

# DEC LIFTS ADVISORY FOR KENAI NORTH BEACH

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SOLDOTNA, AK — The Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) has lifted the beach advisory issued on June 6 for the Kenai North Beach due to elevated levels of enterococci found in the marine water. Two consecutive weekly samples have shown enterococci levels at safe levels.

Water samples were collected on June 11 and 18. All five of the monitoring locations met water quality criteria for enterococci bacteria. These levels indicate that contact recreation, such as wading and swimming are safe.

Fecal coliform bacteria results were above state limits of 31 cfu/100ml set to protect humans from consumption of raw fish and shellfish at three monitoring locations (North Kenai Beach, South Kenai Beach and Kenai River Gull Rookery 1) with levels ranging from 46 to 84 cfu/100ml. DEC continues to advise that people take precautionary measures when fishing along the Kenai River Beaches by rinsing 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 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 enterococci bacteria and fecal coliform 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. Based on microbial source testing for bacteria genetic identification, the primary source of this bacteria on Kenai beaches is gulls. 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](#).