

Toxic and Harmful Algal Blooms ***“A Community in Crisis - Roles”***

Mayor

The mayor of Habport has the important role of moderator at the town meeting. The mayor, along with the town official, must plan the schedule for the meeting. Who will speak when and for how long? Will individuals be allowed time to respond to questions or concerns posed to them? When will the experts be allowed and expected to speak? When will the concerned citizens be allowed to ask questions of the meeting participants?

Things the mayor needs to know: You are an elected official and you are running for reelection this fall. If a solution is proposed that requires funding, the town currently has \$3000 available for discretionary use. Funding allocations should address the prevention, detection, and remediation of HABs. Both you and the town official must approve any allocation of funding.

Town Official

The town official works with the mayor to plan the meeting schedule. Your other job is to facilitate the meeting. Although the mayor will be the moderator, your job will be to insure that the timed schedule is kept and that the meeting progresses in an orderly manner.

Things the town official needs to know: Like the mayor, you are an elected official; however, you were just elected last year and will not be up for reelection until next year. The platform on which you were elected was supported predominantly by the farming and the fishing industry. If a solution is proposed that requires funding, the town currently has \$3000 available for discretionary use. Funding allocations should address the prevention, detection, and remediation of HABs. Both you and the town official must approve any allocation of funding.

Scientist (at least 1)

The scientist is considered an expert at the meeting. Your job is present the facts about the harmful algal bloom – what could have caused it, what effect it has had or will have, what are the potential problems/benefits of proposed solutions. Like a good scientist, you should be prepared to back your statements up with data.

Things the scientist needs to know: At some point in the meeting, you will be called on by the town official to make an expert statement regarding the status of the bloom, the impact it has had on the environment thus far, and the impact you expect it have in the future. Remember that although you are an “expert” on the topic, your job is not to dictate what should be done but rather what the science tells us.

Health Official

The health official works at the local hospital. Your job is to present the health-related facts concerning harmful algal blooms and this bloom in particular. Like the scientist, you should be prepared to back your statements up with data.

Things the health official needs to know: You have seen several cases of respiratory irritation at the hospital over the past few days. You have also treated 4 people for unexplained vomiting, diarrhea, and dizziness in the past 24 hours. Three of the four people had eaten clams at a local seafood restaurant the evening before.

Hotel/Restaurant Owner (at least 1)

The hotel/restaurant owner has a hotel and restaurant right on the beach. Your income is derived solely from the tourism industry. You advertise that your seafood is obtained from local sources. Your business is most lucrative in the summer and fall when tourism is at a peak in Habport. During the off-season, you host many conferences for businesses and other organizations.

Things the hotel/restaurant owner needs to know: Several guests have recently complained about dead fish washing up on the beach by the hotel swimming area. One of your lifeguards visited the emergency room the other day because she was having trouble breathing after her shift. You had to call the police this morning to escort a man off of your property. He entered your lobby yelling that the world was ending and that the dead fish were just the beginning. You were notified by the hospital that some people had gotten sick after eating clams at your restaurant the other night. You have since taken them off of the menu and notified your provider.

Fishing Industry (at least 1)

The people representing the fishing industry have a variety of jobs. One of you earns your income fishing the local waters and selling your catch to local restaurants. One of you earns your income by harvesting shellfish and selling them to local restaurants, as well as shipping your frozen catch to various parts of the country. The third one of your group earns your income by taking tourists out on your boat for day trips. You provide the bait and the equipment, and the customers take home the fish they catch. All three of you make the bulk of your income in the summer and fall when tourism is at its peak in Habport.

Things the fishing industry needs to know: You have noticed that the water has seemed murkier in some areas lately; in some places it almost looks red. You have also seen dead fish in the waters – not very appealing to those tourists on your day trips. You were just told by one of your restaurant customers that they will no longer be purchasing any of your shellfish until you can provide proof that they are not “bad.”

Habport Country Club Owner

The country club owner runs a beautiful 9-hole golf course along the coast. Although it is only 9 holes, it is a favorite spot for tourists. Many visitors to Habport plan their visits around the annual Habport Open in August. People make reservations a year in advance due to the popularity of the event. One reason for its popularity is that all money raised by the Habport Country Club during the event is donated to the local Community Center.

Things the golf course owner needs to know: Over the past 3 days, you have received several phone calls from people asking about the safety of the local waters and questioning whether they should come to the Habport Open scheduled in 2 weeks. One foursome has already cancelled their reservation.

Manager of Wastewater Treatment Plant

The manager of the wastewater treatment plant runs the local office located on the outskirts of Habport. The plant processes the wastewater produced by Habport and returns the cleaned water to the environment, or reuses it for irrigation and landscaping. Although the plant is in operation year-round, it experiences a greater demand during the tourism season when the population of the town has been known to increase by a power of ten.

Things the manager needs to know: The state office of environmental quality inspects your plant every 3 years. You have passed every inspection with flying colors since you have been manager. During your last inspection, you discussed the increasing population of Habport and the possible need for a facility that has a greater capacity.

Organic Farmer

The organic farmer runs a certified organic farm on the outskirts of Habport. You have dairy cows, chickens, and various crops. Most of your income is derived from selling your products in local and regional stores; however, you also supply many of the local restaurants with organic products – a feature which has become very popular on the local restaurant menus over the past few years.

Things the farmer needs to know: You have been farming your land organically for the past 10 years. You only recently acquired your dairy cows (3 years ago).

Concerned Citizens (remainder of class or another class)

The concerned citizens are residents of Habport. You are attending the meeting out of concern for your town. At some point during the meeting, you will have the opportunity to ask questions of the meeting participants and to propose your own ideas on possible solutions.

Things the citizens need to know: What you know of the algal bloom is what you have read in the newspapers and seen on the news. Some of you may have noticed signs of the bloom around town. You have several interests which include, but are not restricted to: (1) the health of your families, (2) the stability of your income, (3) the local environment, and (4) the economic survival of your town.