

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

October 3, 2016

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

**Blaine County** – South Central Public Health District, in cooperation with the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), has issued a health advisory for Magic Reservoir. Today, the DEQ confirmed the presence of unhealthy levels of Microcystins. Microcystins are the toxic product of certain species of blue-green algal blooms, often referred to as Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs).

Balthasar Buhidar, Water Quality Manager with the DEQ, reports that sample taken on September 9, 2016 at Lava Point in Blaine County indicate an average Microcystin level of 136 µg/L or 136 micrograms per liter of water. According to the World Health Organization, a Microcystin level higher than 20 micrograms per liter of water presents a “high risk” for recreational water users.

Health officials will post advisory notices in the area of Lava Point; however, recreational water users should take precautions when accessing the water anywhere in the reservoir, as algal blooms are likely to be present in other locations.

Health officials are advising recreational water users take the following precautions:

- Anglers should only consume the fillet portion of the fish (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.
- Take extra precautions to ensure children, pets, and livestock are not exposed to the water where algal blooms exist.
- Do not consume water with algal blooms. Neither boiling nor disinfecting removes blue-green algae toxins from water.

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.

### **Contact**

Jeff Pierson, Community Relations Director, South Central Public Health District 208-737-5945

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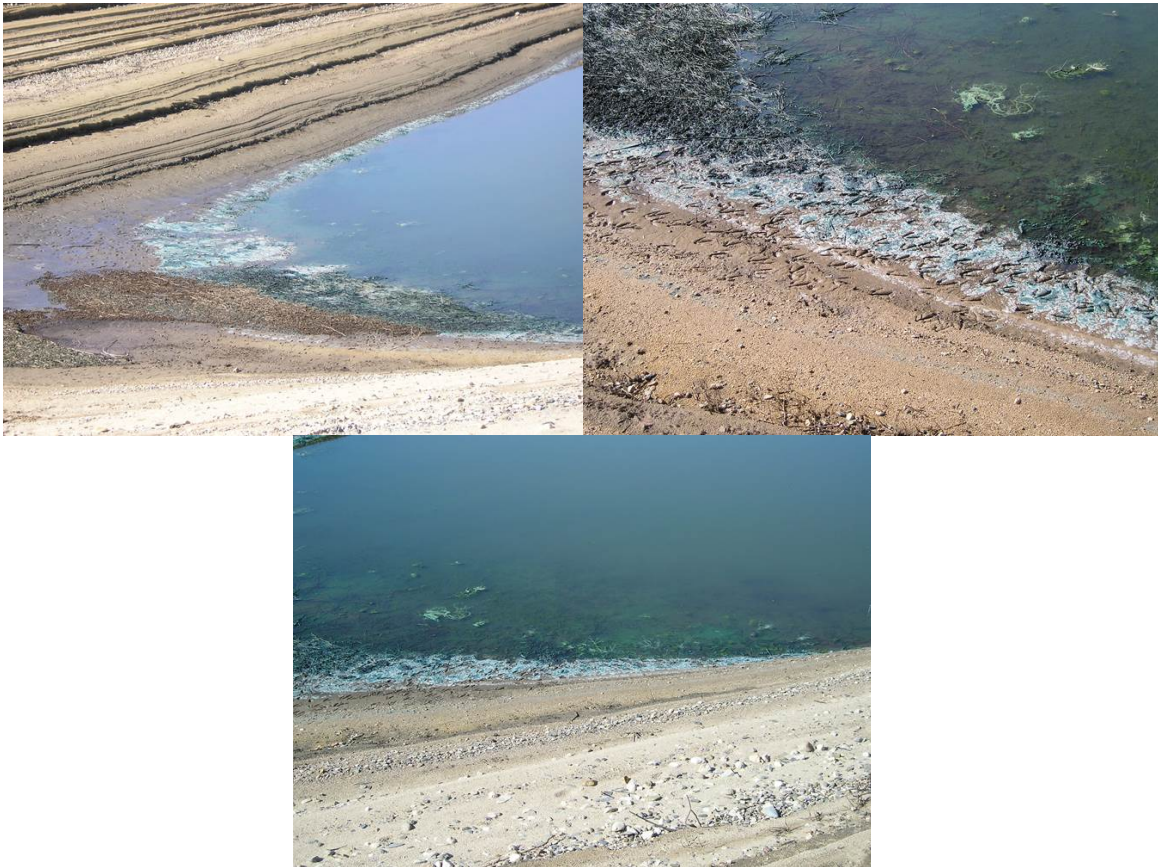
## Data Sheet

### Maps of the Magic Reservoir Area



### Images around Lava Point

The Idaho Department of Fish and Game took the following photo, near Lava Point, on September 30, 2016.



## **Notable Harmful Algal Bloom Outbreaks in the United States**

Harmful Algal Blooms or HABs and associated toxins can cause serious illness and possibly death in humans and animals. According to the CDC:

- In 2007, 15 people suffered respiratory distress after exposure to HAB toxins. The incident was associated with a HAB outbreak near the Florida coast.
- From 2007 to 2010, HAB-associated foodborne exposures caused 273 cases of human illness. These illnesses included stomach, intestinal, and neurological symptoms from eating finfish or shellfish.
- From 2009 to 2010, Health officials reported eleven outbreaks to the CDC. The outbreaks were associated with exposures in freshwater settings in three states. The 61 people sickened in the outbreaks experienced skin irritation, stomach, intestinal, respiratory, or neurological signs and symptoms. These eleven outbreaks represented 46% of the 24 outbreaks associated with untreated recreational water reported for 2009-2010.
- In 2014, Toledo Ohio officials discovered toxins produced by HABs had contaminated potable water supplies in Lake Erie. Nearly 50,000 residents could not use public water to drink, cook, or bath for almost three days.

## **More Information**

The following links provide more information about Harmful Algal Blooms in Idaho.

- Visit the DEQ website <http://www.deq.idaho.gov/water-quality/surface-water/blue-green-algae/>
- Idaho Department of Health and Welfare Blue-green Algae Brochure  
<http://healthandwelfare.idaho.gov/Portals/0/Health/EnvironmentalHealth/Blue%20green%20algae%20brochure.pdf>
- For updates, please visit [phd5.idaho.gov](http://phd5.idaho.gov)