Narragansett Bay Estuary Program – Marine Beaches Project

Grant Donor: New England Interstate Water Pollution Control Commission; Rhode Island Department of Health
Grantee: Clean Ocean Access
Year: 2018-2019
Grant Value: $16,000.00; $6,500.00

Grant Overview:

The Marine Beaches project aims to advance the understanding of bacterial outbreak at high recreational use beaches in Rhode Island to improve public health and provide a model for future locations in the Narragansett Bay watershed. This aligns with the importance of water quality assessment provided in Chapter 23 of the 2017 State of Narragansett Bay and its Watershed Technical Report (2017 Bay Report), which identifies historic and continuing health risks at the bay's marine beaches. This project addresses five of the six research needs established in Chapter 23, which will result in three deliverables: (1) Quality Assurance Project Plan, (2) Microbial Source Tracking, and (3) two case studies performed sequentially, first at Oakland Beach in Warwick, then at Easton's Beach in Newport. The output will be case studies examining two beaches with long records of water quality impairment, and the outcome will be a template for additional scientific research to understand and improve water quality at beaches throughout Narragansett Bay watersheds. The project aims to employ new tools to improve our understanding of marine beach water quality status and trends to enhance our ability to manage and find remedies.

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Expected Impact:

The benefits of this project will be improved insight into over 15+ years of microbiology datasets of enterococci levels at high usage recreational areas along with relationships of bacterial counts and antecedent rain using advanced statistical analysis software developed and supported by the US EPA. This will allow for improved management at high-risk beaches and advance the understanding of the impact of recent management actions to reduce pollution.