



MORTON COUNTY

STATE OF NORTH DAKOTA



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Morton County lakes under blue-green algae advisories

Mandan, N.D. – The North Dakota Department of Environmental Quality (NDDEQ) has recently issued blue-green algae advisories for Harmon Lake and Sweetbriar Lake in Morton County.

An advisory means a blue-green algae bloom is present in portions of the waterbody, and microcystin levels in those areas exceed the public health criteria of 10 micrograms per liter ($\mu\text{g/L}$). Areas where the bloom is present in the water should be avoided. However, areas of the lake where there is no evidence of a bloom may still be used for water-based recreation (e.g., swimming, water skiing, kayaking and paddle boarding). Small children and pets should not swim in the water as they are more susceptible to drinking it and could become ill.

“As always, you should to use the lake at your own discretion, but this advisory doesn’t mean stay away – it means avoid the algae areas and don’t drink the water,” said Tim Nilsen, Morton County Parks Director. “We want people to know they can still enjoy all that our parks have to offer.”

The wind will direct the scum, so it will not be in the same areas every day. Paddle On - Kayak and Paddle-Board Rentals is still open for business at Harmon Lake.

Hot summer weather can contribute to the production of blue-green algae (cyanobacteria) in bodies of water that are used by people, pets and livestock. In some lakes, these blooms can persist into the early fall where they can pose a risk to hunters and their dogs. Blue-green algae discolor the water and can cause foam, scum or mats to appear on the surface. In severe blooms, the water can have the appearance of spilled green paint or green pea soup. Blue-

green algae can also produce toxins in the water called cyanotoxins. People and animals that swallow water containing cyanotoxins can become sick with diarrhea and vomiting. Other symptoms in people include numb lips, tingling fingers and toes; dizziness; or rashes, hives or skin blisters.

The NDDEQ continues to conduct testing for cyanotoxins in Harmon and Sweetbriar lakes at regular intervals to monitor the algae.

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