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BREAKING

FEATURED

Payson Lakes under algal bloom warning after young girl falls ill

By Ashley Stilson Daily Herald 8 hrs ago



A warning sign for harmful algae is pictured near the Swede Sportsman Access on Provo Bay on Tuesday, June 12, 2018. The warning signs were hung yesterday.

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Evan Cobb, Daily Herald

The Utah County Health Department issued an algal bloom warning for Payson Lakes on Wednesday after a 12-year-old girl became sick while recreating at the lake this week.

Health officials stated Big East Lake, Box Lake and McClellan Lake are all under advisory warning, and the Division of Water Quality is monitoring the water and collecting follow-up samples, a press release stated.

Algal blooms can cause gastrointestinal distress, headaches and rashes, and toxins can also be fatal for livestock or pets.

The mother of the girl said she spotted algal on and near the shore of Big East Lake as her daughter played in the lake on Sept. 1 and 2.

“The girl’s symptoms are consistent with dermal exposure and ingestion of cyanobacteria,” the press release reported.

On July 9, the health department issued a warning advisory for McClellan Lake after noticing filamentous algae along the shore and observing the water was murky and had a green hue.

Officials ordered the same warning for Box Lake on Aug. 5 after finding “cyanobacteria resembling grass clippings throughout the water column and concentrated along the northern shore.”

Both warnings remained in place throughout the month as officials continued to monitor the lake and collect samples from each lake in the complex.

“The advisory for Box Lake can be lifted after two consecutive weeks of sampling fall below the recreation health-based threshold,” according to the press release.

Algal blooms occur normally when cyanobacteria in the water multiply quickly and form visible colonies or blooms, according to information from the Utah Department of Environmental Quality.

Most blooms are not toxic, but some types of cyanobacteria can produce nerve or liver toxins. A single bloom can have both toxic and non-toxic strains, and officials said a bloom could test non-toxic one day and become toxic by the following day.

People are encouraged not to swim, water ski, ingest water or let animals ingest water during warnings. Anyone aware of potential algal blooms can contact the 24-Hour Environment Incidents Line at (801) 536-4123.

Ashley Stilson

Ashley Stilson covers crime, courts and breaking news for the Daily Herald. She can be reached at 801-344-2556 or astilson@heraldextra.com.

