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DOH-MADISON ISSUES HEALTH ADVISORY NEAR WITHLACOOCHEE RIVER

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Madison, Fla.— The Florida Department of Health in Madison County (DOH-Madison) has issued a health advisory to residents and visitors near the Withlacoochee River in North Florida due to a wastewater overflow in the City of Valdosta, Georgia, from a recent weather event with excessive rain amounts. **Drinking water is not affected by this advisory.**

DOH-Madison, Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), and Suwanee River Water Management District are working together to assess and closely monitor the situation. As these assessments continue, we will provide updates to the public.

DEP plans to conduct sampling and testing this week along the Withlacoochee River. Until further information is known regarding possible bacterial contamination of the river, residents and visitors in the area are urged to take precautions when in contact with the Withlacoochee River.

Water contaminated with elevated fecal bacteria presents several health risks to humans. Microbes normally found with fecal bacteria could cause gastrointestinal issues and other conditions.

Anyone who comes in contact with the river water should wash thoroughly, especially before eating or drinking. Children and older adults, as well as people with weakened immune systems, are particularly vulnerable to disease, so every precaution should be taken if in contact with the river water.

For more information about the potential health effects of wastewater overflow, contact DOH-Madison at 850-973-5000 or visit Madison.FloridaHealth.gov.

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