



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Anatoxin Biotoxin Found at High Levels in Wiser Lake

BELLINGHAM, WA – Recent sampling at Wiser Lake detected anatoxin, a toxin produced by algae, at levels that may be harmful to people and pets. Toxin levels are close to ten times the maximum safe level established by the US Environmental Protection Agency. Residents are advised to avoid water contact at Wiser Lake and not allow pets to swim in or drink from the lake.

Caution signage has been posted at Wiser Lake since 2019 due to consistently elevated toxin levels. Recent test results indicate an ongoing health risk.

Ingestion of lake water poses the primary human health concern. Limited contact from boating or fishing is not a significant risk to people, but waterskiing, swimming or riding personal watercraft poses a greater risk since water may be accidentally ingested.

Pet owners are advised not to let their pets swim in the lake. Pets often lick their fur after swimming and may ingest toxins while grooming.

Anatoxin is a potent toxin that affects the nervous system. This and other algal toxins are naturally occurring, although human and animal activity can impact the severity of freshwater algal blooms. Nutrients in fertilizer, pet waste, agricultural runoff and wildlife waste provide food for algal growth.

You can learn more about harmful algal blooms at www.nwtoxicalgae.org or at www.epa.gov.

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