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Health Department of Northwest Michigan

Additional Water Sampling Results Known for Richardi Park Beach

Partial body contact recommendation continues

Results from 12 water samples taken Thursday in and around Richardi Park Beach in Antrim County show continuing elevated E. coli levels in two areas. As a result, the Health Department of Northwest Michigan (HDNW) is extending a partial body contact advisory for Richardi Park Beach that's been in place since Aug. 24.

Thursday's sampling at the beach showed an E. coli level of 686.9 per 100ml, which calls for restricted use based on Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) water quality standards. Because of the longevity of elevated E. coli, an additional 11 samples were also taken. Results indicate that E. coli levels are lower upstream of the beach site; however, samples taken at the mouth of the Cedar River – where a number of geese and waterfowl were congregated – showed an elevated E. coli level of 778.9 E. coli per 100ml.

“Results from additional samples support that elevated levels may be coming from the feces of geese and waterfowl, which creates elevated E. coli levels when the feces get into the water source,” said Jeremy Fruk, HDNW Director of Environmental Health. “We also performed water testing near a wastewater pump and those samples were not elevated enough to support leakage from the pump.”

E. Coli levels testing between 301 and 1000 per 100ml qualify for partial body contact advisories, based on EGLE standards. Levels 300 per 100ml and below allow for full body contact. At the current level, HDNW recommends limiting water use to wading, fishing, and paddling. Contact above the waist is not advised. The advisory continues to be posted at the beach.

HDNW's lab in Gaylord has been preserving water samples from Richardi Park Beach to perform molecular source tracking to determine the origin of the E. coli (human or other animals). Those tests will take place over the fall and winter.

HDNW posts beach monitoring reports on its website at <https://www.nwhealth.org/beach.html>. Through an EGLE supported web-based program, the public has real-time access to beach water quality results for beaches all over Michigan. Information can be found at www.deq.state.mi.us/beach/.

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The Health Department of Northwest Michigan is mandated by the Michigan Public Health Code to promote wellness, prevent disease, provide quality healthcare, address health problems of vulnerable populations, and protect the environment for the residents and visitors of Antrim, Charlevoix, Emmet, and Otsego counties. For more information, visit nwhealth.org.