

# Appeal Tribune

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## Researchers find toxin that tainted drinking water in '18

Cassandra Profita  
OPB

A new study pinpoints the type of toxic algae that bloomed in Detroit Lake in 2018 and made the drinking water in Salem potentially hazardous for some people to drink.

Theo Dreher, emeritus professor of microbiology at Oregon State University, led an effort to collect samples from 10 lakes that face the risk of harmful algae blooms. The blooms produce toxins that can cause health problems for people, dogs and wildlife.

Dreher and fellow researchers analyzed the genetics of the microscopic cyanobacteria, also known as blue-green algae, in the samples.

The results, published this month in the journal Harmful Algae, revealed new information about exactly which cyanobacteria organisms produce specific toxins.

"And that's sort of important, because once you know that organism you can study it in isolation and start to look at the factors that lead to its massive growth in a bloom," Dreher said. "You really can't get to the bottom of why these blooms are being produced without specific information."

Dreher said knowing which organisms to study will be key to learning how to prevent harmful algal blooms in the future.

His study found two types of cyanobacteria in Oregon's Detroit Lake that were producing two different toxins. One of the toxins is known as cylindrospermopsin and the other is an uncommon form of microcystin, a recognized liver toxin.

In 2018, both toxins were found in Salem tap water. Authorities issued health advisories to alert vulnera-

See TOXIN, Page 3A



A new study found two cyanobacteria created toxins found in Detroit Lake in 2018. BRIAN HAYES / STATESMAN JOURNAL



Kroc Center lifeguard Tyler Rogers, 18, watches the pool on Monday, June 13 at the Kroc Center in Salem. ABIGAIL DOLLINS/STATESMAN JOURNAL

## 'Turned on its head'

Teenagers have never had a better job market

Edith Noriega | Salem Statesman Journal

The first official day of summer is less than a week away, and that means thousands of local high school and college students will be looking for jobs. • In summer 2022, teens who want to work are in the driver's seat like never before. With the unemployment rate near a 50-year low and businesses desperate to find workers as the economy rebounds from the pandemic, teens are finding more openings and better pay. • The Salvation Army KROC Center in Salem is gearing up for its busiest season this summer, but just like the rest of the country, it's been dealing with a shortage of lifeguards to hire.

See JOBS, Page 2A

## Evictions are rising in Oregon, but an eviction notice isn't the end

Bill Poehler  
Salem Statesman Journal  
USA TODAY NETWORK

Andrew Kamis opened the front door of his West Salem apartment one morning in July 2021 and a piece of paper was taped to it. It was a 10-day notice of eviction.

Oregon's freeze on evictions had expired days earlier. Kamis paid part of that month's rent before the notice, but was struggling to come up with the rest. He went to Mid-Willamette Valley Community Action Agency seeking financial help, but was referred elsewhere. After days of scrambling, he gave up on finding the few hundred dollars he owed.

Eight days after the notice, Kamis decided he didn't want to cause problems and vacated his

See EVICTIONS, Page 3A



Andrew Kamis poses for a portrait at Geer Park in Salem on Jan. 21. Kamis moved out and became homeless after receiving one eviction notice. BRIAN HAYES/SALEM STATESMAN JOURNAL

## US adds \$103M for wildfire hazards, land rehab

Keith Ridler  
ASSOCIATED PRESS

BOISE, Idaho – The U.S. is adding \$103 million this year for wildfire risk reduction and burned-area rehabilitation throughout the country as well as establishing an interagency wildland firefighter health and well-being program, Interior Secretary Deb Haaland announced Friday.

Haaland made the announcement following a briefing on this year's wildfire season at the National Interagency Fire Center in Boise, which coordinates the nation's wildland firefighting efforts.

The U.S. is having one of its worst starts to the wildfire season with more than 30,000 wildfires that have scorched 4,600 square miles. That's well above the 10-year average for the same period, about 23,500 wildfires and 1,800 square miles burned.

About \$80 million will be used to speed up work removing potential wildfire hazards on more than 3,000 square miles of Interior Department lands, a 30% increase over last year. Another \$20 million will be used to bolster post-wildfire landscape recovery.

The money is coming from the \$1 trillion infrastructure deal President Joe Biden signed late last year.

"As wildfire seasons become longer, more intense and more dangerous, President Biden's Bipartisan Infrastructure Law is bringing much-needed support to communities across the country to increase the resilience of lands and better support federal wildland firefighters," Haaland said.

The firefighter well-being program that includes the Forest Service will address physical and mental health needs for seasonal and year-round wildland firefighters, and will include post-traumatic stress disorder care. The fire center in recent years has started making efforts to encourage firefighters to seek mental health help after an increase in wildland firefighter suicides.

"Wildland firefighters work in incredibly stressful environments that can take a significant toll on their overall health and well-being, as well as on those who love them," Haaland said. "Standing up a targeted inter-agency effort to provide trauma-informed mental health care is critical."

The Interior Department's program will establish year-round prevention and mental-health training for wildland firefighters. The Interior Department's Office of Wildland Fire will help create a new system for trauma support services that emphasizes early intervention.

About \$3 million will be used for climate-related research that includes landscape resiliency, prescribed fire, carbon storage and greenhouse gas and smoke emissions.

Some of the money will be used to continue developing a wildfire risk mapping and mitigation tool that's being developed by the Forest Service and the National Association of State Foresters. That tool could help identify high-risk areas and make them a priority for treatment.

"We work with fire years now – it's no longer a fire season," said Jeff Rupert, the Interior Department's director of the Office of Wildland Fire, who took part in Friday's announcement. "That means that we have to do the hard work of reducing fire risk and recovering after fires at the same time that we're responding to fires."

With the latest financial support, "we're investing in all of these phases," he said.

Haaland also visited the U.S. Geological Survey in Boise, where scientists are working to better understand the sagebrush steppe in the U.S. West that has been plagued with giant wildfires in recent decades as invasive species, notably cheatgrass, have moved in. Scientists want to make the areas more resistant to wildfires and help them recover.

"The science is ongoing," Haaland said. "I want you to know that all of us – all of the departments, the bureaus, the offices at the Department of the Interior, of which the USGS is one – we're all working together to make sure that the science compliments the work that the firefighters are doing."

Wildfire seasons have become increasingly longer as climate change has made the West much warmer and drier in the past 30 years, and scientists have long warned that the weather will get wilder as the world warms.

"One thing is profoundly clear," Haaland said. "Climate change will continue to make fires in the West larger, and we must continue to invest in conservation of our ecosystem. Nature is our greatest ally in our fight against climate change."

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