

GREENFIELD

Swimming area closed while officials test for parasite

Results expected in 24 to 48 hours

By **MARY BYRNE**
Staff Writer

GREENFIELD — The Green River Swimming Area was closed Tuesday “out of an abundance of caution” while officials test the water for the presence of a species of parasite called cryptosporidium.

Although its presence in the water hasn't been confirmed, there has been at least one confirmed case in the area, according to a post on the Greenfield Recreation Department's Facebook page.

“It's out of an abundance of caution until we get the lab

testing results back,” Recreation Director Christy Moore said when reached by phone on Tuesday, noting the Department of Public Works “was sampling today.”

The rest of the park on Nash's Mill Road, however, remains open, she said.

“We have amazing staff working to keep the kids cool,” she said. “I'm grateful it's not as hot as it has been.”

Moore said she was notified by the Health Department Tuesday morning, just before the swimming area was about to open.

“We had to rush down there and get it posted and explain to any patrons in the park, as well as our campers,” she explained.

Health Director Jennifer

Hoffman said the city department was notified by the state Department of Public Health of a possible infection in the area, and that the swimming area was a place that person had recently been.

“With anything that could potentially be a contagion to somebody or hurt somebody, we'd close the water down,” she said.

Hoffman said she expects it'll be 24 to 48 hours before test results are returned.

Cryptosporidium is a species of parasite usually found in fecal matter from other animals, Hoffman explained. A common symptom of infection is watery diarrhea lasting anywhere from one to two weeks.

She said the parasite has

been detected in numerous bodies of water throughout the state since June.

“A lot of this is because of the lack of rain,” Hoffman said. “Things that normally would wash out become more concentrated. Even though we flush the swimming hole, with the warm weather and lack of rain, the chances of having bacteria or parasites grow are higher.”

Moore said it was disappointing to close the swimming area, particularly during the Recreation Department's H2Ohhh Yeah-themed week.

“We're doing everything we can to verify that the river is safe, and following the protocols set in place by the local Board of Health,” Moore explained. “We want to keep the public as safe as possible.



STAFF PHOTO/PAUL FRANZ

The Green River Swimming Area was closed to swimming Tuesday as the city waits for water test results.

That is our priority.”

Reporter Mary Byrne can be

reached at mbyrne@recorder.com or 413-930-4429. Twitter: [@MaryEByrne](https://twitter.com/MaryEByrne)