

GREENFIELD

Testing confirms multiple parasites at Green River Swimming Area

By **MARY BYRNE**
Staff Writer

GREENFIELD — Following the lab-confirmed presence of multiple parasites in the water, the Green River Swimming Area will remain closed until further notice.

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

"I'm equally disappointed this is happening, certainly at the peak of the summer," said Recreation Director Christy Moore. "The heat and humidity and the decreased water flow with the drought conditions certainly have affected our river and our natural water sources in the area."

As of Thursday morning, lab results confirmed the presence of the parasites cryptosporidium and giardia, as well as elevated levels of *E. coli*, according to public health officials.

Cryptosporidium is a parasite that causes the diarrheal disease cryptosporidiosis, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). It can be found in water, food, soil or on surfaces or dirty hands that have been contaminated with the feces of humans or animals. The most common symptom of cryptosporidiosis is watery diarrhea, while other symptoms can include stomach pain, dehydration, nausea, vomiting, fever and weight loss.

Giardiasis, caused by the parasite giardia, is passed on through oral contact with infected feces. According to the CDC, the most common cause of giardiasis is from drinking contaminated water or exposure while swimming in recreational water such as lakes, rivers and pools. Short-term symptoms include diarrhea, gas, greasy stools, stomach cramps, nausea, vomiting and dehydration.

The Greenfield Health Department has confirmed that a child has been diagnosed with cryptosporidium and is recovering after receiving treatment. No cases of giardiasis have been identified.



STAFF PHOTOS/PAUL FRANZ

Following the lab-confirmed presence of multiple parasites in the water, the Green River Swimming Area will remain closed until further notice.

"Anyone who has gone swimming recently in the Green River and is experiencing symptoms should consult a physician," said Greenfield Health Director Jennifer Hoffman. "We are working with the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection and Department of Public Health to help pinpoint the source of these parasites and track any illnesses that result."

Hoffman previously said the city department was notified by the state Department of Public Health of a possible infection in the area, and that the Green River Swimming and Recreation Area was a place that person had recently been. Hoffman informed the Recreation Department on Tuesday, at which point the swimming area was closed to await testing results.

Moore, who said she was waiting to hear back from the Health Department regarding the protocol for moving forward, added that the Recreation Department has notified camp families who



have been in the water the last two weeks, as well as swim lesson families.

As for the upcoming Greenfield Triathlon, which is scheduled for Aug. 7, Moore said it is unclear at this point if the swimming area will be ready for the swim portion of the event.

"With the triathlon, we have to test the water within

the 72-hour window before the event," she explained. "In all the years I've been here, we've never had a situation where we've had these two (parasites), cryptosporidium and giardia."

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