

PRESS RELEASE

Rogue Valley Council of Governments • • • • Natural Resources Department

CREEK SAFETY WATCH Bear Creek Watershed – Jackson County July 15th, 2020

***Important Note:* This information is for select creeks in the Bear Creek Basin only – IT DOES NOT COVER ALL CREEKS IN JACKSON COUNTY OR ALL CREEKS IN THE BEAR CREEK WATERSHED. If you have questions about a specific creek, please call RVCOG (see contact information below).**

Routine water quality testing results indicate that the following creeks have exceeded state bacteria standards for contact recreation (swimming, wading, etc.). Residents are asked to use caution when in contact with any waterways and especially to avoid ingestion (which may cause illness) and contact with open wounds (which may cause infection). Very young children should be fully supervised when playing in the water to avoid swallowing the water. It is important to note that contact with any water body – creeks, rivers, lakes, or swimming pools – carries some level of risk.

Possible causes of high levels of bacteria in the creeks include: 1) pet waste, 2) livestock waste, 3) wild animals, 4) leaking septic systems, 5) illegal dumping from portable toilets or RVs, or 6) any other activity that results in the discharge of fecal matter directly into creeks or through storm drains.

Citizens are asked to notify the appropriate agency of any concerns. Failing septic systems and other pollutants discharged into streams should be reported to the Department of Environmental Quality. Complaints can be reported to the complaint hotline at 1-888-997-7888 or online at <http://www.deq.state.or.us/complaints/rep.htm>. If you are unsure of whom to call or have questions regarding which creeks are tested, please call Greg Stabach (541-423-1370) or Amie Siedlecki (541-423-1371) from the Rogue Valley Council of Governments, or visit <http://rvcog.org/what-we-do/natural-resources/>.

What you can do: 1) pick up after your pets, 2) keep manure, kitty litter, and other waste material away from creeks and storm drains, 3) have your septic system inspected and repaired if failing, and 4) put toddlers in swim diapers.

More information is available from the Rogue Valley Council of Governments, Natural Resources Department (<http://rvcog.org/what-we-do/natural-resources/>), the Stream Smart Monitoring Water Quality in the Rogue Basin webpage (<http://www.stream-smart.com/monitoring-water-quality-in-the-rogue-basin/>), the Oregon Department of Human Services (www.egov.oregon.gov/DHS), and the Environmental Protection Agency (<http://www.epa.gov/waterscience/criteria/humanhealth/>).

The following creeks have exceeded state bacteria standards for contact recreation (swimming, wading etc.).

Walker Creek at the Belle Fiore Winery entrance in Ashland
Neil Creek at Dead Indian Memorial Road across from the Ashland Airport in Ashland
Bear Creek at Eagle Mill Road in Ashland
Bear Creek at Suncrest Road in Talent
Bear Creek at 9 th Street in Medford
Bear Creek at Table Rock Road in Central Point
Jackson Creek at Beall Lane in Central Point
Bear Creek above Griffin Creek in Central Point
Griffin Creek off of the Bear Creek Greenway near Interstate-5