

FOR RELEASE
FRIDAY MAY 30, 2008
at Noon Central



Great Lakes Partners Make Strides on Beach Health

RACINE, WI (May 30, 2008) -- Local, state and federal government partners came together today to announce the launch of measures to better address Great Lakes beach health. Racine City Council President David Maack and Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative Executive Director David Ullrich were joined by U.S. EPA Assistant Administrator for the Office of Water Benjamin Grumbles, U.S. EPA Region 5 Acting Deputy Regional Administrator Walter Kovalik, and Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Water Division Administrator Todd Ambts at Racine's North Beach for the event. North Beach is considered a prime example of how local action along with alternative beach management methods can result in healthy beaches.

The announcements made at North Beach included the launch of EPA's standardized beach sanitary survey forms. Sanitary surveys assist beach managers with a consistent approach to identify pollution sources, share information, and plan remediation efforts. Standardized survey forms were called for in the Coastal Health chapter of the *Great Lakes Regional Collaboration Strategy to Restore and Protect the Great Lakes*. The Great Lakes Regional Collaboration (GLRC) was authorized by an Executive Order in 2004 as a regional endeavor to develop a restoration strategy for the Great Lakes. More than 1,500 people participated in the effort including local, tribal, state, and federal stakeholders. The Strategy is comprised of eight focus areas, of which Coastal Health is one.

"The identity of communities along the Great Lakes is so closely tied to these waters," said Mayor Gary Becker of Racine, Chairman of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative. "Healthy and vibrant beaches mean a healthier nearshore ecosystem for the Lakes. Coming together as a region, as we are doing with the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration, is critical to addressing contamination at our beaches and within the Lakes on a larger scale. For the sake of the Lakes, this regional effort needs to succeed."

Based on GLRC Strategy recommendations, and in response to data collected from the Great Lakes states which found that 90 percent of their beach advisories and closings were from unknown sources, U.S. EPA and federal, state and local beach program partners developed standardized beach sanitary survey forms in 2007. The forms were successfully piloted by 61 Great Lakes beaches during the 2007 beach season through EPA funding. Many beach managers that participated in the pilot program have already recommended remediation actions to help achieve clean and safe beach water quality.

The Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative, along with GLRC partners, is working to encourage the broad use of the standard sanitary survey forms around the region through the GLRC Clean Beaches Initiative. Over the last month, the Clean Beaches

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Initiative conducted targeted outreach to beach managers, local governments, and tribal governments to encourage use of the forms. Response so far has been very positive with indications that the forms will be used throughout the Great Lakes region, at beaches spanning from Chicago to the Towns of Ajax and Goderich in Ontario.

The success of a combination of efforts like the use of sanitary surveys, source remediation, and beach grooming is apparent in the example of Racine's North Beach. In 2000, the frequency of beach advisories at North Beach was as high as 66 percent. Through the use of these various beach management methods, Racine has reduced the frequency of beach advisories to at or below 5 percent in the last three beach seasons.

Learn more about the standard beach sanitary survey forms and Great Lakes beach management at www.gllrc.us/initiatives/beaches/CleanBeachesInitiative.html and www.epa.gov/waterscience/beaches/.

Founded in 2003 by Mayor Richard M. Daley, and joined by Mayor David Miller, the [Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative](#) is a binational coalition of mayors and other local officials that works actively with federal, state, provincial, tribal and first nation governments to advance the protection and restoration of the Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence River. The Cities Initiative has grown to include more than 50 member cities from across the Basin.

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