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Martin County Health Department

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 16, 2005

St. Lucie River Blue Green Algae Warning

The Martin County Health Department has expanded a warning to avoid contact with St. Lucie River water with visible algae to include all areas from the Okeechobee Canal to the St. Lucie Inlet. This change is the result of recent sampling that detected algae toxins in some parts of the river. Exposure to water containing algae toxins may cause skin irritation and hay fever-like symptoms in susceptible individuals.

Blue green algae are commonly found in fresh water ponds and rivers in Florida. Light, temperature and the water's nutrient content play a role causing the algae to multiply rapidly. Fortunately, the toxins are diluted and eventually break down and disappear over time.

Additional sampling will be conducted and future results may change the limits of the current warning area. A hotline has been set up for the public to report any illness that they feel may be related to the estuary. The toll free number is 1-888-232-8635.

For further information on the health warnings, please contact Bob Washam, 221-4090, at the health department.

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