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#### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### GRAND TRAVERSE REGION BEACH TESTING BEGINS JUNE 18 THE WATERSHED CENTER TO SAMPLE 21 LOCAL BEACHES THROUGH SEPTEMBER 10

Traverse City, MI; June 11, 2025 – [The Watershed Center Grand Traverse Bay](#) will begin its annual beach testing on June 18, 2025. Twenty-one area beaches in Benzie, Grand Traverse, and Leelanau counties will be tested for harmful *E. coli* bacteria every Wednesday through September 10.

"We are proud to be able to offer this service every year," 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." [Grand Traverse County Health Department](#) Environmental Health Director Brent Wheat agrees. "Each summer, thousands of people visit our beaches to swim, relax, and enjoy the outdoors. Our beach monitoring program regularly tests water quality to help ensure it's safe for recreational use."

Elevated bacteria levels such as *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.

"Our beach monitoring program is focused on protecting public health by providing timely and accurate water quality information," said Eric Johnston, [Benzie-Leelanau District Health Department's](#) Environmental Health Director. "By testing local beaches for bacteria and sharing the results with the public, we're helping to keep our community safe while enjoying the beautiful waters of Benzie and Leelanau counties."

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. Beachgoers are also 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.

Bacteria test results will be available by mid-day on Thursdays and posted shortly thereafter on the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes & Energy [BeachGuard website](#) and The Watershed Center [Facebook page](#). If results show high bacteria levels, an advisory will be posted



at impacted beaches and the water at those beaches will be re-tested until results return to acceptable levels.

The Grand Traverse County Health Department will send a media release only if a beach has a Level 2 or higher water quality index until the results return to Level 1. All results will be posted on GTCHD's [Public Beach Monitoring website](#), [Facebook](#), and [Instagram](#) accounts. The Benzie-Leelanau District Health Department will send a media release each week and post results on its [website](#) and [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) accounts.

Funding for beach monitoring comes from U.S. Environmental Protection Agency BEACH Act Funds; Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy's Water Resources Division Beaches Program; City of Traverse City; Acme Township; the Village of Empire; and the Village of Beulah. Testing will be conducted at the following beaches:

#### Lake Michigan

- Van's Beach
- 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
- Omena Beach
- 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)

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#### About The Watershed Center Grand Traverse Bay

The Watershed Center is a Traverse City-based non-profit organization that advocates for clean water in Grand Traverse Bay and acts to protect and preserve its watershed. The Watershed Center blends scientific and policy expertise with education, advocacy, collaboration, and



solution-oriented actions to serve as a multi-faceted resource for the community. The Watershed Center engages people in ways that increase knowledge, enjoyment, pride, and informed decision-making around water. For additional information, please visit <https://www.gtbay.org>.