

January 11, 2018

Health officials: Water quality advisory issued for Dog River at Alba Club and Fowl River at Hwy. 193

MOBILE, Ala. -- The Mobile County Health Department advises the public that two recent successive tests for recreational water quality for Dog River at Alba Club and Fowl River at Hwy. 193 indicated that the quality was poor.

Dr. Bernard Eichold, Health Officer, warns that people swimming in these waters face an increased risk of illness. He also advises that all seafood harvested in the affected area should be thoroughly cooked before consumption and that individuals should wash their hands after cleaning any fish or other seafood, and also before preparing food.

According to the Alabama Department of Public Health's Mobile Laboratory, samples taken January 10, 2018, exceeded the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) threshold of 104 enterococcus organisms per 100 milliliters for marine water. The site will be retested, to see if enterococci counts still exceed the EPA threshold. Monitoring will continue, health officials said, and the advisory will be lifted once bacteria values fall below the threshold.

ADPH and the Alabama Department of Environmental Management (ADEM) operate the bacteriological water-quality monitoring and notification program under a grant from the EPA BEACH Act Program. This program involves the routine collection of water samples from a total of 25 high-use coastal recreational sites in Mobile and Baldwin counties. In the summer months, samples are taken once or twice a week at the most highly used sites and biweekly at the other sites. All sites are tested once a month in the cooler months.

Based on EPA's "Criteria for Bathing (full-body contact) Recreational Waters," samples are checked for enterococcus bacteria. These indicator bacteria are inhabitants of the intestines of humans and other warm-blooded animals. High counts indicate that other disease-causing germs possibly could be present in the water.

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Water quality advisory

Bacterial concentrations in recreational waters can increase during and immediately following rainstorms because of overflowing sewage collection and treatment facilities, storm water runoff, and malfunctioning septic systems.

Additional information is available on the EPA's web site entitled "Beach Watch" at www.epa.gov/ost/beaches. For more information about the advisory status, visit ADEM's Web site at www.adem.state.al.us. Click on monitoring at the top and then click on Coastal Alabama Beach Monitoring.