

Mission:

To protect, promote & improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county & community efforts.



Rick Scott
Governor

John H. Armstrong, MD, FACS
State Surgeon General & Secretary

Vision: To be the **Healthiest State** in the Nation

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 2, 2013

Contact: DOH Communications

(850) 245-4111

Ashley_Carr@doh.state.fl.us

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH WARNS OF POSSIBLE WASTEWATER CONTAMINATION

~GA wastewater plant overflow may impact Withlacoochee and Suwannee Rivers~

TALLAHASSEE- The Florida Department of Health (DOH) today issued a caution to residents in the counties surrounding the Withlacoochee and Suwannee rivers. The Withlacoochee Water Pollution Control Plant in Valdosta, GA has overflowed into the Withlacoochee River, which flows south, connecting with the Suwannee River.

The Florida Department of Environmental Protection is scheduled to collect water samples from the area and the testing results will be available within the next week.

Until further information is known regarding possible contamination of the rivers, citizens are urged to avoid contact with the Withlacoochee and Suwannee rivers. This includes those individuals in the counties of Dixie, Gilchrist, Hamilton, Lafayette, Levy, Madison, and Suwannee counties.

Water contaminated by wastewater overflow presents several health hazards to humans. Water contaminated wastewater overflow may contain untreated human sewage with microbes that could cause gastro-intestinal and other diseases.

If you have been in contact with the river water, DOH urges you to wash your hands thoroughly before eating or drinking. Children and elderly as well as people with depressed immune systems are particularly vulnerable to disease so every precaution should be taken to avoid the river water.

For more information about the potential health effects of wastewater overflow, residents are encouraged to contact their local county health department. To find contact information for your county health department, please visit <http://www.doh.state.fl.us/chdsitelist.htm>.

Follow us on Twitter at @HealthyFla and on Facebook. For news story ideas, interviews, videos and more from DOH Communications visit the DOH Online Newsroom.

DOH protects, promotes and improves the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts.

###

Florida Department of Health

4052 Bald Cypress Way, Bin A04 • Tallahassee, FL 32399
PHONE: 850/245-4111

www.FloridasHealth.com

TWITTER: HealthyFLA

FACEBOOK: FLDepartmentofHealth

YOUTUBE: fldoh