



Heal the Bay

**2013 End of Summer Beach Report Card:
Oregon and Washington**

Heal the Bay's End of Summer Beach Report Card® (BRC) provides beachgoers with essential water quality information by grading over 190 beach monitoring locations in Washington and Oregon. The data analyzed for this report includes all available beach data collected from Memorial Day through August 21, 2013, in order to publicize summer beach grades prior to Labor Day weekend, one of the busiest beach weekends of the year. For the most recent weekly grades, go to www.beachreportcard.org where you can also download the free BRC mobile application for beach grades on-the-go.

Priority Beach News: Federal Budget Cuts Threaten Beach Program

On April 10, 2013, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) released its proposed budget for Fiscal Year 2014, which eliminates the entire Beaches Grant Program. Congress has appropriated approximately \$10 million annually for the past 11 years, to aid water quality monitoring and public notification programs for coastal and Great Lakes states. Nearly half of all state beach programs are completely reliant on federal funds (including Oregon and much of Washington's Beach Program). The proposed cuts are extremely concerning as states are only obligated to implement beach monitoring when federal funding is provided. The Beach Grant-funded programs allow state, local health and environmental protection agencies to routinely monitor and track water quality at the nation's beaches, as well as alert the public when bacteria levels in the water are unsafe by posting beach warnings or closing the beach.

Without continued federal funding, bather health protection will be threatened as all states will likely be forced to scale back their beach programs. Fewer beaches will be tested, sampling frequencies will decrease, and monitoring seasons will be shortened. Reduced monitoring could also compromise the ability to track chronically polluted beaches, thus allowing potential pollution and infrastructure problems to go unnoticed. Ultimately, the absence of continued federal funding will lead to the discontinuation of many state beach programs. Americans rely on water quality monitoring and reporting to ensure that the water we swim, surf and play in is safe. The public deserves to know that the water is safe when they go to the beach.

While the fate of the federal Beach Program awaits Congressional approval, we are encouraged by the Senate Appropriations Committee's recently proposed draft bill which restores federal Beach Program funds. Heal the Bay, along with our environmental partners, will continue to advocate for this vital public health program.

Beach Breakdown

Washington

The State of Washington exhibited very good water quality this summer with 91% A or B grades. This year Washington monitored 194 monitoring locations at 64 beaches (typically each beach contains three monitoring locations). Of these monitoring locations, 180 were monitored frequently enough (at least weekly) to be included in this report.

The following counties received all A or B grades for the fourth consecutive year in a row: Clallam, Grays Harbor and Thurston County. Jefferson and Snohomish Counties also earned all A or B grades during the summer swimming season. Only 17 out of 183 monitoring locations (9%) received fair to poor water quality grades throughout the state (5 C's, 5 D's and 7 F's).

Clallam County: Beach water quality was excellent throughout Clallam County with all 24 (100%) monitoring locations receiving A grades.

Grays Harbor County: All nine monitoring locations (100%) throughout Grays Harbor County earned A grades this summer.

Island County: Five (56%) monitoring locations in Island County received A grades this summer. Oak Harbor City Beach (west) earned the county's only fair grade (C grade). All three monitoring locations at Holmes Harbor's (Freeland County Park) received poor water quality grades (2 D's and 1 F grade) with the easternmost monitoring location earning a failing grade for the fourth consecutive summer.

Jefferson County: Beach water quality at Jefferson County was excellent this year with all six monitoring locations receiving A or B grades (83% A grades).

King County: Beach water quality throughout King County was excellent this summer with 20 out of 21 locations (95%) earning A or B grades. Golden Gardens (south) was the only monitoring location in King County to earn a fair grade (C grade).

Kitsap County: Excellent beach water quality at Kitsap County was exhibited this summer, with 36 of 39 locations (92%) receiving A grades. Pomeroy Park (Manchester Beach) displayed the county's only fair to poor water quality grades: mid (C grade), north (F grade) and south (C grade).

Mason County: Eight out of 12 (67%) monitoring locations in Mason County earned A or B grades. The following monitoring locations received fair to poor summer grades: Allyn Waterfront Park (mid) (F grade), Allyn Waterfront Park (north) (F grade), Potlatch State Park (north) (F grade), and Twanoh State Park (west of dock) (C grade).

Pierce County: Pierce County exhibited excellent beach water quality this summer with 26 of 27 locations (96%) earning A grades. Ruston Way north – projection of Warner Street was the only Pierce County location to earn a poor water quality grade (D grade).

Snohomish County: All 18 monitoring locations in Snohomish County exhibited excellent water quality this summer, with all A or B grades (94% A grades).

Thurston County: All three monitoring locations (100%) received A or B grades this summer.

Whatcom County: Eight out of 12 (67%) monitoring locations in Whatcom County earned A grades this summer. Little Squalicum Park was the only beach in Whatcom County to display poor water quality (east (D grade), mid (F grade) and west (F grade)).

Oregon

The State of Oregon exhibited excellent water quality this summer, earning all A grades for the fourth consecutive year. Oregon monitored 42 monitoring locations throughout the state this summer, but only 11 (26%) of these locations were monitored frequently enough (at least once a week) to receive a grade in this report. Only two of seven coastal counties in Oregon were monitored on a weekly basis. Heal the Bay looks forward to working with Oregon agencies to increase beach monitoring frequency, as well as the number of sampling locations covered by the Beach Report Card.

About the Beach Report Card

This BRC is based on the routine monitoring data provided by Oregon Health Authority and Washington's Department of Ecology, and would not be possible without their cooperation. These agencies collect and analyze marine water samples for bacteria that indicate pollution from numerous sources, including fecal waste. Data is analyzed when it is made available by these entities and ranked on an A through F grading scale. The better the grade a location receives, the lower the risk of illness to beach users. The report is not designed to measure the amount of trash or toxins found at beaches.

Exact methodology used in determining grades for each location is available online at www.healthebay.org/brc/methodology.

This End of Summer Beach Report Card is a comprehensive analysis of Washington's and Oregon's summer beach water quality. For the latest (weekly) water quality information, consult our online BRC which is updated with the most recent beach water quality grades every Friday at beachreportcard.org. Here you can also download the free BRC Smartphone app to access on-the-go beach water quality information, including weather conditions and user tips for more than 650 beach locations in California, Oregon and Washington.

For more in-depth information on specific beach locations, recent beach news and recommendations for improving water quality, refer to Heal the Bay's *2013 Annual Beach Report Card* at beachreportcard.org under the "Documents" tab.

Heal the Bay reminds you not to swim or surf within 100 yards of any flowing storm drain or for three days after a rainstorm. Studies have shown that after a rainfall, indicator bacteria counts at beaches usually far exceed the National Recreational Water Quality Standards.

Table 1

Oregon's County Summer Beach Water Quality 2013							
County	A	B	C	D	F	A-B%	C-F%
Clatsop	8	0	0	0	0	100%	0%
Tillamook	3	0	0	0	0	100%	0%

Table 2

Washington's County Summer Beach Water Quality 2013							
County	A	B	C	D	F	A-B%	C-F%
Clallam	24	0	0	0	0	100%	0%
Grays Harbor	9	0	0	0	0	100%	0%
Island	5	0	1	2	1	56%	44%
Jefferson	5	1	0	0	0	100%	0%
King	19	1	1	0	0	95%	5%
Kitsap	36	0	2	0	1	92%	8%
Mason	7	1	1	0	3	67%	33%
Pierce	26	0	0	1	0	96%	4%
Snohomish	17	1	0	0	1	100%	0%
Thurston	2	1	0	0	0	100%	0%
Whatcom	8	0	0	2	2	66.6%	33.3%

Heal the Bay is a nonprofit environmental organization making Southern California coastal waters and watersheds, including Santa Monica Bay, safe, healthy and clean. We use science, education, community action and advocacy to pursue our mission.

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