

St. Andrew Bay RMA

Bay PRP 2014-040

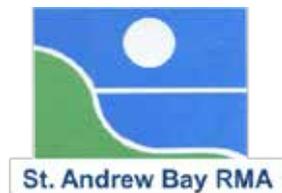
**Identifying the cause of beach swimming advisories
at Carl Gray Park in Bay County, FL**

Linda Fitzhugh, President of RMA

St. Andrew Bay Resource Management Association, Inc.

Why does Carl Gray Park receive the most swimming advisories?

- RMA proposes to identify the sources of fecal bacteria contamination at Carl Gray Park
- Community benefit: Identifying the source of contamination will give our leaders the information they need to solve the problem of beach advisories



Programs:

Baywatch

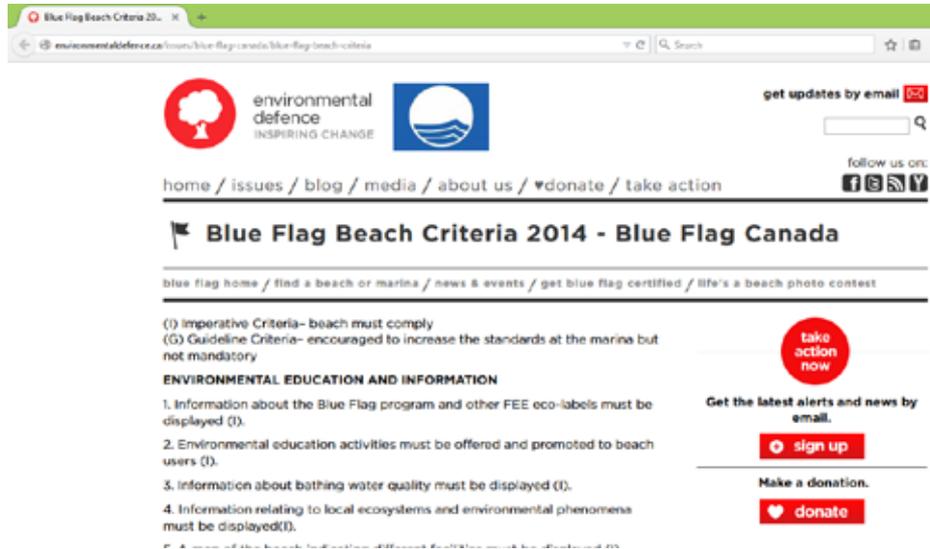
Turtlewatch

Seagrass/Scallop/Shoreline Restoration

Clean Beaches are Vital to Our Economy



A voluntary eco-label awarded to more than 4000 beaches and marinas in 49 countries across Europe, South Africa, Morocco, Tunisia, New Zealand, Brazil, Canada and the Caribbean.



<http://environmentaldefence.ca/issues/blue-flag-canada/blue-flag-beach-criteria>

- Public Perception – often comes from the internet and social media
- What do prospective visitors find in a quick Google search?

They may end up here, where only 2 of our 10 sampled beaches consistently pass standards:

Waterkeeper Swim Guide: theswimguide.org

The screenshot displays the Waterkeeper Swim Guide website interface. At the top, the browser address bar shows the URL: <https://www.theswimguide.org/#30.078041415555727/-86.22755065625/30.329061545637895/-85.28959289257813/11>. The website header features the 'WATERKEEPER SWIM Guide' logo and navigation links: 'About', 'Participate', 'Report Pollution', and 'Get The App'. A search bar is located on the right side of the header. The main content area is a map of Panama City, Florida, with various beach locations marked by colored pins (green, yellow, and red). The map includes labels for Southport, Lynn Haven, Panama City Beach, Upper Grand Lagoon, Lower Grand Lagoon, Panama City, Springfield, Callaway, Parker, and East Bay. The footer contains several sections: 'Blog' with an image of a person on a beach, 'Learn' with an image of a person holding a surfboard, 'Thank you Sponsors' with an image of a person writing on a beach, and 'Get The App' with an image of a person using a smartphone. The footer also includes links for 'AFFILIATES', 'SPONSORS', 'LEGAL', and 'CONTACT'.

And then, they may end up here where Pier Park beach fails 13% of the time:

<https://www.theswimguide.org/beach/1950>

The screenshot shows the website for Panama City Beach Pier. The header includes the 'WATERKEEPER SWIM Guide' logo and navigation links: Blog, About, Learn, Participate, Report Pollution, and Get The App. The main title is 'Panama City Beach Pier' with a sub-header 'Updated by Waterkeeper Swim Guide'. A large panoramic photo of the beach and pier is featured. Below the photo are social media sharing buttons for Facebook (0 likes), Google+ (0), and Twitter (0). A 'DESCRIPTION' section follows, stating: 'The Panama City Beach, also known as Russell-Fields Pier, is located across from the Aaron Bessant Park. The concrete pier extends approximately 1,600 feet into the Gulf of Mexico. The pier does not close, except for weather closures. Admisson/use fee schedule applies. Fishing is permitted, and equipment is available for rental. A Blue Wave recipient, Panama City public beaches may be accessed to the east or west of the pier park area. A clearly marked 500 foot stretch'. A map of Panama City Beach, Florida, is also visible.

GRAPHS



CHART TYPE Pie Bar

INTERVAL Years

TIME PERIOD

2014

Or here, where Carl Grey Park fails 33% of the time

<https://www.theswimguide.org/beach/1953>

The screenshot shows the website interface for Carl Gray Park. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the 'WATERKEEPER SWIM Guide' logo and links for 'Blog', 'About', 'Learn', 'Participate', 'Report Pollution', and 'Get The App'. The main heading is 'Carl Gray Park' with a sub-heading 'Updated by Waterkeeper Swim Guide'. Below this is a large photograph of a beach area with trees and water. A yellow 'Historical Status' button is visible in the top right of the photo area. Underneath the photo is a social media sharing section with 'Like', '+1', and 'Tweet' buttons. A 'DESCRIPTION' section follows, stating: 'A popular waterfront park located on Collegiate Drive just north of Gulf Coast Community College on North Bay, has for several generations been the place to go for boating, fishing, swimming and family picnics. The park has a boat launch ramp and numerous covered picnic tables. Photo Courtesy of VertrynElec.' To the right of the description is a map of Panama City, Florida, showing the location of the park on Collegiate Dr. At the bottom of the page, there are links for 'AFFILIATES', 'SPONSORS', 'LEGAL', and 'CONTACT'.

GRAPHS

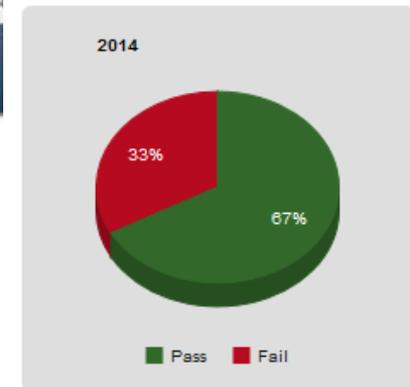


CHART TYPE

Pie Bar

INTERVAL

Years

TIME PERIOD

2014

Or here with this headline:

11
COMMENTS

Florida Panhandle beaches come up short in NRDC water quality, monitoring study

June 28, 2013

http://blog.al.com/gulf-coast/2013/06/alabama_beaches_trounce_florid.html



Testing The Waters, Preven... X

www.nrdc.org/water/oceans/ttw/fl.asp

Search



NATURAL RESOURCES DEFENSE COUNCIL



ACT NOW

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ABOUT US / ISSUES / POLICY

- In 2014, Florida ranked 13th in beach water quality compared to 30 states
- Carl Gray Park ranked 4th worst beach in Florida
- See: <http://www.nrdc.org/water/oceans/ttw/fl.asp>

Testing the Waters 2014

A Guide to Water Quality at Vacation Beaches

State Summary: Florida

Ranked 13th in Beach Water Quality (out of 30 states)
10% of samples exceeded the national Beach Action Value for designated beach areas in 2013.

Summer 2014 is filled with opportunities to improve water quality throughout the United States and to better protect people's health in the process. Everyone can now support a long-awaited rule to enhance protections for small streams and wetlands—these waters can minimize polluted runoff that contributes to poor beach water quality, and can filter out contaminants that promote algae blooms.

State and federal officials have ample legal tools today to rein in stormwater pollution at the city and regional scale. And beach managers can use a new and important tool, the health-protective Beach Action Value developed by the EPA, to make swimming advisory decisions that more fully safeguard public health.

[URGE THE EPA TO TAKE ACTION](#)

[View another location](#)

“Is the water at Panama City Beach really as clear as they claim & are the beaches clean?”

http://www.tripadvisor.com/ShowTopic-g34542-i273-k1236089-What_is_Sea_Water_Quality_in_Panama_City_Beach-Panama_City_Florida.html

The screenshot shows a web browser window with the TripAdvisor forum page. The browser's address bar displays the URL: www.tripadvisor.com/ShowTopic-g34542-i273-k1236089-What_is_Sea_Water_Quality_in_Panama_City_Beach-Panama_City_Florida.html. The page title is "What is Sea Water Quality in Panama City Beach?".

On the left side of the page, there is a sidebar with the text: "Trip Advisor Blog comparing Panama City Beach to Ft. Myers Beach". A large red arrow points from this text to the forum post.

The main content area features a forum post by user "bxclent" from "pittsburgh". The post is dated "Jun 01, 2007, 1:24 PM" and has "posts: 2" and "reviews: 14". The post text reads:

Hello,

I was wondering if anyone could tell me the quality of the water off the beaches at Panama City Beach.

We have gone to Ft Myers Beach for several years & are becoming very disgusted with the water quality. It used to be clear now it's like green pea algae soup & the beaches are always covered with seaweed, red algae or something smelly & gross.

Is the water at Panama City Beach really as clear as they claim & are the beaches clean?

Thanks!

bxclent

Below the post, a box titled "One destination mentioned in this post" lists "Panama City Beach".

On the right side of the page, there are sections for "Related hotels..." (listing Comfort Inn And Suites Panama City, Country Inn & Suites By Carlson, Panama City, and La Quinta Inn & Suites Panama City), "Panama City Destination Experts" (listing amaux and bornwithwheels), and "Beyond destination forums" (listing Air Travel, Business Travel, and Timeshares / Vacation Rentals).

Local Headlines

NewsHerald.com

Newsletter Sign-Up

Squall Live

PanamaCity.com

Daily Deal

Business Directory

PanhandleVarsity

Privacy Policy

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Work For Us

PANAMA CITY
NEWS HERALD
Where life unfolds daily

TRUCK MONTH

2015 Chevrolet Silverado Crew Cab LT All Star

Up To **\$10,000** Off MSRP*

BILL CRAMER

CHEVROLET

*Savings after all applicable rebates, including Owner Loyalty rebate (must be a current owner) instead of a GM rebate, & dealer discounts (plus dealer add-ons & accessories. Applies to in-stock units only. Plus tax, title, license, dealer auto, \$50 electronic filing fee, and \$595 dealer prep fee. Offer ends 09/30/13.

Search carl gray park

Search

68° Some Sun, Panama City, FL

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Search Results 1 - 10 of 73 for "Your search for"

Results 1 - 10 of 73

Advisory for Carl Gray Park rescinded

It is safe to swim at the Carl Gray Park beach now that the local health department has rescinded a swim advisory that went into affect last week after tests showed high levels of the bacteria found in fecal matter.

Published September 11, 2013

[/news/health/advisory-for-carl-gray-park-rescinded-1.201113](#)

Swimming advisory issued for Carl Gray Park

PANAMA CITY – A swimming advisory has been issued for Carl Gray Park, Bay County health officials wrote in a news release.

Published September 5, 2013

[/news/health/swimming-advisory-issued-for-carl-gray-park-1.197766](#)

Carl Gray Park still under advisory

PANAMA CITY – The Florida Department of Health in Bay County has retested the water at Carl Gray Park, as a follow-up to an advisory issued for the park last week, and, as of Tuesday, found it to still contain high levels of enteric bacteria. As a result,...

Published August 13, 2013

[/news/health/carl-gray-park-still-under-advisory-1.186491](#)

Water at Carl Gray Park contains illness risk / REPORT



PANAMA CITY — Down from the boat ramp at Carl Gray Park, a pungent odor drifts on the breeze as water enthusiasts fish and swim in the murky, brownish tide.

Published July 31, 2013

[/outdoors/water-at-carl-gray-park-contains-illness-risk-report-1.180349](#)

Swimming advisories issued for Carl Gray Park, Beach Drive and DuPont Bridge

PANAMA CITY BEACH - Swimming advisories have been issued for Carl Gray Park (#9), Beach Drive (#10) and DuPont Bridge (#11). Advisories for Laguna Beach (#2) and Delwood (#8) have been rescinded, health officials wrote in a news release.

Published July 10, 2013

[/news/health/swimming-advisories-issued-for-carl-gray-park-beach-drive-and-dupont-bridge-1.170216](#)

Surf and/or Currents
Beach conditions are
provided by Beach & Surf
Patrol



Panama City, FL



at 11:46 AM

68°

Mostly cloudy

AccuWeather.com

Local News is Not Just Local



Water at Carl Gray Park contains illness risk / REPORT



Vacationers from Georgia look for hermit crabs at Carl Gray Park in Panama City on Tuesday. An advisory has been posted at the park recommending against swimming due to high bacteria levels in the water.

Andrew Wardlow / Chief Photographer

By Zack McDonald

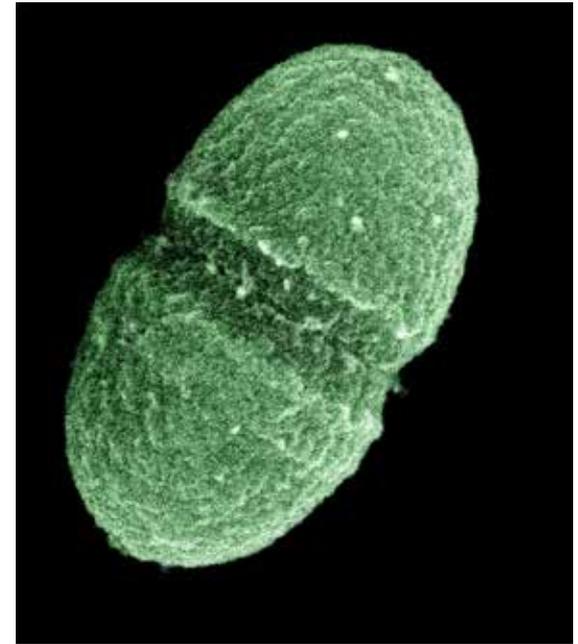
Published: Wednesday, July 31, 2013 at 08:07 PM.

PANAMA CITY — Down from the boat ramp at Carl Gray Park, a pungent odor drifts on the breeze as water enthusiasts fish and

- With the click of a button, local news is shared instantly:
 - Facebook
 - Twitter
 - Linkedin
 - Google+
 - Pinterest

Health Implications

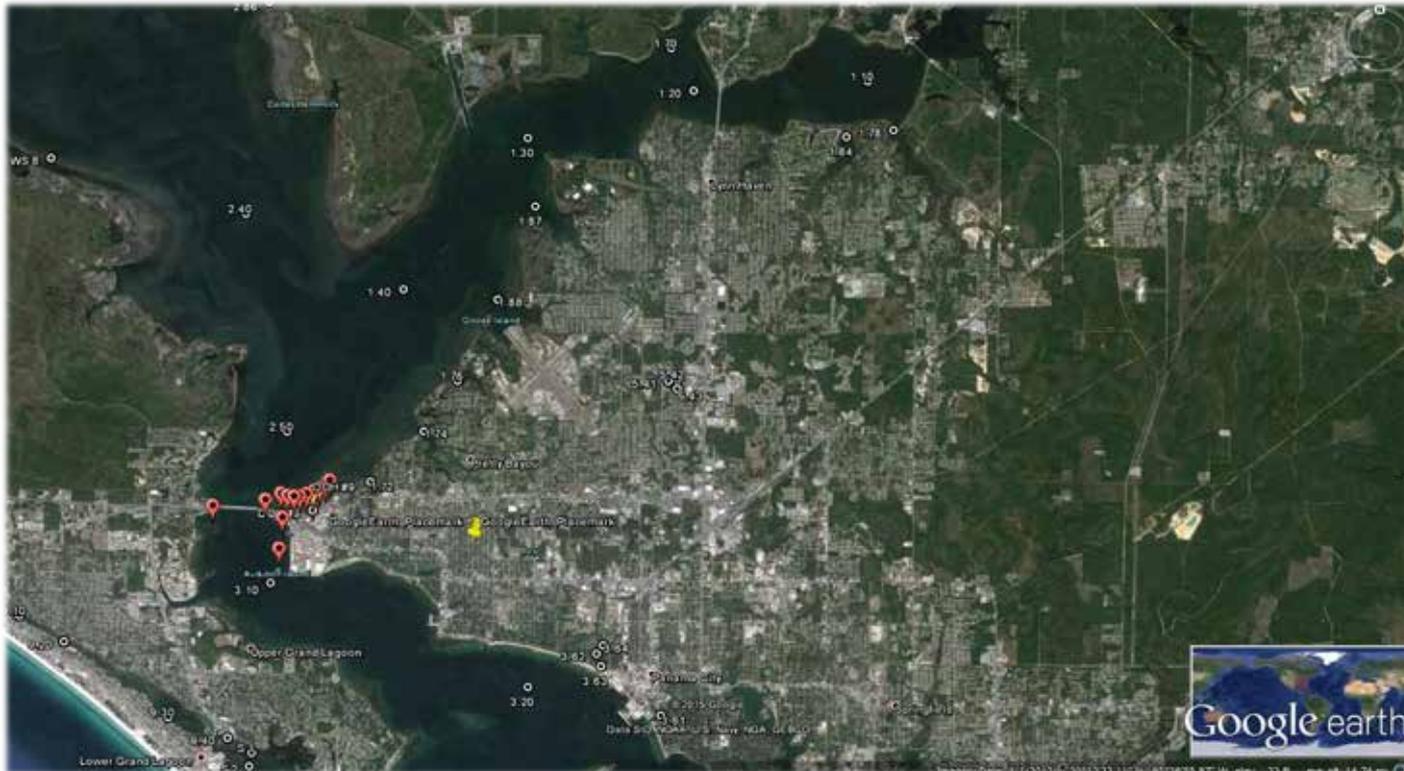
- Enterococci bacteria normally inhabit the intestinal tract of humans and animals
- Presence in recreational waters indicates fecal contamination
- Sources: human sewage, storm water runoff, pets, wildlife
- If present in high concentrations and are ingested while swimming or enter the skin through a cut or sore, they may cause human disease, infections or rashes



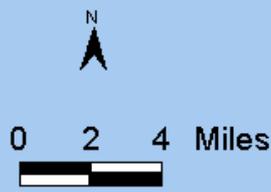
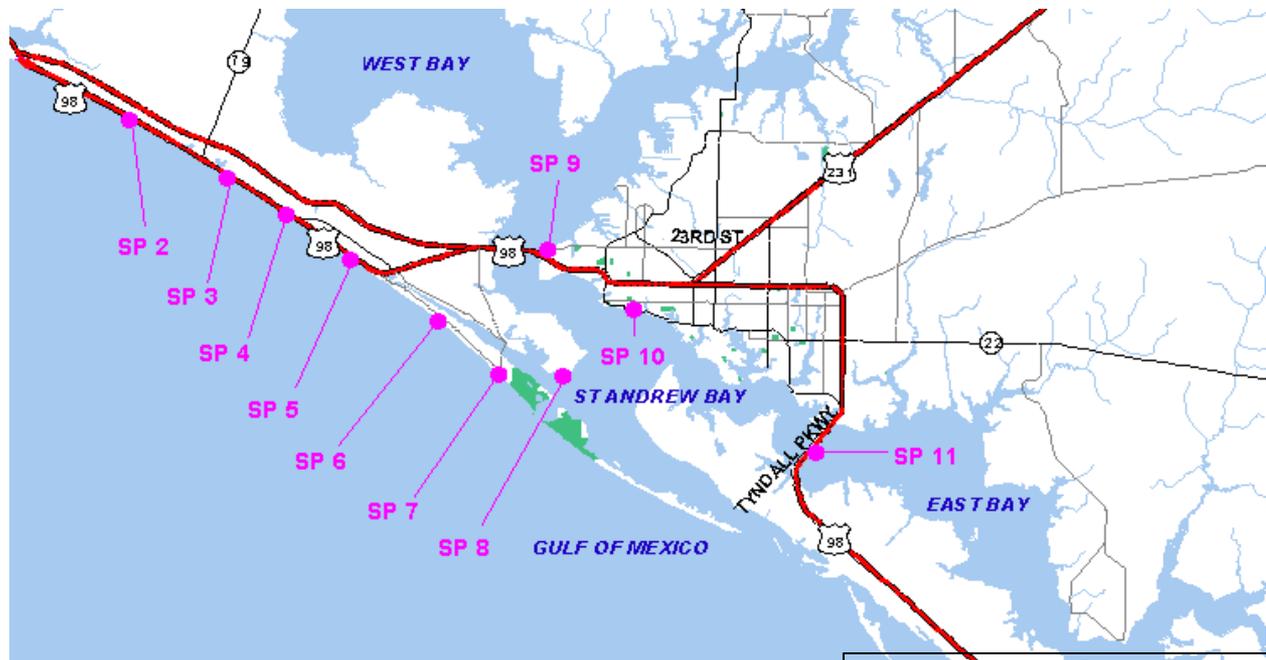
Enterococcus spp.

Study Design

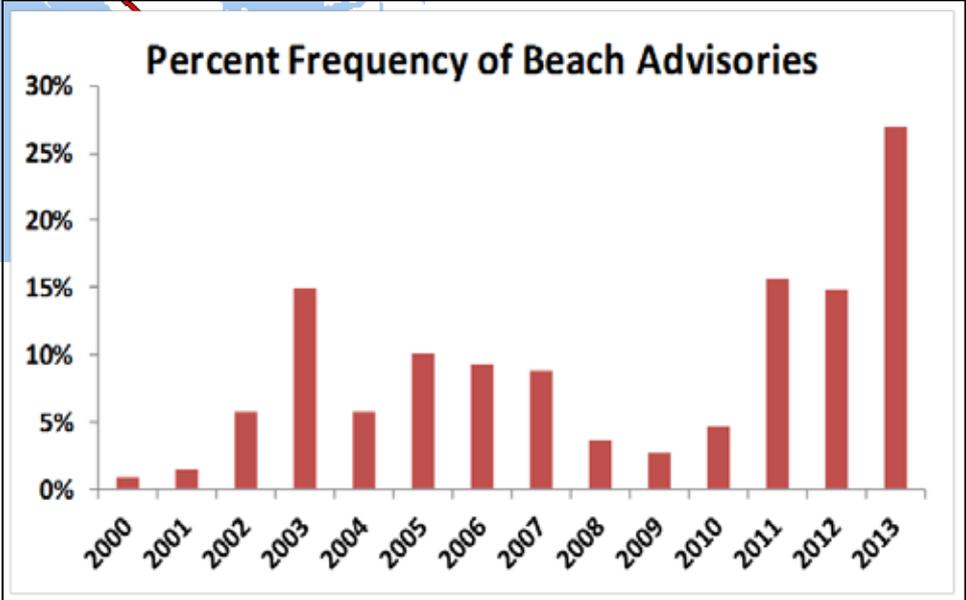
- **Tiered approach using “Best Available Science”:**
 - beach sanitary surveys & local knowledge
 - finalize sample station locations
 - sampling for Enterococci fecal indicator bacteria: ~30 stations
 - molecular & chemical markers (human versus non-human): ~8 stations
 - sample frequency dictated by temporal factors: season, rainfall, tidal state, wind



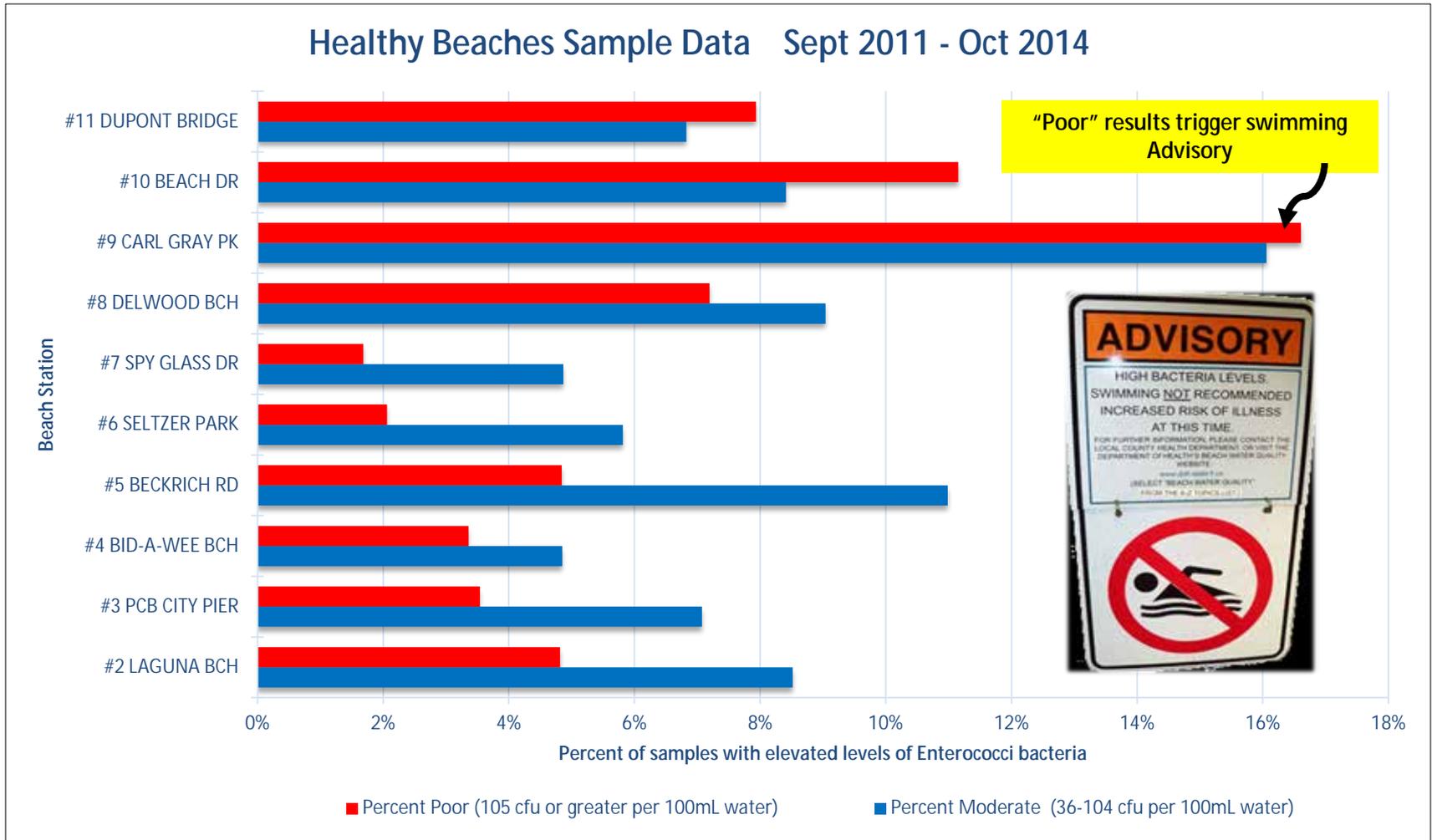
Bay County Healthy Beaches Program



10 beaches monitored every other week
March to October

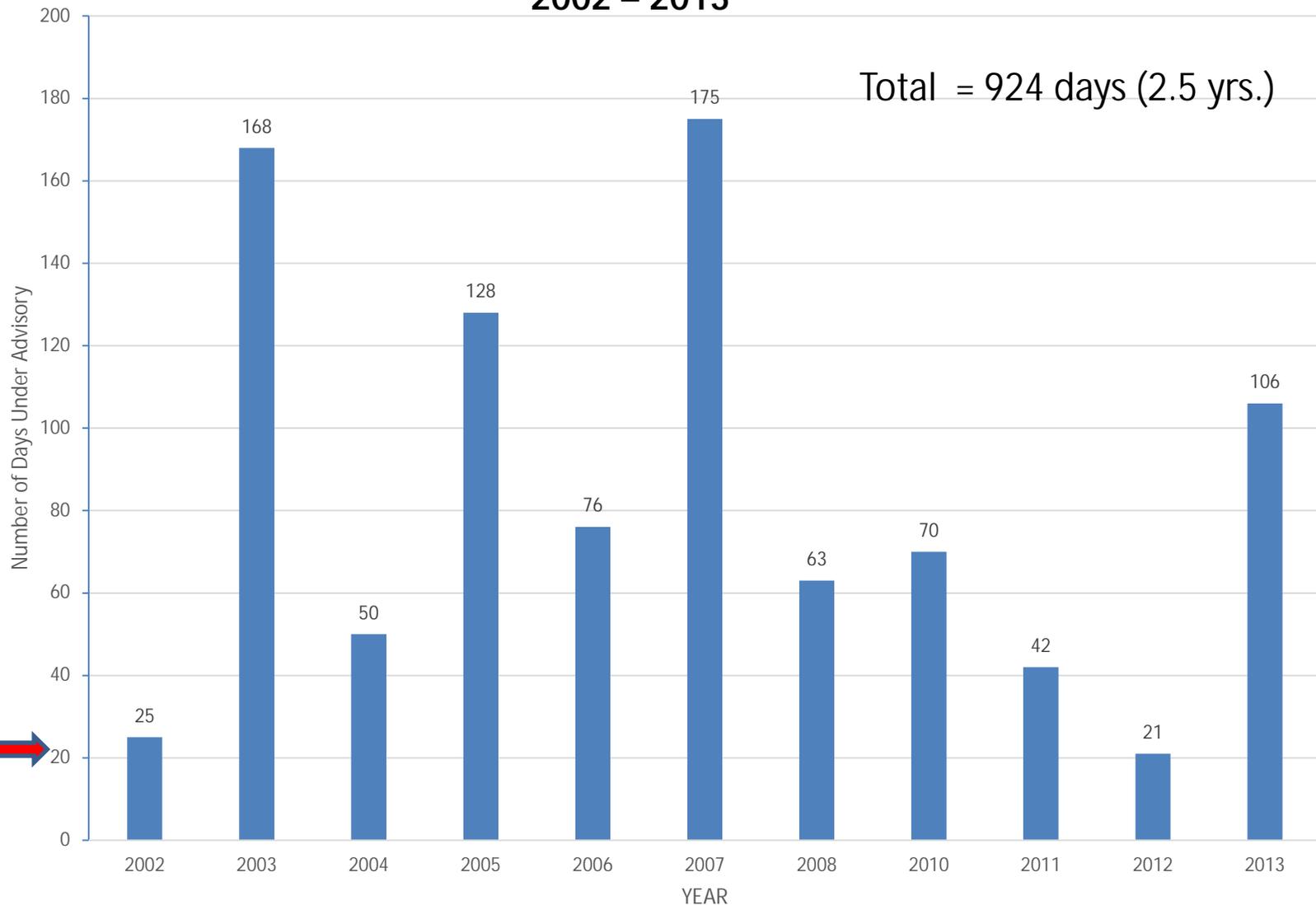


Percent of Beach Samples with High Levels of Enterococci Bacteria



Carl Gray Park - Duration of Swimming Advisories

2002 – 2013



A trend of 21 or more days annually means water is considered **impaired** by FDEP

Source: EPA BEACON 2.0 - Beach Advisory and Closing On-line Notification, <http://watersgeo.epa.gov/beacon2/>

Capability

- RMA has been monitoring water quality in St. Andrew Bay for over 25 years
- Experience managing federal and state grants including contracts with U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, National Fish & Wildlife Foundation, NW FL Water Management District, Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission
- Project ready. No permits needed.

- Partners: FDEP, DOH

Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP)

Julie Espy, Program Administrator, Water Quality Assessment Program, Division of Environmental Assessment and Restoration (DEAR)

David Whiting, Biology Section Administrator, DEAR, Bureau of Laboratories

Florida Department of Health in Bay County (DOH)

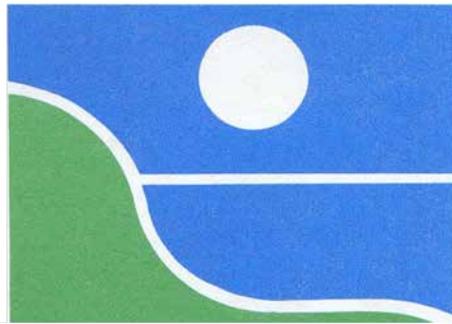
Joe Scully, Environmental Supervisor I, Environmental Health Section, Healthy Beaches Program





Options: Invest in the Solution vs. Status Quo

- **First step needed to reduce swimming advisories. Numerous potential sources at Carl Gray Park dictate a systematic technical approach.**
- **We have partners on board now willing to leverage resources to help pay for the project**
- **Healthy beaches are everybody's business!**
- **No study means community leaders and public will continue to speculate where the bacteria are coming from. Risk of illness. Bad publicity.**
- **This is a RESTORE Act eligible activity and no other funds are available at this time to fund this project**
- **Meets 9 of the 26 Objectives in the Bay County RESTORE Act Plan in all three goal areas: Economic Development & Job Creation, Environment, and Public Infrastructure**



St. Andrew Bay RMA

St. Andrew Bay RMA

Protecting the bay and its resources since 1987

Over 100 members

Over 100 community volunteers

Partners at local, state, and federal levels