



## **Healthy Waters Coalition Update September 2015**

*The Healthy Waters Coalition is a diverse group of municipal and state water and wastewater organizations, and conservation and sustainable agriculture organizations working in Washington DC and in communities throughout the country. The Coalition is focused on strengthening links between our working agricultural lands and the quality of our Nation's waters with a specific focus on nutrients. Please feel free to circulate this list to your members and let us know if you have any colleagues who would find this monthly update informative. If you do not wish to receive these updates, we can remove you from our lists.*

*Below is an overview of the related press coverage and other materials from the month of September.*

### **National Activities**

#### [USDA contributes to Chesapeake Bay water quality effort](#)

##### *Farm Futures*

USDA is releasing \$4 million in a first round of funding that will help several states in the Chesapeake Bay watershed plant more trees along riverbanks and streams. The trees will reduce soil sedimentation and field and animal waste runoff, improving water quality, USDA said. Robert Bonnie, USDA Under Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment, said the 2014 Farm Bill has enabled USDA to support expanded conservation practices on crop, pasture and private forestland in the bay.

#### [USDA Partners with EPA, Offers New Resources to Support Water Quality Trading](#)

##### *USDA*

Following the recent announcement of \$2 million in Conservation Innovation Grants to support water quality trading markets, the Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) hosted a joint workshop to expand markets for water quality benefits generated on farms, ranches and forest lands.

### **State Activities**

#### [Water quality, nitrates still big problems](#)

##### *Norfolk Daily News*

Growing regulatory focus on water quality has brought increased attention to the issue of nitrate contamination in Northeast Nebraska. Studies have found that there is a fairly pervasive nitrate and nitrogen contamination in the groundwater in Pierce County. This has led to a beefed-up water quality

section in the NRD's groundwater management plan and the approval of pertinent rules and regulations by the NRD board.

#### [Harvest rush can lead to manure runoff](#)

*Wisconsin State Farmer*

Farmers have a tool that can help them make decisions about when to spread manure. The Runoff Risk Advisory Forecast is part of the online Wisconsin Manure Management System. It provides maps that are updated three times a day to show short-term manure runoff risk, taking into consideration soil moisture, weather forecast, crop cover, and slope. Farmers can check it to see how risky it will be to spread manure in their watershed basin.

#### **Regional and Local Activities**

##### [Tourism officials compare Lake Erie algae problem to Gulf oil spill, say industry is ailing](#)

*Cleveland.com*

Pacholski, President of the Lake Erie Charter Boat Association, is part of a growing coalition of lake-oriented business owners who are becoming increasingly vocal in demanding solutions to Lake Erie's algae problems – a problem that some are comparing to the 2010 BP oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico. Pacholski estimates that his fishing business is down about 25 percent this year because of the massive harmful algal bloom that formed this summer in Lake Erie.

##### [Delmarva Coalition to focus on helping reduce runoff from farms](#)

*Bay Journal*

A new coalition of farmers, scientists, poultry companies and government agencies is working on the Delmarva Peninsula to determine the best ways to both manage nutrient pollution in the Chesapeake Bay and keep farmers in business. The group is focusing on two themes: better technologies to transform manure into energy and assistance in incorporating land-applied manure into the soil so that it's less likely to run off and is more available to crops.

#### **Research and Miscellaneous**

##### [UI to test new water filtration system on dairies](#)

*Capital Press*

A University of Idaho professor who developed a mobile facility that cleans dirty water and converts the pollutants into fertilizer plans to start testing his experimental technology on dairy lagoons in late-September.

##### [Using Gypsum to Help Reduce Phosphorus Runoff](#)

*USDA Blog*

USDA's Agricultural Research Service (ARS) scientists have been looking for ways to address phosphorus by using gypsum, which binds with phosphorus in the soil and prevents it from running off. There is no shortage of gypsum. In fact, one type is a byproduct of scrubbing the sulfur out of power plant emissions and is used to make wallboard.

##### [Microscopic key to reducing ocean dead zones uncovered](#)

*Ag Professional*

Microbiologists at Brigham Young University, with financial backing from the National Science Foundation and the U.S Dept. of Agriculture, are addressing the global issue of dead zones created by nitrogen and phosphorus loadings by getting to the root of the problem. Their research, the most recent of which publishes this week in Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, is discovering the

potential of naturally-occurring bacteria called rhizobia to stem the tide of oversaturation with nitrogen-based fertilizers.