



WALLA WALLA COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY HEALTH

314 West Main Street • P.O. Box 1753 • Walla Walla, WA 99362

Main Telephone: (509) 524-2650 • Confidential Fax: (509) 524-2642 • Main Fax: (509) 524-2678

Contact: Bryce Heuett

(509) 524-2653

bheuett@co.walla-walla.wa.us

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Toxic algae bloom discovered on Bennington Lake

WALLA WALLA, WA – Walla Walla Department of Community Health (DCH) was notified by the Department of Ecology that cyanobacteria, otherwise known as blue-green algae, was discovered on Bennington Lake in Walla Walla. Cyanobacteria can be harmful to people and fatal to animals. Due to toxicity levels, Walla Walla United States Army Corp of Engineers, in coordination with DCH, has closed the lake to the public.

The Corps of Engineers is working closely with the DCH to monitor the situation. DCH has collected water samples which are being further tested at the King County Environmental Laboratory. Updates will be provided as more information is obtained.

In their toxic form, blue-green algae can kill pets, waterfowl, and other animals. They can also cause serious illness to humans. People or animals can be exposed to cyanotoxins by skin contact with water containing toxins while swimming or doing other activities in the water, drinking water containing toxins, breathing in tiny droplets in the air that contain toxins, or eating fish or shellfish that contain toxins. Exposure may result in stomach pain, headache, neurological symptoms (for example, muscle weakness, dizziness), vomiting, diarrhea, and liver damage.

Bennington Lake visitors are cautioned to keep children and pets out of the water until further testing shows the toxins reduced to safe levels. Typically, the toxin remains in the water for about one week after the bloom disappears.

For more information, visit:

<https://www.doh.wa.gov/CommunityandEnvironment/Contaminants/BlueGreenAlgae>

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