



Public Health
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Panhandle Health District

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Healthy People in Healthy Communities



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 13, 2021

Updated information on harmful algae blooms in northern Idaho can be found online at <https://www.deq.idaho.gov/water-quality/surface-water/cyanobacteria-harmful-algal-blooms/>

Health Advisory Issued for Solomon Lake



Solomon Lake Harmful Algal Bloom September 2021

PANHANDLE HEALTH DISTRICT -- Panhandle Health District (PHD) and the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) have issued a public health advisory for Solomon Lake near Bonners Ferry due to cyanobacteria or harmful algal bloom (HAB). PHD and DEQ are urging the public to use caution when recreating in or near the water, especially where ingestion is a risk.

Water quality monitoring confirmed the presence of cyanobacteria, also known as a harmful algae bloom (HAB) or blue-green algae across the entire body of water.

Bodies of water that have confirmed HABs are tested by DEQ every 2-3 weeks depending on staff availability to confirm a HAB is still present. Active HABs are listed here: <https://www.deq.idaho.gov/water-quality/surface-water/cyanobacteria-harmful-algal-blooms/> and will be removed once bacteria levels reach a safe level.

Caution should be taken anywhere the water appears discolored or murky as HABs can spread or move with wind and water currents. HABs have the potential to produce dangerous toxins especially when accumulated in high concentrations. The physical appearance of these blooms can be unsightly, often presenting as discolored water, streaks or globs of scum and causing thick green mats along lake shorelines. Pets, children, the elderly, and people with compromised immune systems are most at-risk of harmful exposure.

Anyone recreating in any of these bodies of water are advised to take precautions to avoid exposure to lake water appearing to contain a HAB.

If people choose to eat fish from the lake, it is recommended that they remove all fat, skin and organs before cooking, since toxins are more likely to collect in those tissues.

Symptoms of exposure to algal toxins vary according to exposure. Symptoms include rashes, hives, diarrhea, vomiting, coughing, and/or wheezing. More severe symptoms affecting the liver and nervous system may result from ingestion of water. If symptoms persist, consult with your health care provider.

The public will be advised when the concerns no longer exists.

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