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To: CouncilMembers <CouncilMembers@essex.ca>
Subject: Swimming and In-water Activities Prohibited at Colchester Beach



Media Release
July 24, 2020

Swimming and In-water Activities Prohibited at Colchester Beach

Essex– While Colchester Beach is open to the public, swimming and other in-water recreation activities are prohibited after a recent water quality test returned with elevated levels of E. coli bacteria.

The most recent water quality test, conducted by Town staff on July 23, indicated average E. coli levels of 568.1 cfu (colony forming units) per 100 milliliters of water, with two samples returning above 2,000 cfu/100mL. Public health guidelines call for the closure of public access to water if any samples are greater than 1,000 cfu/100mL.

Signage has been posted at the beach and harbour to notify visitors of the restrictions. Out of an abundance of caution, and to ensure the health and safety of visitors, fencing has been also erected to prevent access to the water.

At their June 29 Special Meeting, Council supported the addition of water quality testing to be conducted by Town staff at Colchester Beach. Earlier this year, the [Windsor Essex County Health Unit announced](#) that, due to limited resources during the COVID-19 pandemic, they would cease water quality testing at nine local beaches.

According to the Health Unit, bacterial counts from samples only reflect the conditions at the time of sampling and water quality can change from day to day depending on the weather conditions and lake levels. The Health Unit recommends not swimming if there was a recent heavy rainfall (at least 48 hours), if the water is cloudy, or if you are unable to see your feet when in the water.

While Colchester Beach is now open to the public, all users must maintain physical distancing and limit group sizes according to public health recommendations. The Town has also added additional parking and beach enforcement as well as signage to inform visitors of current beach and harbor rules.

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