

EPA's BEACH Report:

Grand Portage 2011 Swimming Season

October 2012

EPA 820-F-12-050

Introduction

The Beaches Environmental Assessment and Coastal Health (BEACH) Act of 2000 authorizes EPA to provide grants to coastal and Great Lakes states, territories, and eligible tribes to monitor their coastal beaches for bacteria that indicate the possible presence of disease-causing pathogens and to notify the public when there is a potential risk to public health. The BEACH Act requires that recipients of those grants report their coastal beach monitoring and notification data to EPA. This fact sheet highlights the data submitted to EPA by the Grand Portage Band of the Chippewa for the 2011 swimming season.

2011 Swimming Season Monitoring and Notification Actions

The Grand Portage Band monitored 11 coastal beaches during the 2011 swimming season (Figure 1 and Table 1). When monitoring results at swimming beaches show that levels of specific indicator bacteria in the water exceed applicable water quality standards, Grand Portage Band officials issue a beach advisory, warning people of possible risks of swimming.

How many beaches had notification actions?

In 2011, of the 11 coastal beaches that the Grand Portage Band monitored, 6 (54 percent) had at least one notification action (Figure 2). The increase in the number of beaches and action days in 2011 compared to the two previous years is directly due to a severe storm in June that resulted in a federal disaster area declaration for 13 Minnesota counties and three tribal areas, including the Grand Portage Band tribal reservation. Besides the June event

Figure 1. Grand Portage Reservation.

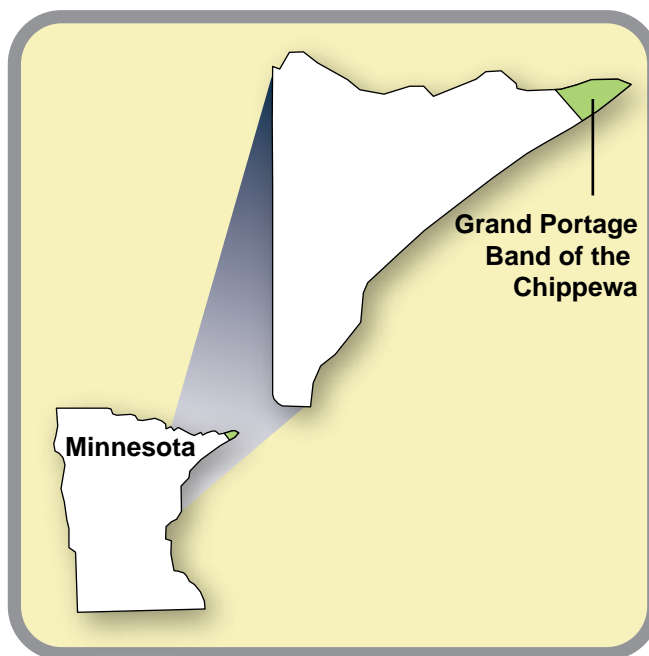


Table 1. Number of monitored and unmonitored coastal beaches for 2011.

| | Total Beaches | Monitored | Not Monitored |
|---------------|------------------|-----------|------------------|
| GRAND PORTAGE | 11 | 11 | 0 |

Figure 2: Percent of beaches with one or more notification actions

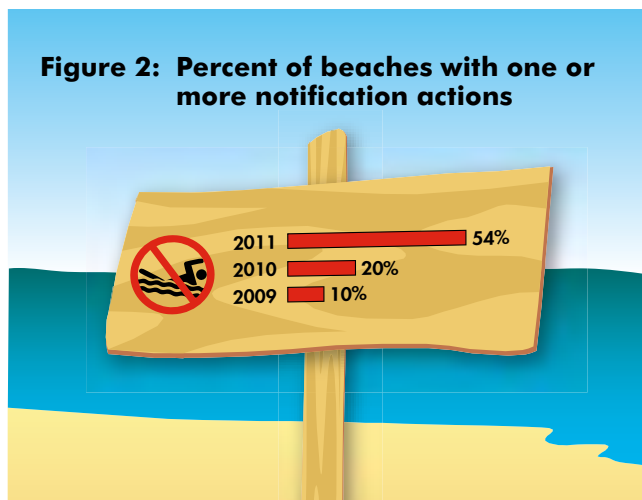
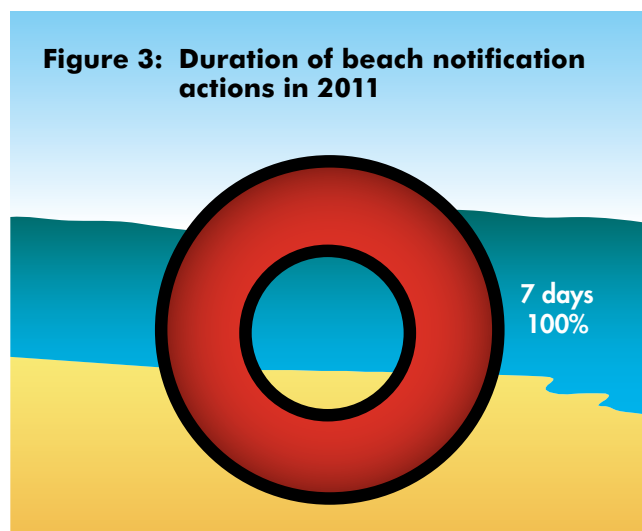


Figure 3: Duration of beach notification actions in 2011



the Grand Portage Band reported only one other notification action at one beach for the rest of the swimming season.

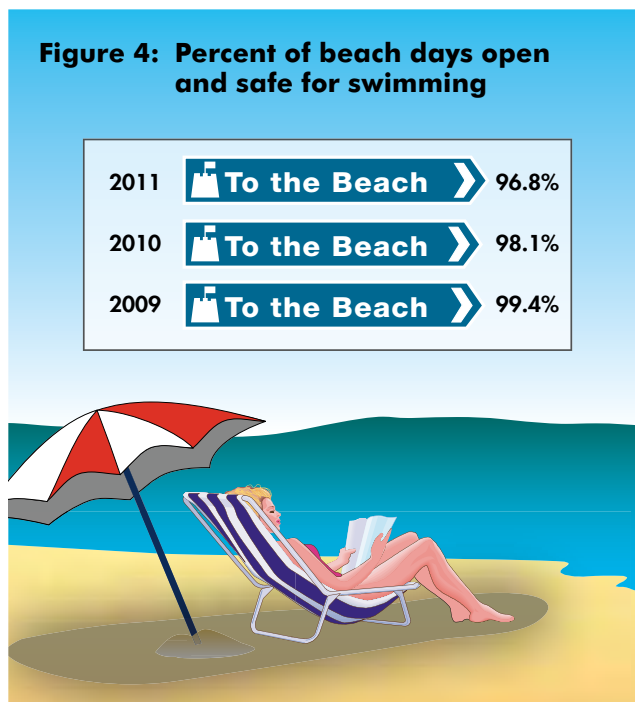
How many notification actions were issued and how long did they last?

The Grand Portage Band issued six notification actions during the 2011 swimming season. The Grand Portage Band lifts an action when follow-up monitoring indicates that water quality complies with applicable standards. In all cases water quality returned to normal and beaches were deemed safe for swimming within a week (Figure 3).

What percentage of days were beaches under a notification action?

EPA calculates the total available beach days and the number of beach days with notification actions

Figure 4: Percent of beach days open and safe for swimming



to better track trends over time. Total available beach days are determined by multiplying the length of the beach season by the number of beaches in the state. For 2011 EPA calculated that 1,331 beach days were associated with the swimming seasons of the 11 monitored Grand Portage Band beaches. The Grand Portage Band reported notification actions on 42 days, meaning that beaches were open and safe for swimming about 97 percent of the time. This continues the trend of consistently high percentages of open beach days (Figure 4).

For More Information

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For general information about beaches visit:

<http://water.epa.gov/type/oceb/beaches/>.

For information about a specific beach visit:

<http://watersgeo.epa.gov/beacon2/>.