




MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor and Council Members

FROM: Katie Coyne, Environmental Officer, Assistant Director
Watershed Protection Department

THROUGH: Jorge L. Morales, P.E., CFM, Director
Watershed Protection Department 

DATE: August 4, 2022

SUBJECT: Monitoring Barton Springs Pool

The purpose of this memorandum is to inform you about recent monitoring for toxins associated with harmful algae in Barton Springs pool.

Staff from the Watershed Protection Department and Austin Public Health have tested water samples taken from Barton Springs Pool after being notified that a dog died shortly after swimming in Barking Springs, the area located at the spillway below the pool. Two samples were taken, one from the upper, shallow section of the pool and one from the lower, deeper section. We received results from those samples on July 28, 2022. The sample taken from the upper section resulted in 0.029 µg/L of Anatoxin-a. These are trace amounts and are far below levels of concern. No toxins were detected in the samples taken from the lower section.

As an extra precaution, staff took additional water samples in the same areas of the pool on August 1. Those results were received the following day and showed no detection of Anatoxin-a at either location.

The water samples taken represent the general exposure risk for swimmers at Barton Springs. They were sampled from the top of the water and include any algae cells or filaments that were present. The World Health Organization* (WHO) uses a guidance threshold of 6 µg/L of Anatoxin-a in drinking water for children and infants, and 30 µg/L for adults. The WHO guidance threshold for recreational use is 60 µg/L. The results from our two sampling events at Barton Springs pool are presented below.

Sample Location	Date	Result
Barton Springs, Upper section	7/15/2022	0.029 µg/L Anatoxin a
Barton Springs, Lower section	7/15/2022	No toxin detected
Barton Springs, Upper section	8/1/2022	No toxin detected
Barton Springs, Lower section	8/1/2022	No toxin detected

Watershed Protection will continue to collaborate with our partners at Austin Public Health and Parks and Recreation to assess public health risk factors and determine when future monitoring in Barton Springs Pool and the area known as Barking Springs is warranted. We are committed to working closely with our partners to support the health and safety of our community.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

cc: Spencer Cronk, City Manager
Anne Morgan, Acting City Manager
CMO Executive Team
Kimberly McNeeley, Director of Parks and Recreation Department
Adrienne Sturrup, Director of Austin Public Health
Jodi Jay, Assistant Director of Parks and Recreation Department
Sara Hartley, Assistant Director of Watershed Protection Department