



Action today so future generations can continue to enjoy ocean activities

## CLEAN OCEAN ACCESS (COA) WORKING TO PREVENT BEACH CLOSURES ON AQUIDNECK ISLAND

August 17, 2015 | AQUIDNECK ISLAND, Rhode Island – Clean Ocean Access (COA) year-round water quality monitoring program expanded in July to identify the source of dry-weather bacteria that may be leading to beach closures. Initial results show that elevated levels of *Enterococci* do exist upstream in the nearby moat that drains onto Easton’s Beach. Further investigation into the source of the bacteria, working closely with the City of Newport and Department of Health will occur in the coming months, along with education and outreach to the community for “simple ways to improve ocean health” with a focus on water conservation, green infrastructure and re-energizing the Aquidneck Island Watershed Council.

As far back as 2008 the weekly data collected by COA documented elevated bacteria levels during dry-weather events, a problem that would not be fixed by UV disinfection that is geared towards precipitation events. Although the UV disinfection plant is working as designed during summer months, the problem of dry-weather events combined with more stringent EPA standards has led to an increase in beach closures this summer. During June 2015 the COA year-round water quality monitoring program identified elevated levels of bacteria in Easton’s Stream associated with dry-weather events. The source of the bacteria was not known so the group expanded the monitoring efforts to include three upstream sample locations:

Date	Rain	Easton's Stream	Easton's Beach (East)
June 5, 2015	0.00		
June 6, 2015	0.00		
June 7, 2015	0.00		
June 8, 2015	0.00		
June 9, 2015	0.00		
June 10, 2015	0.00		
June 11, 2015	0.00	1290	51
June 12, 2015	0.00		
June 13, 2015	0.00		
June 14, 2015	0.00		
June 15, 2015	0.24		
June 16, 2015	0.00		
June 17, 2015	0.00		
June 18, 2015	0.00	1390	187

The additional locations (Braga Park, Eustis Avenue, Pre-UV point) were selected to provide insight into the bacteria levels at locations that *may* be contributing bacteria to the Stormwater discharge along the Easton’s Stream that drains into Easton’s Beach. The expansion of the citizen scientist monitoring program further engages the community, and provides useful information for decision makers and move us one step closer towards our goal of permanent year-round clean water.



**Action today so future generations can continue to enjoy ocean activities**



As shown during the past four weeks of sampling, elevated readings of Enterococci do exist at upstream locations. In some case precipitation events did occur 48 hours prior to testing, however in all cases there were elevated bacteria levels at all upstream locations regardless of precipitation.

Date	Rain	Braga Park	Eustis Avenue	Pre-UV Point	Easton's Stream	Easton's Beach (East)
July 17, 2015	0.00					
July 18, 2015	0.00					
July 19, 2015	0.00					
July 20, 2015	0.00					
July 21, 2015	0.04					
July 22, 2015	0.00					
July 23, 2015	0.00	365	517	104	1070	10
July 24, 2015	0.02					
July 25, 2015	0.00					
July 26, 2015	0.00					
July 27, 2015	0.51					
July 28, 2015	0.14					
July 29, 2015	0.00					
July 30, 2015	0.11					
July 31, 2015	0.00	687	687	128	906	10
August 1, 2015	0.00					
August 2, 2015	0.00					
August 3, 2015	0.00					
August 4, 2015	0.55					
August 5, 2015	0.00					
August 6, 2015	0.00	308	649	249	132	10
August 7, 2015	0.00					
August 8, 2015	0.00					
August 9, 2015	0.01					
August 10, 2015	0.00					
August 11, 2015	0.52					
August 12, 2015	0.00					
August 13, 2015	0.00	579	613	816	613	185



COA Executive Director stated *“The City of Newport and Town of Middletown have taken major steps to improve water quality and we look forward to working together in the years to come to address the remaining issues. In California when it rains, people don’t use the ocean for days. In Rhode Island when it rains, people know the water could be polluted. We want to improve water quality so the next generation of ocean enthusiasts think of rain as a gift, and something to hold on to, not something related to pollution.”*

Clean Ocean Access is committed to achieving the goal of permanent year-round water quality. The bacteria could be coming from wild animals, illegal wastewater connections, or contaminated sediment.