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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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South Central Public Health District has confirmed Hazardous Algae Blooms (HAB) at Thorn Creek Reservoir

GOODING COUNTY- A health advisory was issued today by the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) and South Central Public Health District (SCPHD) for Thorn Creek Reservoir, which sits on the boundary of Gooding, Lincoln, and Camas Counties. DEQ reported that the reservoir has exceeded the criteria for recommending a public health advisory. Cyanobacteria, also known as blue-green algae, are ubiquitous in our environment but a few species are known to produce toxins that pose a threat to humans and other animals, particularly canines.

Based on the taxonomic analysis and visual inspection of Thorn Creek Reservoir, DEQ feels a posting is necessary to caution the public of the danger this Harmful Algae Bloom (HAB) poses.

The public is advised to take the following precautions:

- Avoid exposure to water experiencing a harmful algal bloom. Take extra precautions to ensure children, pets, and livestock are not exposed to the water.
- Pets that are inadvertently exposed should be washed immediately and thoroughly with fresh water taking care not to allow them to clean themselves after exiting the affected water.
- Do not consume water with a blue-green algae bloom. Neither boiling nor disinfecting removes blue-green algae toxins from water.
- If fish are known to have been exposed to a blue-green algae bloom, only consume the fillet portion (remove the fat, organs, and skin). Wash hands after handling. The risk associated with consuming fish caught in waters with a blue-green algae bloom is unknown. Toxins produced by blue-green algae can accumulate in the organs of fish.

SCPHD, Public Health Program Manager, Josh Jensen stated, "Exposure to cyanobacterial HAB toxins may result in life-threatening problems such as, decreased movement, labored breathing, convulsions, muscle spasms, liver damage, neurological issues, and possible death."

HABs develop when specific types of photosynthetic bacteria bloom, at times forming dense visible mats. These can occur in rivers, lakes, and ponds. Warm, slow moving water with high nutrient levels, particularly phosphorous, can create conditions that allow algae to grow very quickly. Typically these conditions occur during the warmer months of summer and early fall. HABs tend to shrink dramatically as the water temperature drops in mid to late fall.

DEQ will continue to monitor water quality until the bloom dissipates and will advise the public when the concern no longer exists.

More information is available at <http://www.deq.idaho.gov/water-quality/surface-water/blue-green-algae/>

For updates, please visit phd5.idaho.gov

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Other Links

<http://www.healthandwelfare.idaho.gov/Health/EnvironmentalHealth/HarmfulAlgalBlooms/tabid/2174/Default.aspx>