Water Quality Swimming Alerts Issed in Carteret County

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Water quality swimming alerts issued in Carteret County

MOREHEAD CITY – State recreational water quality officials today are alerting the public that initial testing at one ocean-side site and one sound-side site in Carteret County showed levels of bacteria exceeding the state's and Environmental Protection Agency's recreational water quality swimming standards.

One alert is for waters at the public beach on Wyndtree Dr., just west of the junction of Coast Guard Road and Wyndtree Dr. in Emerald Isle; the other alert is for waters at the public access at the north side mouth of Town Creek in Beaufort. Test results of water samples collected yesterday show bacteria that exceed the state and federal single-sample standard of 104 enterococci per 100 milliliters for Tier 1 high-usage sites. Swimming areas are classified based on recreational use and are referred to as tiers.

State officials will test the sites again today, and the results of the sampling will dictate further action. If the new sample also shows elevated bacteria counts, state officials will post a swimming advisory sign and issue a swimming advisory.

The N.C. Recreational Water Quality Program tests water quality at ocean and sound beaches in accordance with federal and state laws.

Enterococci, the bacteria group used for testing, are found in the intestines of warm-blooded animals. While it is not known to cause illness, scientific studies indicate that enterococci may indicate the presence of other disease-causing organisms. People swimming or playing in waters with bacteria levels higher than the standards have an increased risk of developing gastrointestinal illness or skin infections.

State officials sample 210 sites throughout the coastal region, most of them on a weekly basis from April to October. Testing continues on a reduced schedule during the rest of the year, when the waters are colder.

For more information on the N.C. Recreational Water Quality Program, visit the program's website [portal.ncdenr.org], view a map of the testing sites [portal.ncdenr.org], and follow the

program's Twitter feed [twitter.com].

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