



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. For the past several years, 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 2008 swimming year (including the winter surfing season in Rhode Island), coastal beaches were cumulatively posted for 1,605 days at the 818 regularly monitored beaches.

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

- EPA has awarded coastal New England states over \$9.5 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 stormwater and other pollution 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 pollution 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 2009	Recent Accomplishments
CT	- Rocky Neck State Park, East Lyme - Ocean Beach Park, New London	An analysis of recent data concluded that most beach closures and advisories were preemptive closures caused by stormwater.
ME	- Ferry Beach State Park, Saco - Wells Beach, Wells	Special studies by the Maine Healthy Beaches program in Ogunquit, Wells and York resulted in additional septic system inspections, hiring of new municipal staff and identification of sources of bacteria in coastal streams.
MA	- Willows Pier, Salem - Wollaston Beach, Quincy - Ryder Street Beach, Provincetown	MA DPH assisted EPA in meetings with health officials from Dartmouth, Marblehead, Provincetown, Salem and Quincy to develop an action plan to reduce beach closures in each municipality.
NH	- Hampton Beach State Park	Surfrider Foundation and National Resources Defense Council recognized the NH Beach Program for its beach monitoring and notification program and the excellent water quality at the beaches.
RI	- Goddard Memorial State Park, Warwick - Warren Town Beach - Scarborough State Beach, Narragansett	The RI Beach Program worked with the DEM to encourage the Town of Bristol to seek funding for innovative stormwater BMPs to address beach pollution sources, including exploring potential daylighting of a culverted stream.

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 stormwater management program (see 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).

For Beach Water Quality Information:

EPA New England: www.epa.gov/ne/eco/beaches

EPA National: www.epa.gov/beaches

CT: www.ct.gov/dph/site/default.asp click on "Programs and Services" and then "Public Beaches"

ME: www.mainehealthybeaches.org

MA: www.mass.gov/dph/topics/beaches.htm

NH: des.nh.gov/organization/divisions/water/wmb/beaches/index.htm

RI: www.ribeaches.org

VT: healthvermont.gov/enviro/water/recwater.aspx