

Recreating on the Tualatin River

Water quality in the Tualatin River is at levels acceptable for swimming and other recreational uses at most times of the year. Popular recreation sites are between the Cities of Hillsboro and West Linn, and Hagg Lake outside of Forest Grove.

River water quality

DEQ monitors water quality at Rood Bridge, Highway 210 (Scholls), Roy Rogers Road and Boones Ferry Road among other sites in the Tualatin Watershed. Clean Water Services, the Joint Water Commission, the Cities of West Linn and Lake Oswego and the USGS also regularly monitor water quality at several locations on the Tualatin River and its tributaries. In recent years, monitoring shows very few water samples with unhealthy bacteria levels. Elevated bacteria levels tend to occur in the fall, winter and early spring season, and may be due to rain washing bacteria into the river. Exposure to microbial organisms (bacteria, viruses, etc.) is the primary health concern for people swimming in the river.

What about other pollutants?

Water quality monitoring by DEQ and other groups have found pollutants, such as metals, pesticides and pharmaceutical products in the Tualatin River. Many of these pollutant concentrations are quite low. Some pollutants can accumulate in riverbed sediment and pose more risk to fish and other aquatic life than to people recreating in the river. While there is no fish consumption advisory specific to the Tualatin River, the Oregon Health Authority does have a statewide advisory for mercury in bass that applies to the Tualatin River.

www.healthoregon.org/fishadv

Harmful Algal Blooms

Consult the Oregon Health Authority for current harmful algal bloom advisories:

<https://go.usa.gov/xVjcu>

People and pets should stay out of the river if the water looks foamy, scummy, bright green or thick like blue-green paint. Cyanobacteria (blue-green algae) may cause these conditions and can produce toxins that are harmful to humans and pets. Dogs are especially sensitive to these toxins and should be kept away from affected waters. Blooms have occurred on the Tualatin River during the summer and fall when low flows, high temperatures and nutrients provide favorable conditions for cyanobacterial growth.



Tualatin River Discovery Day, photo credit Tualatin Riverkeepers

Reduce your risk

While water quality monitoring results support the public's ability to swim in the Tualatin River, the river has a large watershed and pollutants can reach the water from many potential sources. The Oregon Health Authority gives the following simple precautions to reduce exposure to a variety of pollutants:

- Avoid swimming after a heavy rainfall.
- Remind children to not ingest any river water (lick fingers, for example).
- Do not drink untreated water from any waterbody.
- After swimming take a shower.
- Wash hands before eating.
- Avoid swimming in cloudy water.

Real-time information is available

Clean Water Services and USGS collect data during the summer near several popular recreation areas on the Tualatin River. For USGS water quality information go to

<https://or.water.usgs.gov/tualatin/monitors>

For more information please contact:

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Alternative formats

Documents can be provided upon request in an alternate format for individuals with disabilities or in a language other than English for people with limited English skills. To request a document in another format or language, call DEQ in Portland at 503-229-5696, or toll-free in Oregon at 1-800-452-4011, ext. 5696; or email deqinfo@deq.state.or.us.



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