# 2025 Oregon Beach Monitoring Site List Assessment Response to Public Comments Received

The Oregon Beach Monitoring Program (OBMP) is a multi-agency effort between Oregon Health Authority (OHA) and Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) to monitor the marine waters along Oregon's coastline for the presence of fecal bacteria, and to report elevated levels to the public. Through this program, DEQ regularly samples marine water and freshwater at 24 beaches along Oregon's 360 miles of coastline between May and September. To protect public health, OHA issues advisories at beaches where bacteria levels in marine waters are high.

The OBMP invited public comment on a list of proposed beaches to monitor for health risks in 2026 and 2027. The public comment period lasted from October 1-31, 2025. This document summarizes the public comments and responses from DEQ and OHA.

## Contents

## Comment 1: Hammond there's still a lot of trash that is missed!! Up near the sand dunes amongst the wood logs and algae!! I know this because I was at the beach clean-up the last few times!! Plastic bottle tops, straws, cigarette butts, other small items of plastic forks, spoons, plastic ties from bread hamburger buns. A lot is being done, but more garbage can be and should be picked up and removed from the beach!!

**Response:** Thank you for your comment regarding Hammond Beach.

The location we have considered for this comment is Hammond Beach in Clatsop County located on the south shore of the Columbia River upstream from the South Jetty. The Oregon Beach Monitoring Program (OBMP) operates under the Federal BEACH Act which defines coastal recreational waters it can monitor. Hammond Beach is not listed as a BEACH Act beach likely because it is inside the jetty. Furthermore, the OBMP has focused

its monitoring on detecting possible human pathogens by monitoring for fecal indicator bacteria (FIB).

The presence of trash on the beach does create a hazard for humans and wildlife. The 2000 BEACH Act mentions monitoring of floatable debris and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has published guidance *Assessing and Monitoring Floatable Debris* in August 2002 (Document ID: EPA-842-B-02-002). However, due to resource constraints OBMP monitoring is focused on FIB and is limited to the coastal recreational waters identified by the EPA.

### Comment 3: I think those are all great ones to test.

**Response:** Oregon Beach Monitoring Program acknowledges receipt of the comment.

Comment 4: As a resident of Lincoln County (Bayshore community), I am concerned about the water quality in Alsea Bay and at the beaches along the spit due to the numbers of tourists, and its popularity among crabbers and fisherman. Also, the water treatment plant, numerous septics, and runoff into the Alsea River could be sources of contamination.

**Response:** Thank you for your comment regarding Alsea Bay area beaches.

The Oregon Beach Monitoring Program (OBMP) evaluates and ranks beaches by risk according to fecal indicator bacteria (FIB) concentrations in past samples and the number of people using the beach at the time of sampling. The higher ranked beaches have greater FIB concentrations and more beach users than lower ranked beaches. The beaches at Alsea Bay and the beach south of the mouth of the Alsea River have been monitored in the past and their risk rankings (34th for Alsea Bay and 58th for Governor Patterson Beach) were not high enough to justify dropping other beaches proposed for monitoring.

The OBMP did inquire with permit and compliance staff responsible for the Waldport wastewater treatment plant's discharge permit and pulled their compliance history. The plant, which discharges into a tributary to Alsea Bay, conducts regular FIB monitoring and results do not indicate FIB risk to the bay and downstream beaches. The EPA maintains the ECHO database for dischargers where the public can access this information at Enforcement and Compliance History Online | US EPA.

The OBMP has measured beach use at the area referenced in the comment since 2022. The north end of Bayshore does not have any historical FIB data with which to generate an overall risk score. However, this stretch of beach does not appear to have any defined significant surface drainages of freshwater, which is the typical pathway for concentrated FIB to reach beaches. If monitoring were to occur, then OBMP would likely sample near the L. Presley & Vera C. Gill State Natural Area or Driftwood Beach State Rec Site.

Unfortunately, at this time, the OBMP does not have the resources to include the Bayshore area without evidence of potential contamination.

## Comment 5: SUNSET BAY SP BEACH - Coos Bay

**Response:** The Oregon Beach Monitoring Program evaluates and ranks beaches by risk according to fecal indicator bacteria (FIB) concentrations in past samples and the number of people using the beach at the time of sampling. The higher ranked beaches have greater FIB concentrations and more beach users than lower ranked beaches. Sunset Bay State Park beach ranks in the 10 highest ranked risk beaches in Oregon. The Oregon Beach Monitoring Program (OBMP) has 23 seasons of data from Sunset Bay State Park Beach with almost 1700 samples collected. The OBMP prepared the *Big Creek and Sunset Bay Bacteria Investigation* special report in 2020 and is available at https://www.oregon.gov/deq/wq/Documents/DEQ20-LAB-0036-TR.PDF. Sunset Bay will remain on the monitoring list for the upcoming seasons.

## Comment 6: Multiple locations at a specific beach should be monitored, one testing site is not sufficient for beaches that span hundreds/thousands of yards.

**Response:** Thank you for your comment regarding sampling locations on beaches.

The Oregon Health Authority, Beaches We Monitor web page (https://www.oregon.gov/oha/PH/HEALTHYENVIRONMENTS/RECREATION/BEACHWATERQUALITY/Pages/beaches.aspx) lists the sites sampled at each beach including a link to a map for each beach.

Monitoring sites are selected according to beach use and potential pollution sources. The Oregon Beach Monitoring Program (OBMP) surveys popular beaches along 360 miles of coastline. OBMP identifies sources of bacteria pollution and selects sampling locations adjacent to those sources for monitoring. Nearly all monitored beaches have more than one sampling location. By reviewing more than 20 years of data from beaches with multiple sampling sites, OBMP has found that high fecal indicator bacteria concentrations in ocean water generally occur near creek, pipe, and stormwater runoff onto the beach.

If there is a specific beach where additional sites could identify likely pollution sources, OBMP would consider adding monitoring sites to a beach.

Comment 7: They both have had sewerage run-off problems for decades from the nearby camping areas and nothing is being addressed or taken care of. You can see it and smell it.  BASTENDORFF BEACH - Coos Bay and SUNSET BAY SP BEACH - Coos Bay

**Response:** Thank you for your comment regarding Bastendorff and Sunset Bay Beaches.

Oregon Beach Monitoring Program (OBMP) evaluates and ranks beaches by risk according to fecal indicator bacteria (FIB) concentrations in past samples and the number of people using the beach at the time of sampling. The higher ranked beaches have greater FIB concentrations and more beach users than lower ranked beaches.

Bastendorff and Sunset Bay beaches had risk rankings of 21$^{st}$ and 7$^{th}$, respectively, of the 89 beaches that EPA deems eligible for BEACH act funding in Oregon. Comparing the two beaches, Bastendorff has relatively lower risk both in terms of FIB concentrations and the number of individuals in contact with marine water counted during usage surveys. At Basentdorff Beach, Miner Creek has regular high FIB results. The OBMP will continue to monitor both Bastendorff and Sunset Bay beaches for the 2026-2027 season. OBMP has done investigational studies upstream at Sunset Bay. The results of the study are available on the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality Beach Bacteria Reports web page https://www.oregon.gov/deq/wq/pages/beach-bacteria-reports.aspx.

Comment 8: Hello, the monitoring program email from OHA notes that "Beaches marked with an asterisk refer to those within potential environmental justice communities that may be likely to recreate at the beach and therefore have more exposure to high bacterial levels." What defines an "environmental justice community"? What is a "potential" environmental justice community? Thank you.

**Response:** Oregon Beach Monitoring Program considers a potential environmental justice community to be people who may bear a disproportionate share of negative environmental consequences resulting from industrial, municipal and commercial operations because of factors such as race, color, national origin, culture, education or income.

## Comment 9: Should also include Delray and sunset Beach in Seaside. The drive-ons.

**Response:** Thank you for your comment regarding the drive-on beaches of Del Rey and Sunset Beach.

Oregon Beach Monitoring Program (OBMP) evaluates and ranks beaches by risk according to fecal indicator bacteria (FIB) concentrations in past samples and the number of people using the beach at the time of sampling. The higher ranked beaches have greater FIB concentrations and more beach users than lower ranked beaches.

OBMP has evaluated Del Rey and Sunset beaches for potential pollution sources and risk to the public visiting the beaches. OBMP does not have fecal indicator bacteria data for Del Rey or Sunset Beach, but the beaches lack major discharges onto the beach that OBMP generally associates with high FIB concentrations. The OBMP surveys beaches once per year to count visitors on the beach and in the water. Both Del Rey and Sunset beaches rank relatively low on beach visitor swim counts and the overall risk to people using the beach.

Unfortunately, due to resource restraints, the OBMP cannot add the Sunset or Del Rey Beaches without dropping other beaches likely to pose a greater general risk.

## Comment 10: There's quite a gap between the Coos County sites and Lane County, which has only one and no monitoring in Douglas County (the city of Reedsport). I'm no expert but that seems to be missing a lot of potentially contaminated sites. I understand funding issues and I greatly appreciate your efforts. I'm retired, live near Coos Bay and I'd happily volunteer to help with this work. I've worked in the woods and don't mind getting cold, wet & dirty.

**Response:** Thank you for your comment regarding the gap in monitored beaches between Lane and Coos Counties.

Oregon Beach Monitoring Program (OBMP) evaluates and ranks beaches by risk according to fecal indicator bacteria (FIB) concentrations in past samples and the number of people using the beach at the time of sampling. The higher ranked beaches have greater FIB concentrations and more beach users than lower ranked beaches.

The OBMP is funded by Federal BEACH Act grant which defines candidate beaches as those that are not federally managed. The beaches between the mouths of the Siuslaw and the Coos Rivers are administered by the federal government (45 miles of beach) and are therefore not eligible to be included in the OBMP with the single exception of the only Douglas County beach, the 0.5-mile-long Umpqua Lighthouse State Park Beach.

The OBMP collected over 240 samples at the Umpqua Lighthouse Beach over the course of 8 years. This data was used, along with annual beach use surveys to calculate a low overall FIB risk at this beach.

The remaining Lane County beaches rank too low to justify dropping higher ranked beaches to monitor them.

Community scientists do collect FIB data that the OBMP can use to inform monitoring. The most prominent group on the coast doing FIB monitoring is the Oregon chapter of the Surfrider Foundation. Various watershed councils have also contributed to data collection efforts on the coast that have been helpful in identifying potential areas where the OBMP should be monitoring.

Comment 11: I think more Lincoln City areas should be monitored, specifically Road's End near the turnaround or the casino entrances where many people access the beach. There is also a high concentration of vacation rentals all along that area. I was there in May, and a dead sea lion was immediately below the turnaround, rotting for several days (I know that's different from water monitoring, but I think about Lepto because lots of dogs frequent that end of Lincoln City. Another reason I think this area needs to be monitored is that many who are potentially more vulnerable to pathogens such as elders and people with disabilities access the beach at the casino entrance due to accessibility.

I see Neskowin on the list but it's a long way from there to D River.

Thank you.

**Response:** Thank you for your comment regarding Lincoln County beaches.

Oregon Beach Monitoring Program (OBMP) evaluates and ranks beaches by risk according to fecal indicator bacteria (FIB) concentrations in past samples and the number of people using the beach at the time of sampling. The higher ranked beaches have greater FIB concentrations and more beach users than lower ranked beaches.

Statewide, the OBMP currently monitors 24 out of 89 beaches the EPA deems eligible for BEACH Act funding across the 360 miles of Oregon coastline, called candidate beaches. In Lincoln County OBMP monitors 7 out of 24 candidate beaches and in Lincoln City OBMP monitors the 2 highest ranked beaches of the 4 total candidate beaches. The OBMP will begin monitoring Roads End Beach for the 2026 and 2027 seasons pending confirmation of a partner local jurisdiction to manage new beach monitoring and advisory signage.

Your comment has helped identify a likely error in the EPA maintained candidate beach database used to select beaches. Beaches must be listed in this database for OBMP to monitor and issue advisories at the location. The database does not include Wecoma Beach, the sandy beach between ocean beach access number 41 at Chinook Winds Casino and south of number 44 at the end of NW 6th Ct in Lincoln City. The OBMP will work with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to correct the error in the database to include this stretch of beach so it can be included in future assessments.

Samples collected and analyzed by the Salmon-Drift Creek Watershed Council indicate the potential for some FIB risk from pipes emptying onto Wecoma Beach and a marine water FIB result exceeding the threshold used to determine if bacteria levels are unsafe for water contact. If resources allow, the OBMP may visit the freshwater sites on the beach to collect FIB samples analyzed for *Enterococcus* (the FIB used in the OBMP).

By establishing an EPA beach ID number for the Wecoma Beach area, measuring beach use, and possibly collecting more FIB results, the OBMP may be able to include this stretch of beach in future site list assessments, and if warranted add it to the list of monitored beaches.

Comment 12: This looks like a great list of spots that are frequented by various recreational people (swimmers, surfers, kayackers, fisherfolk).

**Response:** Oregon Beach Monitoring Program acknowledges receipt of the comment.

Comment 13: I want to know if the poison that gardeners are spraying on weeds, on one street from the beach is affecting ocean wildlife and corals D River to 14th I have spoken to gardeners, and they all use a stronger spray on weeds than roundup.

**Response:** Thank you for your comment regarding herbicide use near D River Beach.

The Oregon Beach Monitoring Program tests coastal recreational waters for fecal indicator bacteria that are a surrogate for human pathogen health risks. The program is unable to test waters for herbicides and pesticides. You may wish to contact your municipal public works department to learn more about pesticides that may have been measured in stormwater.

Comment 14: This looks like an excellent list of beaches to me.

**Response:** Oregon Beach Monitoring Program acknowledges receipt of the comment.

Comment 15: At least for my knowledge of Lincoln County and the beaches that I most often frequent near Newport, I think your list is very appropriate.

**Response:** Oregon Beach Monitoring Program acknowledges receipt of the comment.

Comment 16: Roads End in Lincoln City is a heavily used beach at the North end of the city. Lots of visitors. I suggest monitoring that beach.

**Response:** Thank you for your comment regarding Roads End Beach in Lincoln City. Oregon Beach Monitoring Program (OBMP) evaluates and ranks beaches by risk according to fecal indicator bacteria (FIB) concentrations in past samples and the number of people using the beach at the time of sampling. The higher ranked beaches have greater FIB concentrations and more beach users than lower ranked beaches.

The OBMP collected about 78 samples at Road's End State Recreation Site over 3 seasons from 2002 – 2004. One result exceeded the threshold used to determine if bacteria levels are unsafe for marine water contact criteria (also called the beach action value or BAV) in 2002.

In June 2014 the OBMP responded to a spill at Logan Creek at Road's End Beach. The FIB results in Logan Creek were high, and the marine results were a little under the BAV. Road's End Beach gets crowds of visitors; the parking area is often full. Our sampling shows it as the 15$^{th}$ highest-use beach. Overall risk rank for Roads End was 20$^{th}$ out of the 89 beaches that EPA deems eligible for BEACH Act funds, called candidate beaches.

Statewide, the OBMP currently monitors 24 out of 89 candidate beaches across the 360 miles of Oregon coastline. In Lincoln County, OBMP monitors 7 out of 24 candidate beaches and in Lincoln City, OBMP monitors the 2 highest-rank beaches of the 4 total candidate beaches. The OBMP will begin monitoring Roads End Beach for the 2026 and 2027 seasons pending confirmation of a partner local jurisdiction to manage new beach monitoring and advisory signage.

Comment 17: The list of beaches is extensive and will probably yield accurate results. I'm familiar with only Neskowin SP beach and Siletz Bay.

**Response:** Oregon Beach Monitoring Program acknowledges receipt of the comment.

Comment 18: Should add the beach in Lincoln City around the 15th St. beach access. It's a popular access point for people in cars to drive out onto the beach, and it always smells funky down by the waterline.

**Response:** Thank you for your comment regarding the 15th Street access to the beach in Lincoln City.

Oregon Beach Monitoring Program (OBMP) evaluates and ranks beaches by risk according to fecal indicator bacteria (FIB) concentrations in past samples and the number of people using the beach at the time of sampling. The higher ranked beaches have greater FIB concentrations and more beach users than lower ranked beaches. Statewide, the OBMP currently monitors 24 out of 89 beaches that EPA deems eligible for BEACH Act funds across the 360 miles of Oregon coastline, called candidate beaches.

Your comment identified a likely error in the EPA maintained candidate beach database used to select beaches. Beaches must be listed in this database for OBMP to monitor and issue advisories at the location. The database does not include Wecoma Beach, the sandy beach between ocean beach access number 41 at Chinook Winds Casino and south of access number 44 at the end of NW 6th Ct in Lincoln City. The OBMP will work with EPA to correct the error in the database to include this stretch of beach so it can be included in future assessments.

Samples collected and analyzed by the Salmon-Drift Creek Watershed Council indicate the potential for some FIB risk from pipes emptying onto Wecoma Beach. They also had a marine water FIB result exceeding the safe-contact threshold. If resources allow, OBMP may visit the watershed council's freshwater sites not located on tribal land to collect FIB samples analyzed for *Enterococcus* (the FIB used in the OBMP).

By establishing an EPA beach ID number for this stretch of beach, measuring beach use, and possibly collecting more FIB results, the OBMP may be able to include this stretch of Wecoma Beach in future site list assessments and if warranted add it to the list of monitored beaches.

Comment 19: Can you add Yachats. Dog poop, lots of people and several times there has been an overflow from the Yachats water system spewing a brown sludge down into the waterfront. At the end of summer, it is entirely green with algae.

**Response:** Thank you for your comment regarding Yachats Beach.

Oregon Beach Monitoring Program (OBMP) evaluates and ranks beaches by risk according to fecal indicator bacteria (FIB) concentrations in past samples and the number of people using the beach at the time of sampling. Higher ranked beaches have greater FIB concentrations and more beach users than lower ranked beaches.

The OBMP collected samples at Yachats for 5 seasons before 2009 (2002, '03, '04, '07, and '08). Samples were collected at 3 marine sites and one freshwater site on the river. The program collected 45 samples, and the highest result was less than one third of the concentration at which a beach health advisory would be issued (41 compared to 130 MPN/100mL enterococcus). Over 70% of the results from Yachats beach were non-detect. As a result of these low concentrations and moderate beach use, the risk at Yachats beach ranks 56$^{th}$ out of 89 total candidate beaches in Oregon. Adding the Yachats beach would require dropping a beach with higher risk ranking.

Regarding discharges, the Yachats drinking water treatment facility could discharge backflow water periodically to flush out its filtration system, but this discharge should happen about a mile upstream from the beach. The wastewater facility discharges directly to the ocean which would be difficult to observe. The brown discharge described is most likely coming from stormwater conveyance system. More information would be needed to determine the nature of the discharge.

If you believe an illegal discharge is happening, you can file a complaint with DEQ's online complaints Department of Environmental Quality : File a Pollution Complaint : Resources : State of Oregon. You can also report an illegal discharge by leaving a voicemail at 1-888-997-7888. Please be prepared to describe to the best of your ability what the problem is, the kind and amount of pollution, the specific location and who is responsible.

The OBMP operates under the Federal BEACH Act which defines where and what it can monitor. The BEACH Act currently does not cover algal bloom monitoring. Previous work conducted by a group of local volunteer community scientists (Yachats Water Monitoring Group) did identify the potential for Yachats River to produce algal blooms on or near the beach. If you are concerned this algal bloom may represent a harmful algal bloom there is information available on the Oregon Health Authority's web page Oregon Health Authority : Recreation : Recreation : State of Oregon including ways to report suspected blooms Oregon Harmful Algal Bloom (HAB) Reporting Form.

Comment 20: Most people think "sand" when thinking of beaches. Yaquina Bay has both sand and mud flat beaches, which ought to be included in this program. My guess is that most health risks on beaches are caused by trash, i.e., things people are too lazy to to dispose of correctly, including items washed down from upriver and/or watersheds.

**Response:** Thank you for your comment regarding trash and Yaquina Bay.

The Oregon Beach Monitoring Program (OBMP) operates under the guidelines of the federal BEACH Act which supports states monitoring coastal recreational waters for risks to beachgoers posed by human pathogens. The OBMP monitors for potential pathogens by analyzing water samples for fecal indicator bacteria. Coastal recreational waters do include estuaries, but EPA generally considers beaches as non-rocky stretches of beach used for swimming, bathing, surfing, or similar water contact activities. For this reason, mud flats, including those in Yaquina Bay, are not included in EPA's list of designated beaches. A map of designated beaches is available at https://beacon.epa.gov/ords/beacon2/r/beacon_apex/beacon2/map-page.

The presence of trash on the beach does create a hazard for humans and wildlife. The 2000 BEACH Act mentions monitoring of floatable debris and the EPA published guidance *Assessing and Monitoring Floatable Debris* in August 2002 (Document ID: EPA-842-B-02-002). However, due to resource constraints OBMP monitoring is focused on FIB and is limited to the coastal recreational waters identified.

## Comment 21: Fogarty Creek Beach should be added for Lincoln County.

**Response:** Thank you for your comment regarding Fogarty Creek Beach.

Oregon Beach Monitoring Program (OBMP) evaluates and ranks beaches by risk according to fecal indicator bacteria (FIB) concentrations in past samples and the number of people using the beach at the time of sampling. The higher ranked beaches have greater FIB concentrations and more beach users than lower ranked beaches.

Between 2002 and 2004 the OBMP collected 59 FIB samples at Fogarty Creek Beach. Only one result exceeded the threshold used to determine if bacteria levels are unsafe for water contact. In 73% of the samples, no FIB was detected. OBMP's beach use counts place Fogarty Creek Beach 25$^{th}$ out of 89 beaches in Oregon that EPA deems eligible for BEACH Act funding, called candidate beaches. Based on FIB results, Fogarty ranks 30$^{th}$ out of the 89 candidate beaches. In Lincoln County OBMP monitors 7 out of 24 candidate beaches. OBMP is not planning to add Fogarty Creek beach at this time because, due to limited resources, that would require dropping a beach with a higher risk profile.

Comment 22: Seal Rock, Curtis Street - People with dogs don't pick up after them, especially at the top of the path down to the beach. There's too much smoking, and the wind carries it all over the beach. I know it's a public place, but there should be some kind of rule.

**Response:** Thank you for your comment regarding the Seal Rock and Curtis Street beaches.

The Oregon Beach Monitoring Program (OBMP) operates under the guidelines of the federal BEACH Act which supports states monitoring coastal recreational waters for risks to beachgoers from fecal matter carrying pathogens. The OBMP monitors for potential pathogens by analyzing water samples for fecal indicator bacteria (FIB). To prioritize where to monitor along the 360 miles of coastline, OBMP evaluates and ranks beaches by risk according to FIB concentrations in past samples and the number of people using the beach at the time of sampling. The higher ranked beaches have greater FIB concentrations and more beach users than lower ranked beaches.

The OBMP monitors FIB which are a general indicator for fecal contamination, including for the waste left behind by dog owners is washed into a sampled waterbody. The OBMP does not consider air pollutants, including cigarette smoke, in its monitoring or site prioritization.

Past monitoring from Seal Rock State Recreation Site has shown some FIB samples exceed the threshold (also called the beach action value or BAV) which is used to determine if bacteria levels are unsafe for water contact. Seal Rock has the 7th highest frequency of the 63 beaches with bacteria data. In response to comments received in 2023 regarding the Curtis St access, OBMP collected 16 samples during the 2024 and 2025 season near the mouth of Deer Creek. None of the Deer Cr samples exceeded the BAV and the highest result was about half the BAV.

Comment 23: I suggest that the beach at Schooner Creek (or the creek flowing into the beach at the city of Newport beach access at NW 68th Street (Newport). Surfrider has been testing the water/creek there sometimes and on several occasions, it's tested high for bacteria. There's a city of Newport pumping station; the beach has been closed once within the past few years because of problems with the sewage system. Because more houses have been built on or next to that street, more people are using that beach.

**Response:** Thank you for your comment about the NW 68th Street beach access in Newport.

Oregon Beach Monitoring Program evaluates and ranks beaches by risk according to fecal indicator bacteria (FIB) concentrations in past samples and the number of people using the beach at the time of sampling. The higher ranked beaches have greater FIB concentrations and more beach users than lower ranked beaches.

In response to previous public comments about this location, OBMP collected 6 freshwater samples from Schooner Creek on the north side of the parking area gate between 2021-2025 as well as 2 ocean samples near the mouth of Schooner Creek in 2021. The Schooner Creek results were above the threshold (also called the beach action value or BAV) used to determine if bacteria levels are unsafe for water contact in marine water. These results indicated that the creek could be a source for elevated FIB, but the ocean samples at the mouth of the creek were both below detection. Incorporating these results into our risk calculation for Moolack Beach (the EPA designated beach that Schooner Cr drains onto), the beach still ranks around 30th out of the 89 total beaches that EPA deems eligible for BEACH Act funding. Resource constraints mean adding this beach at this time would require dropping higher risk beaches.

The OBMP has worked with the Environmental Protection Agency to correct an error in the Moolack Beach coordinates to make sure the NW 68th St access is included as an eligible beach. The beach risk will be reassessed every two years.

Comment 24: I would like to suggest adding Indian Beach in Ecola State Park to the list of beaches in the Oregon Beach Monitoring Program. While this location does not have much development immediately adjacent to it, it is a location that is heavily used for recreation.

I would also like to suggest adding South Beach State Park south of the jetty to Yaquina Bay to the list. Similar to Indian Beach, it is a location with heavy recreation use.

**Response:** Thank you for your comment regarding Indian and South Beach State Park beaches.

Oregon Beach Monitoring Program (OBMP) evaluates and ranks beaches by risk according to fecal indicator bacteria (FIB) concentrations in past samples and the number of people using the beach at the time of sampling. The higher ranked beaches have greater FIB concentrations and more beach users than lower ranked beaches.

Due to the high number of visitors at Indian Beach, it consistently ranks near the 10$^{th}$ highest-risk beach out of Oregon's 89 designated beaches. However, it presents a unique challenge to our process of selecting the highest ranked beaches because the beach is difficult to access. Because of the time that accessing Indian Beach would require, including Indian Beach would likely result in dropping at least one similarly ranked beach. Based on past experience at the beach, occasional major disruptions getting in and out of the site could jeopardize an entire day's samples in a very tight monitoring schedule.

OBMP monitored Indian Beach for seven seasons from 2003 – 2011. The program collected 210 samples. One result out of the 210 samples exceeded the threshold used to determine if bacteria levels are unsafe for water contact (the beach action value or BAV). Because the frequency of high FIB was so small, the lack of significant upstream sources of pathogens at the site, and the jeopardy accessing the sites presents to completing other work, the OBMP decided not to include Indian Beach in its final list of beaches to monitor for the 2025 and 2026 season.

OBMP monitored South Beach Newport from 2003 to 2007 and collected197 total samples. None of these samples exceeded the beach action value and FIB was mostly not detectable. While the beach usage at the site is moderately high (around 20$^{th}$ out of 89 total beaches in Oregon), the very low risk of detecting high bacteria concentrations means that including South Beach would require dropping higher risk-ranked beaches in the area.

Comment 25: Gov Patterson State Park Beach should be added because it has an ancient septic system overdue for hookup to Waldport's sewage treatment and high numbers of dog walkers who fail to either bag their dog's feces or leave the bags on the beach

**Response:** Thank you for your comment regarding Gov. Patterson State Park Beach.

Oregon Beach Monitoring Program (OBMP) evaluates and ranks beaches by risk according to fecal indicator bacteria (FIB) concentrations in past samples and the number of people using the beach at the time of sampling. The higher ranked beaches have greater FIB concentrations and more beach users than lower ranked beaches. OBMP's current resources are stretched to sample 24 the highest ranked out of the total 89 EPA-designated candidate beaches in Oregon.

OBMP has not monitored Governor Patterson Beach for FIB concentrations since 2003, but the 15 samples collected then were all low concentration. When combined with the relatively low beach use that we observed in our surveys, the beach ranks 58$^{th}$ priority out of 89 beaches. Adding Governor Patterson Beach would require dropping a beach with a higher ranked risk in the area.

OBMP did contact the Oregon DEQ treatment plant permit writer and compliance specialist to determine if there could be concerns around the performance of that facility. Based on the information available, the Waldport treatment plant sufficiently removes bacteria from their discharge upstream of Alsea Bay and complies with their permit. Regarding the Governor Patterson Park restroom, our partners at Oregon Parks and Recreation Department conducted a site visit to check on the operation of the facilities there. Parks mentioned that the vent, when functioning properly, can be a source of strong odors, but the drain field and holding tanks are all functioning properly.

Comment 26: Really, we don't need OHA to constantly monitor our beaches so you can just shut them down to all usage. You have a tendency to exaggerate concerns and over-regulate. Interestingly, very few people actually use our beaches due to the cold weather and ocean temperatures - especially compared to the east coast and Florida. Stop creating problems where few exist!

**Response:** Thank you for your comment. A few points of clarification regarding the Oregon Beach Monitoring Program may address some of your concerns. Oregon monitors beaches only during the peak summer use season. Each beach is monitored 5 to 10 days per year. When a sample shows increased risk to human health based on the presence of fecal indicator bacteria, the Oregon Health Authority issues an advisory which states the potential risks of elevated fecal bacteria concentrations and encourages visitors to avoid contact with the water. No beaches are shut down or closed. When Oregon Health Authority issues and advisory, Oregon Beach Monitoring Program repeats sampling usually within a day and continues until concentrations drop and the advisory is lifted. There are few problems on the Oregon Coast with only a small percentage of our samples from marine waters resulting in beach advisories; however, even this very limited program has identified areas where problems do exist.

Comment 27: List makes sense. There is Washburne SP beach in Lane County, but not as many visitors as Heceta Beach, plus Washburne doesn't have the runoff from nearby homes.

My concern for all of the beaches is fecal contamination from dog owners not picking up after their dogs. Some "bury" it.

**Response:** Fecal indicator bacteria (FIB) monitored by the Oregon Beach Monitoring Program (OBMP) would measure contamination from dog feces getting into the water. However, the fecal indicator OBMP measures cannot differentiate between different host animal sources. A different type of testing called genetic microbial source tracking, can be used to estimate the likely sources of bacteria, but these methods are many times more expensive than the bacteria culturing method used by the OBMP to quantify the general FIB concentrations.

The OBMP completed one such genetic microbial source tracking study targeting samples with high FIB concentrations around Cannon Beach. The study looked at dog, human and ruminant source markers. The dog markers were the least common detected and were not detected in any of the three ocean water samples. The study only had 20 total samples analyzed for genetic markers, and 17 of those were from rivers and streams draining the area around Cannon Beach and Tolovana. The study is too small to make any general conclusions.

OBMP evaluates and ranks beaches by risk according to FIB concentrations in past samples and the number of people using the beach at the time of sampling. The higher ranked beaches have greater FIB concentrations and more beach users than lower ranked beaches. The current resources are stretched to sample 24 of the total 89 EPA-designated candidate beaches in Oregon – those eligible for BEACH Act funds. The ranked risks for Heceta and Carl G Washburne beaches are 33$^{rd}$ and 67$^{th}$, respectively. Heceta Beach is included in the list, but Carl G. Washburne Beach's rank is too low monitor without dropping significantly higher ranked beaches.

Comment 28: There is a beach just in between two that are mentioned on the list in Lincoln County, Seal Rock SP and Ona Beach, accessed from Hwy 101 on Curtis Rd. It runs from the North side of the rock that separates it from Seal Rock SP for about a mile North before you get to what might be called Ona Beach. It is important that this area receive at least the same attention as the two areas mentioned in the list.

This beach (what I call "Curtis Road Beach") is home to a great variety of wildlife. I walk it whenever I can and I see all sorts of birds, nesting and migratory at different times of the year. Herons fish in that grotto and seal mothers bring their pups there to rest and play in safety. The rocks host a nicely recovering population of starfish, urchins and mussels. Several species inhabit the tidepools.

It does not take much scientific knowledge to recognize pollution in the area… just take a whiff when you walk down to the beach from the parking area at Curtis Road. It smells of raw sewage, and it ranges from strong to overwhelming depending on the day. It can be seen seeping from the stream that runs near the entry trail. This isn't the only place along that stretch with a problem - a thorough sample collection along the bank and from the various runoff streams would paint an awful picture.

Please make certain, even if it is not specifically added to the list, that the mile of beach on either side of the Curtis Road access is given the same attention as the mentioned sites.

**Response:** The Oregon Beach Monitoring Program (OBMP) responded to public comments about the Curtis Street access beach in 2023. The program started collecting samples from Deer Creek about 150 m south of the Curtis Street beach access in 2025. OBMP collected 8 samples in 2025. The FIB results from these samples have been low so far, with the highest measured result being less than half the criteria to trigger an advisory in marine water. As resources allow, OBMP field crews will continue monitoring near the Curtis Street access and add samples at new freshwater locations in addition to the Deer Cr site. There is an outflow pipe on the north side of the access at Curtis Street that does flow out to the beach seasonally. If resources allow, the OBMP may sample from the pipe for fecal indicator bacteria as we do not have any data from that location yet.

Comment 29: I would like to add some beaches to this list in Curry County.

1: Sporthaven Beach. This beach has high person to water contact and is right next to the Chetco River where runoff could be a concern.

2. North Jetty Beach. This is the beach located next to the north jetty of the Chetco River. There is frequent person-to-water contact, and it is also next to the Chetco River. Not only are there runoff concerns but there have been several incidents in the past where the sewer system servicing Seacliff Terrace has failed, one of which closed the beach to public use for several weeks.

**Response:** Oregon Beach Monitoring Program (OBMP) evaluates and ranks beaches by risk according to fecal indicator bacteria (FIB) concentrations in past samples and the number of people using the beach at the time of sampling. The higher ranked beaches have greater FIB concentrations and more beach users than lower ranked beaches.

OBMP monitored Sporthaven beach between 2002 and 2011 and collected 81 samples. Historical data showed low concentrations with no exceedances of the threshold (also called the beach action value or BAV) used to determine if bacteria levels are unsafe for water contact, and most samples did not have detectable FIB concentrations.

The beach on the northern end of the Chetco Jetty is not identified as a water contact beach by the Environmental Protection Agency—likely due to the density of nearshore rocks. The OBMP operates under the Federal BEACH Act which defines where and what it can monitor. The OBMP will be working with the EPA to revisit the beach locations. We will consult with our field staff and other organizations to determine if we can make a case to include the beach north of the Chetco Jetty. This would be first step towards considering this area as a beach to include in future site list assessments.

The nearest OBMP listed beach north of the Chetco is Mill Beach (OR953303). Mill Beach has been monitored since 2002 and has shown some high measurements resulting in a high risk ranking for the presence of FIB.

Beaches we do monitor in Brookings are Mill and Harris Beaches. Both beaches had significantly higher risk, ranking 19$^{th}$ and 16$^{th}$, respectively compared to 48$^{th}$ for Sporthaven Beach.

Comment 30: Hi all, appreciate your work on this. I wanted to emphasize my perceived importance of Nye Beach monitoring. I have lived next to Nye Beach for almost three years and take walks on it almost daily. I would estimate the number of days over seasons of higher beach usage (spring, summer, fall) that Nye Beach smells like sewage at 12%, and the number of days that Nye smells strongly of chlorine at another 12%. Combined, this would be almost one in four days that the beach has issues. And this wouldn't account for the lifetime of these contaminants in the water, where people surf, kayak, go fishing and crabbing, etc.

While only living at Nye for three years, I have been connected to the ocean here for about 9 years - when completing my graduate degree at OSU I would come out to Newport weekly to surf. The number of times there is a "sewage leak" in Newport, and associated water quality warnings, is concerning. There will either be signs on the beach warning of bacteria levels, or warning people with chlorine sensitivities to stay off.

I hope this merits continued monitoring of Nye Beach. Further, continued collection of data here could provide a strong record that in coming decades could be used to create change in the City of Newport. Lastly, if possible, it would be great if chlorine could also be tested. Newport's solution to sewage leaks appears to be to douse it with chlorine to the point where the beach is emanating the smell. I think ultimately, we would all want a more wholesome and healthful solution and collecting this data to provide a long-term record would be one piece of the puzzle getting us there.

Thanks again for all you do.

**Response:** Oregon Beach Monitoring Program (OBMP) operates under the guidelines of the federal BEACH Act which supports states monitoring coastal recreational waters for risks to beachgoers posed by fecal matter carrying pathogens. The OBMP monitors for potential pathogens by analyzing water samples for fecal indicator bacteria (FIB). Nye Beach is among OBMP's most sampled beaches with over 1600 samples collected since 2002. In 2025, two beach advisories were issued based on ocean water sampling. The OBMP also contacted DEQ staff familiar with stormwater management and wastewater permits for the City of Newport.

Although BEACH Act rules state advisories can only be issued based on ocean water samples, the OBMP also collects samples at the pipe outfall at the Nye Beach turnaround. This freshwater location has a significantly higher frequency of elevated FIB concentrations than the nearby ocean water. However, the pattern of when these higher concentrations at the Nye Beach pipe outfall happen does not have a predictable pattern. In addition, the pipe drains a large and complex catchment making it more difficult to attribute sources.

The OBMP will continue to monitor Nye Beach sites for at least the next two years and hope to document reduced frequency of elevated FIB concentrations.

In response to concerns raised in the comment, OBMP reached out to DEQ permit writers and stormwater staff to gather additional information about how potential pollutants are handled in the area. The paragraphs below summarize this information.

Using smoke testing and camera assessments, the City of Newport has identified and fixed any possible leak or cross contamination issues related to wastewater collection it was able to locate.

The City of Newport does pipe chlorinated, treated wastewater from its treatment plant south of Yaquina Bay to a facility near Nye Beach where the chlorine is removed prior to ocean discharge. Although there were issues calibrating the dechlorination process when the system first came online, it has been working properly with no chlorine violations since it was calibrated. There have been failures in the piping system that have released chlorinated water although we are unaware of any of these discharging in the vicinity of Nye Beach.

Regarding chlorine odor at Nye Beach, there are also a number of hotels in the area with pools, spas and laundry systems using bleach. Any discharges of these chlorinated waters should be directed to the wastewater treatment plant, although pool and laundry rooms vent air with a strong chlorine odor. There is no chlorination of stormwater done by the City of Newport.

Comment 31: Sandlake water should be monitored. DEQ has tested the water in past if they are not doing it now and it previously had elevated sewer pollution. USFS has abandoned the RV dump amenity at the campground. Many, very many, RV operators pull the wastewater plug on their rigs and drain the wastewater as they drive away. The wastewater is dumped onto Galloway Road as they exit the park. Galloway road at the park's entrance is adjacent to Sandlake. Furthermore, RVs are allowed to camp on the sand in a location near the West Dunes parking lot. Before leaving, it would be very easy to discreetly dump the wastewater directly into the sand. This area is in a bowl shape. During heavy rain, the water from the bowl-shaped area is carried in a seasonal stream directly into Sandlake just west of the Day Use Fisherman parking. In the summer, many people recreate in the water, and fishermen and crabbers regularly utilize the water at the runoff site. I am very willing to walk the described area if needed to explain the situation further. Thank you for allowing my comments

**Response:** Thank you for your comment regarding the Sandlake area.

The Oregon Beach Monitoring Program (OBMP) operates under the guidelines of the federal BEACH Act which supports states monitoring coastal recreational waters for risks to beachgoers posed by fecal matter carrying pathogens. In researching your comment, OBMP did identify that the list of Environmental Protection Agency-designated candidate beaches does not include the stretch from Cape Lookout south to the Sandlake outlet. Coastal recreational waters can include estuaries, but EPA generally defines beaches as non-rocky stretches of beach used for swimming, bathing, surfing, or similar water contact activities. OBMP agrees the sandy beach facing the ocean should be recognized as a candidate but is uncertain whether EPA would consider the beach near the campground “coastal” for the program.

Federal property is excluded from OBMP’s jurisdiction over coastal recreational waters. The Sandlake area does include some federal land; however, initial assessment indicates that the Siuslaw NF property does not extend to the beach. We will work EPA and Siuslaw NF to determine if a correction is needed to the list of recreational waters and add the eligible areas south of Cape Lookout to our list of candidate beaches. The grant funding of OBMP limits data collection and issuing of advisories to only locations on the candidate beach list.

The Tillamook Estuary Partnership has collected data in Sandlake that indicates 31% of samples analyzed for *Enterococcus* (FIB used that OBMP uses) exceeded the threshold (also called the beach action value or BAV) used to determine if bacteria levels are unsafe for marine water contact. The data are available online at Oregon Department of Environmental Quality’s publicly available database, AWQMS. The Tillamook Estuary

Partnership's results may warrant OBMP collect some freshwater samples at the mouth of the outlet just before discharging onto the beach if resources allow. The OBMP can also start to collect beach use data at Sandlake so it can be included in future site list assessments.

Statewide, the OBMP currently is stretched to monitor 24 out of the 89 candidate beaches across the 360 miles of Oregon coastline. OBMP evaluates and ranks beaches by risk according to FIB concentrations in past samples and the number of people using the beach at the time of sampling. The higher ranked beaches have greater FIB concentrations and more beach users than lower ranked beaches. Beaches with the highest ranked risk are most likely to be included in future lists of sampled beaches.