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Title

Pilot Projects to Reduce Algae Scums and Bacteria at Beaches

Body

An innovative pilot project involving the City of Madison, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, Dane County, and the University of Wisconsin will look at ways to reduce floating algae scums along the shorelines of the Yahara lakes. The water quality of Madison area beaches has been a growing issue due to high levels of aquatic microorganisms such as blue-green algae and E. coli bacteria. High concentrations of blue-green algae are not only aesthetically displeasing due to their dirty appearance and foul smell but contact with highly infested waters can lead to health concerns such as skin rashes, sore throats, headaches, muscular pain, harm to the liver and nervous system, and gastrointestinal problems. Because of the human health concern, a major goal of this experiment is to keep Madison's beaches cleaner and safer.

For this coming summer of 2011, the City plans to install an UltraViolet (UV) system on site to inactivate E. coli, and other pathogens inside an enclosure system. The system is designed to pump water inside the enclosure through UV treatment and release it back into the enclosure. All of the water in the enclosure must circulate through the system to reduce the level of contamination at the beach. In addition, the City plans to install a deflector at BB Clarke for a second year to collect further data and test its effectiveness. Last year in 2010, the deflector showed promising results and had great support from the community and thus it is proposed to be installed for a second year.