

Contact:

Sarah U'Ren
The Watershed Center
suren@gtbay.org
231.935.1514 ext. 2

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

GRAND TRAVERSE REGION BEACH TESTING BEGINS JUNE 15
THE WATERSHED CENTER TO SAMPLE 19 LOCAL BEACHES THROUGH SEPTEMBER 7

TRAVERSE CITY, Michigan; June 15, 2022 – The Watershed Center Grand Traverse Bay will begin its annual beach testing on June 15, 2022. Nineteen area beaches in Benzie, Grand Traverse, and Leelanau counties will be tested for harmful *E.coli* bacteria every Wednesday through September 7.

Beach test results will be available by noon on Thursdays and posted shortly thereafter on the [Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes & Energy \(EGLE\) BeachGuard website](#), [The Watershed Center Facebook page](#), the [Grand Traverse County Health Department website](#), and the Benzie-Leelanau District Health Department [website](#) and [Facebook page](#). If test results show high bacteria levels, local Health Departments will post advisories at impacted beaches and the beaches will immediately be re-tested until results return to acceptable levels.

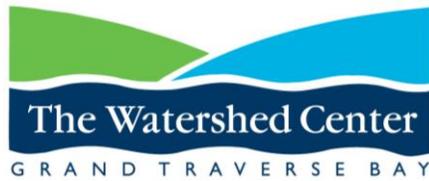
Elevated bacteria levels, including *E. coli*, at beaches pose a threat to public health and cause illness, especially in young children and people with compromised immune systems. The presence of *E. coli* in surface water indicates fecal contamination is present at the beach, which includes a host of other harmful viruses and bacteria. Beachgoers are encouraged to take simple actions to reduce the risk of *E. coli* at beaches such as not feeding ducks and other birds, disposing of diapers (including swim diapers) in trash cans, and having young children take frequent bathroom breaks.

“Every year, we are proud to be able to offer this service within the watershed,” said Sarah U'Ren, Program Director at The Watershed Center. “Our weekly testing for *E. coli* bacteria is an integral piece of our efforts to keep our residents, visitors, and beaches healthy.”

“I’m also excited to announce that we have been in discussions with Peninsula Township and have added Haserot Beach on Old Mission Peninsula to our testing program this year,” U’Ren adds.

Beach goers are reminded not to swim near storm drains, especially during and immediately after a rain event, as water from the storm drain may contain *E. coli* and other harmful pathogens from animal feces that are washed into the drains during a storm. The risk of elevated *E. coli* levels after a rain event decreases as sunlight breaks down the bacteria in open water.

Funding for beach monitoring comes from U.S. Environmental Protection Agency BEACH Act Funds, the City of Traverse City, Acme Township, Peninsula Township, the Village of Empire, and



the Village of Beulah. This year Lake Michigan beaches will mainly be tested due to lack of grant funding for inland lake testing. Testing will be conducted at the following beaches:

Lake Michigan

- Empire Beach
- Frankfort Beach

Grand Traverse Bay - West

- Bryant Park (Traverse City)
- Sunset Park (Traverse City)
- Senior Beach (Traverse City)
- Clinch Park (Traverse City)
- Volleyball Beach (Traverse City)
- West End Beach (Traverse City)
- Greilickville Harbor Park
- Suttons Bay South Shore Beach
- Suttons Bay Marina Park Beach
- Northport Beach

Grand Traverse Bay - East

- East Bay Park (Traverse City)
- Haserot Park Beach
- Traverse City State Park
- Acme Bayside Park
- Saylor Park (Acme)

Inland Beaches

- South Bar Beach (South Bar Lake)
- Beulah Beach (Crystal Lake)

###

The Watershed Center is a non-profit organization that advocates for clean water in Grand Traverse Bay and acts to protect and preserve its 1,000-square mile watershed, which covers portions of Grand Traverse, Leelanau, Antrim, and Kalkaska counties. Learn more at www.gtbay.org.