Fact Sheet: BEACH Act Locational Data
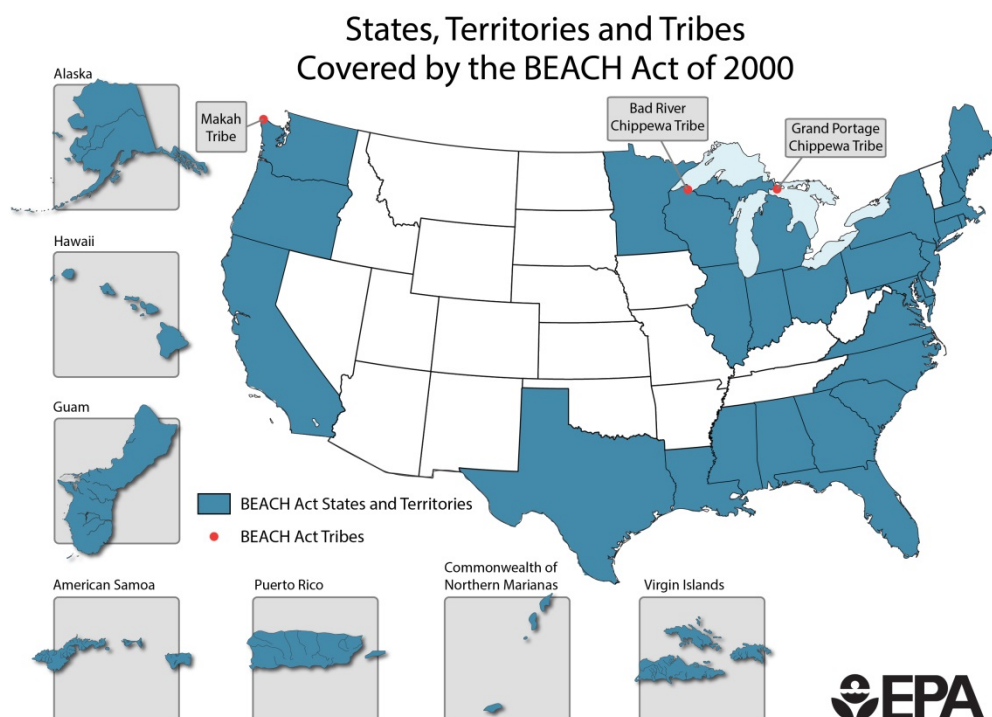
About the BEACH Act Program

The Beaches Environmental Assessment and Coastal Health Act (BEACH Act) of 2000 requires coastal and Great Lakes states and territories to report to EPA on beach monitoring, notification and geospatial data for their coastal recreation waters. The BEACH Act defines coastal recreation waters as the Great Lakes and marine coastal waters (including coastal estuaries) that states, territories, and authorized tribes (collectively referred to as "states" or "jurisdictions") officially recognize or designate for swimming, bathing, surfing, or similar water contact activities. The BEACH Act Program focuses on the goals of improving public health and environmental protection for beach goers and providing the public with information about the quality of their beach water.

For more information on the BEACH Act Program, visit https://www.epa.gov/beaches.

States, Territories and Tribes Covered by the BEACH Act of 2000

How EPA Collects Beach Locational Data

EPA collects beach locational data in two ways. EPA uses the **Pr**ogram tracking, beach **A**dvisories, **W**ater quality standards, and **N**utrients (PRAWN) database to store the beach advisory, notification and geospatial data submitted by states. EPA also uses the STOrage and RETrieval (STORET) database to store the beach water quality monitoring and monitoring station location data submitted by states. The geospatial data enable the public to accurately associate beach advisory, notification and water quality monitoring data with their respective beaches using map viewing applications.

How EPA Indexes Beach Locational Data

Upon collection, latitude and longitude data for beaches and monitoring stations are indexed to EPA's Reach Address Database (RAD), which stores the data for use by mapping applications. The RAD uses the National Hydrography Dataset Plus (NHDPlus) to provide a nationally normalized dataset. Moreover, the RAD provides the beach and monitoring station locations within the NHDPlus surface water drainage network in a manner similar to street addresses. Prior to releasing RAD indexed beach location data to the public, the data are sent to the respective jurisdictions for review and approval.

BEACH Act Locational Data Flow

PRAWN and STORET → RAD → Mapping Applications

For More Information:

- More information on the procedures for collection and indexing locational data are available at: https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2014-09/documents/sop2014.pdf.
- More information about the RAD is available at: https://www.epa.gov/waterdata/reach-address-database-rad.
- More information about NHDPlus is available at: http://www.horizon-systems.com/nhdplus.
- Instructions for the locational data review process are available at: https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2014-09/documents/beachreviewtool.pdf.

How to Access BEACH Act Locational Data

You can access beach locational data through BEACON and quarterly datasets provided by EPA:

BEach Advisory and Closing Online Notification (BEACON). BEACON (https://watersgeo.epa.gov/beacon2/Beacon.html) provides an online searchable map viewer for accessing the most up-to-date beach locational data.

BEACH Act National Geospatial Dataset – Quarterly Snapshot. A quarterly snapshot of the locational dataset is available in several downloadable formats at: https://www.epa.gov/waterdata/waters-geospatial-data-downloads. The geospatial dataset contains both active and historical beaches, and selected PRAWN attributes.

Additional Ways to Access BEACH Act Data

BEACON. In addition to providing locational data, BEACON (https://watersgeo.epa.gov/beacon2/Beacon.html) offers numerous customizable reports for PRAWN and STORET data for BEACH Act beaches.

Annual Swimming Season Statistics (1999-2012). Between 1999 and 2012, EPA published a national summary report about the previous year's swimming season data. These reports are available at: https://www.epa.gov/beach-tech/annual-swimming-season-statistics-1999-2012. To view data by Beach ID, select an annual report, select a jurisdiction, open the raw data (XLS) file, and open the Attributes tab. The 2012 report is the final annual beach report. You can find the most currently available swimming season statistics in BEACON.

STORET. Using a Project ID (aka Beach ID), raw water quality monitoring data can be downloaded from STORET: https://www.epa.gov/storet/dbtop.html. A guide to configuring reports of Beach Program water quality data can be found at: https://www.epa.gov/storet/archive/Downloading_STORET_Data.pdf. For data from more programs see: http://waterqualitydata.us/portal_userguide/.

BEACH Act Program and Locational Data Contacts

For more information on the BEACH Program or BEACH Geospatial data set contact:

BEACH Program IT Lead: William Kramer, US EPA Office of Water. Phone: (202) 566-0385. Email: kramer.bill@epa.gov.

PRAWN Database Support: Chris Stevenson, CGI Federal. Phone: (337) 344-5429. Email: christopher.stevenson@cgifederal.com.

Beach Indexing and Review Support: Amy Wesley-Snider, RTI International. Phone (919) 316-3711. Email: alwesley@rti.org.

RAD and Geospatial Datasets: Brad Cooper, Eastern Research Group, Inc. Phone: (703) 633-1685. Email: Brad.Cooper@erg.com.