



Creating Solutions for Our Future

COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

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News Release

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Five Area Lakes affected by Toxic Algae Blooms

Swimmers, pet owners and anglers advised to avoid contact

Toxic blue-green algae advisories are now in effect for Black, Deep, Long, Pattison and Scott Lakes. A Public Health advisory has been in effect for Deep Lake since October 16, and advisories were issued earlier this week for Black, Pattison and Long Lakes. Scott Lake is the latest to be added to the list of those with advisories in effect. People are advised to stay out of the lakes until further notice. Anglers who fish any of the affected lakes should practice catch and release until the advisories are lifted.

Recent water samples taken from the lakes show the algae toxin *Microcystin* from four to 25 times greater than the state standard of six micrograms per liter (ug/L) for recreational water use. Swallowing or exposure to toxin-contaminated water can cause abdominal pain, diarrhea, and vomiting in humans and death in animals. Symptoms can take hours to days to appear.

“It’s unusual to have this many lakes showing toxic algae levels at one time, especially at this time of year,” said Art Starry, Director of the county’s Environmental Health Division.

“While we can’t pinpoint the exact cause of this unprecedented situation, we recommend that people, especially children, and pets stay out of the affected lakes to avoid getting sick.”

Warning signs are posted at public access points, public boat launches and other community access points on each lake. The lakes will be monitored weekly until algae levels are at or below the state standard and the advisories can be lifted.

While not all algae blooms are toxic, some algae can produce toxins that can harm the nervous system, the liver, the skin, the stomach and intestines. Experts from the county’s Environmental Health Division recommend the following to prevent illness from algae:

- Avoid swimming, wading, wind surfing and water-skiing in waters where algae blooms are present.
- Don’t drink untreated surface water.
- Keep pets and livestock out of waters with algae blooms.

- When fishing, catch-and-release is the safest practice. If you do eat your catch, remove the internal organs, which may contain harmful algae toxins, and clean fish thoroughly.
- Avoid areas of scum when boating and clean your boat thoroughly.

WHAT: Toxic Algae Advisories in effect for Black, Deep, Long, Pattison and Scott Lakes

- **No swimming, no pets, no fishing advised**

WHEN: Effective immediately and until further notice

WHERE: Black, Deep, Long, Pattison and Scott Lakes

- Advisories are posted at public and community access points and public boat launches on each lake

For more information about toxic algae blooms and other water quality information, visit the Thurston County Environmental Health web pages at www.co.thurston.wa.us/health/ehadm/swimming/swimming_index.html.