



BEACH

Currents

State and Local Beach Health Innovations and Success Stories

Winter 2005

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Beach Currents is designed to promote communication among state, tribal, and local public health officials about beach protection activities. This second edition features the first National Beaches Conference and Great Lakes' beach programs. We encourage all beach management professionals to submit articles sharing their successes and challenges. To submit an article or to get more information about the EPA Beaches Program, call 202-566-0444 or send an e-mail to ost-beaches@epa.gov.

EPA Declares First National Beaches Conference a Glowing Success

The National Beach Program's first national meeting for state and local beach managers from across the country was held on October 13-15, 2004, in San Diego, California. The conference was considered a glowing success by all who attended. In attendance were representatives of all but three of the 36 Beach Act states and territories, at least two inland states, and Canada, Mexico, and the United Kingdom.

Attendees recognized the progress in developing state beach programs four years after passage of the BEACH Act in 2000. They also recognized significant technological advances in developing rapid methods for microbial analysis and microbial source tracking techniques. Several examples presented at the conference confirmed innovative program development in states where beach programs did not exist before Congress passed the BEACH Act.



Bryan "Ibrahim" Goodwin

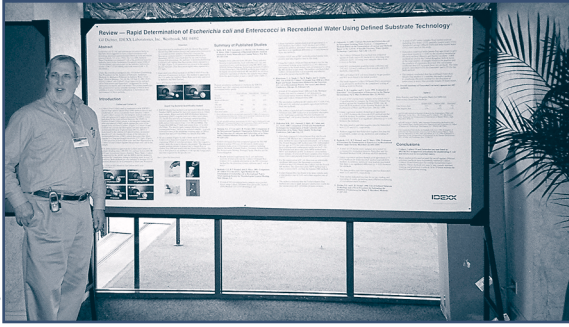
Each state is finding creative ways of working through their unique combination of state and local laws and existing beach monitoring programs. For example, in Maine, where beach monitoring has historically been done at the local level, the new state beach manager regularly approaches localities and invites them to participate in the state beach monitoring program. Participation is not mandatory; however, the majority of the localities see the benefit of being part of the state beach program. The state beach manager in Maine is also working with a marketing company to

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develop outreach materials to increase public awareness about:

- water quality at beaches,
- potential health risks,
- the advantages of monitoring for fecal indicators, and
- public notification when counts are high.

Maryland has a long history of beach monitoring at the local level, sometimes including

regular monitoring and posting. In the past few years the Maryland state beach manager has developed a program in which state and local public health officials share resources. The result is increased credibility in the monitoring and notification approach and better consistency in health protection for the beach-going public.

The BEACH Act requires public notification when bacterial indicator counts are higher than the water quality criteria limit. This can have serious economic impacts for the surrounding community. Dr. Linwood Pendleton from the University of California at Los Angeles School of Public Health presented research showing analysis of costs of beach closures and costs of illness.

EPA's Office of Research and Development presented results of epidemiology studies, including development of rapid methods.

They have conducted epidemiological studies for the past two years at four Great Lakes beaches. Results from the Mission Bay Epidemiology study, conducted by the Southern California Coastal Water Research Project were also presented.

A panel discussion on the second day of the conference was designed to promote frank and open discussion of beach monitoring and beach program issues. The questions were addressed by panel members all with different areas of expertise and experience relating to federal and state environmental policy, beach water quality, health, and monitoring. After the panel members addressed the questions, the questions were then put out to conference attendees for discussion and questions to the panel. Panel members were Denise Keehner, Division Director for the Standard and Health Protection Division at the US EPA; Dr. Shannon Briggs, beach manager for the state of Michigan; Monica Mazur from the Orange County California Health Care Agency; Mark Gold from Heal the Bay; and Dr. Rachel Noble, faculty at the University of North Carolina Marine Science Program.

The two questions posed to the panel were:

1. After everything that you have heard here, what are the areas of the EPA beach program that need the largest improvement given existing technologies? How can federal, state, and local programs work together most effectively?

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2. We've heard about new technological developments—what is the role of EPA in the development of these technologies and where should their priorities be placed?

State beach managers were able to meet and network with other state beach managers from across the country, and to hear about ongoing research related to beach monitoring. Researchers were able to hear about research needs from the people who are making daily

decisions on beach water quality. Several states presented examples of how beach monitoring lead to identifying sources of sewage contamination, which lead to putting a stop to the source and resulted in a cleaner beach.

Proceedings from the conference will be available on CD in February and will include text of the panel discussion, and questions and answers after the presentations.

Storm Water Monitoring Enhances Local Beach Program in Ohio

The Ohio Department of Health (ODH) has administered a Bathing Beach Water Quality Program since the mid-1970s. It's a cooperative effort among the ODH, the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, public and private organizations along the Lake Erie shoreline, and local health departments with beaches in their jurisdictions. The ODH encourages local health departments to develop their own monitoring programs, but such programs are not mandatory. The ODH's program also provides an incentive for developing predictive models to assess water quality, adding preemptive warning systems for public notification, and identifying and eliminating potential sources of pollution.

In May 1993, the Cuyahoga County Board of Health (CCBH) adopted regulations requiring a Bathing Beach Water Quality Program to protect the public from health risks associated with swimming in bathing waters. Cuyahoga County is along the Lake Erie shoreline in northeast Ohio. At the beginning of the program, sanitary surveys were conducted on all known bathing beaches. These surveys looked at factors that could harm the health and safety of bathers. A key component of these surveys was identifying potential sources of pollution, such as storm drains (outfalls), sewage systems, wastewater treatment plants, industrial outlets, animal enclosures, and erosion areas.

Located in Parma, Ohio, and within the Cleveland Metropolitan Area, the CCBH is responsible for two public beaches and 13 private beaches. The beaches are scattered throughout the county, along inland lakes and along the Lake Erie shoreline. The CCBH samples the public beaches four days a week and the private beaches once or twice a month. They collect water samples from Memorial Day through Labor Day and analyze them for the presence of *Escherichia coli* bacteria. The CCBH also routinely collects effluent samples from any storm sewer outfalls on or near the beaches and tests the samples for *E. coli* bacteria that might affect beach water quality.

The CCBH received BEACH Act funds from the ODH in 2003 to reevaluate its program to meet the objectives of the BEACH Act. Their overall goal was to develop a comprehensive, risk-based bathing beach monitoring and public notification program. To help classify the beaches, they identified shoreline storm sewer outfalls and streams in the vicinity of the beaches. Twenty locations (11 storm sewer outfalls and nine streams) accessible for sampling were identified, and they sampled these locations once a week for *E. coli* bacteria during the 2003 recreation season.

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The sampling results revealed that 16 of the 20 locations had significant potential to affect beach water quality. It is important to note that several significant storms occurred during the 2003 recreation season, which might have contributed to elevated bacteria levels. Nonetheless, they identified elevated concentrations of *E. coli* at most of the sampling locations even during dry weather conditions. They will provide the data to the municipalities where samples were taken. The CCBH expects that the municipalities will participate in investigating potential sources of pollution that might be contributing to elevated bacterial levels.

Urban areas often have antiquated sewer infrastructures, including both storm sewer and sanitary sewer systems. These systems

ing into Big Creek from a storm sewer outfall. They collected fecal coliform samples from several upstream storm sewer manholes in an attempt to isolate the area from which the sewage was originating. They also conducted dye testing on the apartment buildings and local businesses to identify the exact source of the problem. The CCBH determined that permits had been obtained several years ago to connect the properties to a sanitary sewer, but either the connections were not made or proper connections and inspections were not conducted. The problem was resolved through a cooperative effort between city and county officials to upgrade the sewer system to allow for proper connections. These properties have since been properly connected to a sanitary sewer, and the flow of sewage to Big Creek has ceased.

In addition, storm lines such as downspouts and sump pumps are often connected to a sanitary sewer. In these situations, heavy rains can lead overload local wastewater treatment plants, sometimes resulting in the release of partially treated sewage into local waterways. Storm water can therefore have tremendous impacts on beach water quality.

The CCBH also used Beach Act funds to improve public notification by disseminating beach water quality data. Beginning with the 2003 recreation season, Cleveland's primary newspaper, *The Plain Dealer*, published a weekly beach report (see below). Because of their large audience, *The Plain Dealer* published water quality data for all the northeast Ohio Lake Erie public beaches, encompassing four counties.

Another event impacting beach water quality was the Blackout of 2003, which affected most of the state of Ohio. On August 14, 2003, a power outage resulted in the release of sewage into the waters that flow to Lake Erie from wastewater treatment plants. Several municipal sanitary lift stations stopped

Eight apartment buildings constructed in the 1950s were connected to the storm sewer rather than the sanitary sewer, causing raw sewage to flow into a local creek. The CCBH discovered this problem during a routine stream assessment...

were often designed to overflow during heavy rains to prevent basement flooding. Sanitary sewer bypasses can also occur when there is a blockage in the system, allowing the release of sewage into the storm sewer system. Older communities in urban areas are also prone to individual home and business cross-connections, where sanitary lines are connected to a storm sewer. An example of this was recently observed in the Cleveland Metropolitan Area. Eight apartment buildings constructed in the 1950s were connected to the storm sewer rather than the sanitary sewer, causing raw sewage to flow into a local creek. The CCBH discovered this problem during a routine stream assessment on Big Creek, a tributary to the Cuyahoga River. Raw sewage was flow-

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operating, releasing even more sewage. Many Lake Erie beaches were closed as a precaution due to expected elevated bacteria levels. The beaches were later opened and operated under water quality advisories until bacteria levels returned to the recommended standards.

For more information on the Cuyahoga County Board of Health's Bathing Beach Water Quality Program please contact Jill Lis, R.S., Program Manager, Division of Environmental Health, (216) 201-2001, x 1240, jlis@ccbh.net, www.ccbh.net.

Great Lakes Beach Association Annual Conference

The Great Lakes Beach Association Annual Conference took place in Parma, Ohio on November 30 and December 1, 2004. There were 102 registered participants. All great lake states were represented. Participants included staff from local health departments, universities, state agencies (environmental quality, parks and recreation, community health, and natural resources), and federal agencies (US EPA, USGS), students and vendors.

Presentations and posters included a summary of the national conference, updates from state beach programs, redevelopment efforts along urban shorelines, epidemiology studies on the great lakes, comparison

results of microbial source tracking methods, remediation of urban run off, forecasting/modeling, lake and watershed surveys of water borne pathogens including algal toxins and *cryptosporidium*, updates of rapid test methods, and effects of shore slope and groundwater interactions.

The Great Lakes Beach Association will meet again in Green Bay, Wisconsin on November 2 and 3, 2005. Conference presentations will be on the web page soon <http://www.great-lakes.net/glba/2004conference.html>



National Study Looks at Beach-goers' Risk of Waterborne Illness

The National Epidemiological and Environmental Assessment of Recreational (NEEAR) Water Study Team just completed its second season of data collection. Next year, they expect to select a marine beach, signaling the end of the freshwater portion of the study.

Swimming in water of poor quality can cause stomach, respiratory, eye and ear illnesses. The NEEAR Water Study was designed to assess the risks of waterborne illness to beach-goers and test a new generation of water quality tests that produce faster results. The new water quality tests will give results in two hours or less (rather than the standard 24 hours), allowing beach managers to test the

water in the morning and make reliable fast decisions about the information they should provide about beach waters before visitors go to the beach. The goals of the study are to prevent swimming-related illnesses and improve the quality of the water for recreation.

Thus far, the team has been highly successful in collecting epidemiological and water quality information. To date, the study was conducted at four Great Lakes Beaches (West Beach, Indiana; Huntington Beach, Ohio; Washington Park, Indiana; and Silver Beach, Michigan). Volunteers were recruited in the beach areas and asked to provide information

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about their activities and health status after beach visits.

The NEEAR Water Study is collaborative research between the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and local public health organizations. You can find more information on the study at the NEEAR Web site at www.epa.gov/nheerl/near/.



EPA Finalizes Rule to Improve Health at the Nation's Beaches

On November 8, 2004, EPA Administrator Mike Leavitt signed a final regulation that helps improve the health of the Nation's beaches on coastal and Great Lakes waters. The final rule established more protective health-based federal bacteria standards for states and territories bordering Great Lakes or ocean waters that have not yet adopted standards as required by the BEACH Act of 2000. These federal water quality standards are part of the Administration's Clean Beaches Plan, which also includes grants to states and territories for beach monitoring and

public notification programs, technical guidance, and scientific studies.

Of the 35 states and territories that have coastal or Great Lakes recreational waters, EPA found that 14 have adopted water quality standards that are as protective of health as EPA's recommended criteria for all their coastal recreation waters, five have adopted the criteria for some of their coastal recreation waters, 13 states are in the process adopting the criteria, and three have not begun the process. Although the agency established federal standards through this final rule, any state that adopts its own standards that are as protective as EPA's and receives approval will be removed from the federal requirements.

EPA will continue to grant funding to all eligible states and territories regardless of their status under this action. The agency is committed to ensuring continued monitoring of the Nation's beaches and public notification of beach closures and advisories. EPA has provided about \$32 million in grants to help states implement this monitoring program.

You can find more information about the new criteria and the rule at www.epa.gov/water-science/beaches/bacteria-rule-final-fs.htm.



Junk or Jewels: Hidden Rewards of Beach Monitoring

It's never easy to walk up a sand dune. Even elite runners "feel the burn" as their feet sink into the sand with each step. We walk up Mount Baldy every day, and when we reach the beach, we collect our water samples. We could call ourselves the "samplers," or "the ones who do the dirty work," or even the "beach glass collectors." It's 6:30 in the morning. The sun pokes over the horizon. The lake water glistens as the waves slowly rumble. We heave up the infamous Mount Baldy and witness nature's wonders as we reach the peak.

For two intense months in the summer of 2004, we sampled six sites along Mount Baldy and Central Beaches in Porter County, Indiana. Sure, it was a great summer job—out at the beach every day! Eventually, we could count the number of steps between Mount Baldy 1 and 2. We knew exactly when the guy on the four-wheeler would drive by to pick up the trash. It didn't take too long for the repetition to eat at us, and we needed a way to spice up the sampling. After all, we walked between 2 and 3 miles daily on the beach to collect these samples. By the Fourth of July, Alissa had a plan: Collect the beach glass.

Beach glass ... sounds like trash. Trash? Quite possibly. Beach glass is simply that—pieces of glass found on the beach. The "acceptable" pieces are those worn down by the sand so much that they are smooth to the touch. To Stacey, our hard-core environmentalist, we were doing the National Park Service a favor collecting the beach glass. To Alissa, Jessica, and me, it was a contest to see who could collect the prettiest pieces or the most pieces or the very rare blue pieces. If the edges were sharp, however, Alissa would instruct us to throw the piece back into the lake, in hopes that it would come out a week later, sanded down and smooth.

By far, the clear pieces are the most abundant. The beach glass is mostly, we figure,

pieces of beer or pop bottles thrown down somewhere north of us in Lake Michigan, only to land by our feet on Central Beach. At the southern tip of Lake Michigan, we were fortunate enough to collect the discarded glass from probably anywhere north of us on the shoreline.

Now what? We had a huge bag full of beach glass sitting in the lab. Alissa and I proposed putting it in a jar and passing it back and forth when we visited each other at college. Stacey was a little more creative. She suggested purchasing wire, thin leather rope, and a few metal pieces. The end result would be beach glass necklaces. Thus, one Friday the four of us went on a mission to find beach glass necklace supplies. We were successful, and after careful consideration and some trial and error, we ended up with at least a dozen different beach glass necklaces.

Hopefully, all the data compiled from our water sampling will give our bosses, Richard Whitman and Meredith Nevers, new thoughts and ideas regarding the relationship between water chemistry and *E. coli* counts. In the summer of 2004, we collected more than 6 water samples and 25 conductivity measurements a day. We also assembled a fantastic beach glass collection, made some nifty necklaces, and in our own way helped clean up the shores of Lake Michigan. Our necklaces not only remind us of the sampling of the summer of 2004 but also symbolize the friendships the four of us formed along the shore in those 2 months.

*Cassie Peller, United States Geological Survey
Porter, Indiana*

For my sampling buddies Alissa Bishel, Stacey Byers, and Jessica Hardesty

Calendar of Events

January 24-27, 2005

International Conference on Remediation of Contaminated Sediments

New Orleans, LA

This meeting will focus on ecological and human health risk assessments, sediment stability, evaluating the effectiveness of remedies, defining what constitutes a successful remedy, and how to manage cleanups in ports and harbors. Sponsored by Battelle. Contact Joan Purvis at 800-783-6338 or info@confgroupinc.com for more information.

February 1-3, 2005

Surface Water Monitoring and Standards (SWiMS) Meeting

Chicago, IL

The SWiMS meeting is an annual State/Tribal/EPA technical coordinators meeting aimed at sharing monitoring successes and challenges, learning about the most up-to-date scientific information, and discussing programmatic issues. The meeting will cover a wide range of current topics including such topics as nutrient criteria, modeling and other predictive tools, sediment in water quality management, use of biological data, wetlands monitoring and assessment, and others. It will be held at the Allerton Crowne-Plaza Hotel. Contact Holly Arrigoni at arrigoni.holly@epa.gov or visit the website <http://www.epa.gov/region5/water/wqb/swims.htm> for more information.

February 7

Workshop for Southern Communities Crowne Plaza Hotel

Warwick, RI

February 11

Workshop for Northern Communities Urban Forestry Ctr.

Portsmouth, NH

NEIWPCC and EPA New England are co-hosting two workshops to provide tools and guidance for beach managers, state and local health officials, public works departments, park managers, town managers, and elected officials interested in reducing and preventing beach closures. These workshops are part of the Clean New England Beaches Initiative and will provide tools and guidance for state and local governments interested in reducing beach closures. Representatives from both marine and freshwater beach communities are encouraged to attend. Speakers will be from state and local communities who have experience in reducing beach closures. For additional information, contact Susy King at NEIWPCC, 978-323-7929, sking@neiwpcc.org

February 15-18, 2005

Major Accomplishments And Future Directions In Public Health Microbiology Workshop

Columbus, OH

This workshop, sponsored by the Office of Water Quality, National Water-Quality Assessment Program, and the USGS Ohio District will include presentations and discussions regarding USGS activities with public health microbiology related to research, source tracking, and monitoring. The deadline for meeting and hotel registration is January 8, 2005. Visit the following website for information on the workshop preliminary agenda, accommodations, and the workshop registration form: <http://water.usgs.gov/owq/meetings/microbiology/index.html>. For those interested, a short course titled, "Microbiological Sampling And Analysis Laboratory Hands-On Session" will be given on February 15. The short course includes 1 day of lectures, demonstrations, and hands-on activities. For more information, contact Donna Francy (dsfrancy@usgs.gov) or Becca Bushon (rnbushon@usgs.gov).

March 9-11, 2005

2005 American Shore and Beach Preservation Association Summit

Washington, DC

The American Shore and Beach Preservation Association will bring beach movers and shakers together with federal policy makers at its March 9-11 2005 Summit in Washington, DC, to focus on "Defending America's Embattled Coastal Resources." The summit, timed to coincide with the start of the federal appropriations process, will include a full day of lobbying and learning on Capitol Hill, as well as working sessions with Members of Congress, Corps officials and key federal staffers at the Washington Court Hotel (the summit headquarters). The Capitol Hill sessions will include a working lunch with members of the Congressional Coastal Caucus, as well as an awards reception in the Capitol that evening. For more information visit the ASBPA Web site at www.asbpa.org. A limited number of rooms are available at the Washington Court, so those interested in staying on-site should call (800) 321-3010 or (202) 628-2100 before the early-registration deadline of February 4.

June 9-11, 2005

2005 Great Lakes Conference and IJC Biennial Meeting on Water Quality

Kingston, Ontario

This International Joint Commission meeting will focus on the current science and issues regarding

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Calendar of Events

the health of the Great Lakes and include breakout sessions and specific in-depth discussions a wide range of topics fundamental to the review of the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement and its future. Contact Jennifer Day at 519-257-6733 or dayj@windsor.ijc.org for more information.

July 18-21, 2005

StormCon '05 Orlando, FL

The 4th Annual North American Surface Water Quality Conference and Exposition, this event will feature a focused series of forty workshops designed specifically to provide the information needed to solve a community's surface water quality problems. Contact Steve Di Giorgi at (805) 682-1300, ext. 129 or stevedg@forester.net for more information.

July 17-22, 2005

Coastal Zone '05 New Orleans, LA

Sponsored by NOAA Coastal Services Center, Coastal Zone is the premier conference for the world's coastal resource managers. The 14th installment of the biennial conference series focuses on balancing the issues and interests of land and sea. With over 1,000 participants expected from all over the world, this conference promises to provide valuable tools, lessons learned, and new ideas to help address the coastal management issues we're all facing. This conference will be held at the New Orleans Marriott. Contact Jan Kucklick at Jan.Kucklick@noaa.gov or (843) 740-1279 for more information.

July 19-22, 2005

The 2005 Watershed Management Conference Williamsburg, VA

This conference will bring together a diverse group of attendees, each with a critical stake in watershed management. Topics ranging in scope from state-of-the-art computer modeling, to field monitoring, to watershed science, to governmental policy and regulation all have a home at Watershed Management 2005. Send an E-mail to conf@asce.org for more information.

October 31-November 2, 2005

2005 Sustainable Beaches Conference St. Petersburg, FL

The Clean Beaches Council is hosting this conference at the Renaissance Vinoy Resort and Golf Club. This Conference will bring together a diverse group of stakeholders, professionals, and officials involved in beach management. Visit www.cleanbeaches.org or call (202) 682-9507 for more information and to submit ideas for sessions, presentations, and pre-conference workshops.

November 2-3, 2005

2005 Great Lakes Beach Association Annual Conference Green Bay, WI

The Great Lakes Beach Association (GLBA) is presently made up of members from Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin, Environment Canada and several mid-west universities and non-government agencies. Local, county and state public health, regulatory agencies, coordinating agencies, researchers and environmental groups are among the groups involved. Their mission is the pursuit of healthy beach water conditions in the Great Lakes area. An annual conference is held to conduct business and share new information in four major categories: investigative, modeling, methodology, and information systems. Information on the 2005 conference will be posted on the GLBA web site <http://www.great-lakes.net/glba>.



News from EPA Regions and HQ's Beach Program

Beach Grants

EPA expects beach grant funding for beach monitoring and notification programs, similar to previous years, to be available in 2005. We expect to publish the Federal Register Notice in February or March. Eligible states include those bordering the Great Lakes, and tribes. These grants are designed to help meet the requirements under the Beaches Environmental Assessment and Coastal Health (BEACH) Act of 2000. This is the fifth year in a row that this money is being made available since the passage of the BEACH Act. The funding is an integral part of the Administration's Clean Beach Plan.

The amount of funds available for eligible coastal states and territories is based on the length of beach season, the miles of beach, and the number of people who use that beach. Grants will also be available for eligible Indian tribes who apply.

These funds are designed to ensure that the public is better protected when traveling to beaches across the country. EPA estimates that Americans take a total of 910 million trips to and spend about \$44 million at coastal areas each year.

National List of Beaches Provides Snapshot of Beaches

EPA has provided federal grant funds since 2001 to help states and territories develop and implement their beach programs. One BEACH Act grant condition is that states, tribes, and territories must identify their coastal recreation waters and report on monitoring activities at those beaches. States submitted their lists to EPA by December 31, 2003. EPA used the state lists to compile the first National List of Beaches, and made it available to the public

in April 2004. The National List of Beaches is a picture of the extent of beach monitoring across the country. It will help EPA find better ways to implement the BEACH Act. The List also provides information to the public about beaches in their state.

This List is a snapshot at the time of publishing. It will be updated as more beaches are monitored. EPA will ask for updated information from the states and will publish notices in the Federal Register of all revisions.

You can see the National List of Beaches on EPA's web site at <http://www.epa.gov/water-science/beaches/list/list-of-beaches.pdf>. For more information contact your EPA Regional beach program representative (http://www.epa.gov/beaches/plan/whereyoulive_region.html) or Beth LeaMond at 202-566-0444 (leamond.beth@epa.gov).

BEACON Database to be Launched Memorial Day 2005

In the first years of EPA's Beach Program, states submitted beach data through the National Health Protection Survey of Beaches. The Beaches Environmental Assessment and Coastal Health (BEACH) Act requires EPA to make a national coastal recreation water pollution occurrence database containing state-reported beach monitoring and notification data available to the public electronically. EPA created the **BE**ach **A**dvisory and **C**losing **O**nline **N**otification (BEACON) Internet application to make state beach advisory and closing data available to the public.

EPA will announce the availability of BEACON on Memorial Day 2005. EPA expects many

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visits to this site as the beach-going public prepares to go to the beach. EPA points the public and press to this site for finding information about their beaches of interest.

Using BEACON, the public can view information by looking at a national map and selecting a state or by typing in the name of a specific beach. Visit http://oaspub.epa.gov/beacon/beacon_national_page.main to see how this process works.

Beach Info Listserve

"Beachinfo" listserv provides a forum for discussing various recreational beach program issues. To become a member, send an email to beachinfo-subscribe@lists.epa.gov.



The following resources are just a few that report local beach water quality conditions. Several resources will be highlighted in each issue.

Earth 911

A partnership effort between Earth 911, Oceana, and participating states and communities provide specific information generated and uploaded directly by local government agencies regarding the most recent water quality conditions at local beaches. Through their Web site, you can also sign up to receive an email containing information on your beaches current conditions, news, events and activities. www.earth911.org/WaterQuality/index.asp

Oceans.us

EPA is one of nine Federal agencies participating in the development of an Integrated Ocean Observing System (IOOS). Reducing public health risks is one of the seven goals of this initiative. For more info, see www.oceans.us. The Beaches Program plans to pursue collaboration with IOOS activities that focus on coastal water quality.

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Announcements

NEEAR

This is just a notification that the Federal Register FRL-7787-1 for Water Quality Indicators and/or Rapid Measurement Technology will be available on the NEEAR Water Study Website
<http://www.epa.gov/nheerl/needar/>.

EPA Launches New Topical Website on Beaches

The Agency is implementing a new approach to making it easier for people to find information on EPA's web site. We are organizing the information around topics rather than programs or organizations. One of the first new topic-based sites brings together the Agency's information on beaches. Take some time to visit EPA's new beaches website at www.epa.gov/beaches to help you plan a trip to the beach, learn about beach conditions, and see what EPA is doing to clean and protect our Nation's beaches. We are also working on topic-based sites for water quality standards, cruise ship water discharges, floating debris, private drinking wells, and septic systems.

The material in this document has been subjected to Agency technical and policy review and approved for publication as an EPA report. The views expressed by individual authors, however, are their own and do not necessarily reflect those of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.