

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**For More Information Contact**

Gary Switzer, Environmental Health Manager Senior

(540) 899-4797 extension 114

[gary.switzer@vdh.virginia.gov](mailto:gary.switzer@vdh.virginia.gov)

**ALGAL BLOOM IN AQUIA CREEK POSES HAZARD TO HUMANS AND PETS**

Monday, July 25, 2011, the Department of Environmental Quality collected samples from Aquia Creek in Stafford County which after being analyzed was found to be *Microcystis aeruginosa*. This blue-green algae species are capable of producing toxins known as microcystins, which can be toxic through consumption to both animals and humans.

The Stafford Environmental Health Department is advising people to avoid contact with the water in the areas of these algae blooms and to keep their pets out of the water. People who come into contact with the water may experience skin or respiratory irritation if exposed to the water. If water is ingested, abdominal pain, jaundice, malaise, and/or vomiting may occur in humans.

Pets that do come into contact with the water in Aquia Creek should be prevented from licking their coats and bathed as soon as possible to remove any blue-green algae or toxin that may be entrapped in their coats. This toxin is potentially fatal to pets.

If you have questions please contact Gary Switzer, Environmental Health Manager Senior at (540) 899-4797 extension 114, or [gary.switzer@vdh.virginia.gov](mailto:gary.switzer@vdh.virginia.gov).