

Warnock Lake in Atchison Under Public Health Warning

The Kansas Department of Health & Environment has issued a public health warning for Warnock Lake in Atchison due to high levels of toxic blue-green algae.

The warning states that water conditions are unsafe and direct water contact should not occur. This includes wading, skiing, and swimming. It is also advised to keep pets from having contact with or drinking lake water.

Fishing is still permitted, though, and any fish meant for consumption should be cleaned, and only the fillet portion should be consumed.

State officials say it may take several weeks or months for the algae to die out to normal, safe levels, adding that the only option is to wait it out. Killing the algae would release toxins into the water which could deplete oxygen, killing the fish population.

Exposure to the blue-green algae can cause intestinal or respiratory problems, or skin irritations. If exposed to algae, the KDHE recommends showering and changing out of wet clothing immediately after contact.

The KDHE will continue to monitor the lake algae and announce any changes.