

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 12, 2016

The Idaho Department of Environmental Quality and South Central Public Health District issue a health advisory for Mormon Reservoir

CAMAS COUNTY – A health advisory was issued today for Mormon Reservoir by the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) and the South Central Public Health District (SCPHD). The DEQ reports that a local veterinarian recently treated a dog that later died. Based on the symptoms, the veterinarian suspects that the dog might have died due to exposure to toxins produced by a harmful algal bloom (HAB). The cause of death is still under investigation. The animal recently had contact with algal blooms at Mormon Reservoir.

Based on a visual inspection of Mormon Reservoir, DEQ was able to confirm the presence of a cyanobacteria bloom, also known as blue-green algae. There are several species of cyanobacteria, each producing toxins harmful to people and animals.

The public is advised to take the following precautions:

- Avoid exposure to water experiencing a harmful algal bloom. Take extra precautions to ensure children, pets, and livestock are not exposed to the water.
- Do not consume water with a blue-green algae bloom. Neither boiling nor disinfecting removes blue-green algae toxins from water.
- If fish are known to have been exposed to a blue-green algae bloom, only consume the fillet portion (remove the fat, organs, and skin). Wash hands after handling. The risk associated with consuming fish caught in waters with a blue-green algae bloom is unknown. Toxins produced by blue-green algae can accumulate in the organs of fish.

According to Josh Jensen, Public Health Program Manager, with South Central Public Health District, “Children and pets are particularly susceptible. Exposure to the toxins produced by cyanobacterial HABs may result in life-threatening liver damage, neurological problems such as muscle spasms, decreased movement, labored breathing, convulsions, and possible death.”

HABs develop when specific types of photosynthetic bacteria form visible, dense, build ups in freshwater lakes, ponds, and reservoirs. Warm, slow moving water with high nutrient levels, particularly phosphorous, create conditions that allow algae to grow very quickly. Typically these conditions occur during the warmer months of late summer and early fall. HABs shrink dramatically as the water temperature drops in mid to late fall.

DEQ will continue to monitor water quality until the bloom dissipates and will advise the public when the concern no longer exists.

More information is available at <http://www.deq.idaho.gov/water-quality/surface-water/blue-green-algae/>

For updates, please visit phd5.idaho.gov or call the Public Health Hotline 866-450-3594

###

Contacts:

- Sonny Buhidar PhD, Water Quality Manager, Idaho Department of Environmental Health 208-736-2190
- Josh Jensen, Public Health Program Manager, South Central Public Health District 208-737-5915
- Jeff Pierson, Community Relations Director, South Central Public Health District 208-737-5945

Other Links

<http://www.healthandwelfare.idaho.gov/Health/EnvironmentalHealth/HarmfulAlgalBlooms/tabid/2174/Default.aspx>