

The Long, Toxic Summer Is Here

July 14, 2018



Lisa Rinaman

The St. Johns River now has toxic algae, as seen in the following news item [“Toxic Algae Invades St Johns River,”](#) from Jacksonville Channel 4. We recall the mess in the Santa Fe during the 2012 drought.

We have now reached a tipping point: “The Florida Water Daily ” often has news items dealing with algae in Florida’s waterways. As summer approached, we saw more and more items about Lake Okeechobee and beaches closed because of high bacteria count. As summer progressed, there were more and more closures and boil warnings. Now the balance board has tipped downward, as the other day instead of listing all the many bad places, the “Water Daily” simply listed the safe beaches, since they were far fewer than the toxic ones. The assumption now is that most Florida waters are dangerous to human health, so to go swimming we must

find one of the few safe places.

Take note water managers. Take note of fertilizers used. Take note of new septics. Take note of over-pumping, and new large consumptive use permits, and mine permit applications.

Thanks to Lisa Rinaman, St Johns RiverKeeper, and all the others who tell the world and Florida water controllers, that the state has failed us. Our status quo is not working and we must rethink our daily lives and make drastic changes that will hit everyone's pocketbook.

We must have new management from Tallahassee down or all our waters will look like the big lake down south.

Comments by OSFR historian Jim Tatum.

-A river is like a life: once taken, it cannot be brought back-

ORANGE PARK, Fla. – Toxic algae is back in the St. Johns River.

It was most recently found near Doctors Lake Marina in Clay County, where a hint of green can be seen in the water. According to the St Johns Riverkeeper, algae has also been reported near the Shands Bridge, near Julington Creek and even further north in the river.

Although it's currently not as big of a problem compared to what the area has seen in the past, the recent rain, combined with the heat, could make it much worse.

“The algae is just a symptom of too much nutrient pollution on our waterways. That comes from fertilizer as well as pet waste and sewage. So we are seeing this green algae when conditions are right, we have a lot of rain washing in this pollution and

he gets really hot,” said Riverkeeper Lisa Rinaman.

She said the impact of the algae goes beyond recreation.

“When people can’t use our creek or use our river or take their boat to Cap’s, Clark’s or Lady’s, then it’s also an economic issue,” Rinaman said.

Rinaman said thankfully it’s not as bad right now in the St Johns River as it is in some other places in Florida.

“In Lake Okeechobee, as we speak, about 90 percent of the lake is covered,” she said. “We’re very hopeful that doesn’t happen here in North Florida, but we need to stay on top of it every day to make sure we know what’s going on in our waterways.”

If the problem gets worse or continues for a long time, explained Rinaman, there are things people who use the water recreationally need to know.

“It’s really important to make sure kids aren’t swimming in it. And you shouldn’t eat fish out of waterways with the green algae,” said Rinaman.

As for fixing the problem, Rinaman said everyone needs to do their part.

“We really need a comprehensive approach where we all as residents do our part,” Rinaman said. “But we also have to have state and local elected officials play (a) role in making sure we have that long-term strategy.”

Copyright 2018 by WJXT News4Jax – All rights reserved.