EPA's BEACH Report:
Louisiana 2006 Swimming Season

June 2007

Introduction

The BEACH Act of 2000 requires that coastal and Great Lakes states and territories report beach water quality monitoring and notification data for their coastal recreation waters to EPA. 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.

Louisiana's BEACH Program was initiated as a pilot program in 2004, monitoring six sample stations at three state parks. In 2005, the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals (LDHH), with its partners, expanded the Program from the 2004 pilot to near full implementation, monitoring 26 of the 28 sample locations identified for monitoring. However, in August 2005, the monitoring program was terminated due to Hurricane Katrina, which directly impacted all monitored sites on the eastern half of the state and the program overall. After the hurricane, those beaches were either inaccessible or debris covered and recreational use was non-existent. Shortly after Hurricane Katrina, beach sites on the western half of the state were directly impacted by Hurricane Rita, rendering the remaining beaches inaccessible for the balance of the 2005 swimming season. Because of the lingering impacts of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita on recreational beach use during 2006, 18 of 28 sample sites were reassigned to a lower monitoring Tier for the 2006 monitoring season. During 2006, beach signs destroyed by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita were replaced, the capacity to process BEACH program water quality samples was re-established, and all accessible beaches were monitored throughout the swimming season.

This fact sheet summarizes beach monitoring and notification data submitted to EPA by

Figure 1. Louisiana coastal counties with 2006 monitored beach data.

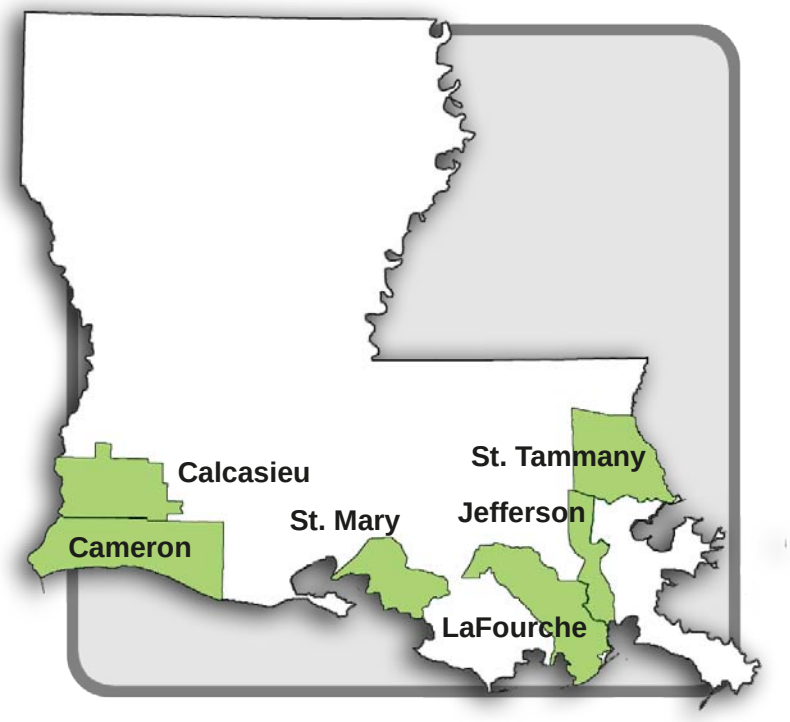

Table 1. Breakdown of monitored and unmonitored coastal beaches by county.

County	Total Beaches	Monitored	Not Monitored
CALCASIEU	2	0	2
CAMERON	13	13	0
JEFFERSON	7	7	0
LAFOURCHE	4	0	4
ST. MARY	1	1	0
ST. TAMMANY	1	1	0
TOTALS	**28**	**22**	**6**

2006 Summary Results

How many beaches had notification actions?

When monitoring of water quality at beaches shows that levels of certain bacteria exceed standards, Louisiana's beach managers issue an advisory, the monitoring/advisory sign at the sample site is opened to display the advisory warning, a press release is issued, and notice of the advisory is placed on the OPH BEACH Web site (www.ophbeachmonitoring.com) and the Earth 911 Web site (www.earth911.org/WaterQuality/). Of the 22 coastal beaches that were monitored in 2006, 1, or 5 percent, had at least one advisory during the 2006 season (Figure 2).

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

One beach notification action was reported during the 2006 swimming season. The action lasted between 3 and 7 days. Figure 3 presents breakdowns of action durations.

What percentage of days were beaches under a notification action?

For Louisiana's 2006 swimming season, EPA determined there were a total of 4,048 beach days associated with the 22 monitored beaches. Actions were reported on 5 of those days or about 0.1 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/

For information about beaches in Louisiana:

www.ophbeachmonitoring.com

Figure 2: Monitored Beaches with and without notification actions.

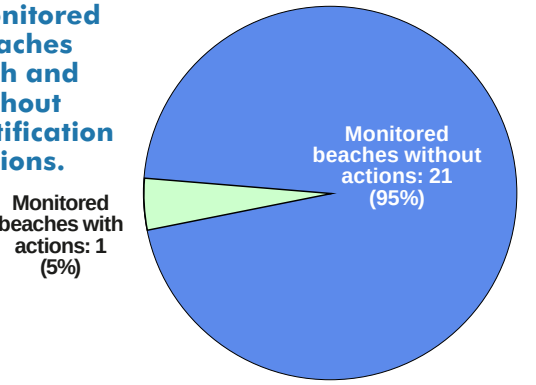

Figure 3: Beach notification actions by duration.

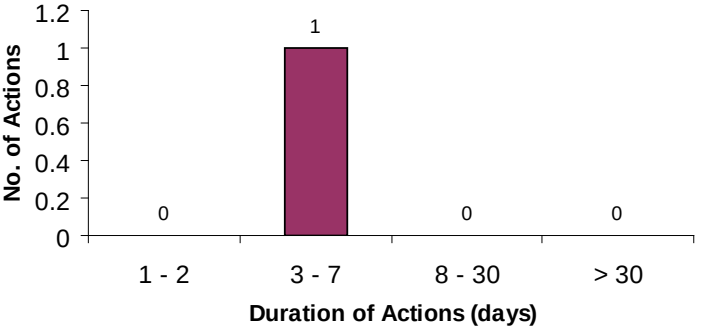

Figure 4: Beach days with and without notification actions.

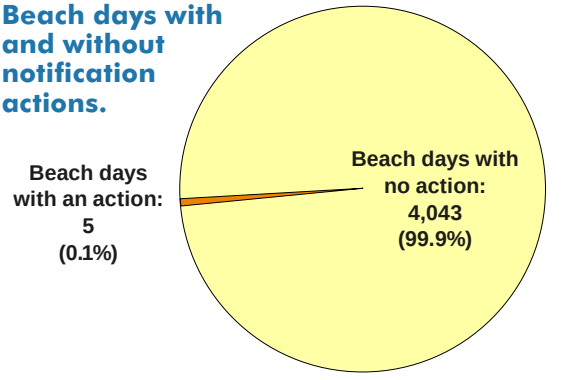

Table 2. Beach notification actions, 2004–2006.

	2004	2005	2006
Number of monitored beaches	6	26	22
Number of beaches affected by notification actions	6	22	1
Percentage of beaches affected by notification actions	100%	85%	5%