



EPA's BEACH Report: Wisconsin 2009 Swimming Season

May 2010

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 2009 swimming season.

In 2009, its seventh year of its beach program, Wisconsin evaluated and redistributed allocations to each of the contracting entities based on the number of high, medium, or low priority beaches, a minimum sample per beach, and an adjustment was made for travel reimbursement. The state contracted with 16 individual health departments in 13 counties to conduct the routine monitoring of 122 beaches along Lake Superior and Lake Michigan. There was continued utilization of secure on-line input forms to update information about beaches, monitoring stations, and personnel utilizing the Wisconsin Beach Health Website. Data entry protocols were redesigned to be more efficient. An automatic e-mail messaging service and a really simple syndication service (RSS Feed) provided daily updates on beach conditions to the public. Wisconsin had 250 people receiving beach advisories for 156 beaches in 2009. Additionally, Wisconsin had 42,000 visits to the Wisconsin Beach health website last year. The average number of unique visitors was 183 per day throughout the beach season of June to August.

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 4 times each week with results posted.

Figure 1. Wisconsin coastal counties.

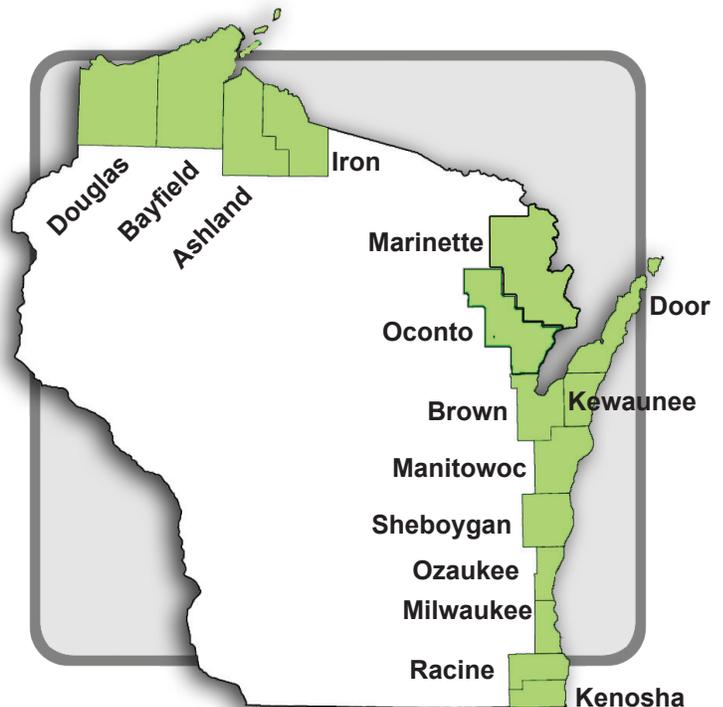


Table 1. Breakdown of monitored and unmonitored coastal beaches by county for 2009.

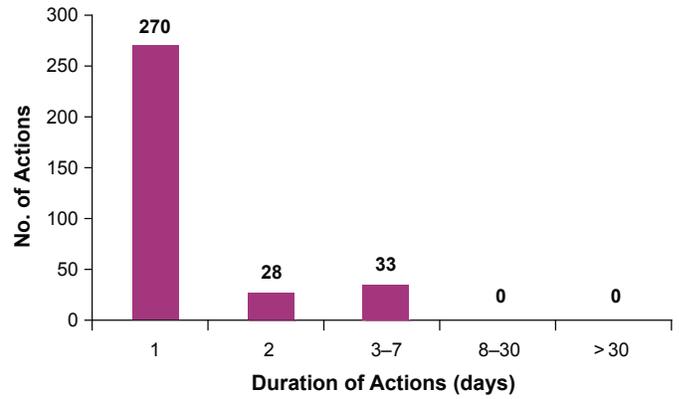
County	Total Beaches	Monitored	Not Monitored
ASHLAND	7	7	0
BAYFIELD	19	16	3
BROWN	9	3	6
DOOR	53	31	22
DOUGLAS	16	12	4
IRON	5	5	0
KENOSHA	7	5	2
KEWAUNEE	5	2	3
MANITOWOC	17	9	8
MARINETTE	6	0	6
MILWAUKEE	13	11	2
OCONTO	1	0	1
OZAUKEE	12	7	5
RACINE	7	4	3
SHEBOYGAN	16	10	6
TOTALS	193	122	71

2009 Summary Results

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

When water quality standards are exceeded at a particular beach, Wisconsin's approach is to issue a beach advisory that warns people to avoid contact with the water. A total of 63 monitored beaches had at least one advisory issued during the 2009 swimming season. About 90 percent of Wisconsin's 331 notification actions lasted two days or less. Figure 2 presents a full breakdown of notification action durations.

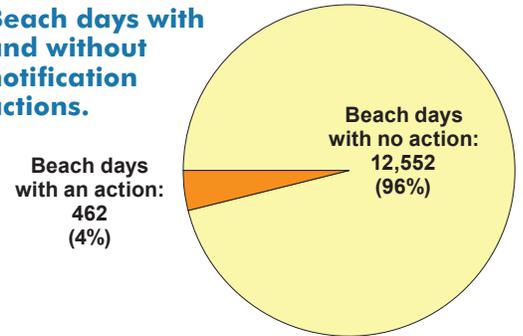
Figure 2: Beach notification actions by duration.



What percentage of days were beaches under a notification action?

For Wisconsin's 2009 swimming season, actions were reported about 4 percent of the time (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Beach days with and without notification actions.



How do 2009 results compare to previous years?

Table 2 compares 2009 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 2009, 73 percent of the beaches reported that possible sources were unidentified. Storm-related runoff was listed as a possible source of pollution at 21 percent of the beaches.

Table 2. Beach notification actions, 2007-2009.

	2007	2008	2009
Number of monitored beaches	118	120	122
Number of beaches affected by notification actions	85	84	63
Percentage of beaches affected by notification actions	72%	70%	52%
Percentage of beach days affected by notification actions	7%	7%	4%

For More Information

For general information about beaches:

www.epa.gov/beaches/

For information about beaches in Wisconsin:

www.wibeaches.us

Figure 4: Percent of investigated monitored beaches affected by possible pollution sources (122 beaches).

