Red Tide: University Of New Hampshire Experts Available

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DURHAM, N.H. -- Red tide, a condition in which shellfish become contaminated due to naturally occurring marine algae, has forced the closure of many of New Hampshire's shellfish beds. Flooding and extensive rainwater runoff from recent storms have compounded the red tide and water quality issues. Several University of New Hampshire researchers are available to discuss red tide and its impact on clams, mussels, and oysters.

Candace Dolan is the phytoplankton project coordinator for the Great Bay Coast Watch. Sponsored by New Hampshire Sea Grant and UNH Cooperative Extension, the Great Bay Coast Watch is a volunteer effort dedicated to protecting the long-term health of New Hampshire's coastal and estuarine waters through water quality monitoring and educational programs. Dolan can be reached at (603) 749-1565, or candace.dolan@unh.edu.

Richard Langan is co-director of the UNH/NOAA Cooperative Institute for Coastal and Estuarine Environmental Technology (CICEET) and director of the UNH/NOAA Open Ocean Aquaculture Project. His research interests include shellfish aquaculture and water quality monitoring. CICEET, which develops tools for clean water and healthy coastal habitats nationwide, supports several projects that address red tide, including Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute researcher Don Anderson's extensive work on this coastal management issue. Langan can be reached through Dolores Leonard at (603) 862-3685 or dolores.leonard@unh.edu.

Red tide refers to a condition in which filter-feeding shellfish (clams, oysters, mussels) accumulate a potent toxin produced by naturally occurring marine algae. The toxin, which is not destroyed by cooking the shellfish, affects the human central nervous system and can be fatal. A red tide bloom in summer of 2005 closed shellfish beds for months and caused millions of dollars of losses in tourism and fishing.