



Beach Project Initiative

Progress Report – November 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 Clean Beaches Initiative

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 event was held on May 30, 2008 to officially launch the surveys and to help bring regional and national attention to the surveys and the benefits of their broad use.

Status and Next Steps

At the beginning of the 2008 beach season, the feedback had been very positive from coastal county health departments and communities in all of the eight Great Lakes States, as well as some in the Province of Ontario, that many would use the survey during the 2008 beach season. There were preliminary indications that close to 120 beaches throughout the region were planning to use the survey.

The Clean Beaches Initiative workgroup reconvened in late October 2008 to assess the success of the Clean Beaches Initiative over the 2008 beach season and to discuss next steps. The workgroup expressed interest in continuing to advance recommendations and milestones from the GLRC Strategy Coastal Health chapter, specifically efforts to further encourage the use of surveys and other proven beach management practices as well as remediation of sources of contamination throughout the region. The workgroup is in the process of exploring possible next steps with these objectives in mind for further future collaboration.