



COUNTY OF YOLO

Office of the County Administrator

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Health Advisory Issued for Cache Creek and Lake Washington in Yolo County Due to Harmful Algal Blooms

(Woodland, CA) – The Yolo County Department of Community Services’ Environmental Health Division, in collaboration with the Yolo County Health and Human Services Agency (HHS) and Yolo County Parks, has issued a health and safety advisory for portions of Cache Creek and Lake Washington. Recent testing revealed concerning levels of cyanotoxins, a byproduct of harmful algal blooms (HABs). This advisory is crucial to safeguard the health of residents and recreational users of the creek and lake.

April Meneghetti, Director of Environmental Health, emphasized the importance of the advisory: “The well-being of our community is our highest priority. We strongly encourage everyone to adhere to the advisory recommendations to protect yourself, your family, and your pets from potential harm. By following these guidelines, you play a crucial role in managing this issue.”

Cyanobacteria can produce toxins that pose serious health risks. These toxins may cause skin irritation, gastrointestinal issues, headaches, and more severe health problems if ingested. Children and pets are particularly vulnerable due to their smaller size and greater likelihood of coming into contact with or ingesting contaminated water.

Recent sampling results from August 2, 2024, identified two advisory levels for Cache Creek. At Cache Creek Regional Park Lower Site, a significant microcystin level of 74.09 µg/L was detected, prompting a Danger Advisory. In response to this finding, all water contact activities, including the use of watercraft, are prohibited. Pets and livestock must be kept away from the water, and any visible algae or scum should be avoided. The water is unsafe for drinking or cooking, and boiling or filtering will not make it safe. Consumption of fish and shellfish from this area is strongly discouraged. Yolo County Parks offers alternative recreational activities and has posted signage at locations of concern.

At Camp Haswell, microcystin levels were recorded at 4.85 µg/L, leading to a Caution Advisory. Residents are advised to avoid swimming and stay clear of any visible algae or scum. Pets and livestock should be kept away from the water and must not drink or come into contact with it. If a pet or livestock does come into contact with the water, rinse them immediately with fresh water. Additionally, water from this area should not be used for drinking or cooking, and fishermen should avoid consuming shellfish from this location.

Lake Washington, near the Sailing Club, which also had conditions warranting a Danger Advisory for microcystin, is experiencing rapidly changing conditions due to tidal flows, and has been downgraded to a Caution Advisory. The public should follow the same health and safety precautions recommended for Camp Haswell.

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Cyanobacterial blooms often occur when water conditions are warm, stagnant, and enriched with nutrients such as phosphorus and nitrogen, typically from fertilizer runoff. These blooms can vary in color, including blue-green, red, or brown, and may emit a foul odor as they decompose. While not all blooms are harmful, testing is necessary to confirm the presence of dangerous toxins.

Dr. Aimee Sisson, Yolo County Public Health Officer, underscored the significance of the advisory: “During the summer, people and pets alike love to cool off in natural bodies of water. Some of these waters may be temporarily unsafe. Check conditions on the online portal before you go, heed posted signs, and learn to recognize algal blooms in order to stay healthy.”

Yolo County is actively monitoring the situation and will provide updates as needed. For the most current information on Cache Creek, Lake Washington, and other local water bodies, please visit the California Harmful Algal Blooms Portal. To report a harmful algal bloom, complete the bloom report form by visiting the HABs Portal at MyWaterQuality.ca.gov/HABs/do/BloomReport.html, emailing CyanoHAB.Reports@WaterBoards.ca.gov, or calling the HABs toll-free hotline at 1-844-729-6466.

For additional information about harmful algal blooms and related health risks, please visit the California Harmful Algal Blooms Portal at MyWaterQuality.ca.gov/HABs. For guidance on preventing exposure and managing affected waters, refer to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) at www.CDC.gov/Harmful-Algal-Blooms.

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