

# Oregon's First Public Water System Algal Toxin Advisory – Lessons Learned

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# Statesman Journal

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Detroit Lake supplies Salem's drinking water. The latest test results for toxins in the water are expected Thursday.

U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

## Drinking water fouled

Children younger than 6 shouldn't drink from tap in Salem, other cities

**Zach Urness, Natalie Pate and Bill Poehler**

Salem Statesman Journal  
USA TODAY NETWORK

Low levels of toxins caused by algae blooms in Detroit Lake have been discovered in Salem's drinking water, prompting officials to warn parents not to give tap water to children under 6 years old.

People with compromised health and immune systems also are being told not to drink tap water.

Other affected cities include Turner and Stayton.

Bottled water should be used for drinking, making infant formula, making ice and preparing food and beverages for the affected groups, officials said.

"Children under the age of six, people with compromised immune systems, people receiving dialysis treatment, people with pre-existing liver conditions, pets, pregnant women or nursing mothers, or other sensitive populations should follow this advisory," a news release states.

Salem-Keizer Public Schools will offer bottled water for students who are pre-K through first grade, district offi-



Water from Detroit Lake, where the algae was first detected last week, flows down the North Santiam River and becomes Salem's drinking water.

MOLLY J. SMITH/STATESMAN JOURNAL FILE

11 questions answered on Salem's water warning

**Jonathan Bach and Bill Poehler**  
Salem Statesman Journal  
USA TODAY NETWORK

Salem city officials issued a do-not-drink advisory Tuesday following the detection of low levels of toxins in city drinking water pulled from the North Santiam River.

The advisory affects children under 6 years old and vulnerable populations, such as nursing mothers and dialysis patients. Officials are urging them to drink bottled water.

**Is there something that can be done to treat the water so it is safe to drink?**

David Farrer, a public health toxicologist with the Oregon Health Authority, said there really isn't anything to be done to treat the water.

Boiling the water doesn't work; camping filters don't work; nor do the filters that attach to faucets. Farrer said it's best for children and others in vulnerable populations to not drink the water until the advisory is lifted.

**What are cyanotoxins?**

A common bacteria called cyanobac-

### Affected communities

Detroit

Gates	Mill City
Jefferson	Salem
Lyons	Stayton
Mehama	Turner

# Salem's Drinking Water Source and System



May 21<sup>st</sup> 2018 at Blowout creek



SALEM  
AT YOUR SERVICE  
Date: 5-21-18 Time: 11:00 AM  
Sample ID: B0  
Analysis: Algal count

*Dolichospermum lemmermannii*



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# Overview of Microcystin Data

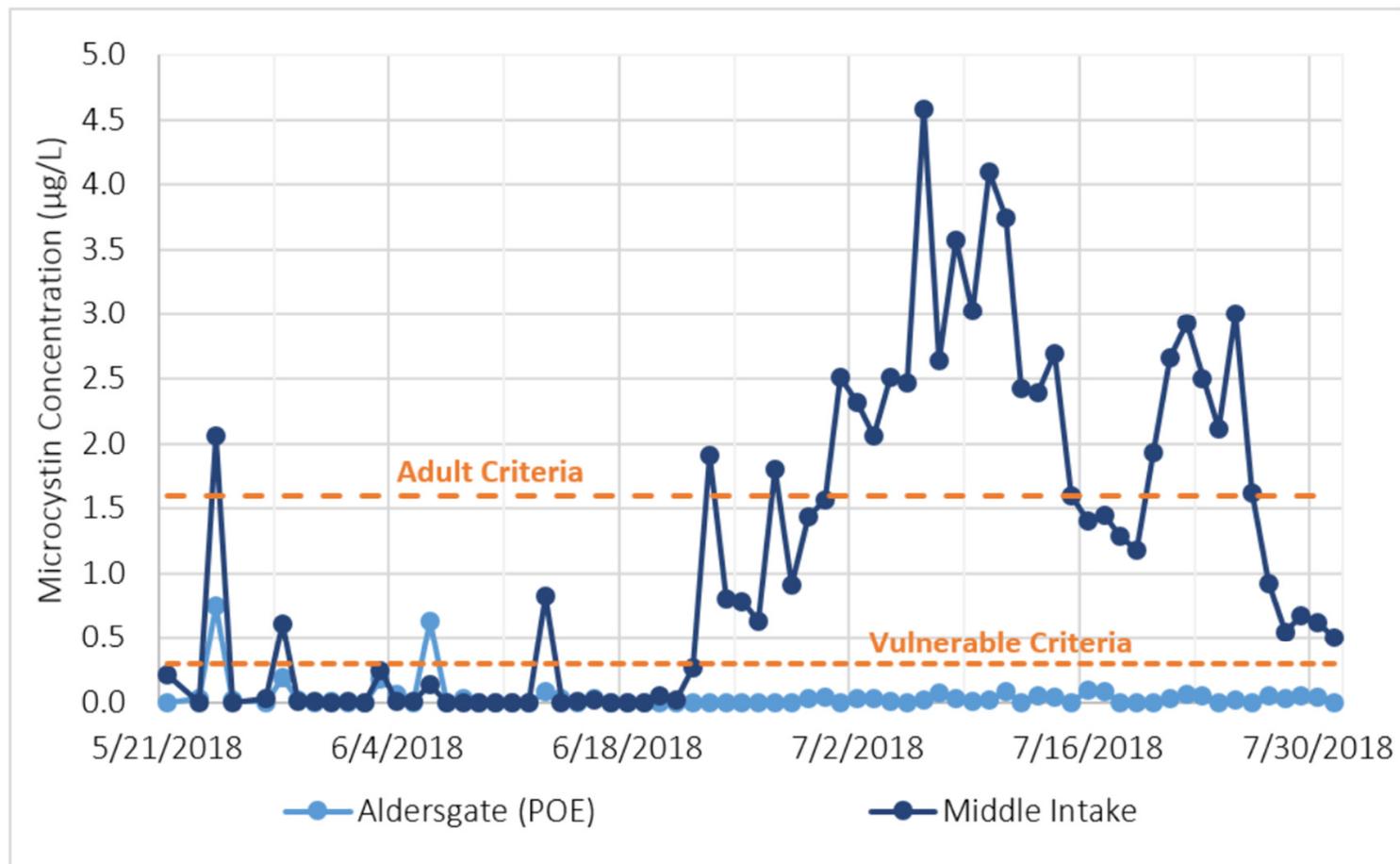
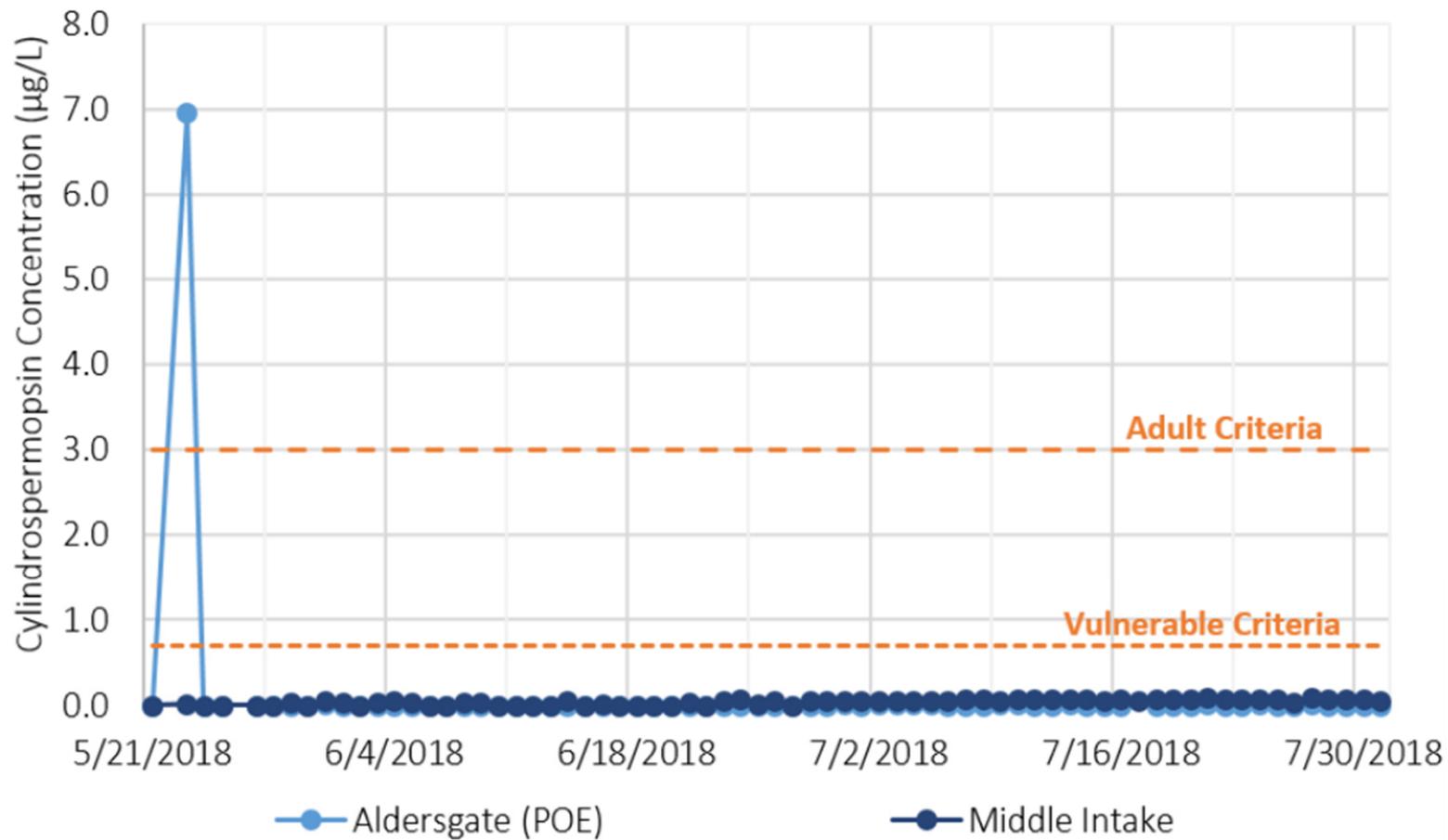


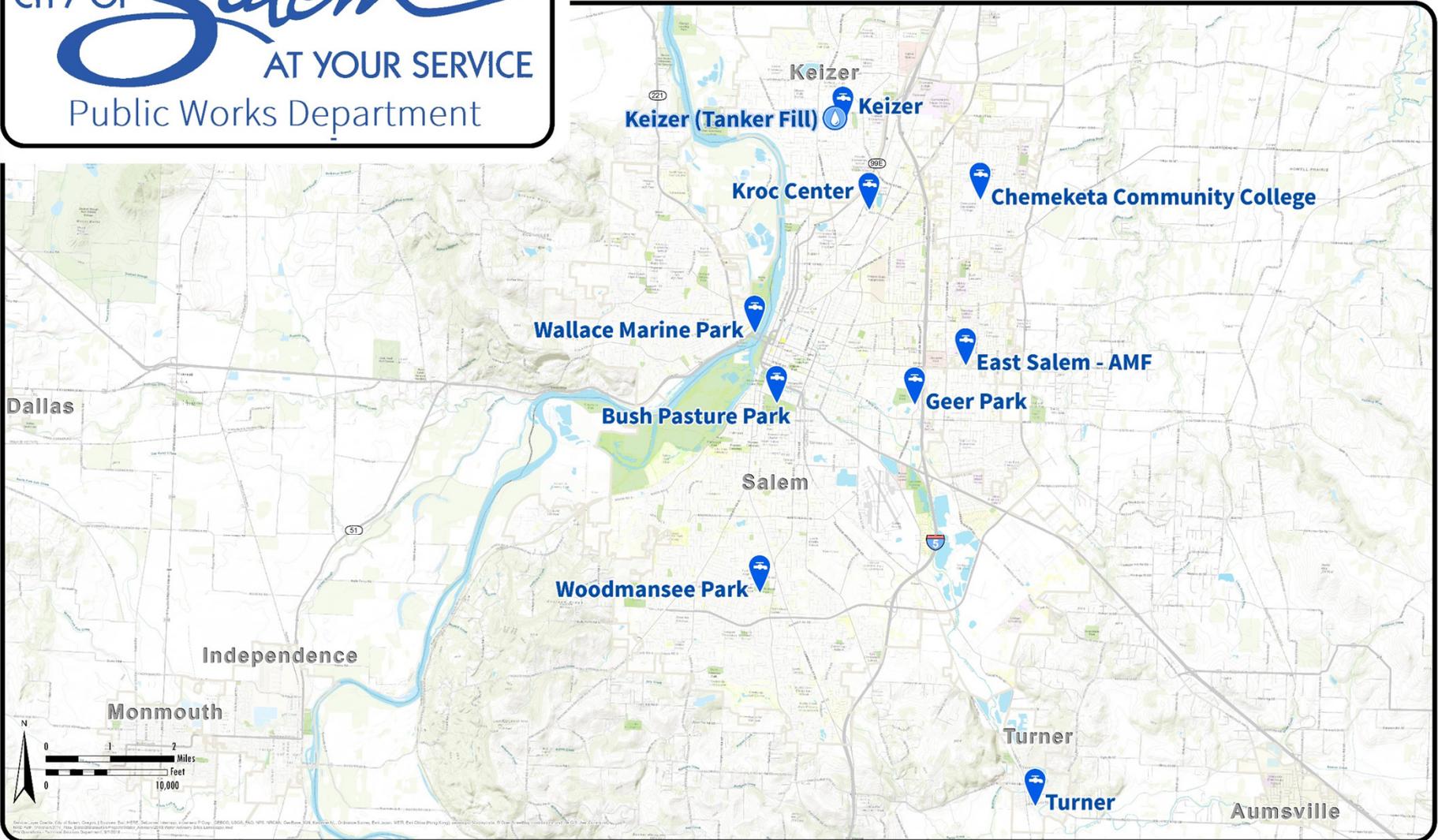
Figure 2.2 Microcystin Concentrations at the GIWTF Intake and Aldersgate (POE)

# Overview of Cylindrospermopsin Data





# Water Distribution Stations



## Bottled Water

- Initially distributed at sites
- Dumping water
- Went to gallon jugs
- Finally stopped

## Home Delivery

- **Vulnerable populations**
  - Called hotline
  - Need evaluated
  - Water was also available at Marion/Polk County Food Share



# BYOC

- Bring your own container.
- Bags were too small.
- Worked well – except!



# Dispensing water

- County Health concerns
- Modified dispensing systems
- Staff fill containers



Questions?

