



## Save The River

Upper St. Lawrence RIVERKEEPER®

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## FACT SHEET

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### BEACH WATCH

Save The River's Swimming Water Quality Program – Summer 2012

#### **Program Overview:**

Save The River runs the Beach Watch program to determine whether popular swimming locations around the River are safe for swimming. The six locations tested have been selected because they are popular swimming spots but are not tested for water quality by any other agency. Our goal is to ascertain whether there is a health risk to swimmers from *E. coli* bacteria in the water. Each location is tested weekly throughout the season and the results are compared to state water quality standards for swimming water. All samples are taken by Save The River volunteers and analyzed by Converse Laboratories in Watertown. Complete results are posted in the Save The River office and on the website [www.savetheriver.org](http://www.savetheriver.org) and in *River Watch*, the Save The River member newsletter, publicized in the local media, and found on the *Swim Guide* mobile app and website [www.theswimguide.org](http://www.theswimguide.org).

#### **About the testing parameter:**

Beach Watch samples are tested for bacteria called *E. coli*. Each summer Save The River tests for the bacteria that the New York State Department of Health has determined to be the indicator of safe swimming water for that season. *E. coli* is a bacterium found in the intestines and can cause serious gastrointestinal complications if ingested. The New York State Health Department has set a swimming water quality limit of 235 colonies of *E. coli* bacteria per 100 milliliters of water for any one time sample, and 126 colonies for an average result over a 5 week period. Any freshwater that exceeds this limit is considered unhealthy for swimming.

#### **What do the results mean?**

Results are expressed in numbers of bacteria colonies found in a one hundred milliliter (ml) sample of swimming water. So for example, a result of 15 means that 15 *E. coli* colonies were found in that 100 ml sample. A sample result of 235 or less is within Department of Health standards. A Log Mean Average result of 126 or less is within healthy water quality standards.

#### **Will beaches be closed?**

Save The River runs this program on a volunteer basis and the results cannot necessarily be used to conclusively say that a location is unsafe for swimming. Instead, we test these sites to determine whether there is cause for concern at a specific location and whether further testing is needed. If high bacteria levels are found, Save The River confers with state agencies to develop a more conclusive sampling plan and looks closely at potential causes and solutions.

#### **Where are the bacteria coming from?**

There are many potential sources of bacteria in swimming areas, including improper sewage disposal, agricultural run-off, bird and animal waste and various other environmental factors.

#### **What are the possible health effects?**

High levels of bacteria can cause health problems such as rashes and gastrointestinal illness, and are most dangerous for the very old, very young, or anyone with a compromised immune system. In order to reduce the risk of bacteria related illness, employ the following simple safety measures: never swallow swimming water and wash hands after swimming and before eating.

#### **For more information**

Contact Save The River at (315) 686-2010 or via e-mail at [striver@savetheriver.org](mailto:striver@savetheriver.org)

## 2012 Save The River Beach Watch Water Quality Results

**All beaches tested in 2012 were within safe swimming limits.**

Sample Location	Date	Result	Sample Location	Date	Result
Cape Vincent	7/2/2012	1	Clayton	7/2/2012	1
Wilson's Bay	7/9/2012	3	Frink Dock	7/9/2012	2
3 ft sample	7/16/2012	6.3		7/16/2012	<1
	7/24/2012	120.1		7/24/2012	1
	8/1/2012	54.8		8/1/2012	1
	8/8/2012	14.5		8/8/2012	9.8
	8/13/2012	1		8/13/2012	1
	8/20/2012	1		8/20/2012	2
	8/27/2012	10.5		8/27/2012	<1
	<b>Log Mean Average</b>	<b>6.44</b>		<b>Log Mean Average</b>	<b>2.10</b>

Sample Location	Date	Result	Sample Location	Date	Result
Cape Vincent	7/2/2012	1	Clayton	7/2/2012	N/A
Wilson's Bay	7/9/2012	5.2	Round Island West	7/9/2012	1
6 ft sample	7/16/2012	0		7/16/2012	2
	7/24/2012	81.6		7/24/2012	1
	8/1/2012	8.4		8/1/2012	1
	8/8/2012	17.3		8/8/2012	17.3
	8/13/2012	1		8/13/2012	1
	8/20/2012	<1		8/20/2012	<1
	8/27/2012	1		8/27/2012	5.2
	<b>Log Mean Average</b>	<b>3.41</b>		<b>Log Mean Average</b>	<b>1.91</b>

Sample Location	Date	Result	Sample Location	Date	Result
Grindstone Island	7/2/2012	1	Alexandria Bay	7/2/2012	4.1
Potter's Beach	7/9/2012	4.1	Scenic View Park	7/9/2012	1
	7/16/2012	1		7/16/2012	12.2
	7/24/2012	1		7/24/2012	13.2
	8/1/2012	2		8/1/2012	3.1
	8/8/2012	1		8/8/2012	1
	8/13/2012	9.7		8/13/2012	3
	8/20/2012	3.1		8/20/2012	<1
	8/27/2012	<1		8/27/2012	<1
	<b>Log Mean Average</b>	<b>1.63</b>		<b>Log Mean Average</b>	<b>2.64</b>

Sample Location	Date	Result	Sample Location	Date	Result
Grindstone Island	7/2/2012	N/A	Wellesley Island	7/2/2012	<1
Potter's Beach	7/9/2012	1	Lake of the Isles	7/9/2012	1
Grindstone Farm'	7/16/2012	1		7/16/2012	<1
	7/24/2012	1		7/24/2012	2
	8/1/2012	1		8/1/2012	4.1
	8/8/2012	2		8/8/2012	14.6
	8/13/2012	1		8/13/2012	13.4
	8/20/2012	N/A		8/20/2012	1
	8/27/2012	<1		8/27/2012	2
	<b>Log Mean Average</b>	<b>1.09</b>		<b>Log Mean Average</b>	<b>2.27</b>

Sample Location	Date	Result
Grindstone Island	7/2/2012	N/A
Potter's Beach	7/9/2012	1
Grindstone Point'	7/16/2012	<1
	7/24/2012	1
	8/1/2012	24
	8/8/2012	6.3
	8/13/2012	2
	8/20/2012	N/A
	8/27/2012	<1
	<b>Log Mean Average</b>	<b>2.04</b>

Results are expressed in numbers of bacteria colonies found in a one hundred milliliter (ml) sample of swimming water.

The NY State Department of Health has set a swimming water quality limit of 235 colonies of E.coli bacteria per 100 milliliters of water.

A Log Mean Average result of 126 or less is within healthy water quality standards.

**All beaches tested in 2012 were within safe swimming limits.**