Mississippi River/Gulf of America Hypoxia Task Force Newsletter

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Hypoxia Task Force Highlights

The 39th Hypoxia Task Force Public Meeting will be held in person the afternoon of December 2, 2025, in Washington DC, and with a virtual live-stream. Registration and meeting materials will be posted on the HTF Website when available.

On July 31, 2025, NOAA released the results of the annual Gulf of America hypoxic zone survey cruise. The measured 2025 size was 4,402 square miles resulting in the 5-year average of 4,755 square miles for the long-term coastal goal.

State Activities

Louisiana Updates Nutrient Reduction Strategy

The Louisiana Nutrient Reduction and Management Strategy Interagency Team released the 2024 Strategy 5-year update in March 2025. Thanks those who provided input and public comment. The Strategy document and relevant nutrient-related information is available on the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality's public website.

The Louisiana Interagency team is comprised of the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority of Louisiana, Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry, Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality, and the Louisiana Department of Energy and Natural Resources. The team developed this Strategy to support the goal of water quality protection, improvement, and restoration within Louisiana's water bodies and represents Louisiana's contribution to the larger effort to promote and implement activities to address nutrient concerns. Annual reporting continues, with the release of the 2024 report in July 2025 to the website.

Read the Strategy

Minnesota Nutrient Reduction Strategy 2025 Updates and Public Review

Minnesota released its updated Nutrient Reduction Strategy (NRS) for public review on July 14. The full draft strategy can be viewed via the Minnesota NRS webpage.

The 2025 Minnesota NRS documents progress in nutrient reduction in both in-state waters and waters leaving the state via three international basins. Water and nutrients from Minnesota travel via the Mississippi River south to the Gulf, via the Red River of the North to Lake Winnipeg, and via the Lake Superior to the Great Lakes. The 2025 update measures the work still needed to meet goals established by the Hypoxia Task Force, the International Red River Watershed Board, local watersheds, and the state of Minnesota. Chapters focused on rural and urban sources of nutrients lay out strategies for addressing excess nutrients in those areas and integrate them with the watershed approach from the Minnesota Water Management Framework. Next steps for tracking progress and adjusting the NRS to meet changing conditions are identified, and the

recommendations conclude by prioritizing the measures needed to make a significant impact on excess nutrients.

Work on the revisions began in 2022 and built on the 2020 Progress Report. Updates were developed by a core interagency NRS team and through the support, work and ideas of over 100 other experts from Minnesota and federal agencies, local government units, private contractors and the faculty and staff at the University of Minnesota. Revisions were supported through the EPA's Gulf Hypoxia Program and supplemented with state funding. After a public comment period, the comments will be reviewed, and a final update will be published to the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's website by the end of 2025. For more information about the updates or to learn about related webinars and content please visit the Minnesota Nutrient Reduction Strategy webpage.

Read the Strategy

Federal Activities

EPA Gulf of America Division announces Notice of Funding Opportunity

The EPA Gulf of America Division is pleased to announce the *Innovative Solutions for Improving Water Quality and Strengthening Local Economies in the Gulf of America Watershed* funding opportunity. It is anticipated that up to 12 awards will be made under this announcement. Awards are expected to be from $500,000 to $1,000,000, depending on Agency funding levels, the quality of applications received, agency priorities and other applicable considerations. Awards funded under this opportunity are expected to have a 3-to-5-year project period.

This funding opportunity seeks applications that improve water quality through nutrient reduction and/or estuarine or marine HAB mitigation demonstration projects that are enhanced by innovative technology. All applicants should identify how their nutrient reduction project and use of innovative technology could lead to cost savings and economic benefits in the future.

View the Funding Opportunity

EPA Launches Weekly HAB Forecasts

The EPA launched a forecast model to predict the probability of a cyanobacterial harmful algal bloom occurring in the coming week for over 2,000 of the largest U.S. lakes and reservoirs across the lower 48 states. The forecast is released on a weekly basis from March to November. The model predictions were validated with Cyanobacteria Assessment Network (CyAN) satellite data and have an overall prediction accuracy of 90 percent.

Explore the Forecast Dashboard

EPA Updates the Restoration and Protection Screening Indicator Database

The EPA recently released Version 2.8 of the Restoration and Protection Screening (RPS) Indicator Database, a national dataset of subwatershed attributes for the conterminous United States. The newly updated RPS Indicator Database incorporates 193 new and updated indicators for HUC12 subwatersheds, containing 389 HUC12 indicators in total. The full dataset can be accessed by visiting the EPA RPS Indicator Database page. Data are available in the following formats: Excel, file geodatabase, and web service. The data can also be visualized and applied to compare HUC12 subwatersheds within the Web RPS Tool or Excel RPS Tool.

New indicators processed as part of this release include data generated under the EPA National Nutrient Inventory that characterize nitrogen and phosphorus inputs to watersheds from point and non-point sources. Updated watershed health scores from the 2025 Preliminary Healthy Watersheds Assessment are also included. Other indicator updates focus on land use and land cover; road-stream crossings; wildfire risk; protected lands and conservation easements; agricultural tile drainage and drainage ditches; hurricane storm surge flooding; hazardous materials; and water quality assessments, impairments, and Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs). The EPA continues to work with states and partners to help them apply RPS indicators in useful ways such as prioritization under the 303(d) Program and Nonpoint Source Program planning.

Visit the Database

Visit the EPA Hypoxia Task Force Website

To learn more about the work of the Hypoxia Task Force, visit our website which features recent reports and measurements, important documents, upcoming actions and learning opportunities. The “In the Spotlight” section of the homepage provides a great introduction.

Check out the HTF Homepage

Email OW-Hypoxia@epa.gov to Sign Up for the HTF Newsletter or to Unsubscribe.

The *Mississippi River/Gulf of America Hypoxia Task Force Newsletter* is a periodic publication produced by the EPA's Office of Water in partnership with the Hypoxia Task Force. The newsletter provides a snapshot of recent state activities, federal agency activities, publications and resources.

The mention of trade names, products or services does not convey and should not be interpreted as conveying official federal approval, endorsement or recommendation for use.

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