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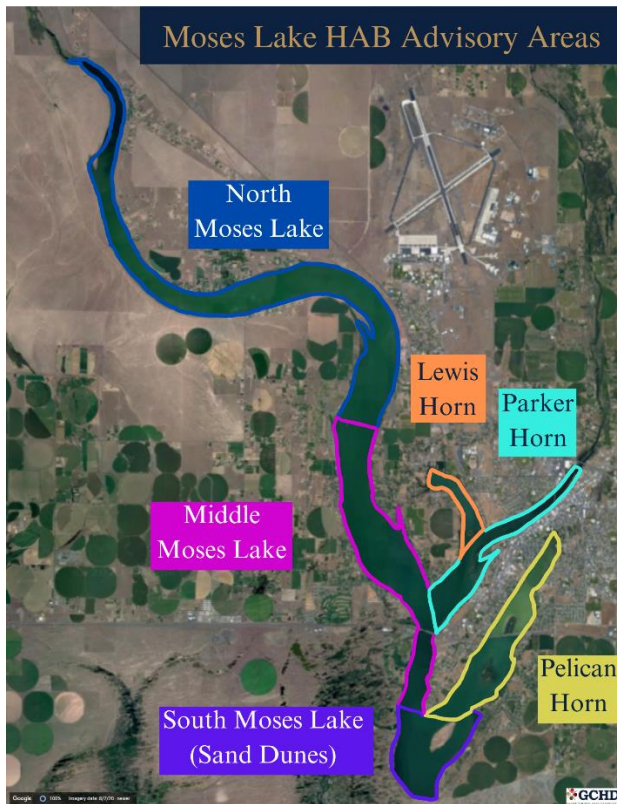
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GCHD Announces Improved System for Cyanobacteria Monitoring

Moses Lake, WA- Grant County Health District (GCHD), is excited to introduce an improved monitoring system for cyanobacteria (blue-green algae) that will be piloted on Moses Lake this year! Moses Lake will now be divided into six sections for monitoring and sampling purposes: *North Moses Lake, Lewis Horn, Parker Horn, Middle Moses Lake, Pelican Horn and South Moses Lake (Sand Dunes)*. See “Moses Lake Advisory Areas” photo below. A group of dedicated volunteers called the Cyanobacteria Surveillance by Citizens, Users, and Managers (CSCUM) will help consistently monitor and sample potential blooms at various points in each section. One major advantage of this initiative is the ability to issue targeted advisories and warnings for a specific area of the lake rather than an advisory encompassing the entire body of water.



“This pilot project has been a goal of GCHD’s for quite some time and we couldn’t have done it without the help of our willing volunteers and community partners, especially the Columbia Basin Conservation District. We are thrilled to see it come to life!”, says Environmental Health Manager, Stephanie Shopbell.

What is a Blue-Green Algae Bloom?

Blue-green algae blooms grow rapidly in fresh water when there is enough sunlight, high temperatures, and nutrients in the water. It often looks like green paint floating on the water. It is common for Grant County waters to have blue-green algae in the summer and fall, but not all blue-green algae blooms are toxic.

Access the Results - Volunteers will record and submit their findings using an app. Information will be uploaded



to a map that was created in collaboration with the Columbia Basin Conservation District and Moses Lake Watershed Council. Results will then be made accessible to the public, allowing residents and visitors to make informed decisions before committing to a day on the water. Routine observations began on Monday (7/10/2023). Volunteers will make observations at each site weekly throughout the summer and early fall. Results can be found on GCHD's Blue-Green Algae Monitoring page. <https://granthealth.org/blue-green-algae-monitoring/>.

How to Volunteer – If you are interested in joining our team of CSCUM volunteers, there is still time to do so. More information on what volunteers do and a sign up is available on our website; <https://granthealth.org/blue-green-algae-monitoring/>.

Active Advisories - Currently, there is a water quality warning advisory for the Perch Point area on Potholes Reservoir. GCHD has also received reports of a suspected blue-green-algae bloom on Westshore Drive in Moses Lake. No blooms were observed at either Blue Heron Park or Connelly Park by volunteers and no toxin samples were taken.

GCHD recommends that you **DO NOT**:

- Swim or water ski in areas of scum.
- Drink lake water.

GCHD recommends that you **DO**:

- Keep pets and livestock away from these areas.
- Clean fish well and discard guts.
- Avoid areas of scum when boating.

Blue-Green Algae Exposure Symptoms:

The type of blue-green algae commonly found in Grant County lakes produce Microcystin toxin, which can cause serious illness in people, pets, and livestock.

- Symptoms may take 30 minutes to 24 hours to appear, depending upon the size of the person or animal affected and the amount of toxic bloom consumed. Microcystin toxicosis may include jaundice, shock, abdominal pain/distention, weakness, nausea/vomiting, severe thirst, rapid/weak pulse and death.
- Pet owners should not allow their pets to play in or drink water where blue-green algae are present as these toxins can kill pets.

Future Plans - GCHD hopes to eventually expand this pilot project beyond Moses Lake and implement a similar monitoring system on other Grant County lakes known for annual blue-green-algae blooms. For now, all other Grant County lakes will continue to depend on GCHD's existing monitoring system, which will issue advisories and warnings for the entire lake. These advisories can be found on the same Blue-Green Algae Monitoring page.

Additional Resources

[Blue-Green Algae](#) | WA- DOH

[Washington State Toxic Algae](#) | WA- DOH & WA- Department of Ecology

[Freshwater Water Quality Information](#) | WA Department of Ecology

[Toxic Algae Database](#) — Find out which freshwater lakes have toxic algae (WA Dept of Ecology)

[Blue-Green Algae Illness](#) | CDC

[Toxic Blue-Green Algae Blooms Brochure](#) [PDF]