Panhandle Health District
Healthy People in Healthy Communities

Public Health
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Panhandle Health District

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NEWS RELEASE

Health Advisory Issued for Chuck Slough

Panhandle Health District – August 7, 2025

Image of HAB advisory area at Chuck Slough, August 2025

Panhandle Health District (PHD) in collaboration with the Idaho Department of Health & Welfare (IDHW) and Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) have issued a public

health advisory for the Chuck Slough in Sandpoint, ID (see map of advisory area). Recent water sampling by DEQ indicates the presence of cyanobacteria, also known as a harmful algal bloom (HAB). The advisory is based on the field observations, water sample results, potential public health impacts, and the recommendation of DEQ. The public should take precaution throughout the lake as HABs can spread and move with wind and water traffic.

Idaho's active HAB advisories are listed here:
https://www.gethealthy.dhw.idaho.gov/recreational-water-health-advisories.

Private domestic water system owners utilizing the lake as a drinking water source are cautioned that potentially present cyanobacteria cannot be removed by boiling or filtering the water. If contact (swimming, bathing, or showering) has been made with water containing a HAB, it is recommended to wash off with fresh water.

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 HABs vary according to exposure. Symptoms can 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 or your veterinarian for pet exposure.

Cyanobacteria are a natural part of Idaho's water bodies. When temperatures rise, their populations can bloom and toxic chemical compounds, or cyanotoxins, can be released into the water. 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 vary, presenting as discolored water, streaks or globs of scum and can cause thick green mats along lake shorelines. Pets, children, the elderly, and people with compromised immune systems are most at-risk of harmful exposure.

The public is urged to use caution when recreating in or near the water if the appearance of a HAB is present.

For more information about harmful algal blooms, visit DEQ's website at:
https://www.deq.idaho.gov/water-quality/surface-water/cyanobacteria-harmful-algal-blooms/

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Image of HAB at Chuck Slough, August 2025

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Panhandle Health District provides over 40 different public health programs to families, individuals and organizations in northern Idaho. From food and drinking water safety to health education and disease control, public health services are critical to ensure our community is a safe and healthy place to live, work and play.

The PHD team is made up of nurses, nutritionists, environmental health specialists, health educators and many other dedicated professionals with a common goal to deliver vital public health services.

Panhandle Health District is one of seven health districts in the state of Idaho.