

Utah Lake Under WARNING Due to Harmful Algal Bloom

Provo, Utah - Health officials have placed all of Utah Lake at a WARNING level today due to potentially harmful algal bloom. The public, their pets, and other animals are warned to stay out of the Lake due to discovery of a blue-green algal bloom. The Utah Department of Environmental Quality's (DEQ) Division of Water Quality (DWQ) has collected samples and found the presence of algal species that have the potential to produce toxins.

Water sample results throughout the lake have cell concentrations significantly over the recommended warning threshold level. The recreational warning threshold is 20,000 - 10 million cells per milliliter (cells/ml). The latest water sample results for Utah Lake include:

- Saratoga Springs: 1,425,058 cells/ml.
- Two miles west of Vineyard: 40,442 cells/ml.,
- Lincoln Beach/Marina: 6,534,446 cells/ml
- Swedes Access (Provo Bay): 118,408 cells/ml
- Utah Lake State Park north of dike: 7,805 cells/ml
- One mile southeast Bird Island: 18,516 cells/ml
- Utah Lake Provo Bay Ski Dock: 79,933 cells/ml
- Sandy Beach: 2,559,265 cells/ml

Toxin levels for microcystin exceeded 5 micrograms per liter (ug/L) at Sandy Beach Marina, Lincoln Marina, and Saratoga Springs Marina. These levels exceed the recreation health-based threshold for a Warning Advisory.

“Water with these levels of concentration in the algal bloom pose health risks,” says Eric Edwards, Deputy Director of Utah County Health Department. “To protect the health of people and animals that use the lake, it is important for the public to be aware of the WARNING on the lake.”

Those recreating on Utah Lake should take caution and avoid areas of scum. Recreationists are advised to be mindful of conditions, as they may change over the course of the day.

DEQ's Division of Water Quality sent samples to the Utah Public Health Lab for further toxin analysis. Results should be available soon. Updates will be posted on DEQ's habs.utah.gov.

“For those who would like updates on Utah Lake, such as when warnings or closures are issued or lifted, we encourage signing up at www.alerts.utahcounty.gov. It is an easy way to get text, e-mail, or phone notifications,” notes Utah County Health Department Public Information Officer, Aislynn Tolman-Hill

Utah County Health Department is posting WARNING signs at Saratoga Springs, American Fork, and Lindon Marinas today.

Although blue-green algae are a natural part of many freshwater ecosystems, under the right conditions they can grow rapidly. High levels of nutrients in the water, combined with warm temperatures, abundant sunlight, and calm water, can promote growth, resulting in extensive blooms. These blooms consist of cyanobacteria (often referred to as blue-green algae), a type of bacteria that poses risks to humans, wildlife, domestic animals, and fish. Symptoms of exposure include headache, fever, diarrhea, abdominal pain, nausea and vomiting, and sometimes allergic-like reactions from skin contact.

For concerns about possible human exposure, call the Utah Poison Control Center at 800-222-1222, or your physician.

To sign up for updates: go to www.alerts.utahcounty.gov, create account. Select contact methods. Create profile, select location. Choose alert subscription “Utah Lake” under “Utah County Alerts.”

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