



Date: July 23, 2009

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Technical questions: Laura Boswell, 971-673-0438; Jackson Baures, Jackson County Health Department, 541-774-8206

Public health advisory issued for Whetstone Pond, Denman Wildlife Area

A health advisory prompted by high algae levels found in Whetstone Pond in the Denman Wildlife Area, located 6 miles north of Central Point, was issued today by the Oregon Department of Human Services (DHS) and the Jackson County Health Department. Whetstone pond is managed by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Water monitoring has confirmed the presence of blue-green algae that can produce toxins harmful to humans and animals, said Laura Boswell, Harmful Algae Bloom Surveillance program coordinator in DHS.

These algae levels are likely to be associated with dangerous toxin concentrations in the water, according to World Health Organization guidelines.

Swallowing or inhaling water droplets should be avoided, as well as skin contact with water by humans or animals. Drinking water from Whetstone Pond is especially dangerous, including to your pet. Boswell advised visitors that toxins cannot be removed by boiling, filtering or treating the water.

DHS recommends that people who choose to eat fish from Whetstone Pond where algae blooms are present should remove all fat, skin and organs before cooking since toxins are more likely to collect in these tissues.

Exposure to toxins can produce symptoms of numbness, tingling and dizziness that can lead to difficulty breathing or heart problems and require immediate medical attention. Symptoms of skin irritation, weakness, diarrhea, nausea, cramps and

fainting should also receive medical attention if they persist or worsen. Children and pets are particularly susceptible.

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

With proper precautions to avoid water contact, people are encouraged to visit Whetstone Pond and enjoy activities such as nature study, picnicking, catch-and-release fishing and bird watching.

For local information contact Dan Van Dyke or Clayton Barber at the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, 541-826 - 8774.

For health information, contact Laura Boswell, Harmful Algae Bloom Surveillance program coordinator, 971-673-0440 or www.oregon.gov/DHS/ph/hab/; also the DHS toll-free information line at 1-877-290-6767, or Jackson Baures, Jackson County Health Department at 541-774-8206.