

Rocky Pointe Marina September 2023 Newsletter

Toxic Algae Bloom

The OHA has issued warnings for many areas, with some information listed below. We are starting to see small amounts between the inside docks and the shore where the water is stagnant, shallower, and therefore warmer. A reminder that swimming is not allowed in the marina. Dogs at the boat ramp are not advised. Swimming off the front of your house is at your own risk and is outside the property of RPM.

From Oregon Health Authority

NOW IS prime time for plunging into Oregon's rivers, lakes, and swimming holes. But you (and your dog) might want to look before you leap. The Oregon Health Authority issued advisories for cyanobacteria blooms in four bodies of water in the Portland area.

"Pets are who we're most concerned about," says David Farrer, a toxicologist for the Oregon Health Authority. "We've never had any people that we know of die from exposure to one of these blooms, but we have had a lot of animals die from these blooms, especially dogs, sometimes livestock."

Blooms can look like blue or blue-green paint, thick like pea soup, or foamy and reddish brown. As of August 2, affected areas near Portland include Aarons Lake, Pete's Slough, and Sturgeon Lake on Sauvie Island, as well as the Willamette River near Willamette Cove. Near Vancouver, WA, advisories have also been issued for Lacamas Lake and Vancouver Lake. These warnings counsel against swimming and drinking the water, even with filtering. High-speed boating is also not recommended, due to spray that leads to inhalation. Eating fish from these waters is also ill-advised.

Cyanobacteria blooms, which are often colloquially referred to as "algae" blooms aren't really algae, according to OHA. Cyanobacteria naturally occur in bodies of fresh water worldwide, but when they bloom en masse, they sometimes produce high levels of cyanotoxins, like microcystins and cylindrospermopsin. When ingested, they can produce red rashes on the skin, as well as gastrointestinal symptoms like nausea and diarrhea for up to 72 hours. For dogs, ingesting cyanotoxins can even be deadly.

Summer and early fall are the peak seasons for cyanobacteria blooms (they happened last August, too, and every previous year since monitoring began). Sunlight and warm water temperatures help the bacteria thrive, as do nutrients from human activity like fertilizer and waste. Climate change and high population density also contribute to the increasing frequency of algae blooms. You're more likely to find them in shallow, warm, and still bodies of water—which, Farrer notes, can also include backyard ponds or livestock troughs.

It's impossible to tell whether a bloom is toxic just by looking at it, and not all bodies of water are regularly tested for cyanotoxins. Thus, experts say to avoid bodies of water with visible cyanobacteria blooms.

Honey Pot Service- Do It Yourself

The plumbing in your floating home is just like a land home until it exits your floating home into a septic tank communing referred to as a "honey pot" They are very simple and range in size around 30 to 40 gallons. Old ones were made of steel and the new ones are all plastic. The metal ones eventually will rust out and continuously run with river water coming in. At the sale of a home, we require that the honey pot be plastic.

There are only a few components to the system.

- 1/2hp blackwater sewage pump- Ace Hardware \$249
- Float switch with tethered plug- Ace \$29.95 (include with new pump)
- Power source- typically a GFCI plug near the honey pot.
- Connection to dock line with backflow valve. Ace, \$19.95

The tethered float switch is a plug that goes into your outlet and allows the pump to be piggy backed onto it, much like Christmas tree lights. When the float inside your tank reaches the set height and becomes vertical, it allows power to the pump until the float goes down. You can test the float switch by unplugging it from the outlet and plug the pump directly into the outlet. If the pump runs, then you need a new float switch. If the pump does not run, you need to test the power source. Reset the GFCI and/or your circuit breaker. Test pump again. If the pump does not work, find an item to plug in to test or use a volt meter to test. If there is no power, you need an electrician. You can also get an extension cord and try plugging in the pump to a working circuit. If the pump does not operate, then you need a new pump. If your pump runs and cycles, but sewage is spilling out, it may be a clogged backflow valve. Contact our office and one of our staff can look at the backflow valve after you have done the other tests. Typically, what happens is it gets clogged with long hair or other fibrous materials. It can also get clogged open causing the sewage in the main line to flow back into your honey pot. The best preventative measure is to not flush anything but human waste and modest amounts of regular toilet paper- PERIOD. Also, it is a good idea to open your honey pot once a year and use a hose to clean the sides to help the float switch not get stuck. Unfortunately, the primary honey pot service person has retired. Even Care Maintenance can do repairs on honey pots, decking, chain adjustments, floatation inspection. Call 503-806-4795. Remember that our staff is not for hire- please do not ask them.

Fall and Low Water- & Tides

For boaters please be on the lookout for sandbars and broken off pilings that lined the backs of Mutlnomah Channel to tie off log rafts until the 1980's. Give yourself 75ft from the shore. For floating homes, the large flood or incoming tides can cause your home to move upstream, rather than downstream which is what the chains are set for. A strong wind from the north going south will do the same thing. For additional chains, chain adjustments or a bumper log in between the houses, contact Even Care Maintenance, 503-806-4795

Statement and Due Dates

We read the meters between the 16th and 19th of the month and add it to your bill/statement. We mail the statements no later than the 20th of the month. Payment is due on the 1st and considered late at 5pm on the 8th of the month. Boaters on auto payment will still get a statement reflecting the charges we will process on the first business day of the month. There is a drop box on the office on the left side of the door.