



Technical Contact: Ken Kauffman, DHS (971) 673-0435
Technical Contact: Deanna Connors PhD, DHS (971) 673-0444
Forest Information: Cheryl Caplan, (541) 957-3270

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Public health advisory issued for Lemolo Lake

A health advisory prompted by high algae levels found in Lemolo Lake, located 60 miles from Roseburg, Oregon, was issued today by the Oregon Department of Human Services (DHS), the Umpqua National Forest and the Douglas County Health Department.

Water sampling by the Umpqua National Forest has confirmed the presence of blue-green algae that can produce toxins harmful to humans and animals, said Ken Kauffman, toxicologist with the Oregon DHS. These 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 Lemolo Lake is especially dangerous. The toxins cannot be removed by boiling, filtering, or treating water.

DHS recommends that if people choose to eat these fish, they should remove all fat, skin and organs before cooking since toxins are more likely to collect in these tissues.

Children and pets are particularly susceptible to the toxins. Symptoms of numbness, tingling and dizziness can lead to difficulty breathing or heart problems and require immediate medical attention. Symptoms of skin irritation, weakness, diarrhea, nausea, cramps and fainting, and should also receive medical attention if they persist or worsen.

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

With proper precautions to avoid water contact, people are encouraged to visit Lemolo Lake and enjoy activities such as camping, hiking, biking, picnicking, catch-and-release fishing and bird watching.

For local information contact the Diamond Lake Ranger District office at (541) 498-2531 or (541) 793-3310 weekends, or <http://www.fs.fed.us/r6/umpqua/>. For health information, contact Ken Kauffman, DHS toxicologist, at (971) 673-0429 or Deanna Connors PhD, at (971) 673-0444 or <http://oregon.gov/DHS/ph/envtox/maadvisories.shtml>. For health information, contact or call Terry Westfall, Douglas County Health and Social Services at (541) 464-3820.

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