From: lyris@swrcb18.waterboards.ca.gov
Subject: PRESS RELEASE: Sonoma County Department of Health Services to Post Caution Signs at Russian River Public Beaches
Date: August 4, 2016 at 11:04 AM
To: Brenda Adelman rrwpc@comcast.net

This is a message from the California Regional Water Quality Control Board, North Coast Region (1).

For Immediate Release
Date: August 4, 2016
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Blue-Green Algae Toxins Detected in Russian River
DHS to Post Caution Signs at Public Beaches

Santa Rosa, Calif. – During the week of August 1st, the Sonoma County Department of Health Services (DHS) began detailed water testing throughout the Russian River. On Thursday, August 4, DHS received test results indicating that a low-level of blue-green algae toxins are present in certain areas of the river. In accordance with state guidance, the level of toxin present is enough to trigger the posting of "Caution" signs. Signs in both English and Spanish will be posted at all ten public beaches along the Russian River.

"We have been watching conditions like the water temperature and visually monitoring the river," said Dr. Karen Holbrook, Sonoma County Deputy Public Health Officer. "When we noted conditions were present that could support rapid growth of algae, including blue-green algae, we started laboratory testing." Although, the most recent results do not trigger restrictions of recreational activity at the river, the results do indicate there could be a risk to pets and children in particular. "We want to inform people using the Russian River to take steps to protect themselves, their families and especially their pets." Dogs like to eat things and are known to preferentially seek out blue-green algae. Be aware of this in deciding how you supervise your dog.
"Caution" is the lowest of three levels of state recommended advisory signage ("Caution" "Warning" and "Danger"). The Russian River is open for recreational use. However, the public should be advised that potentially harmful algae may be present. Care should be taken to keep children and pets away from algae, and prevent them from drinking river water.

Signs will include these recommendations:
   ·   Stay away from algae in the water.
   ·   Keep children away from algae in the water, on the shore and in isolated side pools.
   ·   Do not drink river water or use for cooking.
   ·   Do not let pets drink the water, or eat scum on the shoreline.
   ·   For fish caught here, throw away guts and clean fillets with tap water or bottled water before cooking.
   ·   Rinse off thoroughly with clean water after river play, particularly children and pets.

Weekly laboratory testing will continue until two successive weeks of negative test results. River conditions will be monitored until they no longer support the rapid growth of blue-green algae.

Public Contact Information:
If you have concerns regarding your or your family's health, contact your healthcare provider. If you have concerns regarding your pet's health, contact your veterinarian. Be sure to tell the medical professional about possible contact with blue-green algae.

For questions regarding the status of the Russian River go to the website listed below or call the recorded beach hotline at (707) 565-6552.

• DHS Environmental Health and Safety Blue-Green Algae Website: http://www.sonoma-county.org/health/services/bluegreen.asp
The following websites provide more information on blue-green algae and harmful algal blooms:

• California Cyanobacteria and Harmful Algal Bloom (CCHAB) Network:
http://www.mywaterquality.ca.gov/monitoring_council/cyanohab_network/index.html

• State Water Resources Control Board: http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/bluegreen_algae/

• Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): http://www.cdc.gov/hab/cyanobacteria/facts.htm

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