

Manatee County leaders looking for ways to minimize macroalgae, lyngbya



As scientists and environmentalist monitor the presence of type of blue green algae called Lyngbya in our water ways, Manatee County officials are looking to minimize it. (Sarasota Bay Estuary Program)

By Daniela Hurtado

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ANNA MARIA ISLAND, Fla. (WWSB) - As scientists and environmentalists monitor the presence of a type of blue-green algae called Lyngbya in our waterways, Manatee County officials are looking to minimize it.

In a statement on Thursday evening, the communications director for the county sent us a statement from their County Administrator Scott Hopes:

“We are actively evaluating alternatives to minimize the macroalgae that’s finding its way onto the shore and into the canals in the Islands. That evaluation includes exploring specialized equipment for harvesting algae that would be removed and taken to alternate locations to dry it before sending it to the landfill,” said Hopes.

Experts tell us they’re predominantly seeing the Lyngbya in some portions of Miguel Bay, Palma Sola Bay, and Anna Maria Sound.

Environmentalists like Suncoast Waterkeepers board member, Rusty Chinnis, say looks can be deceiving when it comes to this algae. It starts on the ocean floor and then floats up so just because you can’t see it from sea level doesn’t mean it isn’t there.

 **Daniela Hurtado**
last Thursday

Scientist tell me Lyngbya (a kind of blue green algae) has gone down a bit in the last week and a half in the Anna Maria Sound and Palma Sola Bay Area (which is good news) but is still present and yes, smelly.
Story on [ABC7 Sarasota - WWSB](#) at 6.




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"Never this early. Never in these quantities," said Chinnis when ABC7 asked him about how usual the Lyngbya was during this time of year.

"We had a big increase from say from early May to early June and two weeks ago it was really superabundant," said Dr. David Tomasko, the Executive Director at the Sarasota Bay Estuary Program.

Nearly two weeks ago is around the time we caught up with the neighbors at [Snead Island](#).

Scientists with the Sarasota Bay Estuary Program have been collecting samplings the last several weeks and say there is some good news this week.

"Looks like there's quite a bit less than there was two weeks ago. Which is encouraging news but it's not the final story," said Dr. Tomasko.

So what would be the final story and the solution to the smelly Lyngbya issue?

Environmentalists say scooping it up is only a bandaid.

"We need to do a better job with our wastewater and stormwater," said Dr. Tomasko.

"Where do the nutrients come from? Some of that we know. It's the wastewater discharges, it's stormwater runoff, fertilizers when we shouldn't be fertilizing," said Chinnis.

As for county leaders, Chinnis says he's taken some commissioners to see and smell the issue firsthand.

"Manatee County commissioners like Kevin Van Ostenbridge and George Kruse actually took me out on an offer to show them the condition of the bay," said Chinnis.

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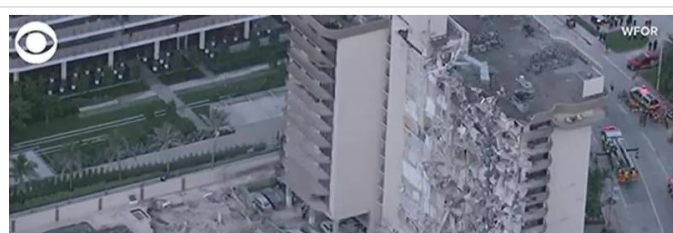
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