Work Products

1. A quality assurance project plan (QAPP) is being submitted that that identifies the quality assurance and quality control (QA/QC) procedures, data quality objectives (DQOs), and standard operating procedures (SOPs) that clarify study objectives, define the appropriate type of data, and specify tolerable levels of potential decision errors that will be used as the basis for establishing the quality and quantity of data needed to support decisions.
2. Monitoring data will continue to be submitted to EPA utilizing the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) as an intermediate third party. The FDEP meets EPA data submission requirements and will submit all data in an acceptable form. Notification data will be submitted to the EPA PRAWN database by way of the WQX system.

3. When the sample and testing program is in progress at a beach, samples will be collected bi-weekly. Sampling/testing will be conducted year round in the 15 counties south of Pasco County on the Florida west coast, south of Brevard County on the east coast, and Volusia County. In the 15 remaining counties, sampling/testing will be conducted bi-weekly from March 1st through September 30th of each year. The number of sample sites will be selected to ensure adequate beach coverage and public health protection.

4. Additional data, if available, from local county monitoring efforts would be included in the data submitted as part of this grant. The data from these additional monitoring efforts, while not supported by funding associated with this grant, will be subject to the QAPP developed for this grant.

5. Beach waters shall be tested for only *Enterococcus spp. b*acteria. Enterococcus testing shall be done using the United States Environmental Protection Agency method 1600 or other EPA approved method.

6. Poor water quality Public Health Advisories are issued based on the Beach Action Value (BAV) according to the program guidance provided by the United State Environmental Protection Agency. Based on the State of Florida's chosen risk level the BAV is 70 CFU Enterococci/100mL. When a sample exceeds the BAV a resample may be immediately taken to confirm the exceedance. If confirmed a public health advisory will be issued. If no resample is taken then a public health advisory will be issued immediately. No weekly or monthly geometric means will be calculated. When an Advisory is issued, the local media will be alerted electronically, and the Public will be notified through local media, signs posted at each beach under advisory, and via the Florida Healthy Beaches website http://www.flbeacheswaterquality.com. The website contains the sample results and any advisories issued for each beach monitored through the Healthy Beaches program.

Biographical Sketch

Introduction

Florida's public health officials welcome the opportunity to continue the Florida Healthy Beaches Program with the technical and financial assistance of the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Beaches Environmental Assessment and Coastal Health (BEACH) Act of 2000.

The Florida Department of Health (DOH) is responsible for providing monitoring and public health protection for marine beach areas, and will administer the grant application process. The Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) is responsible for adopting water quality criteria for all recreational waters. Both agencies will work closely to implement the provisions of the BEACH Act, and will work in consultation and cooperation with federal and state agencies, universities, and other interested organizations working to learn more about the coastal beach program. The DOH will use the program implementation guidance, recommended ambient water quality criteria for bacteria, study protocols, and data collection instruments established by EPA.

Background

Florida is the third most populous state in the nation with population estimates of approximately 21 million residents. During 2017, more than 116 million visitors vacationed in Florida, enjoying the state's beautiful scenery and the natural beauty of Florida's beaches.

Florida has over 800 miles of beaches, temperate to tropical climates, and warm ocean currents. Growth in the counties around coastal beaches has been significant. Increased wastewater originating from treatment plants and septic tanks, are a byproduct of this growth. Increased urbanization has and will continue to alter the watershed and stormwater runoff, including the freshwater flows to our bays, brackish water rivers, and near-shore waters. Microbial contaminants have been identified as a high priority risk to waters in coastal communities.

Florida Healthy Beaches Program

In 1998, five of Florida's coastal counties began monitoring for enterococci bacteria under a grant-funded pilot program. By the beginning of 2000, 11 Florida counties were participating in the program, which continued through July 2000. In August 2000, the beach water quality monitoring program was extended to 34 of Florida's coastal counties through new state legislation and funding (Florida Healthy Beaches Program, Senate Bill 1412 and House Bill 2145). The coastal beach water samples collected by the county health departments are analyzed for enterococci bacteria. County health departments issue health advisories when elevated levels of bacteria are confirmed, based upon guidance developed in consultation with the DOH State Office. All sampling data is provided to the public via an Internet site which also shows the location of the sampling sites.