



# Health Advisory Issued for the Pine River in Alma

September 22, 2015

*Use caution if you choose to enjoy the Pine River as the water may be unsafe at times.*

## **CAUTION**

**This river may contain harmful bacteria.**

*Testing has shown that the Millpond may be polluted and is often not safe for swimming.*

**How can you enjoy this river safely?**

- Avoid the river during and immediately after rainfall.
- Do not let the water get in your mouth, nose or eyes.
- Wash your hands with soap and water before eating.
- Shower when you return home.



Contact the Mid-Michigan District Health Department  
989-831-5237 for more information.

*The sign at left has been posted at various locations along the Pine River in Alma, including at the boat landing and Luneack Landing.*

The Mid-Michigan District Health Department had issued an advisory for the Pine River in Alma because it is contaminated with E.coli bacteria. No one should swim in the Pine River in Alma, including at the boat landing and Luneack Landing.

Testing has shown that E.coli levels in the Pine River in Alma are almost always above the Environmental Protection Agency's standard for swimming. If a person ingests E.coli bacteria they can become ill, including having diarrhea which may be severe enough to require hospitalization.

### **How can you enjoy the river safely?**

- E.coli is often higher immediately after rainstorms, so avoid using the river during those times.
- Do not swallow the water or let it get in your mouth.
- Wash your hands with soap and water before eating.
- If you get wet, shower when you return home.

### **How did the water get polluted?**

Natural bodies of water contain microorganism regardless of how clean or clear the waters look. Testing has shown that most rivers in Michigan do become polluted from time-to-time. The most frequent sources of disease-causing microorganisms are from sewage overflows, polluted storm water runoff, runoff from agricultural lands, sewage treatment plant malfunctions, and malfunctioning septic systems.

Pollution is often much higher during and immediately after rainstorms because water draining into the river may be carrying sewage from over-flowing sewage treatment systems. Rainwater also flows to our rivers after running off lawns, farms, streets, construction sites, and other areas, picking up animal waste, fertilizer, pesticides, trash and many other pollutants. Many of these pollutants end up in our rivers.

### **How does polluted water affect you and your family?**

Water can be polluted by different things, including disease-causing organisms, like *E. coli*. Swimming or playing in unsafe water may result in minor illnesses, such as sore throats or diarrhea, but have the potential to lead to more severe illnesses, depending on the exposure. Children, the elderly and people with weakened immune systems have a greater chance of getting sick when they come in contact with contaminated water.

### **What is E.coli?**

*Escherichia coli* (*E. coli*) bacteria normally live in the intestines of people and animals. Most *E. coli* are harmless, but some *E. coli* are pathogenic, meaning they can cause illness, either diarrhea or illness outside of the intestinal tract. The types of *E. coli* that can cause diarrhea can be transmitted through contaminated water or food, or through contact with animals or persons.

**If you have any questions, please contact the  
Mid-Michigan District Health Department at  
989-875-1002**