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FLOODING BRINGS POTENTIALLY DANGEROUS SEWAGE OVERFLOWS TO NORTH ALABAMA

The heavy rain and recent stretch of flooding has caused many Sanitary Sewage Overflows throughout the state. It makes the waters much more dangerous than you might think.

The flooding throughout North Alabama isn't just causing property damage, *it can pose a major health risk as well.*

Aundra Parker lives in Madison County and likes to fish in his free time, but environmentalists say *after a major flooding the waters become a public health hazard.*

"I've never seen this lake or lakes flood before, especially to the point of road closures," Parker said.

David Whiteside, executive director of the Tennessee Riverkeeper, said *his team counted more than 220 Sanitary Sewage Overflows (SSOs) over the past two weeks throughout North Alabama.* He says the combination of overflows and run-off is *generating more bacteria and pathogens in the waters.*

"Whenever we have heavy rains and flooding, the amount of pollution and discharges increases exponentially," Whiteside said.

One of the biggest concerns when *being around the polluted water is infection.* One splash of water can cause an infection.

"I do kind of prick my hand sometimes on the hooks and that's concerning," Parker says.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, contaminated waters after a flood can lead to infections, skin rashes, and even tetanus.

"Anybody that has an open wound or comes in contact with the water, especially with your face or your orifices, *they can get sick or get their open wounds infected,*" Whiteside said.

Sewage overflows also contaminate the fish. If eaten or not cleaned properly, it could *cause a severe stomach illness.* Whiteside also says you should *watch your pets around flood water.* If they get in contact with the dirty water, the bacteria could track back into your house.

These SSOs are still happening right now. An active map by the Alabama Department of Environmental Management shows ongoing overflows throughout the state. In Huntsville, there are more than 30 active SSOs all a result from flooding.

Now that Parker knows about the *health risks he can't see,* he is going to be much more cautious around the water.

"I'm engaged in hobby that's involved in the water so I'm definitely going to look at it differently," Parker said.

To find out if a Sanitary Sewage Overflow is happening where you live, <http://gis.adem.alabama.gov/sso/index.html>