



EPA's BEACH Report: Wisconsin 2010 Swimming Season

May 2011

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 2010 swimming season.

Wisconsin contracted with 16 individual health departments in 13 counties to conduct the routine monitoring of 118 beaches along Lake Superior and Lake Michigan. In 2010, its eighth year of its beach program, Wisconsin evaluated and redistributed allocations to each of the contractors based on a number of factors, including the number of high, medium, or low priority beaches; a minimum sample frequency for each beach; and estimated travel costs for field sampling. Wisconsin continued to use secure on-line input forms to update information about beaches, monitoring stations, and personnel on the Wisconsin Beach Health website. The public website displayed the current advisory status for all beaches and provided information on beach conditions and water quality. An automatic e-mail messaging service and a RSS feed service provided daily updates on beach conditions to the public. Wisconsin had 580 people receiving beach advisories via e-mail in 2010. Additionally, Wisconsin had 62,000 visits to the Wisconsin Beach health website last year, an increase of 30% over 2009. The average number of unique visitors to the website was 333 per day throughout the beach season of Memorial Day through Labor Day, an increase of 50 percent from 2009.

Counties throughout the State continue to adopt inland beach monitoring programs using guidance developed from the coastal BEACH Act program. Popular swimming beaches at state parks and forests were tested at least four times each week with results posted on the Wisconsin Beach Health website.

Figure 1. Wisconsin coastal counties.

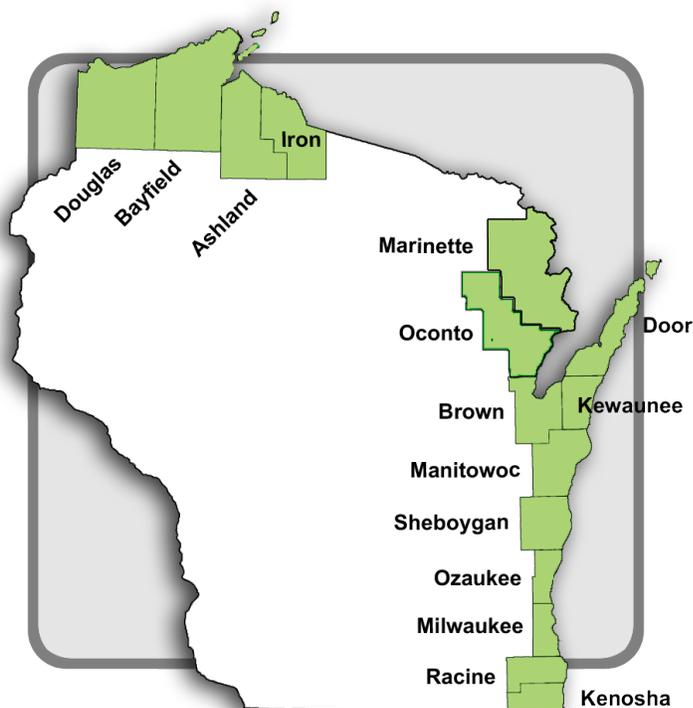


Table 1. Breakdown of monitored and unmonitored coastal beaches by county for 2010.

County	Total Beaches	Monitored	Not Monitored
ASHLAND	7	7	0
BAYFIELD	19	16	0
BROWN	3	3	0
DOOR	31	31	0
DOUGLAS	12	12	0
IRON	5	5	0
KENOSHA	5	5	0
KEWAUNEE	2	2	0
MANITOWOC	9	9	0
MILWAUKEE	11	11	0
OZAUKEE	7	7	0
RACINE	2	2	0
SHEBOYGAN	8	8	0
TOTALS	118	118	0

2010 Summary Results

How many notification actions were reported and how long were they?

When water quality standards are exceeded at a particular beach, Wisconsin issues a beach advisory that warns people to avoid contact with the water. A total of 91 monitored beaches had at least one advisory issued during the 2010 swimming season. About 82 percent of Wisconsin's 532 notification actions lasted two days or less. Figure 2 presents a full breakdown of notification action durations.

What percentage of days were beaches under a notification action?

The summer of 2010 had frequent rains and many beaches were under advisories to protect the public from potentially contaminated water. Actions were reported less than eight percent of the time (Figure 3).

How do 2010 results compare to previous years?

Table 2 compares 2010 notification action data with monitored beach data from previous years.

What pollution sources possibly affect investigated monitored beaches?

Figure 4 displays the percentage of Wisconsin's investigated monitored beaches possibly affected by various pollution sources. In 2010, 85 percent of the beaches reported that possible sources were unidentified. Storm-related runoff was listed as a possible source of pollution at 14 percent of the beaches.

For More Information

For general information about beaches:
www.epa.gov/beaches/

For information about beaches in Wisconsin:
www.wibeaches.us

Figure 2: Beach notification actions by duration.

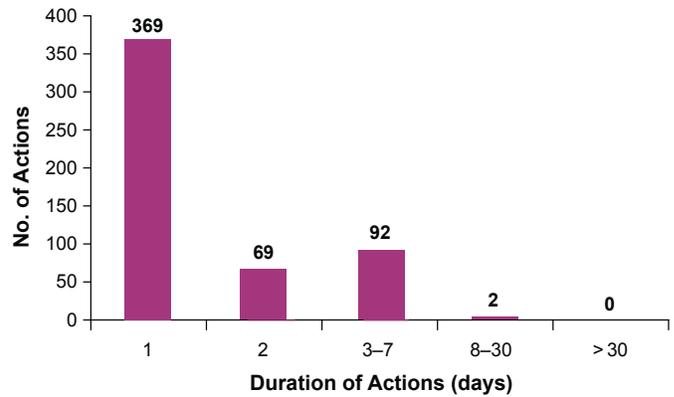


Figure 3: Beach days with and without notification actions.

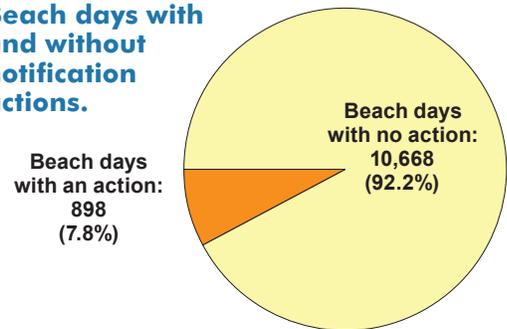


Table 2. Beach notification actions, 2008–2010.

	2008	2009	2010
Number of monitored beaches	120	122	118
Number of beaches affected by notification actions	84	63	91
Percentage of beaches affected by notification actions	70%	52%	77%
Percentage of beach days affected by notification actions	7%	4%	8%

Figure 4: Percent of investigated monitored beaches affected by possible pollution sources (85 beaches).

