

# NC Health Directors Legal Conference

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June 7, 2017



## About the Institute



- Founded in 1998
- Campus-wide research
- Mission – research, education + service



## About the Collaboratory



- Established by legislature in 2016
- Mission – utilize UNC research expertise
- Current projects: Nutrient Study, Hurricane Recovery, Aquaculture, Wildfires



## Overview

- Beaches Environmental Assessment and Coastal Health Act of 2000
- N.C. Recreational Water Quality Program
- Coordinating with other agencies
- Emerging issue



## BEACH Act

- The federal Clean Water Act was amended in 2000 for the purposes of protecting public health at beaches.
- Requires states to adopt water quality standards for pathogens and pathogen indicators in coastal recreational waters.



## BEACH Act

- Defines coastal recreational waters as marine coastal waters and Great Lakes.
- Inland waters are excluded from definition.
- Provides grants for monitoring and public notice.



## BEACH Act

- In 2012 U.S. EPA released new water quality criteria recommendations intended to:
  - better account for pollution after heavy rainfall
  - increase public health protections
  - promote rapid water testing
- Recommendations provide states multiple options to choose from in setting standards.



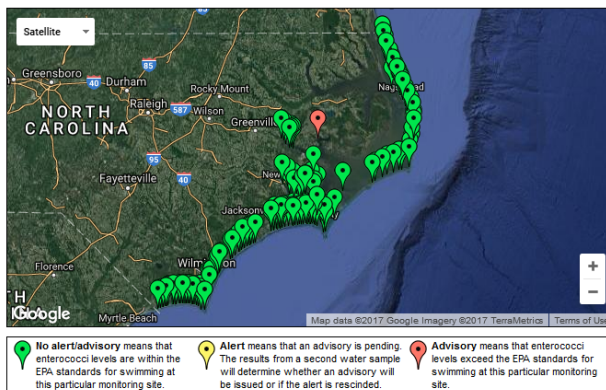
## NC Recreational Water Quality Program

- N.C. Division of Marine Fisheries monitors and tests coastal waters for bacteria.
- Coastal waters include ocean beaches, sounds, bays, and estuarine rivers.
- Program notifies public when bacteria standards for safe bodily contact are exceeded.



## NC Recreational Water Quality Program

Sampling Map Data



## NC Recreational Water Quality Program

- The program monitors and tests 240 swimming sites along the coast.
- Ocean beaches and high usage areas are sampled weekly during swimming season.

## NC Recreational Water Quality Program

- Press releases are issued and signs are posted when a swimming standard is exceeded.



## Other Agency Involvement

- N.C. does not have a state monitoring program for inland recreational waters.
- Several other agencies to be aware of:
  - N.C. Division of Water Resources
  - N.C. Division of Parks and Recreation
  - N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission
  - U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

## Ohio and Toxic Algal Blooms

- Ohio's response to recent toxic algal blooms includes a strategy for recreational waters.
- Focus on advisories at state park lake beaches.
- Involved an inter-agency agreement with the Corps.

*Have fun on the water, but know that blue-green algae are in many Ohio lakes. Their toxins may be, too.*

**Be Alert! Avoid water that:**

- looks like spilled paint
- has surface scums, mats or films
- is discolored or has colored streaks
- has green globs floating below the surface



**Avoid swallowing lake water.**

For more information, visit [ohioalgaefo.com](http://ohioalgaefo.com) or call 1-800-OHBEACH.



## UNC Nutrient Study

- In 2016 N.C. General Assembly directed UNC to study nutrient issues at Jordan and Falls Lakes, including toxic algal blooms.
- Information about the study can be found at:

<http://collaboratory.web.unc.edu/>



## Questions

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