Media Release

News Release
California Regional Water Quality Control Board
North Coast Region
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Blue-green algae bloom triggers Danger Alert for water contact in Klamath Reservoirs and River

News Release:
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Toxicity from harmful algal blooms in several areas of the Klamath River has reached dangerous levels. Swimmers, boaters and recreational water users are advised to stay out of the water until further notice.

Cyanobacteria or blue-green algae toxicity has increased to dangerous levels in Copco and Iron Gate Reservoirs and in the mainstem below Iron Gate Dam to Walker Bridge, and from Happy Camp to the estuary at the mouth of the Klamath River.

Water samples collected between Aug. 31 and Sept. 13, 2017 from those areas exceed the State of California's recommended threshold for cyanobacteria toxins in recreational waters. The reservoirs and much of the Klamath River currently exceed the "danger" threshold, and have been posted with public health alerts warning against all forms of water recreation including boating, swimming, and fishing; and further advising against animal contact with the water.

Residents and recreational water users are advised to enjoy camping, hiking, picnicking or other recreational activities while taking precautions to avoid waters near these bloom areas and any scums along the water's edge.

Water quality monitoring is done weekly in the summer from Link River Dam in Oregon to the Klamath River estuary in California. Sampling continues late into the fall to determine when toxin levels are below the public health thresholds and water contact is safe. This sampling is conducted collaboratively by the United States Bureau of Reclamation, PacifiCorp, the Karuk Tribe, the Yurok Tribe, the California North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board and the United States Environmental Protection Agency.

The posting within California is supported by the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board, the Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA), the California Department of Public Health, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Forest Service, PacifiCorp, and the Yurok and Karuk Tribes.

The blooms appear as bright green in the water, and can accumulate along the shore. Recreational exposure to cyanobacteria toxins can cause eye irritation, allergic skin rash, mouth ulcers, vomiting, diarrhea and cold and flu-like symptoms. Liver failure, nerve damage and death have occurred in rare situations where large amounts of contaminated water were directly ingested.

State officials urge those recreating in cyanobacteria impacted waters to follow the recommendations below:

- Take care that pets and livestock do not drink the water, swim through algae, scums or mats, or lick their fur after going in the water. Rinse pets in clean water to remove algae from fur.
- Avoid wading or swimming in water containing algae blooms or scums or mats.
- Do not drink, cook or wash dishes with untreated surface water from these areas under any circumstances; common water purification techniques (e.g., camping filters, tablets and boiling) **do not** remove toxins.
- People should not eat mussels or other bivalves collected from these areas. Limit or avoid eating fish; if fish are consumed, remove guts and liver, and rinse filets in clean drinking water.
- Get medical treatment immediately if you think that you, your pet or livestock might have been poisoned by blue-green algae toxins. Be sure to alert the medical professional to the possible contact with blue-green algae.

Water users are encouraged to check most recent sampling results on the Klamath Blue-Green Algae Tracker (see link below). Even when blue-green algae blooms are not present, still carefully watch young children and warn them not to swallow the water.

For more information, please visit:

Klamath Blue-Green Algae Tracker:
http://www.kbmp.net/maps-data/blue-green-algae-tracker

My Water Quality – Are harmful algal blooms affecting our waters?
http://www.mywaterquality.ca.gov/habs/index.html

California Department of Public Health:
https://archive.cdph.ca.gov/HealthInfo/environhealth/water/Pages/Bluegreenalgae.aspx

CA Cyanobacteria and Harmful Algal Bloom (CCHAB) Network:
http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/bluegreen_algae/

CA Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment:
http://oehha.ca.gov/ecotox/microcystins.html

US Environmental Protection Agency:
https://www.epa.gov/nutrient-policy-data/cyanohabs

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