**Speaker 1** (00:01): Many communities have a Main Street. The center of town [inaudible 00:00:04] might be the busiest, oldest or most important part of that town. What if that Main Street wasn't a street at all, but a lake. Hopatcong Lake, New Jersey, the state's largest lake. For the four towns around the lake, Jefferson, Mount Arlington, Roxbury and Hopatcong, this lake is a hub for business, tourism and ecology. But in the summer of 2019, the lake was struck with a harmful algae bloom, HAB. This is a story best told while looking from three different perspectives. So this is part three of three, where we'll examine the economic aspect of the algae bloom.

**Marty Kane** (00:39): And so basically the lake as we know it today has been that way since the 1840s. But in its heyday if you will, Lake Hopatcong was a major Northeast resort. It had over 40 hotels and rooming houses on the shores of the lake. Two separate amusement parks on the shores of the lake. All types of activities, both day and night for people. In many ways it was a Jersey Shore before the Jersey Shore.

**Speaker 1** (01:04): The lake is home to dozens of businesses that rely on the summer commerce, as people go out on the water to enjoy the summer sun. There are clubs, restaurants, marinas, yacht, clubs, fishing clubs, bars and beaches, where an estimated 500,000 people visit the lake annually.

**Eric Wilsusen** (01:19): Our restaurants, our marinas, gas, you name it, it's New Jersey's largest lake, so you have so many people that come to use it as a recreation source.

**Marty Kane** (01:31): And people come out in much greater numbers than they do at other times in the year, whether it's the lake restaurants, to rent boats, they just come into the area to make use of the lake. And literally thousands of people come here on weekends. In a particular Cove alone, you might get 400 boats in our busiest Cove.

**Speaker 1** (01:53): The harmful algae bloom swept in suddenly, putting the lake under advisory and leaving many business owners in a tough spot.

**Robert DeFillippo** (02:00): All of our businesses suffered because the lake was virtually shut down. So all the businesses in Roxbury, which borders the lake through the landing area of our town. Those businesses and the marinas and everything associated with a business around the lake just stopped.

**Lisa Palanchi** (02:23): A lot of people didn't put their boats in because they were afraid of the algae bloom. Again, people wouldn't go water skiing, they weren't sailing, they weren't really doing any activities on the water. So definitely affected us. When we had to shut down, we weren't allowed to continue as normal because the state had told us that we couldn't do it.

**Marty Kane** (02:43): So all of a sudden the businesses didn't get the business and didn't get any customers, you didn't have people coming into the bagel shops, the liquor stores.

**Lisa Palanchi** (02:53): We had actually shut one down totally, which was Lake Hopatcong Adventure Company, because that is totally on the water, pedal boards, hydro bikes, kayaks.

**Speaker 6** (03:01): We're a very seasonal restaurant where in the summertime we have a lot of boats that come into our docks. We have a lot of people on the water that come from out of town. So when the alga bloom came to town, we saw a really big drop in the amount of people that came up this way for the summertime.

**Speaker 1** (03:17): Businesses around the lake had to quickly adapt to keep themselves afloat for the season.

**Lisa Palanchi** (03:21): Offering some incentives, buy one get one, to get people to come here. We had a couple events at the golf course to try to get people to come up here, we had a couple tournaments. So people came up for that and then they would go to the restaurants and eat and stuff.

**Speaker 6** (03:34): Do whatever we could, and like I said, to operate as normal as we could. With the algae bloom we took on more parties in that regard so that we have this big restaurant and we would have a party of 40 people or 50 people, where generally in the summertime it's kind of leave it open for the boaters to come in and guests to come in, and not do so many parties.

**Speaker 1** (03:55): Even the businesses were doing their part in the bloom, working to educate their guests and make sure they were following guidelines to lower the impact on the lake.

**Lisa Palanchi** (04:02): And my owner is very supportive of ecological friendly things to the lake. So we actually treat our water, to again try to help with making sure that we don't put anything into the lake that could possibly... The drainage systems around here, we have a huge drainage system around here to keep the water from running off and taking all those pesticides. But I think getting the right information to our customers, to our employees so that when people approach them with questions, can I go out there and am I going to get a rash, am I going to die? They know the right answer to tell them and to educate everyone on that algae bloom. So people don't become so fearful next time.

**Speaker 6** (04:42): So just keep encouraging people to get on boats and go out there and have fun. Maybe not swim so much when the algae bloom comes up. But keep people in line with the fun activities that we can do to really try to promote Lake Hopatcong and let people know it is the state's largest lake. So we want to let people know, just because there's an algae bloom, you can still go out on the water, just don't go in the water as much. You can still enjoy those recreational activities

**Speaker 1** (05:12): To learn more, visit the New Jersey DEP website at nj.gov/dep/hab