



**CITY OF THE DALLES**  
Department of Public Works  
1215 West 1<sup>st</sup> Street  
The Dalles, Oregon 97058

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## PRESS RELEASE

**DATE:** July 16, 2020

**TOPIC:** Wastewater Treatment Plant Discharge Continues to Exceed *E. coli* Limit

**CONTACT:** Public Works Department (541) 296-5401

**FOR RELEASE:** IMMEDIATELY

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Operations at the City of The Dalles Wastewater Treatment Plant are improving but are not yet back in compliance after a recent plant upset that resulted in discharge to the Columbia River of treated wastewater exceeding the plant's limit for *E. coli*.

A problem with the aeration system has been identified. Changes to the system have resulted in improvement. The City has added several loads of healthy biological process liquor to boost the treatment process. These measures are expected to restore the biological balance so that the plant can quickly return to normal operations.

The ultraviolet disinfection process remains ramped up to maximum capacity in an attempt to compensate for partially treated effluent due to the upset. Staff has increased the frequency of effluent sampling until *E. coli* counts are back within permit limits.

On Wednesday July 15, 2020 samples were taken at pre-arranged locations in the Columbia River to determine the effect of the discharge on water quality in the river. Tests on five samples taken between River Mile 186.5 (Rocky Island, to the west of the Columbia Gorge Discovery Center) and 189.5 (City of The Dalles wastewater treatment plant outfall) show that *E. coli* levels at the sample locations were well below bacterial [criteria](#) set by the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality for freshwater recreation.

<b>E. coli in recreational waters</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Maximum</b>
DEQ Criteria OAR 340-041-0009 Bacteria	126.0 MPN/100L (90-days)	406.0 MPN/100L
Results from samples taken between River Mile 186.5 and 189.5 on July 15, 2020	4.1 MPN/100L	6.3 MPN/100L

MPN = Most Probable Number

As a precaution, signs will remain in place at locations of public river access until the discharge from the wastewater treatment plant returns to compliance. Signs are posted on the Oregon shore of the Columbia River, from The Dalles Riverfront Park to West Mayer Park boat launch. The signs say: "Warning - Contaminated Water - No water contact" and give phone numbers to call for information.

The Department is in communication with the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality and local health department officials to coordinate response. Questions can be directed to the Public Works Department office at (541) 296-5401.

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