

Media Release:

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Berry Springs Temporarily Closed For Swimming

The Department of Natural Resources, Environment, The Arts and Sport (NRETAS) advises that the waterholes at Berry Springs Nature Park are temporarily closed to swimming due to bacterial levels that exceed Northern Territory Department of Health water quality guidelines.

Parks & Wildlife Service Acting Executive Director Digby Whyte said regular monitoring of Berry Springs water quality has revealed two consecutive tests over 500 enterococci/100mL.

“Late in the dry season, it is normal to see an increase in enterococci as water flow is reduced and becomes less available to dilute bacteria,” said Mr Whyte.

“It’s also possible that the recent rain washed in ground-based animal and organic waste that accumulated during the dry season.

“As visitor health and safety is our top priority, the area will remain closed for swimming until the water quality returns to a safe level.”

The new Department of Health Guidance Notes for Recreational Water Quality in the Northern Territory, which was introduced in July 2011, indicates that conditions are not generally considered acceptable for swimming beyond 500 enterococci/100mL due to an increased risk of gastroenteritis, ear infections and other infections.

“We will continue to do daily testing to see if the water quality improves and if we have two consecutive results that show acceptable conditions, we may be able to open for swimming again before the wet season arrives,” said Mr Whyte.

Berry Springs is seasonally closed for swimming every wet season when monsoonal rains, strong water flow and the increased risk of estuarine (saltwater) crocodiles entering the system make it unsafe for swimming.

The picnic areas and barbecues at Berry Springs Nature Park remain open to visitors.

For the latest access reports to parks and reserves administered by NRETAS, go to www.nt.gov.au/nreta/parks/access.html.

Ends

Media Note – For more information, contact Digby Whyte on 8999 4561.

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