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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Okaloosa County Saltwater Beach Monitoring Results For March 12, 2012

The Okaloosa County Health Department conducts weekly saltwater beach water quality monitoring at 12 sites through the Healthy Beaches Monitoring Program. The water samples are analyzed for enteric bacteria (both fecal coliform and enterococci), that normally inhabit the intestinal tract of humans and animals and which may cause human disease, infections, or rashes. The presence of enteric bacteria is an indication of fecal pollution, which may come from stormwater runoff, pets and wildlife, and human sewage. The purpose of the Healthy Beaches Monitoring Program is to determine whether Florida has significant beach water quality problems.

Site	Name	City	Fecal Coliform	Water Quality	Enterococci	Water Quality	Enterococci Geometric Mean	Water Quality
SP-1	Liza Jackson Park	Ft. Walton Beach	92	Good	120	Poor	54.43	Poor
SP-2	Garniers Park	Ft. Walton Beach	440	Poor	500	Poor	108.21	Poor
SP-3	Marler Park	Okaloosa Island	4	Good	32	Good	27.65	Good
SP-4	Wayside Park	Okaloosa Island	12	Good	8	Good	16.77	Good
SP-5	Poquito Park	Shalimar	20	Good	356	Poor	72.26	Poor
SP-6	Gulf Islands National Seashore	Okaloosa Island	4	Good	4	Good	42.74	Poor
SP-7	East Pass	Okaloosa Island	8	Good	160	Poor	53.55	Poor
SP-8	Lincoln Park	Valparaiso	56	Good	16	Good	55.61	Poor
SP-9	Henderson Park Beach	Destin	8	Good	4	Good	8.95	Good
SP-10	Fred Gannon Rocky Bayou State Park	Niceville	16	Good	16	Good	97.53	Poor
SP-11	James Lee Park	Destin	4	Good	32	Good	12.41	Good
SP-12	Camp Timpochee	Niceville	72	Good	24	Good	39.42	Poor

Water quality classifications are based upon:

1. Florida's Department of Environmental Protections (FDEP) adopted Criteria for Surface Water Quality Classifications (Chapter 62-302.530, Florida Administrative Code), which establishes a fecal coliform standard greater than or equal to 400 colony forming units per 100 milliliters for 10% of the samples, and
2. United States Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA's) recommended standard for enterococci of greater than or equal to 104 colony forming units per 100 milliliters of marine water, or a geometric mean of the five most current weekly samples of greater than 35 colony forming units per 100 milliliters of marine water.

Advisories have been issued for **Liza Jackson Park** of Ft. Walton Beach, **East Pass** of Okaloosa Island, and for **Poquito Park** of Shalimar -- based on the enterococci standard and the geometric mean standard recommended by the EPA. This should be considered a potential health risk to the bathing public.

An advisory has been issued for **Garniers Park** of Ft. Walton Beach -- based on the enterococci and geometric mean standards recommended by the EPA, as well as the fecal coliform standard recommended by the FDEP. This should be considered a potential health risk to the bathing public.

Advisories have been issued for **Gulf Islands National Seashore** of Okaloosa Island, **Rocky Bayou State Park** of Niceville, **Lincoln Park** of Valparaiso, and for **Camp Timpoochee** of Niceville -- based on the geometric mean standard recommended by the EPA. This should be considered a potential health risk to the bathing public.

Bacteria counts often come back high during or after a rainfall event. If you have any questions, please contact the Okaloosa County Health Department at (850) 833-9247 or (850) 689-7859, or visit the Department of Health's Internet Beach Water Quality website, www.doh.state.fl.us, click on "Floridians and Visitors" - under "Food, Water, Air, Land" choose "Beach Water Quality." You can also visit www.HealthyOkaloosa.com, and click the "Healthy Beaches" link to be taken to a list of the Okaloosa County "Healthy Beaches" sites and maps.

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