

State of New Mexico
Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department

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News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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State Parks Issues Notice of Blue-Green Algae at Bluewater Lake State Park

PREWITT, NM – New Mexico State Parks has issued a notice for the presence of Blue-Green Algae at Bluewater Lake State Park. Blue-Green Algae have been found to be in the lake. State Parks is advising visitors who swim at Bluewater Lake State Park of possible health risks associated with exposure to blue-green algae – a naturally occurring organism in lakes that can produce toxins but is short lived. As a precaution, State Parks is posting notices at Bluewater Lake State Park and distributing flyers to visitors.

Blue-green algae occur naturally in lakes throughout the state and rarely produces blooms with the toxic characteristics. Most blue-green algae are safe; however, people should be aware that toxic conditions can exist and should limit their contact with blue-green algae as much as possible.

To guard against exposure, consider the following precautions:

- When boating, water skiing or swimming, don't come in contact with water that is discolored or where excessive foam, scum, or mats of algae on the water are visible
- Avoid swimming in areas with large quantities of algae
- Shower or rinse off with clean water after swimming and prior to food preparation and eating
- Rinse pets off with clean water instead of allowing pets to groom themselves
- Bring clean water for pets and keep them away from the lake
- Never drink untreated surface water, whether or not algae blooms are present
- Seek immediate medical attention if symptoms occur after possible exposure

Blue-green algae can form anytime, particularly in the summer or early fall when conditions include the presence of warm, shallow, nutrient rich water that receives a lot of sunlight. Though not normally toxic, algae can produce toxins which can make humans and animals sick when consumed or contact is made with skin.

Toxic algae blooms are usually localized, sporadic and last a very short amount of time. Algal blooms are often linked to high levels of nitrogen and phosphate, which come from nutrient rich farm runoff, storm water runoff and treated waste water. Algae might be present in water that is visibly discolored and can include shades of green, blue-green, yellow, brown or red.

Ingestion of, or exposure to, the toxins can result in a rash, hives, or skin blisters in humans. Other symptoms can include runny eyes and nose, dizziness and severe abdominal pain; sore throat, tingling of the lips or extremities, asthma-like symptoms, or allergic reaction; acute gastroenteritis, including diarrhea and vomiting, liver toxicity, kidney toxicity or neurotoxicity. Symptoms may take minutes to days after exposure to show up in people or animals.

For more information on YOUR New Mexico State Parks, please visit our website at www.nmparks.com or call 1-888-nmparks.

Conditions are Right for Adventure at New Mexico State Parks!



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The Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department provides resource protection and renewable energy resource development services to the public and other state agencies.

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