



For Immediate Release

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Advisory: Washtenaw County Beach Closure

Independence Lake beach closed due to high levels of bacteria

YPSILANTI, Mich., Aug 6, 2020 – Washtenaw County Health Department and the Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation Commission are closing Independence Lake beach at Independence Lake County Park due to high levels of *E. coli* bacteria. Independence Lake is in Webster Township and operated by Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation Commission, 3200 Jennings Road, Whitmore Lake. The high levels were detected through [routine testing](#) done at public bathing beaches during the summer months. The closure is effective immediately and will remain in effect until follow-up tests show the bacteria levels are at levels considered safe for swimming.

E. coli bacteria can cause gastrointestinal illness and are a particular concern for people with weakened immune systems. Elevated levels of *E. coli* bacteria can sometimes appear due to animal feces in the water or heavy rains. The *E. coli* may have been caused by a mixture of recent rainstorms and an unusually high amount of ducks and geese on the beaches. Bird feces can be washed into the lakes by stormwater.

The public beach at Independence Lake County Park is closed to swimming. Other forms of recreation that do not involve body contact with the water, like fishing, are permitted. The beach will remain closed until additional testing demonstrates bacteria levels have been reduced. The Michigan Public Health Code allows for public beach closures if *E. coli* bacteria levels exceed set thresholds.

Individuals with questions or concerns regarding public beach water sampling, or those who believe they may have become ill after swimming in the impacted waters, are encouraged to call the Washtenaw County Environmental Health Division at 734-222-3800 during normal business hours, or visit www.washtenaw.org/envhealth.

For the most updated information on public beaches, as well as a listing of water sample results, please visit the Michigan BeachGuard website at www.egle.state.mi.us/beach.

Washtenaw County Health Department

The Washtenaw County Health Department promotes health and works to prevent disease and injury in our community. Our mission is to assure, in partnership with the community, the conditions necessary for people to live healthy lives through prevention and protection programs. Visit us at washtenaw.org/health, on social media @wcpubhealth or call 734-544-6700.

Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation Commission

The Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation Commission, founded in 1973, currently manages 14 parks and 33 nature preserves totaling more than 6,000 acres. Washtenaw County Parks provides recreational and nature-based programming. Visit us at washtenaw.org/parks on Facebook and Instagram, or call 734-971-6337.

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