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For Immediate Release
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Health Alert Health Alert Health Alert

Jacksonville, FL - August 12, 2005, the St. Johns Water Management District has tested the St. Johns River for toxins resulting from the blue-green algae bloom. The test results indicate high concentrations of toxin. The bloom affects the river in Duval County and extends through Clay and St. Johns Counties.

Health effects can occur when surface scum or water containing high levels of blue-green algal toxins are swallowed, through contact with the skin or when airborne droplets containing toxins are inhaled while swimming, bathing or showering. Direct contact or breathing airborne droplets containing high levels of algal toxins during swimming or showering can cause irritation of the skin, eyes, nose and throat and inflammation in the respiratory tract.

The Health Department recommends people refrain from recreational use of the river this weekend that could result in ingestion of and/or skin exposure to river water. Children should also not be allowed to play along the shoreline where they might be exposed to clumps of algae or drink water from the river. It is unclear as to whether ingestion of fish from the river poses a health risk.

Livestock and pet deaths have occurred when animals consume large amounts of accumulated algal scum from along shorelines. Do not allow pets to eat clumps of algae that accumulate along the shoreline.

The River Water Management District will retest the affected areas on Monday.

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Duval County Health Department

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