



# EPA's BEACH Report:

## Wisconsin 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 Wisconsin for the 2006 swimming season.

The Wisconsin Beach Monitoring and Notification Program's primary goal is to reduce beach visitors' risk of exposure to disease-causing microorganisms in water. Fifteen health departments along Lake Michigan and Lake Superior sample the water at beaches one to five times per week.

Wisconsin has partnered with US Geological Survey and the Southeast Beach Task Force to develop the Great Lakes Beach Health Web site ([www.wibeaches.us](http://www.wibeaches.us)). Funds from the BEACH Act grant were used to enhance and expand an existing Southeast Wisconsin Beach Health website to include monitoring information for 123 beaches located along Wisconsin Great Lakes. The Web site allows public access to real time data and advisory information for all beaches monitored along the Great Lakes borders. It also allows the public to sign up to receive e-mail notification of advisories or closures for beaches of their choice.

**Figure 1. Wisconsin coastal counties with 2006 monitored beach data.**



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

County	Total Beaches	Monitored	Not Monitored
AHSLAND	7	7	0
BAYFIELD	19	16	3
BROWN	9	3	6
DOOR	53	28	25
DOUGLAS	16	12	4
IRON	5	5	0
KENOSHA	7	5	2
KEWAUNEE	5	2	3
MANITOWOC	17	10	7
MARINETTE	6	0	6
MILWAUKEE	13	11	2
OCONTO	1	0	1
OZAUKEE	11	6	5
RACINE	7	2	5
SHEBOYGAN	16	10	6
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>192</b>	<b>117</b>	<b>75</b>

## 2006 Summary Results

### How many beaches had notification actions?

An advisory sign is posted warning swimmers that there is an increased risk of illness whenever the water quality criterion of 235 colony forming units (CFU)/100 mL for *E. coli* is exceeded. A red stop sign that closes the beach is posted when *E. coli* levels exceed 1,000 CFU/100mL, indicating a more serious risk of illness. Advisories and closures may also follow rainfall events or storm water and sewage overflows. In addition, inland beaches located at Wisconsin State Parks are monitored using the same protocol as the Great Lakes Beach Program. Of the 117 coastal beaches that were monitored in 2006, 83, or 71 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 655 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 Wisconsin's 2006 swimming season, EPA determined there were a total of 11,817 beach days associated with the 117 monitored beaches. Actions were reported on 1,265 of those days or about 11 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

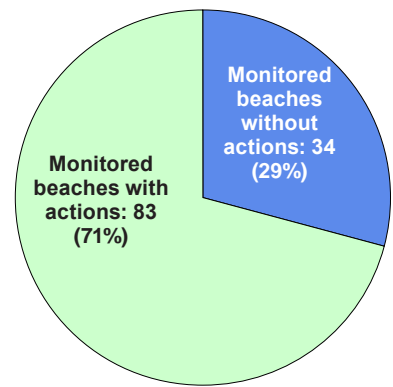
For general information about beaches:

[www.epa.gov/beaches/](http://www.epa.gov/beaches/)

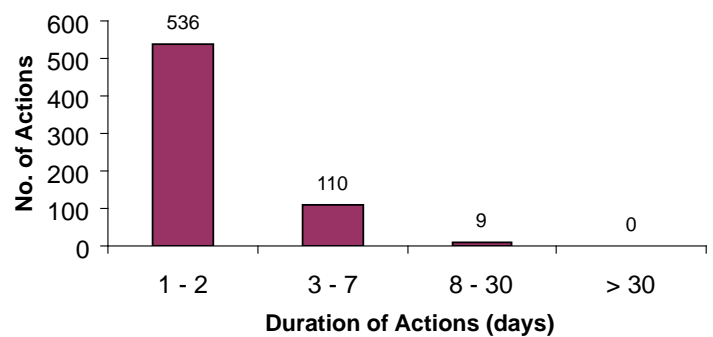
For information about beaches in Wisconsin:

[www.wibeaches.us](http://www.wibeaches.us)

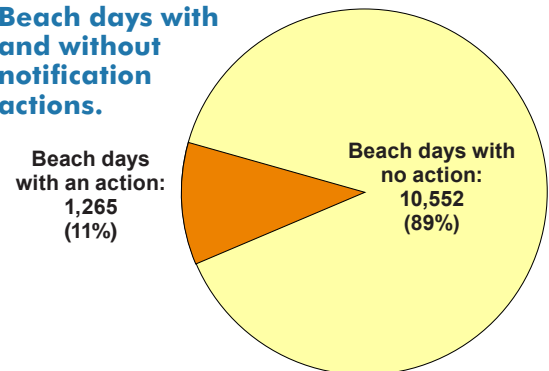
**Figure 2: Monitored beaches with and without notification actions.**



**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	118	115	117
Number of beaches affected by notification actions	81	82	83
Percentage of beaches affected by notification actions	69%	71%	71%