NEW YORK STATE’S HARMFUL ALGAL BLOOM INITIATIVE

New York’s Harmful Algal Bloom (HABs) Initiative seeks to mitigate the threat of HABs to sources of drinking water in upstate New York through regional collaboration, advanced monitoring pilot projects, and the development and implementation of community-specific action plans. $65 million was pledged to advance the objectives of the HABs Initiative.

Led by the state’s Water Quality Rapid Response Team, the initiative’s implementation began in 2018. A series of regional summits attended by national, state, and local experts were held to evaluate regional and statewide bloom conditions, discuss HABs drivers and mitigation strategies, and to provide recommendations for further actions. The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) oversaw the development of strategic Action Plans for 12 priority lakes across the state, including several within the Great Lakes basin. $500,000 was allocated to each lake to create its action plan. Lessons learned are currently being used to develop strategic plans for restoring water quality and preventing HABs in other New York lakes where HABs have also been reported.
Portions of several grant programs that fund activities related to HABs mitigation have been set aside to support the remaining $59 million earmarked for the initiative. The New York Department of Environmental Conservation maintains an online inventory of these funding opportunities available to communities if they choose to implement action plan recommendations. Implementation is voluntary.

Additionally, pilot projects resulting from the regional summits’ recommendations were announced in the summer of 2018 for three sites within the Great Lakes basin. Researchers deployed two advanced monitoring stations to nearshore and offshore sites on Skaneateles Lake, Owasco Lake, and Seneca Lake. These monitoring stations will provide real-time water-quality information that contributes to the understanding of HABs development, duration, and effects on water quality.

**TYPE**
Investment

**ISSUE**
Source Water