



Beach Project Initiative Progress Report – June 2008

Introduction

The Great Lakes Regional Collaboration (GLRC) identifies coastal health as a challenge recognizing the significance of beaches to the economic well-being, health and quality of life of the region's citizens. Contamination leading to beach advisories and threats to public health continues to be a concern in the Basin. The GLRC calls for identification of sources of contamination and remediation. The use of tools like sanitary surveys is a way to achieve these goals.

GLRC Beach Initiative Project

Interagency cooperation is essential for creating and improving the use of sanitary surveys and beach forecasting models. Several federal, state, local and tribal partners who work together in the Great Lakes Beach Association are taking part in such efforts.

The GLRC will increase this cooperation and further the objectives of the GLRC Strategy by supporting and encouraging the use of sanitary surveys and education on predictive modeling throughout the region. This support and encouragement will take the form of a targeted campaign focused on the standard sanitary survey tool (piloted during the summer of 2007) as well as education on predictive modeling.

Status

Through the Clean Beaches Initiative, beach managers, state beach program coordinators, cities, coastal health departments and tribes were contacted directly in advance of the 2008 beach season with the survey forms and information on how to use them. A Clean Beaches Initiative webpage was created on the GLRC website as a portal for Great Lakes beach information and features the surveys and examples for beach managers to use as reference as well as information on predictive models and state monitoring programs. Additionally, a successful press conference was held on May 30, 2008 to officially launch the surveys and to help bring regional and national attention to the forms and the benefits of their broad use. To date, feedback has been very positive with coastal county health departments and communities in all of the eight Great Lakes States, as well as some in the Province of Ontario, indicating that they will be using the forms during the 2008 beach season.

Next Steps

The Clean Beaches Initiative workgroup will likely be reconvened at the end of the 2008 beach season to assess the success of the Clean Beaches Initiative and to see what, if any, further efforts can be made to continue broadening the use of the sanitary survey forms throughout the region as well as providing information on beach health management and predictive modeling.