TECHNICAL MEMORANDUM

Tenmile Lakes Toxic Algae Monitoring, July 27, 2009

Prepared for: **Tenmile Lakes Basin Partnership**

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July 27th, 2009 toxic algal cell count results for Tenmile Lakes are as follows (see Figure 1 below for sample station location):

Station	Date	*Microcystis* (cells/ml)	*Gloeotrichia* (cells/ml)	Total *Microcystis+ Gloeotrichia*	Total *Anabaena* (cells/ml)
S3	7/27/2009	0	0	0	6964**
S8	7/27/2009	2181	0	2181**	2523**
N11	7/27/2009	0	0	0	1667*
N16	7/27/2009	0	0	0	2075**

*Exceeds World Health Organization Alert Level 1 increased vigilance guideline level of 500 cells ml^{-1} for potentially toxigenic species in drinking water systems.
**Exceeds World Health Organization Alert Level 2 public health posting guideline level of 2000 cells ml^{-1} for potentially toxigenic species in drinking water systems

Samples form July 27th show that *Microcystis aeruginosa* (MSAE) at station S8 (see Figure 2) exceeded the WHO Alert Level 2 guideline of 2000 cells/ml (at which time DHS and local health services typically issue a public alert for drinking water lakes and reservoirs). In addition, total *Anabaena* also exceeded Alert Level 2 at S3, S8, and N16. However, as noted in previous Algal Memos, the predominant *Anabaena* species identified was *Anabaena planctonica* (Appendix I), a species less commonly associated with toxin production. Because the MSAE level of 2181 cells/ml at S8 has been associated with microcystin toxin levels exceeding the WHO 1 µg/L drinking water level in past years, home-owners should ensure that treatment systems are operating effectively

Overall, blue-green algae (cyanobacteria) have increased since the last sample date of July 13th; however, the predominant species was A*phanizomenon flos-aquae*, a species that has yet to demonstrate toxin production in Oregon (Appendix I). *Anabaena planktonica* was the secondary dominant at all sample stations. Various Chrysophytes, Cryptophytes, and Diatoms comprised the remainder of the biovolume at all stations. Although reported levels for non-dominant species (such as MSAE) indicate the general trend, they do not guarantee that levels of potentially toxigenic species at a particular location do not exceed guideline values. This spatial variability and the fact that cyanobacterial cells have been reported in home-owner drinking water treatment systems (see Kann 2007), make it prudent that all drinking water protection efforts should be in place. Levels of all potentially toxic cyanobacteria were well below recreational guidelines.

Due to the patchy nature of blue-green algal blooms it is possible for higher Microcystis aeruginosa and Anabaena flos-aquae densities (and therefore higher microcystin toxin and anatoxin concentrations to be present in areas not sampled in this survey, particularly along shorelines or during calm conditions of little to no *wind. Given the lakes' demonstrated history of toxic blooms, and the fact that all areas of the lake cannot be tested at all times, those utilizing the lake for drinking water should always follow Oregon Health Division recommendations for purification (attached). In addition, recreational users should always avoid contact with water whenever noticeable surface concentrations of algae are evident or when the lake has an obvious green to blue-green appearance. Moreover, because pets or other domestic animals are the most likely to ingest contaminated water, these animals should not be allowed access to the lakeshore whenever either noticeable surface concentrations of algae or an obvious green to blue-green appearance is evident.*

References for Alert Levels

Carey, C.C., and J.F. Haney, and K.L. Cottingham. 2007. First report of microcystin-LR in the cyanobacterium *Gloeotrichia echinulata.* Environmental toxicology 22:337-339.

Kann, J. 2007. Tenmile Lakes Toxic Algal Sampling Program: 2006 Data Summary Report. Tenmile Lakes Basin Partnership, Lakeside OR 97520

Falconer et al. 1999. Safe levels and safe practices. Pages 155-177 *in*: I. Chorus and J. Bartram, editors. *Toxic Cyanobacteria in water: a guide to their public health consequences*. World Health Organization Report. E & FN Spon, London and New York.

Stone, D., and W. Bress. 2007. Addressing Public Health Risks for Cyanobacteria in Recreational Freshwaters: The Oregon and Vermont Framework. Integrated Environmental Assesment and Managment; 3(1): 137 - 143 (2007). http://www.oregon.gov/DHS/ph/hab/docs/Stone_cyano_rec.pdf

Yoo, S.R., W.W. Carmichael, R.C. Hoehn, and S.E. Hrudy. 1995. Cyanobacterial (blue-green algal) toxins: a resource guide. AWWA Research Foundation and American Water Works Association. Denver, CO. 229 p. (ISBN 0-89867-824-2)

Year 2009 Tenmile Lakes Sample Site Locations

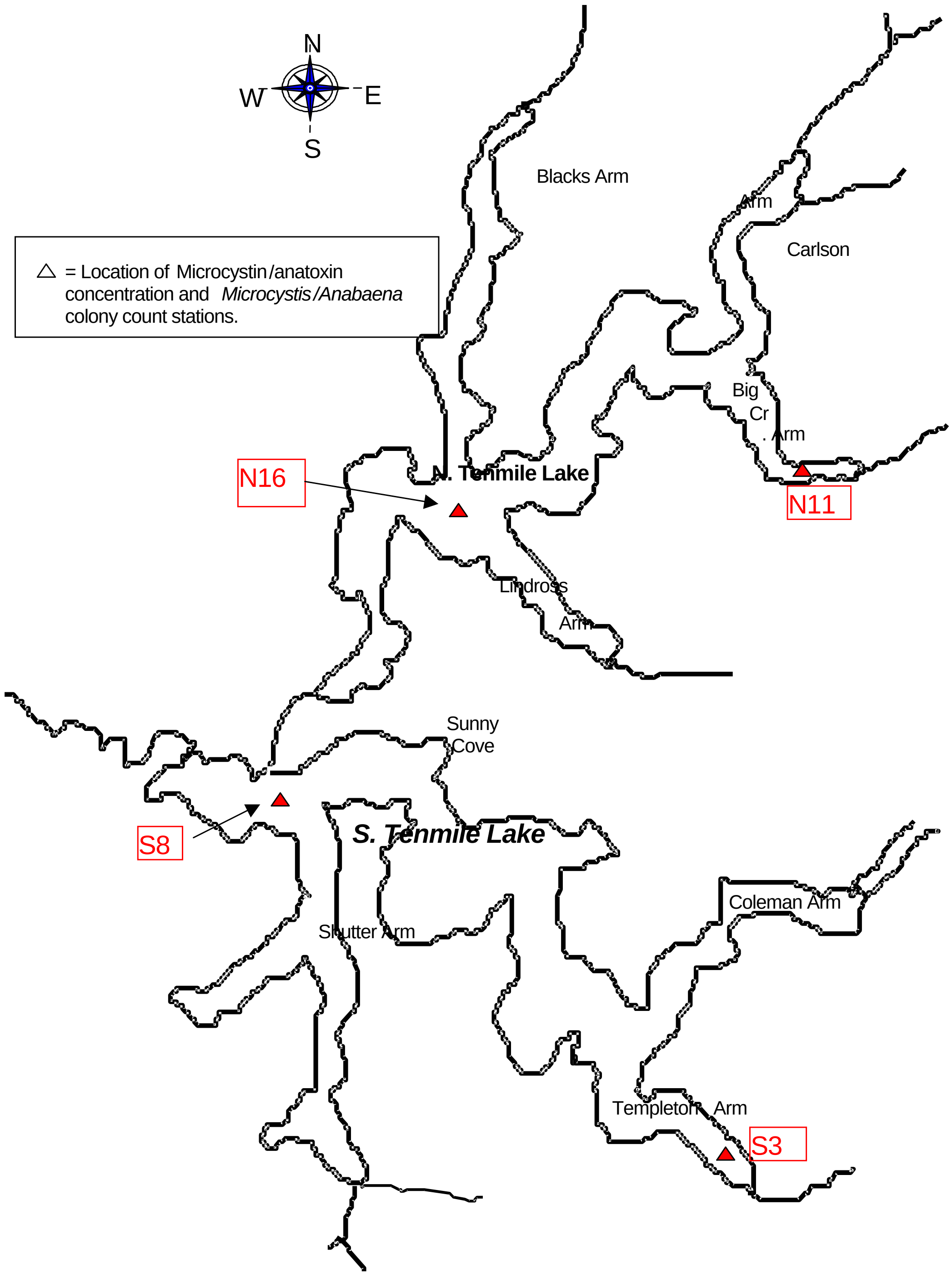

Figure1. Sample station location for potentially toxigenic cyanobacteria, Tenmile Lakes, 2009.

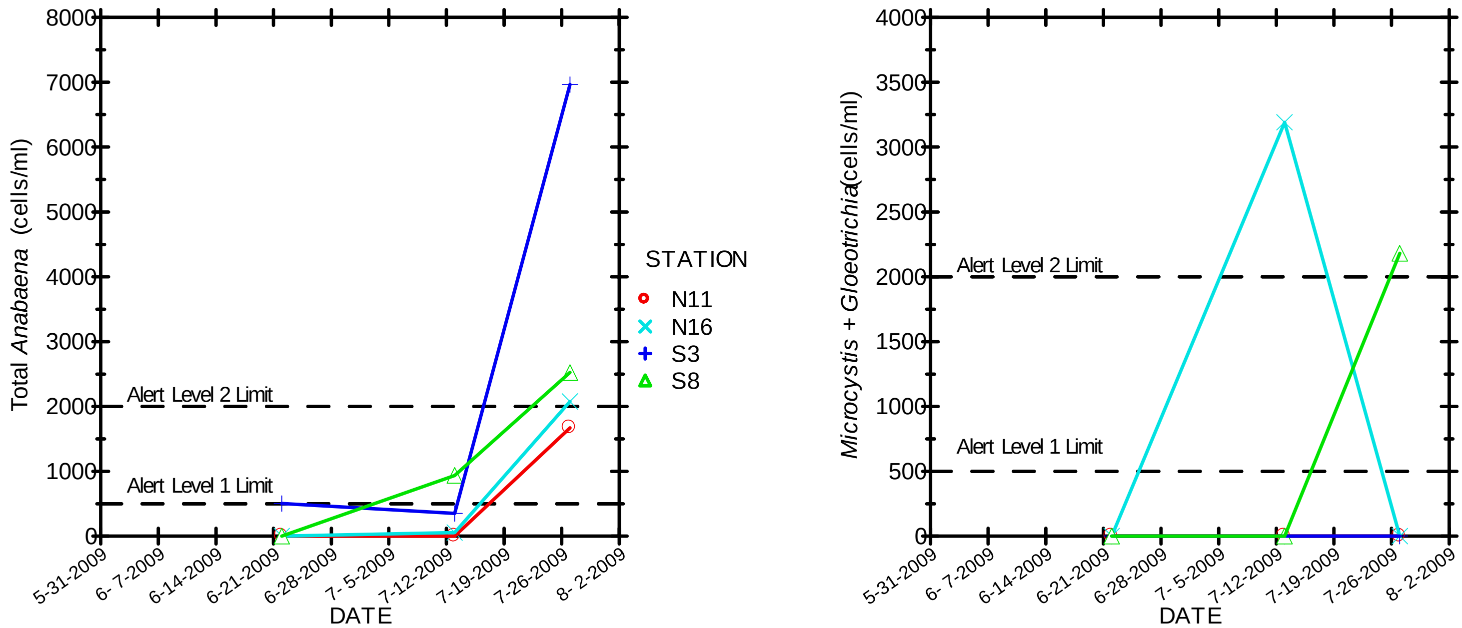

Figure 2. Trend of potentially toxic cyanobacteria in Tenmile Lakes, 2009.

Appendix I: Aquatic Analysts Phytoplankton Lab Sheets

Phytoplankton Sample Analysis

Sample:	Tenmile Lake
Sample Site:	S3
Sample Depth:	
Sample Date:	27-Jul-09
Total Density (#/mL):	1,258
Total Biovolume (um^3/mL):	2,468,713
Trophic State Index:	56.4

	Species	**Density #/mL**	**Density Percent**	**Biovolume um^3/mL**	**Biovolume Percent**	**Group**
1	Aphanizomenon flos-aquae	997	79.2	1,318,406	53.4	bluegreen
2	Anabaena planctonica	228	18.1	1,125,450	45.6	bluegreen
3	Anabaena flos-aquae	23	1.8	22,892	0.9	bluegreen
4	Chlamydomonas sp.	6	0.5	1,851	0.1	green
5	Rhodomonas minuta	6	0.5	114	0.0	cryptophyte

Aphanizomenon flos-aquae cells/mL =	20,927
Aphanizomenon flos-aquae heterocysts/mL =	17
Anabaena planctonica cells/mL =	6,150
Anabaena planctonica heterocysts/mL =	450
Anabaena planctonica akinetes/mL =	11
Anabaena flos-aquae cells/mL =	342
Anabaena flos-aquae heterocysts/mL =	11

Note: 200 count.

Aquatic Analysts **Sample ID:** MB52

Phytoplankton Sample Analysis

Sample:	Tenmile Lake
Sample Site:	S8
Sample Depth:	
Sample Date:	27-Jul-09
Total Density (#/mL):	2,006
Total Biovolume (um^3/mL):	2,756,065
Trophic State Index:	57.2

	Species	**Density #/mL**	**Density Percent**	**Biovolume um^3/mL**	**Biovolume Percent**	**Group**
1	Aphanizomenon flos-aquae	1,868	93.1	2,236,310	81.1	bluegreen
2	Anabaena planctonica	87	4.3	446,987	16.2	bluegreen
3	Cryptomonas erosa	15	0.7	7,560	0.3	cryptophyte
4	Melosira ambigua	15	0.7	21,409	0.8	diatom
5	Microcystis aeruginosa	7	0.4	17,447	0.6	bluegreen
6	Chlamydomonas sp.	7	0.4	2,363	0.1	green
7	Melosira granulata	7	0.4	23,989	0.9	diatom

Aphanizomenon flos-aquae cells/mL =	35,497
Aphanizomenon flos-aquae heterocysts/mL =	683
Anabaena planctonica cells/mL =	2,443
Anabaena planctonica heterocysts/mL =	80
Microcystis aeruginosa cells/mL =	2,181

Note: 200 count.

Aquatic Analysts **Sample ID:** MB53

Phytoplankton Sample Analysis

Sample:	Tenmile Lake
Sample Site:	N11
Sample Depth:	
Sample Date:	27-Jul-09
Total Density (#/mL):	571
Total Biovolume (um^3/mL):	959,007
Trophic State Index:	49.5

	Species	**Density #/mL**	**Density Percent**	**Biovolume um^3/mL**	**Biovolume Percent**	**Group**
1	Aphanizomenon flos-aquae	478	83.8	602,899	62.9	bluegreen
2	Anabaena planctonica	52	9.1	296,125	30.9	bluegreen
3	Melosira granulata	12	2.0	25,520	2.7	diatom
4	Melosira granulata angustissima	6	1.0	5,075	0.5	diatom
5	Melosira ambigua	6	1.0	18,789	2.0	diatom
6	Asterionella formosa	3	0.5	1,276	0.1	diatom
7	Cocconeis placentula	3	0.5	1,334	0.1	diatom
8	Achnanthes minutissima	3	0.5	145	0.0	diatom
9	Glenodinium sp.	3	0.5	2,030	0.2	dinoflagellate
10	Fragilaria crotonensis	3	0.5	4,872	0.5	diatom
11	Chlamydomonas sp.	3	0.5	942	0.1	green

Aphanizomenon flos-aquae cells/mL =	9,570
Aphanizomenon flos-aquae heterocysts/mL =	261
Anabaena planctonica cells/mL =	1,618
Anabaena planctonica heterocysts/mL =	49

Note: 200 count.

Aquatic Analysts **Sample ID:** MB54

Phytoplankton Sample Analysis

Sample:	Tenmile Lake
Sample Site:	N16
Sample Depth:	
Sample Date:	27-Jul-09
Total Density (#/mL):	1,564
Total Biovolume (um³/mL):	2,176,360
Trophic State Index:	55.5

	Species	Density #/mL	Density Percent	Biovolume um³/mL	Biovolume Percent	Group
1	Aphanizomenon flos-aquae	1,426	91.2	1,706,983	78.4	bluegreen
2	Anabaena planctonica	69	4.4	366,196	16.8	bluegreen
3	Asterionella formosa	46	2.9	34,409	1.6	diatom
4	Rhodomonas minuta	5	0.3	92	0.0	cryptophyte
5	Sphaerocystis schroeteri	5	0.3	2,576	0.1	green
6	Cosmarium sp.	5	0.3	966	0.0	green
7	Fragilaria crotonensis	5	0.3	54,098	2.5	diatom
8	Dinobryon sertularia	5	0.3	11,040	0.5	dinoflagellate

Aphanizomenon flos-aquae cells/mL =	27,095
Aphanizomenon flos-aquae heterocysts/mL =	469
Anabaena planctonica cells/mL =	2,001
Anabaena flos-aquae heterocysts/mL =	69
Anabaena flos-aquae akinetes/mL =	5

Note: 200 count.

Aquatic Analysts **Sample ID:** MB55

Oregon Health Division
Drinking water treatment guidance
August 31, 2001

DHS Contact Information:

Harmful Algae Program Coordinator: Laura Boswell at (971) 673 – 0438
If she is not available call the main line for the Office of Environmental Public Health at: (971) 673 – 0440 or
Toll Free: (877) 290 – 6767 and press 0. Ask for Laura Boswell

1. Treatment systems should consist of sand filtration followed by chlorination, followed by activated charcoal filtration. It is essential that sand filtration be done before disinfection to remove as many algal cells as possible without killing or rupturing them.
2. Chlorination systems should be capable of maintaining at least 1 ppm of chlorine residual for at least 20 minutes contact time before the water enters the activated charcoal system.
3. The final step in the process should be effective activated charcoal treatment to remove toxin remaining after the sand filtration and disinfection processes.
4. All treatment equipment used should meet NSF standard 53, and should be adequately sized to treat the maximum amount of water that you use. Treatment equipment needs regular monitoring and servicing to assure that it functions properly.
5. Ideally all water entering your home should be treated as recommended. It is possible to treat only water used in the kitchen, but this increases chances that animals or pets would inadvertently drink untreated water.

As more monitoring is done and toxin levels are measured this advisory may be altered. The advisory is to remain in effect until specifically changed or lifted by county and state health officials.

FACT SHEET

TOXIC *MICROCYSTIS* BLOOMS IN TENMILE LAKES

(information modified from Oregon Health Division Document: Hazards from *Microcystis aeruginosa* in Fresh Water – http://www.ohd.hr.state.or.us/esc/docs/mafact.htm)

➢ What is a toxic bloom of *Microcystis aeruginosa*?

Microcystis aeruginosa is a species of blue-green algae that grows naturally in many surface waters. In most bodies of fresh water and most weather conditions it does not pose a hazard to wildlife or human beings. However, under certain conditions (such as when the water is warm with abundant nutrients) *Microcystis aeruginosa* can grow more rapidly than normal. The result can be excessive numbers of large colonies that form floating masses on the water surface or that are dispersed within the water column. These occurrences are called "algal blooms". *Microcystis aeruginosa* can produce natural toxins (called microcystins) that are very potent, and these toxins are higher in concentration during bloom conditions. The microcystin toxins are produced and contained inside the *Microcystis* cells, and are released to the water when the cells die and disintegrate. Also, since the cells are very small, they can be ingested along with the water. Toxin levels in a water body tend to be higher near shorelines and at the surface of the water where animal and human contact is most likely.

➢ What are the primary toxic effects of these blooms?

The primary toxic effect of microcystins is on the liver. At very high doses, death of liver cells and destruction of blood vessels in the liver can result in serious injury and possibly death. Though less is known about the long-term effects of microcystin toxins, animal studies have shown these toxins can cause chronic liver damage and may promote the formation of liver tumors. These effects are more likely to occur if exposure is frequent over a long period of time.

The levels of toxin necessary to produce immediate or acute illness in humans and animals are much higher than levels that may cause chronic liver injury. Drinking water standards are usually based on chronic effects. Currently, there is no drinking water standard in the U.S. for microcystins. Canada, Australia, and Great Britain have developed a guideline level of 1 microgram toxin per liter of water, or 1 part per billion (1 ppb). During algal blooms, toxin levels can greatly exceed 1 ppb.

➢ How is it determined when the water becomes safe once a bloom is reported?

Changes in weather or in other conditions in a water body influence the growth of blue-green algae. Generally, cooler weather, rainfall, and reduced sunshine will lead to reductions in algal growth and toxin levels. Algal blooms generally peak and die off rapidly and toxin levels in the water decline over days or weeks. Only blue-green algae experts can distinguish visually between different kinds of algal growth, and are able to determine when blooms have disappeared. Testing of the water is the only way to be certain that toxin levels are no longer dangerous.

➢ When does the Oregon Health Division Issue Warnings?

Drinking Water -- When measured or estimated toxin levels reach 1 ug/l the Department of Human Services, Office of Public Health Systems issues public advisories or warnings. These will include warnings regarding the use of water for drinking or food preparation unless the water has been treated following specific guidelines for destroying and removing toxins. Animals should be kept away from water during periods when microcystin toxin levels exceed 1 ug/l, because drinking the water can cause serious or even fatal illness.

Contact Recreation -- If levels are high enough to pose hazards for swimming, water-skiing or other direct skin contact activities, the advisories will warn against water contact. Generally skin hazards occur where the water has a green or blue-green color or where there are visible clumps or mats of algae present in the water. When measured toxin levels reach 5 ug/L or cell counts reach 15,000 cells/ml, contact recreation is considered unsafe.

➢ Can testing ensure that all areas of the lake are safe?

No, due to the patchy nature of blue-green algal blooms it is possible for higher *Microcystis* densities (and therefore higher microcystin toxin concentrations) to be present in areas not sampled in a given survey, particularly along shorelines or during calm conditions of little to no wind. **Therefore, when a lake has a demonstrated history of algal toxicity or the presence of known toxin producing algal species, those utilizing the lake for drinking water should always follow Oregon Health Division recommendations for purification. In addition, recreational users should always avoid contact with water whenever noticeable surface concentrations of algae are evident or when the lake has an obvious green to blue-green appearance.**

➢ Are domestic animals at risk during blooms?

Yes, pets or other domestic animals are the most likely to ingest contaminated water, these animals should not be allowed access to the lakeshore whenever either noticeable surface concentrations of algae or an obvious green to blue-green appearance is evident.

➢ Is it safe to eat fish and other aquatic life?

Clams, mussels, snails and other shellfish should not be eaten during microcystin advisory periods, but it is believed that fish can be safely eaten if they are cleaned and all internal organs discarded. Internal organs of such fish may be toxic even to animals.

➢ How much does testing cost?

Samples must be shipped to qualified laboratories for analysis. A microscopic determination to quantify the number of Microcystis colonies and cells costs $90 per sample. A specialized test to analyze for the microcystin toxin concentration costs $100 per sample (overnight shipping costs not included), and for anatoxins the cost is $250/sample .

- NOTE: A fact sheet about microcystin toxin and its effects may be found on the Web at www.dhs.state.or.us/publichealth/esc/docs/mafact.cfm