

Coastal Beach Inspection Program

Summer Sampling 2015 Annual Report



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2015 Public Bathing Beach Inspection Program: Coastal Beaches

The BEACH Program is a federally-funded program that provides resources for coastal beach research and monitoring. NHDES inspected 16 coastal public swimming beaches in 2015. During the swim season that runs from Memorial Day through Labor Day, six beaches were inspected twice weekly and five were inspected weekly according to their tiered monitoring assessment (Table). The final five beaches, Hampton Harbor, Sun Valley, Sawyer, Seabrook Town Beach, and Northside Park (a.k.a., Plaice Cove), were sampled every other week in 2015. Sampling frequency was reduced at Sawyer and Seabrook Town Beaches in the summer of 2015 because the beaches were removed from the impaired waters list updated every two years by NHDES.

Staff members conducted 257 inspections and collected 897 samples for Enterococci analysis during the swim season. No off-season sampling was conducted in 2015. During the swim season, only three Enterococci samples exceeded the state standard, resulting in just one coastal beach advisory. The single advisory was issued for two days at Northside Park Beach, the only advisory ever issued for that beach. The swim season in New Hampshire was 104 days long in 2015, which translates into 1,664 beach days for all 16 beaches. With only two advisory days during the entire summer at coastal beaches, the chance of a beach being under a swimming advisory was less than 0.2% in 2015.

Although rainfall during June, July and August 2015 was about one-fifth more than average, the number of coastal advisories and elevated results were below average. This indicates that rainfall is not the source of issues at coastal New Hampshire beaches.

All 16 coastal beaches are accessible to the general public. All five state beaches have parking fees as do the beaches on Hampton and Seabrook Harbor. New Castle town beach charges all visitors an entrance fee. The remaining coastal beaches have parking areas for residents near the beach, but public parking is available in most areas of the coast.

What started as a special study of the beach program in 2008, has now become in-progress projects by two coastal towns. The two watershed management plans completed in 2011 for the Little River and Parsons Creek watersheds are the basis for North Hampton and Rye work to reduce bacteria coming to the coast through stormwater. Both towns are receiving watershed assistance grants and continued to use grant funds in 2015 to pinpoint bacteria sources for remediation.

Future efforts of the beach program will include maintaining monitoring efforts at coastal beaches and yearly reviews of the tiered monitoring evaluation to ensure effective sampling is in place. Additionally, communication through new media methods will continue to inform the public how the beach program works, what it samples and what advisories indicate.

Table. 2015 Coastal Beach Locations and Sampling Frequency

Beach Name	Alternate Name	Town	Visits per week
Hampton Harbor Beach	–	Hampton	Every other week
Hampton Beach State Park	–	Hampton	2
North Beach State Park	–	Hampton	1
Northside Park	Plaice Cove	Hampton	Every other week
Sun Valley Beach	Part of Seabrook Town Beach	Hampton	Every other week
New Castle Town Beach	Great Island Common Beach	New Castle	2
Bass Beach	–	North Hampton	1
North Hampton State Beach	–	North Hampton	2
Foss Beach	–	Rye	1
Jenness Beach at Cable Road	Cable Beach	Rye	2
Jenness Beach State Park	–	Rye	1
Sawyer Beach	–	Rye	Every other week
Wallis Sands Beach at Wallis Road	Pirates Cove Beach	Rye	2
Wallis Sands State Park	–	Rye	2
Seabrook Town Beach	–	Seabrook	Every other week
Seabrook Harbor Beach	–	Seabrook	1