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DEC Reports Bacteria Levels Meet Standards at Sandy Beach, Petersburg

(PETERSBURG, AK) – The Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) has issued a notice that water quality samples collected at Sandy Beach by the Southeast Alaska Watershed Coalition on Friday, September 18, 2015, confirmed fecal coliform bacteria levels meet water quality standards. Recreational activities may resume without the precautionary measures referenced in the September 18 press release which originally announced the elevated levels.

Sandy Beach is located approximately 1½ miles east of Petersburg, ½ mile east of the airport, on Sandy Beach Road. Water quality samples collected on September 11 and 16 contained levels above Alaska’s water quality criteria for fecal coliform, 200 fecal coliforms per 100 milliliters (FC/100 ml). The confirmation water sample result for September 18 was 110 FC/100 ml.

Fecal coliform bacteria can come from any warm-blooded animal including birds, seals, and humans. The reason for the earlier elevated levels is unknown. Potential sources are birds, marine mammals, humans, and dogs.

Southeast Alaska Watershed Coalition has collected samples this summer to evaluate bacteria levels at Sandy Beach and will resume sampling in spring/summer of 2016. The beach sampling program is being funded and implemented by DEC. It is part of a nationwide effort to decrease the incidence of water-borne illness at public beaches under the federal BEACH Act.

For more information about the Alaska beach monitoring program, visit the Alaska BEACH Grant Program Website:

<http://www.dec.state.ak.us/water/wqsar/wqs/beachprogram.htm>.

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