



EPA New England joins the New England states and their local communities in a Clean Beach initiative.

### **What is EPA's Beach Initiative?**

The goal of the Beach Initiative is to protect public health by reducing pollution levels that cause beach closures in New England. This year we revised this goal to include eliminating chronic beach closures. To help meet this goal, we will work closely with existing federal and state water quality programs to focus their efforts in communities experiencing chronic beach closures. We will work with state and local beach managers to develop and execute aggressive plans to remove sources of contamination, and build public support to fund necessary improvements.

### **Why do we need to reduce pollution at New England's Beaches?**

Polluted runoff and untreated sewage can contain bacteria, viruses and protozoa that cause illnesses such as gastroenteritis or hepatitis. Beaches are closed, or advisories posted, when bacteria levels -- which indicate the potential presence of fecal contamination -- exceed acceptable levels. One in four New England freshwater and coastal beaches are closed or posted at least once in a typical year. In the summer of 2007, coastal beaches were cumulatively posted for 1,168 days at the 804 regularly monitored beaches.

### **How are EPA and the New England states accomplishing this goal?**

- EPA has awarded coastal New England states over \$8 million to develop and implement beach monitoring, assessment and public notification programs.
- EPA and state officials are providing technical assistance to communities to identify and control sources of fecal contamination from storm water and other pollutant sources.
- We established "Flagship Beaches," which are high-use beaches selected by each state as models for targeted pollution assessments, enhanced monitoring and improving water quality.
- We promote the use of high quality monitoring and assessment methods and support the investigation of new molecular technologies.
- We encourage and involve the public and communities in education, monitoring and advocacy.

### **What has the Beach Initiative accomplished since 2001:**

- The number of coastal beaches with water quality monitoring has almost doubled to over 800 beaches.
- All priority coastal beaches in New England have been assessed and potential pollutant sources mapped.
- State and municipal environmental and health agencies are working with communities with chronic water quality problems to develop an action plan to identify and eliminate sources of pollutants.
- Water quality has improved at several beaches throughout New England due to remediation of pollution sources. Thousands of beach-goers are notified of water quality conditions through various media.

## **What's Happening at the Flagship and other beaches?**

	Flagship Beaches 2008	Recent Accomplishments of the Beach Program
CT	- Rocky Neck State Park, East Lyme - Ocean Beach Park, New London	The City of Norwalk installed innovative filters at over 200 catch basins, removing significant amounts of chemical and biological pollutants from storm water near beaches and other resources.
ME	-Ferry Beach State Park, Saco -Wells Beach, Wells	Based on a study of water circulation, and the influence of wind direction and rainfall on bacteria levels, Maine Healthy Beaches completed an action plan to improve water quality at Ogunquit beaches.
MA	-Willows Pier, Salem -Wollaston Beach, Quincy -Ryder Street Beach, Provincetown	Water quality improved at Wollaston Beach in 2007. With Barnstable County, MA DPH conducted intensive sanitary surveys at six beaches on Cape Cod.
NH	- Hampton Beach State Park	With the local chapter of the Surfrider Foundation, NH Beach Inspection Program trained volunteers to monitor water quality in the "off-season."
RI	- Goddard Memorial State Park, Warwick - Warren Town Beach - Scarborough State Beach, Narragansett	With the RI DOH and RI DEM, EPA conducted a study at Goddard Beach to test rapid DNA-based indicator methods for hastening public notification of monitoring results to real-time water quality assessment at local beaches.

## **You can get involved in local beach improvement programs.**

- Properly maintain your septic system, pick-up after your dog, do not feed waterfowl.
- Encourage the development and implementation of your community's storm water management program (see [www.epa.gov/ne/npdes/stormwater/index.html](http://www.epa.gov/ne/npdes/stormwater/index.html)).
- Learn about water quality at your favorite beach and contact the local health department to ensure water quality is being monitored and problems are investigated.
- Report illicit discharges or connections to local and state officials.
- If you are a boater, use a pump-out facility for your boat sewage.
- Volunteer to monitor the water at your beach (see [www.epa.gov/owow/monitoring/volunteer](http://www.epa.gov/owow/monitoring/volunteer)).

## **For Beach Water Quality Information:**

EPA New England: [www.epa.gov/ne/eco/beaches](http://www.epa.gov/ne/eco/beaches)

EPA National: [www.epa.gov/beaches](http://www.epa.gov/beaches)

CT: [www.ct.gov/dph/site/default.asp](http://www.ct.gov/dph/site/default.asp)

ME: [www.mainehealthybeaches.org](http://www.mainehealthybeaches.org)

MA: [www.mass.gov/dph/topics/beaches.htm](http://www.mass.gov/dph/topics/beaches.htm)

NH: [www.des.state.nh.us/beaches](http://www.des.state.nh.us/beaches)

RI: [www.ribeaches.org](http://www.ribeaches.org)

VT: [healthvermont.gov/enviro/water/recwater.aspx](http://healthvermont.gov/enviro/water/recwater.aspx)