

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

For more information:  
Madisson Heint  
200 Seminary Drive  
Winona Lake, IN 46590  
574-372-5100, ext. 6446  
heinlmm@grace.edu

### **Blue-Green Algae Toxin Report Released for Kosciusko County Lakes**

WINONA LAKE, Ind. (August 28, 2014) – Following a Lake Erie algae bloom that shut down the Toledo, Ohio drinking water supply, a report released by the Center for Lakes & Streams at Grace College provides insight into how susceptible Indiana lakes may be to blue-green algae toxins.

“In 2009, blue-green algae toxins were identified as an emerging threat,” said center director Nate Bosch. “We responded immediately by conducting one of the most thorough algae toxin studies in Indiana.”

The four-year study focused on blue-green algae and its most common toxin, microcystin, as they occurred in the lakes of Kosciusko County, including Indiana’s largest natural lake, Lake Wawasee.

“We wrapped up four years of data collection in the fall of 2013 and have been analyzing data since then to prepare a final report,” said center program manager Anna Burke. “We were able to finish and release the report at a time where a lot of residents are curious about this threat and how it may be affecting our own lakes here in Indiana.”

The research results offered encouraging news and reason for caution. On average, lake microcystin levels throughout the study did not exceed health guidelines. While this is good news, there is some reason for caution because even though levels were generally low, a majority of lakes did test positive for some amount of microcystin. This indicates there is still potential for future microcystin problems.

Another point of caution is that some lakes had very high quantities of the blue-green algae itself while not having high levels of the microcystin toxin. The report indicated this could still be a health threat because even if these algae were not producing microcystin, they could have been producing other toxins that are not tested for as commonly.

One promising result of the study was the potential to make real-time estimates for both algae and microcystin levels in lakes, as laboratory analysis can sometimes take too long for rapid actions to be taken to avoid health threats. The center is exploring developing the real-time method for use by lake associations and lake residents.

The center is also working in conjunction with the local health department to secure equipment and training for toxin analysis, in addition to training center staff to conduct algae quantification.

“Our situation in Kosciusko County is a little different than Toledo because our lakes are not necessarily used as a drinking water supply, so we’re more concerned with public exposure to the toxin through lakes activities such as swimming,” said Bosch. “But the results of this study still give a good snapshot of the condition of Indiana lakes as relates to the issue of blue-green algae and its toxins.”

For more information on the study contact the center at [lakes@grace.edu](mailto:lakes@grace.edu) or 547-372-5100, ext. 6445. The full report is available online at [lakes.grace.edu](http://lakes.grace.edu).

Funding for the study was provided by the K21 Health Foundation, private donors and Grace College.

The Center for Lakes & Streams at Grace College conducts research, provides resources, engages and educates residents, and collaborates with local organizations in efforts to make the lakes and streams of Kosciusko County cleaner.

###