



Grant County Health District – Always Working for a Safer and Healthier Grant County

Ephrata Office County Courthouse
PO Box 37, Ephrata, WA 98823
509-754-6060

Moses Lake Office
1038 West Ivy Suite 1, Moses Lake, WA 98837
509-766-7960

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE 08/19/2011 To: Grant County Media	FOR INFORMATION CONTACT Todd Phillips, Environmental Health Specialist 509-754-6060 ext. 18 Jefferson Ketchel, Administrator 509-754-6060 ext. 26
---	--

Potholes Reservoir Continues to have Toxic Algae

New test results are now available for blue-green algae toxin levels in Potholes Reservoir.

Last week the Grant County Health District (GCHD) found toxic blue-green algae in the Potholes Reservoir, about a half mile west of the Lind-Coulee boat launch. Algae (unknown if toxic) was also seen at the Job Corps Dike. Late last week, warning signs were posted near the Pothole's shorelines.

GCHD conducted new tests on Tuesday, August 16 and received the results today (August 19). The only area found to have toxin levels **above** Washington State Recreational Guidelines continues to be Lind Coulee.

On Monday, August 22 GCHD will be re-assessing and re-testing areas of Potholes for toxin.

The public is asked to alert the GCHD Ephrata office at (509) 754-6060 if they see algae in Grant County waters.

Funding for the monitoring and testing of Potholes Reservoir and Moses Lake is through a grant from the Washington State Department of Ecology.

To find out more about testing results throughout Washington's bodies of fresh water go to the Washington State Department of Ecology Toxic Algae Database:

<https://fortress.wa.gov/ecy/toxicalgae/InternetDefault.aspx>

When a WARNING is posted along a shoreline, GCHD recommends:

- Do not drink lake water.
- Avoid swimming, wading or other activities in the water.
- Keep pets from having contact with or drinking water.
- Clean fish well and discard guts
- Avoid areas of algae scum when boating

What to do if you see blue-green algae?

As soon as you see a bloom:

Coulee City, Electric City, Ephrata, George, Grand Coulee, Hartline, Krupp, Mattawa, Moses Lake, Quincy, Royal City, Soap Lake, Warden, Wilson Creek

- Avoid all contact with the water.
- Keep pets and livestock away from the water.
- **Call the Grant County Health District at 509-754-6060 and report the location.**

What is Blue-Green Algae Bloom?

The “algae” is actually a bacteria that grows rapidly in fresh water when there is enough sunlight, high temperatures and nutrients in the water. It is common for Grant County waters to have blue-green algae in the summer and fall. Not all blue-green blooms are toxic. However, there are types of blue-green algae that produce toxins (or poisons) which can cause serious illness in people, pets and livestock.

People who come in contact with poisonous algae may feel numbness of lips, tingling in fingers and toes, dizziness, stomach pain, diarrhea, vomiting, and skin rashes. If you are experiencing these symptoms after being in the water seek medical treatment right away.

Pet owners should not allow their pets to play in or drink water where blue-green algae are present, as these toxins can kill pets.

What are the signs of toxic blue-green algae?

- The appearance of greenish or blueish paint floating on the water.
- Large number of dead fish, birds or other animals.
- Sudden and unexplained sickness or death of a pet, especially if it has algae on its mouth, legs or feet.
- People develop skin rashes after being in the water.

For more information on toxic blue-green algae visit: www.doh.wa.gov/ehp/algae/faqs.htm

###