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The Intelligencer.

VOLUME CLXIV, NO. 12

WHEELING, W.VA. — SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 5, 2015 32 PAGES 4 SECTIONS PF

BLUE-GREEN ALGAE FOUND THROUGHOUT THE OHIO AND TRIBUTARIES

DEP Reveals Scope Of Algae's Spread in River

Health advisories
remain in effect

By LINDA COMINS
Staff Writer

WHEELING — The West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection has released a series of aerial photographs showing blue-green algae blooms on the Ohio River.

The department's aerial assessment of the river, conducted this week, extended from the Huntington area north to the mouth of Buffalo Creek at Wellsburg.

John Wirts, assistant director of WVDEP's Division of Water and Waste Management, said the presence of a blue-green algae bloom does not equate to the presence of toxins.

Wirts, who is assigned to the division's Watershed Assessment Branch, said he Ohio River Valley Water Sanitation Commission and state health departments will be posting any results of new toxins analysis as soon as they are available.

Health advisories in the region remain in place and close monitoring continues of area water supplies as blue-green algae blooms are still visible in the Ohio River and some tributaries.

Howard Gamble, administrator of the Wheeling-Ohio County Health Department, said health department officials are monitoring the river, along with their partners at the city of Wheeling, West Virginia Bureau of Public Health and ORSANCO.

Both the Wheeling-Ohio County and Marshall County health departments have issued health advisories for individuals using the Ohio River. Residents are advised to use caution when swimming, boating, fishing or doing other recreational water activities in the river. Special

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Photos Provided

ABOVE: Blue-green algae blooms are visible on Fish Creek where it enters the Ohio River. BELOW: The West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection's aerial photographs of include this shot taken upstream of Natrium and Clarington.



Wheeling to Drill More Water Wells

By IAN HICKS
Staff Writer

WHEELING — Should Wheeling's water treatment plant ever have to close its Ohio River intakes again — as it did for a few days in August when a blue-green algae bloom first surfaced near the city — its backup well water system soon will be able to pump an additional million gallons of water per day.

The city plans to drill two additional wells in the Warwood area, putting a total of seven wells with the ability to generate

5 million gallons of water per day at its disposal, according to City Manager Robert Herron. The five wells now in operation near the water treatment plant can generate about 4 million gallons of water per day.

Although the algae concerns made the announcement timely, the additional wells have been planned for some time. The cost of drilling them was included in the \$39.3 million bond issue that funded construction of the new

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