



# News Release

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**For Immediate Release:**

**Date:** July 15, 2015

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## **Algae Bloom Reported**

An algae bloom was reported at Hammond Pond in the Rock Island area. A combination of warm temperatures, sunlight, and nutrient-rich waters can cause blue-green algae to reproduce rapidly, or "bloom." Within a few days a clear lake, pond, or ditch can become cloudy with algae growth. Blue-green blooms usually float to the surface and are thicker near the shoreline.

**If you observe a suspected algae bloom assume it is toxic and keep pets and people away from the water.** Some blue-green algae produce toxins or poisons. In their toxic form, blue-green algae can cause illness in humans, pets, waterfowl, and other animals that come in contact with the algae. Toxic blooms can kill livestock and pets that drink the water.

Signs of a toxic bloom may include:

Dead fish, waterfowl, or other animals

Sudden, unexplained sickness or death of a cat or dog, (especially if it has algae on its mouth, legs, or feet)

Skin rashes on humans after being in the water

Eventually the toxins break down in the water and are destroyed naturally. According to the Department of Health fish from affected areas are safe to eat if they are properly cleaned and gutted.

Testing of the water for blue-green cyanobacteria toxin levels is underway. Chelan Douglas Health District is working with the Chelan County Public Utility (PUD) to warn the public about the potential for algae blooms on the Rock Island reservoir near Hammond Ponds. For public safety, the PUD warns those enjoying the river to avoid areas where algae blooms are present. Shoreline users and boaters should avoid contact with water whenever surface concentrations of algae are evident or when the water has an obvious green to blue-green appearance.

If you observe a suspected bloom of blue-green algae, be cautious, minimize contact and call the Chelan Douglas Health District at (509) 886-6400 if you have questions.

If test results confirm toxic algae exists, signs will be posted along the shoreline in affected public-use areas and samples will be tested weekly until toxin levels drop below the state's accepted levels.