

WASHINGTON STATE BEACH PROGRAM

What Is The BEACH Program?

Washington State's BEACH Program is funded through the federal BEACH Act of 2000 which amends the Clean Water Act. This program is designed to reduce the risk of disease to users of recreational saltwater beaches. The program tests heavily used beaches and notifies the public when there is an increased risk of illness from swimming.

EPA Provides Funding



State Coordinates



Locals Implement



A Cooperative Project

The BEACH Program is managed by both the Washington State Departments of Ecology and Health. They work together with counties and tribes to design optimal sample plans for each county and tribal government. To collect samples from beaches, most counties use county staff. But some counties use volunteers and non-profit organizations such as the Surfrider Foundation and Beach Watchers.



Fewer beaches are tested each year

Because of increased costs related to staffing and testing, we test fewer beaches each year. EPA requires us to test the most heavily used beaches that have potential sources of fecal pollution nearby. The priority beaches are listed in Figure 1.

The number of beaches the BEACH Program monitors each year is decreasing because of funding:

- 2004 – 72
- 2005 – 74
- 2006 – 72
- 2007 – 65
- 2008 – 55



Figure 1. Prioritizing beaches with limited funding.

SWIMMABLE PUGET SOUND BEACHES?

How Does the Puget Sound Partnership determine if our beaches are "Swimmable"?

The BEACH Program uses 41 Puget Sound Core beaches to evaluate long-term trends at swimming beaches in Puget Sound.

Goal: Prevent nutrient and pathogen pollution.

Measure: Percent of Core Puget Sound swimming beaches that meet safe swimming standards at all times during the summer.

Target: The percentage of Core beaches that meet swimming standard between May-Sept. increases by 5% each biennium.

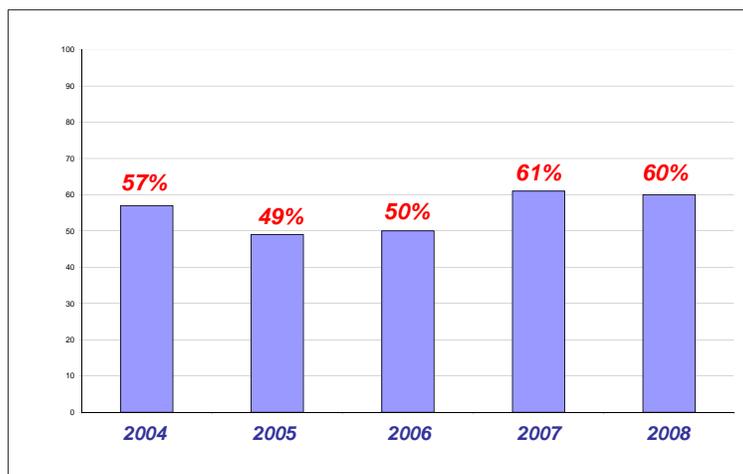


Figure 2. Percent of Core beaches that meet bacteria standards for swimming at all times (May-Sept.).

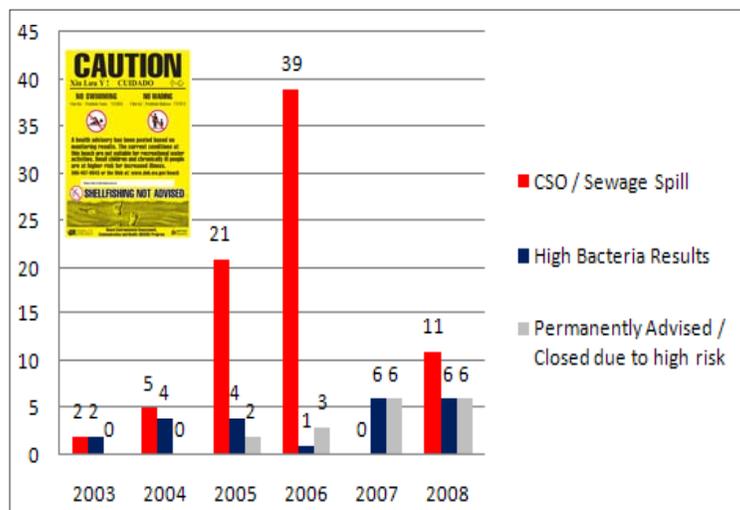


Figure 3. Beach closures and advisories.

IDENTIFYING PROBLEMS & FINDING SOLUTIONS

Identifying Beaches with Chronic Bacteria Problems

Seasonal geometric means are calculated at the end of each BEACH season (Memorial Day – Labor Day) to help identify beaches with chronic bacteria problems that are in need of further investigation and/or remediation actions. Figure 4 shows these geometric means for the most recent year.



- 10 (46 beaches)
- 10 – 19 (9 beaches)
- 20 – 34 (1 beach)
- >34 (0 beaches)

Beaches with elevated seasonal geometric means (10-19)

- Eagle Harbor Waterfront Park – Kitsap
- Silverdale County Park – Kitsap
- Larrabee State Park, Wildcat Cove – Whatcom
- Boulevard Park - Whatcom
- Oak Harbor City Beach Park – Island
- Freeland County Park / Holmes Harbor – Island
- Port Williams Boat Launch – Clallam
- Quilcene (Herb Beck Marina) – Jefferson
- Bayview State Park – Skagit

Beaches with elevated seasonal geometric means violating EPA's criteria (10-19)

- Pomeroy Park, Manchester - Kitsap

Figure 4. 2008 beach seasonal geometric means (*enterococcus* MPN/100 mL).

Fixing Bacteria Problems



Oak Harbor City Beach Park – The Island County BEACH Program has identified numerous pollution sources and made corrective actions. The BEACH Program continued monitoring this beach through 2007 and again in 2008. In July 2008 the Oak Harbor City Beach Park was reopened to swimming.

Cline Spit – The Clallam Conservation District implemented the "Collaborative Storm Water Management for the Sequim/Dungeness Watershed." The partnership received \$538,048 from EPA. Clallam County and partners will implement a regulatory development approach to develop a Comprehensive Storm Water Management Plan and adopt Clearing and Grading and Storm Water Ordinances. They will assess storm water impacts by monitoring of chemical, nutrient, and bacterial pollutants; updating GIS database layers; and providing peer and public outreach.

Freeland County Park - In March 2007 a Shellfish Protection District was formed. Island County conducted water quality monitoring and pollution source identification and remediation. A large public outreach effort was made, and the community reduced the pollution from septic systems, pet waste, agriculture, businesses, residences, and other sources. The beach was reopened to swimming on September 10, 2008, although the shellfish closure remains in effect.

Kitsap County Beaches - Kitsap County has a Pollution Identification & Correction (PIC) Program to determine the sources of bacterial water pollution in specific geographical areas and to implement corrective actions. Currently, the projects include: Dyes Inlet Restoration Project, Manchester Project, and the Illabeek Creek Project.

Twanoh State Park - The BEACH Program and Shellfish Program conducted an investigative dye study identifying a failing onsite sewage system. Governor Gregoire secured \$17.3 million to make improvements to 24 state parks including Twanoh. The project cost 100k with 900k allocated through the State Department of Ecology. The park reopened in July 2007.

Walker County Park - The BEACH Program monitored Walker County Park from 2005-2007. Investigative samples were collected to try to identify the source of contamination. No conclusive source was identified. The county posted a permanent advisory at the beach pending more information. The closure remains in effect.

Figure 5. Progress at problem beaches.