

News release

July 1, 2013

Media contact: Jonathan Modie; 971-246-9139; phd.communications@state.or.us, Robert Smith, Oregon Parks and Recreation, 503-390-0639, ext. 227

Technical questions: David Farrer; 971-673-0971; david.g.farrer@state.or.us, or Aaron Borisenko, 503-693-5723; aaron.n.borisenko@state.or.us

Health advisory issued for water contact at Harris beach *Higher than normal bacteria levels found at Curry County beach*

A public health advisory was issued today due to higher-than-normal levels of bacteria in ocean waters at Harris beach in Curry County. The higher-than-normal level was found at the east end of Goat Island.

Increased pathogen and fecal bacteria levels in ocean waters can come from shore and inland sources such as storm water runoff and animal waste from birds such as sea gulls and even pets.

Water samples indicate higher-than-normal levels of fecal bacteria, which can result in diarrhea, stomach cramps, skin rashes and other illnesses. Direct contact with the water should be avoided until the advisory is lifted, especially for children and the elderly who may be more vulnerable to waterborne bacteria.

While this advisory is in effect at Harris beach, visitors should avoid wading in nearby creeks or in discolored water, and stay clear of water runoff flowing into the ocean. Even if there is no advisory in effect, officials recommend avoiding swimming in the ocean for 48 hours after a rainstorm.

(more)

State officials advise that the status of water contact advisories at beaches is subject to change. For the most recent information on advisories, please visit the [Beach Monitoring Program](#) website or call 1-877-290-6767.

Although state officials discourage water contact, they continue to encourage other recreational activities such as walking, playing on the beach, flying kites, and picnicking on these beaches because they pose no health risk even during an advisory. Neighboring beaches are not affected by this advisory.

Since 2003 state officials have used a federal Environmental Protection Agency grant to monitor popular Oregon beaches and make timely reports to the public about elevated levels of fecal bacteria. Oregon state organizations participating in this program are Oregon Public Health, Oregon Department of Environmental Quality and Oregon Parks and Recreation Department. For more information contact the [Beach Monitoring Program](#) at 971-673-0400 or www.healthoregon.org/beach.

#