

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT



EPA's BEACH Report:

Oregon 2006 Swimming Season

June 2007

Introduction

The BEACH Act of 2000 requires that coastal and Great Lakes states and territories report to EPA on beach monitoring and notification data for their coastal recreation waters. The BEACH Act defines coastal recreation waters as the Great Lakes and coastal waters (including coastal estuaries) that states, territories, and authorized tribes officially recognize or designate for swimming, bathing, surfing, or similar activities in the water.

This fact sheet summarizes beach monitoring and notification data submitted to EPA by the State of Oregon for the 2006 swimming season.

Between May and September each year, the Oregon Beach Monitoring Program (OBMP) helps protect people who play in coastal waters that are designated for swimming, bathing, surfing and similar water contact activities. The program conducts regular water quality tests, issues health advisories, and offers public education and prevention tips.

During the 2006 swimming season, the OBMP monitored 71 sampling sites at 20 recreational beaches along the Oregon coast. Ocean water is sampled either once a week, every two weeks, or monthly based on the priority ranking of the beach. The priority is determined by beach use, previous monitoring results, pollution hazards, and public input. The beach program works with other state agencies to collect and test water samples, and when bacteria levels exceed the state standard of 158 enterococci organisms per 100mL of ocean water sampled a water contact advisory is issued.

Oregon uses various methods for notifying the public about water contact advisories, including media releases, phone calls to city and county officials, email notification to local governments and interested stakeholders, signage at beach access points, posting information on the program Web site, and a Web site link to the Earth911 Web site where advisory information is also posted. To expand public notification, Oregon set up a new statewide toll-free telephone service prior to the 2006 summer season to make updated beach advisories available to the public especially for those individuals without Internet access.

Figure 1. Oregon coastal counties with 2006 monitored beach data.

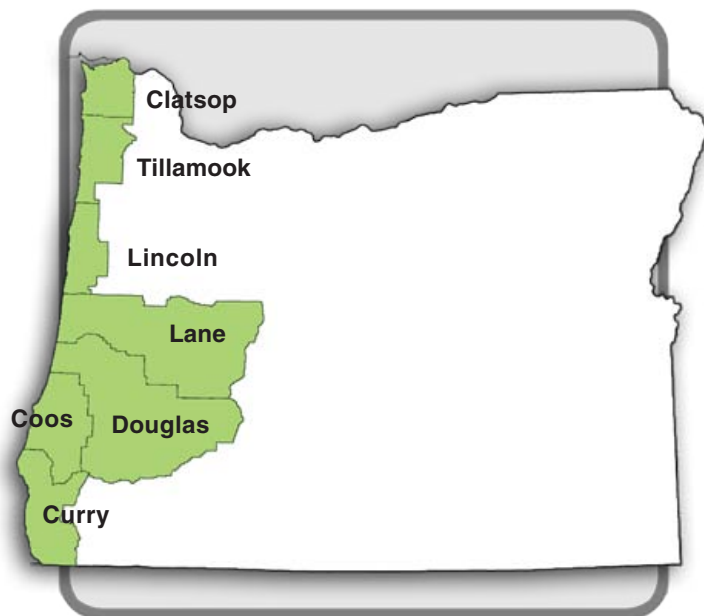


Table 1. Breakdown of monitored and unmonitored coastal beaches by county.

County	Total Beaches	Monitored	Not Monitored
CLATSOP	7	3	4
COOS	3	2	1
CURRY	13	3	10
DOUGLAS	1	0	1
LANE	4	0	4
LINCOLN	18	6	12
TILLAMOOK	13	6	7
TOTALS	59	20	39

2006 Summary Results

How many beaches had notification actions?

Oregon issues a beach advisory, warning people to avoid contact with the ocean water at the particular beach. Of the 20 coastal beaches that were monitored in 2006, 8, or 40 percent, had at least one advisory during the 2006 season (Figure 2).

How many notification actions were reported and how long were they?

A total of 10 beach notification actions were reported in the 2006 swimming season. Actions were of relatively short duration, however. Figure 3 presents breakdowns of action durations.

What percentage of days were beaches under a notification action?

For Oregon's 2006 swimming season, EPA determined there were a total of 2,500 beach days associated with the 20 monitored beaches. Actions were reported on 20 of those days or about 0.8 percent of the time (Figure 4).

How do 2006 results compare to previous years?

Beginning in 2003, states are required to submit data to EPA under the BEACH Act for beaches which are in coastal and Great Lakes waters. Table 2 compares 2006 data with data reported in previous years.

For More Information

For general information about beaches:
www.epa.gov/beaches/

For information on Oregon's monitored beaches and sampling results visit www.healthoregon.org/beach, or contact (971) 673-0431.

Figure 2: Monitored beaches with and without notification actions.

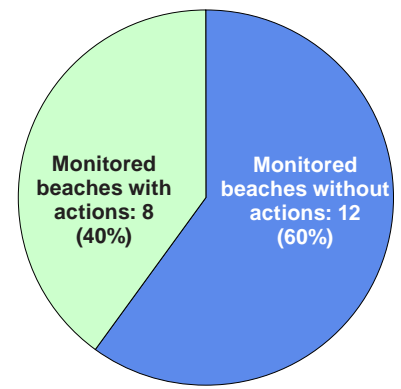


Figure 3: Beach notification actions by duration.

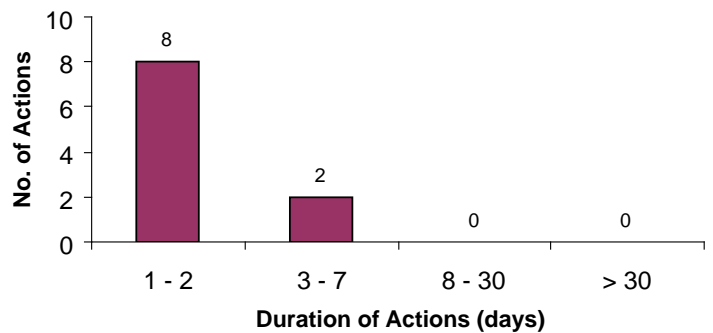


Figure 4: Beach days with and without notification actions.

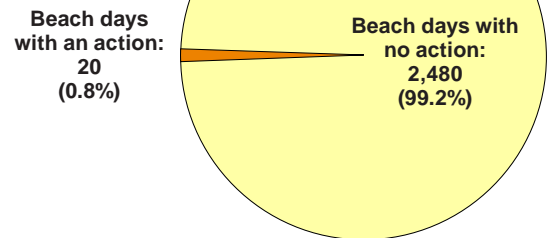


Table 2. Beach notification actions, 2004-2006.

	2004	2005	2006
Number of monitored beaches	58	20	20
Number of beaches affected by notification actions	8	11	8
Percentage of beaches affected by notification actions	14%	55%	40%