

October 1, 2010

DSHS Issues Fish Advisory for Mountain Creek Lake

The Texas Department of State Health Services has issued an advisory warning people not to consume any species of fish from Mountain Creek Lake in Grand Prairie, Texas. The advisory was issued after laboratory testing of fish samples found elevated levels of dioxins and polychlorinated biphenyls, or PCBs.

People should avoid eating any species of fish from Mountain Creek Lake until further notice. Long-term consumption of dioxins and PCBs may cause cancer and reproductive, immune system, developmental and liver problems.

According to DSHS standards, PCB levels in fish above 0.047 milligrams per kilogram (mg/kg) may pose a risk to human health. PCB levels in the most recent Mountain Creek Lake samples averaged 0.138 mg/kg and were as high as 0.949 mg/kg. Levels of dioxins in smallmouth buffalo averaged 2.548 picograms per gram (pg/g) and were as high as 6.622 pg/g above the DSHS standard of 2.33 pg/g.

PCBs are industrial chemicals once used as coolants and lubricants in electrical equipment. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency banned PCBs in 1979, but items containing them did not have to be replaced. Dioxins are byproducts of combustion and industrial activity. Dioxins and PCBs degrade slowly in the environment. Elevated levels of PCBs and dioxins in fish do not pose a health risk for people swimming or participating in other water recreation activities.

At the request of the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, as a part of its Total Maximum Daily Load 5-year follow-up program, DSHS collected samples from Mountain Creek Lake to reevaluate toxicity levels in fish.

DSHS is lifting an aquatic life order that prohibited people from possessing fish from Mountain Creek Lake. The fish consumption advisory still applies.

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