

For Immediate Release:

Friday August 13, 2010 3:00pm

From: The Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency

Contact: Rebecca Burns, Director of Environmental Health 269-273-2161 Ext. 228

RE: Sewage discharge advisory. St. Joseph River South of the Broadway Street Bridge, specifically from the Clean Water Plant discharge point at Wolf St. to at least ¼ mile downstream of Wolf St., Three Rivers, Michigan

"No Contact" Health Advisory Issued

St. Joseph County, Michigan:

Officials of the Three Rivers Clean Water Plant have notified the Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency (CHA) today, that the treated sewage effluent being discharged into the St. Joseph River exceeds the expected fecal coliform count. The fecal coliform count in the samples read yesterday afternoon and soon to be read today were TNTC (to numerous to count) with an estimated count of greater than 8000 per 100 ml for the result collected on August 11th and read on August 12th. The elevated fecal coliform count is attributed to the rain event of Wednesday, August 11th which increased the flow volume to the plant.

Action taken. The Three Rivers Clean Water Plant increased the feed rate of chlorine into the treated sewage effluent on August 13, 2010 in an attempt to provide proper chlorination of the effluent. Persons are advised to avoid any body contact with the St. Joseph River South of the Broadway Street Bridge, specifically from the Clean Water Plant discharge point at Wolf St. to at least ¼ mile South of Wolf St. This advisory includes any body contact with the river for activities such as swimming, canoeing or fishing. The advisory is in affect until August 16, 2010 unless further action is required.

Numerous infectious diseases are associated with contact with fecal coliform and this advisory has been issued as a precautionary measure to protect the public's health.

Future Action. The CHA is currently notifying local newspapers, radio stations and providing information via the internet to get the word out to citizens as rapidly as possible about this advisory. The health agency will continue to monitor this situation until conditions return to normal.

This release as well as a **Frequently Asked Questions** guide regarding fecal coliform will be posted on the CHA website at:

www.bhsj.org/faqs