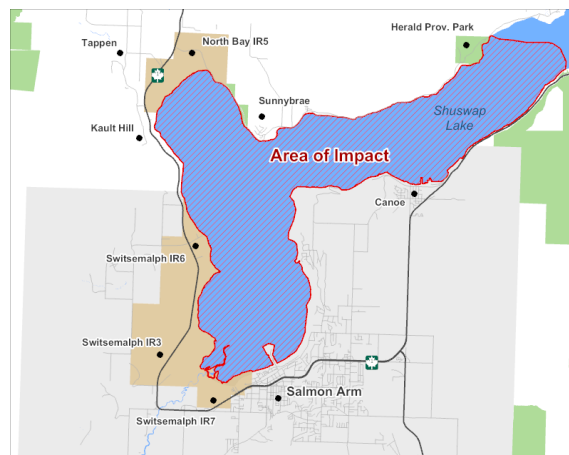


For Immediate Release | August 11, 2020

## IH provides regional update on large algal bloom in Shuswap Lake

SALMON ARM – Interior Health, the Ministry of the Environment and the First Nations Health Authority are working with the City of Salmon Arm, the Columbia Shuswap Regional District, and Fraser Basin Council to monitor a large, algal bloom that has filled most of the Salmon Arm of Shuswap Lake.

This algal bloom was first detected on July 22, 2020. At this time, on-site environmental testing indicates this bloom is primarily non-harmful green algae with very low numbers of cyanobacteria or blue-green algae and the risk to the public remains low.



At this time of year, algal blooms are known to occur in many of the lakes, ponds, and wetlands found throughout the Interior region of B.C.

During warm summer months, it is common for some blooms to be blue-green algae or cyanobacteria, which can quickly grow into large masses called cyanoblooms. Blue-green algae can produce a toxin, which may be harmful if it is swallowed or if it comes in contact with skin.

Cyanoblooms are also usually blue-green in colour and can cover the surface or make normally clear water look like thick pea soup or paint.

Although the water is visually not appealing, it remains safe for all recreational activities, as well as for public drinking water system, which uses the lake as its primary drinking water supply.

Visitors and residents are reminded not to drink or cook using untreated water directly from lakes, ponds or wetlands due to the risk of waterborne illness – boiling water will not remove the blue-green algae from the water – and never wade or swim in water with visible cyanoblooms. Pets should also be kept out of waterbodies where there are active algae blooms as they can be sensitive to the toxins.

Interior Health and other agencies will continue to monitor public drinking water supplies and recreational beaches.

---

Additional Information on blue-green algae is available at HealthLinkBC,  
<https://www.healthlinkbc.ca/healthlinkbc-files/blue-green-algae>

-30-