OKLAHOMA
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY
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News Release

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DEQ Recommends Caution on Lakes, Rivers and Streams

As Labor Day approaches, many Oklahomans may be planning a trip to one of the state's lakes, rivers, or streams to enjoy swimming, boating, canoeing and other water activities. The Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) wants to remind residents to be cautious when taking advantage of Oklahoma's natural water bodies.

Certain bacteria, viruses and protozoa can be present in untreated bodies of water. Some of these microorganisms occur naturally while others are carried into surface waters from a variety of sources. Some of these microorganisms are harmful and can cause mild problems such as ear infection, swimmers itch, intestinal diseases, or relatively rare but serious conditions such as eye infections and some forms of meningitis.

DEQ recommends the following precautions when swimming in any body of untreated water to reduce exposure to waterborne microorganisms:

- **Hold nose or wear nose plugs when jumping into the water**
- **Wash open skin cuts and scrapes with clean soap and water immediately after swimming**
- **Avoid swallowing water when swimming**
- **Wear ear plugs to prevent ear infections**
- **Wear swim goggles or masks to prevent eye infections**
- **Avoid swimming near storm drains (pipes that drain polluted water from streets)**
- **Take children to the restroom frequently/Use swim diapers on infants**
- **Stay away from any area that has floating debris, stagnant water, oil sheens or dead fish**

Additionally, swimmers should be aware of blue green algae and cryptosporidium, both caused by microscopic organisms. When waters are heated and stagnant, the risk for exposure will increase.

For more information, please visit www.deq.state.ok.us or contact Skylar McElhaney at (405) 702-7167.

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