

Beach Water Quality Monitoring

The Beach Monitoring Program is an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) grant funded program; that is designed to help States monitor the water quality along their coasts and estuaries. Tests are run on coastal waters to determine whether or not there are any pollutants present. The Oregon Department of Human Services (DHS) is testing for Enterococci, a bacterial microorganism found in human and animal waste. The correlation of Enterococci with swimming-associated gastrointestinal illness in both marine and fresh water is greater than what we see in other bacterial organisms such as E-coli. As long as the level of bacteria is below 156 cfu/100ml ((cfu) Colony Forming Units), the water is considered safe. Enterococci gets into beach waters from a variety of natural and man-made sources such as mammal and seabird waste, or streams that empty onto the beach while carrying contamination such as storm water runoff, sewage treatment plants or animal waste.

The Oregon Beach Monitoring Program began its first full season of testing in May 2003. Through coordination with the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), 52 beaches are tested for the indicator organism Enterococcus. The beaches are tested using a three tier system in the peak system from May to September and are tested once a month throughout the rest of the year. During the peak season the Tier 1 beaches are tested once a week, the Tier 2 beaches are tested every other week and Tier 3 beaches are tested once a month. In Cannon Beach, the following are test locations: Ecola Ramp, Haystack Rock, the mouth of Ecola Creek, Tolovana Wayside Park, and Indian Beach.

Related Links

- [Environmental Protection Agency \(EPA\)](#)
- [Oregon Department of Human Services \(DHS\)](#)
- [Department of Environmental Quality \(DEQ\)](#)