

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**August 25, 2023****Media Contact:**Allison Balmes-John, allison.balmes@vdh.virginia.gov**SWIMMING ADVISORY ISSUED FOR AQUIA CREEK IN
STAFFORD COUNTY**

(Stafford, VA)— Aquia Creek in Stafford County is under a swimming advisory from the crossing of Aquia Drive to Government Island until further notice due to a nearby sewage release. A sewer force main break occurred several hundred feet from the waterway near Aquia Drive. The swimming advisory is being released out of an abundance of caution until results from water testing are available. The duration of the swimming advisory will be adjusted based on these results.

“The Virginia Department of Health, Department of Environmental Quality and Stafford County Department of Utilities are working together to assess the impacts of the sewage release to Aquia Creek,” said Brent McCord, Environmental Health Manager for the Rappahannock Area Health District. “Due to the many marinas and private access points along Aquia Creek, the swimming advisory is being issued to prevent any possible illness due to the sewage release.”

Repairs to the sewage main have been completed. The absence of rain events since the completion of the repairs may allow the sewage to concentrate in some areas, and it is not possible at this time to know the impact of sewage on the creek. There are no concerns about contamination of the drinking water supply.

To prevent illness, people should:

- Avoid contact with Aquia Creek from the crossing of Aquia Drive to Government Island. This includes swimming, wading, tubing, and stand-up paddleboarding.
- With proper caution, activities where contact with the water is limited (boating and fishing) may continue.
- Pets should also stay out of the water and avoid drinking the water in this area.
- If you come in contact with the water in this area, wash exposed areas promptly with soap and water.
- If you experience any adverse health issues after contact with the creek, seek medical care and notify your practitioner of the exposure to the water

Signage in English and Spanish will be posted at known public access points to the area under advisory.

To stay up to date on swimming advisories in Aquia Creek, please visit the Rappahannock Area Health District’s Facebook page. Visit www.SwimHealthyVa.com for more information on ways to stay safe while recreating in natural water bodies.

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