



DHS Technical Contact: Deanna Conners (971) 673-0444
Deschutes NF Contact: Sue Olson (541) 383-5561
Klamath Co. Media Contact: Delbert Bell (541) 883-1122

August 7, 2008

For Immediate Release

Public Health Advisory Issued for Odell Lake

A health advisory prompted by extremely high algae levels found in Odell Lake was issued today by the Deschutes National Forest, the Klamath County Health Department, and the Oregon Department of Human Services (DHS).

“Water sampling by the Deschutes National Forest has confirmed the presence of blue-green algae that can produce toxins harmful to humans and animals,” said Deanna Conners, with the Office of Environmental Public Health, Oregon Department of Human Services.

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 Odell Lake is especially dangerous. The toxins cannot be removed by boiling, filtering, or treating water.

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

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 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 Odell Lake and enjoy activities such as camping, hiking, biking, picnicking, catch-and-release fishing and bird watching.

For local information contact the Deschutes National Forest at (541) 383-5300, www.fs.fed.us/r6/central_oregon.

For health information, contact Deanna Conners, DHS Environmental Health Specialist, at (971) 673-0444 or <http://oregon.gov/DHS/ph/envtox/maadvisories.shtml> or contact Delbert Bell, Klamath County Health Department at (541) 883-1122.

###