

DEC ISSUES ADVISORY FOR KENAI NORTH BEACH

Enterococci bacteria may indicate a health risk

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SOLDOTNA, AK — The Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) has announced an advisory for the Kenai North Beach due to elevated levels of enterococci bacteria and fecal coliform found in recent samples of the marine water at this location.

Until sample results consistently meet water quality standards and DEC lifts this advisory, people should take precautionary measures when visiting the Kenai North Beach. DEC recommends beach users take normal precautions to avoid exposure, such as avoid swimming in the water, wash with clean fresh water after contact with marine water, and rinse fish with clean water after harvesting from the area. As always, people should cook seafood to a minimum internal temperature of 145 degrees Fahrenheit to destroy pathogens.

Water samples were collected on June 4. All of the other tested locations meet water quality criteria for enterococci bacteria and fecal coliform at this time. Water quality samples were collected at the following locations:

- North Kenai Beach
- South Kenai Beach
- Kenai River Gull Rookery 1 (60.53660N, 151.25400W)
- Kenai River Gull Rookery 2 (60.55180N, 151.24400W)
- Warren Ames Bridge

As part of a statewide recreational beach monitoring program, marine water samples will be collected at the listed coastal areas to evaluate fecal coliform and enterococci bacteria levels weekly from May to September 2019. Monitoring locations maps and sampling information are shown on the [Alaska BEACH Grant Program website](#).

Enterococci bacteria can come from any warm blooded animal, including birds, seals, and dogs, as well as humans. Potential sources of this bacteria on Kenai beaches are likely birds, but may include other wildlife, pets, and humans. Contact with water impacted by enterococci bacteria may cause stomach aches, diarrhea, or ear, eye, and skin infections.

The BEACH sampling program is funded and implemented by DEC. It is part of a nationwide effort to decrease the incidence of water-borne illness at public beaches under the federal Beaches Environmental Assessment and Coastal Health (BEACH) Act. Water samples have been collected periodically at Kenai River beaches since 2010.

For more information about the Alaska BEACH monitoring program, visit the [Alaska BEACH Grant Program website](#).