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DATE                           12 May 1999

TO/DEST.                    Coordinator, Community Services Committee

FROM/EXP.                  Medical Officer of Health

SUBJECT/OBJET            **1999 BEACH RECOMMENDATIONS**

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Information Previously Distributed

To be listed on the Community  
Services Agenda, 17 June 1999

BACKGROUND

It is the responsibility of the Medical Officer of Health to make recommendations from a health perspective regarding the use of recreational waters for bathing purposes. The decision to permit bathing at any particular beach is made by the municipal Department of Recreation and Parks.

In Ottawa-Carleton, the most relevant factor in determining the beach water quality is the knowledge of the sanitary conditions at the site, supplemented by the bacteriological analysis of the water. Historical sampling results permit an analysis of past trends of bacterial influences at a site, while ongoing daily sampling permits analysis of current factors influencing the bacterial load at any given time.

The Environmental Health/Communicable Disease Control Division monitors the water quality at all beaches within the Region. A total of 25 sites on the Ottawa and Rideau Rivers are sampled. The three in-town beaches (Mooneys Bay, Westboro Beach and Britannia Beach) are sampled five days a week, while the out-of-town beaches are sampled once every two weeks. Samples were taken between May 26 and August 31, 1998. The City of Ottawa opened the in-town beaches to the public in 1998 for a total of 58 days on the following dates: June 13-14, June 20-21, and June 27 to August 19. This was a similar schedule to the 1997 season when they reduced the number of days the beaches were open from previous years as result of budget constraints.

Mooney's Bay Beach has a pump system which brings water from the centre of the Rideau River into the beach area to improve water circulation. This beach is also equipped with gull netting over the swimming area to deter seagulls from frequenting the beach. Both of these measures have made a positive impact on the water quality at Mooney's Bay. Gull netting will be erected over part of the swimming area at Britannia Beach in 1999 to see if similar positive outcomes in beach water quality will be seen.

Samples are tested for the presence of E. coli bacteria, and measured against the Ontario Ministry of Health standard of 100 organisms of E. coli per 100 ml of water in recreational waters. It takes a minimum of 24 hours for bacteriological results from the samples to be processed due to the nature of the culturing of the E. coli organisms measured. For this reason, bacteriological results are not available until the day after the sample was taken.

In preparing departmental recommendations, previous information including knowledge of various discharges into the rivers and their effects as measured by thousands of bacteriological samples taken over the past several years was reviewed. Rainfall is another factor which affects stormwater contribution to the rivers. In 1998, as well as in past years, there was a correlation between rainfall events of 5 millimetres (mm) or more on recreational water quality at both Britannia and Westboro Beaches.

#### Water Quality at Beaches in 1998

Annex A shows the 1998 bacteriological results for the three in-town beaches: Mooneys Bay, Westboro Beach and Britannia Beach.

#### **Mooneys Bay**

Water quality at Mooneys Bay was good in 1998, exceeding the Provincial standard on 8 sampling occasions. Three of these events occurred prior to the beach opening.

#### **Westboro Beach**

In 1998, the Health Department recommended that Westboro Beach be closed for 24 hours following a rainfall of 5 mm. or more and when a bacterial test results indicated a trend of poor water quality. Sample results exceeded the provincial standard 20 times during the open bathing season, up from 12 times in 1997. Rainfall events and trends of poor water quality resulted in the beach being posted for a total of 20 days in the bathing season.

#### **Britannia Beach**

In 1998, the Health Department recommended that Britannia Beach be closed for 24 hours following a rainfall of 5 mm. or more and when a bacterial test results indicated a trend of poor water quality. 1998 saw a decline in the quality of water at Britannia Beach. Sample results exceeded the provincial standard 32 times during the open bathing season, up from 20 times in 1997. Rainfall events and trends of poor water quality resulted in the beach being posted for a total of 27 days in the bathing season.

#### **Out-of-Town Beaches**

The water quality at out-of-town beaches along the Rideau and Ottawa Rivers remained good in 1998.

### **Medical Officer of Health Recommendations for 1999**

The Health Department will continue to monitor all beaches in the Region on the same schedule as in 1998, with increases as necessary. In 1999, the City of Ottawa will open the three in-town beaches to the public on the following dates: June 12-13; June 19-20, June 26 to August 20.

For the in-town beaches, I recommend the following:

- Mooneys Bay Beach be open for swimming;
- Westboro Beach be open for swimming but close for 24 hours following a rainfall of 5 mm. or more; and
- Britannia Beach be open for swimming but close for 24 hours following a rainfall of 5 mm. or more.
- If bacteriological trends indicate a problem at any of these beaches, I will recommend the beach in question be closed until such time as sample results indicate it is safe for bathing.

For the out-of-town beaches, I recommend the following be open for swimming in 1999:

#### **Ottawa River**

Fitzroy Provincial Park (2)  
Camp Woolsey  
Constance Bay  
Camp "Y"  
Shirley's Bay  
Auger Beach  
Baskins Beach  
Buckham's Bay

#### **Rideau River**

Rideau Provincial Park (4)  
Baxter Conservation Centre  
Long Island (RCMP Camp)  
Taylor Conservation Area  
Kars Dock  
Echolands

The following out-of-town monitoring points should continue to be sampled:

#### **Ottawa River**

Phiney Point  
Ottawa Beach

#### **Rideau River**

Manotick East  
Black Rapids

### **Financial Implications**

There are no financial implications resulting from this report.

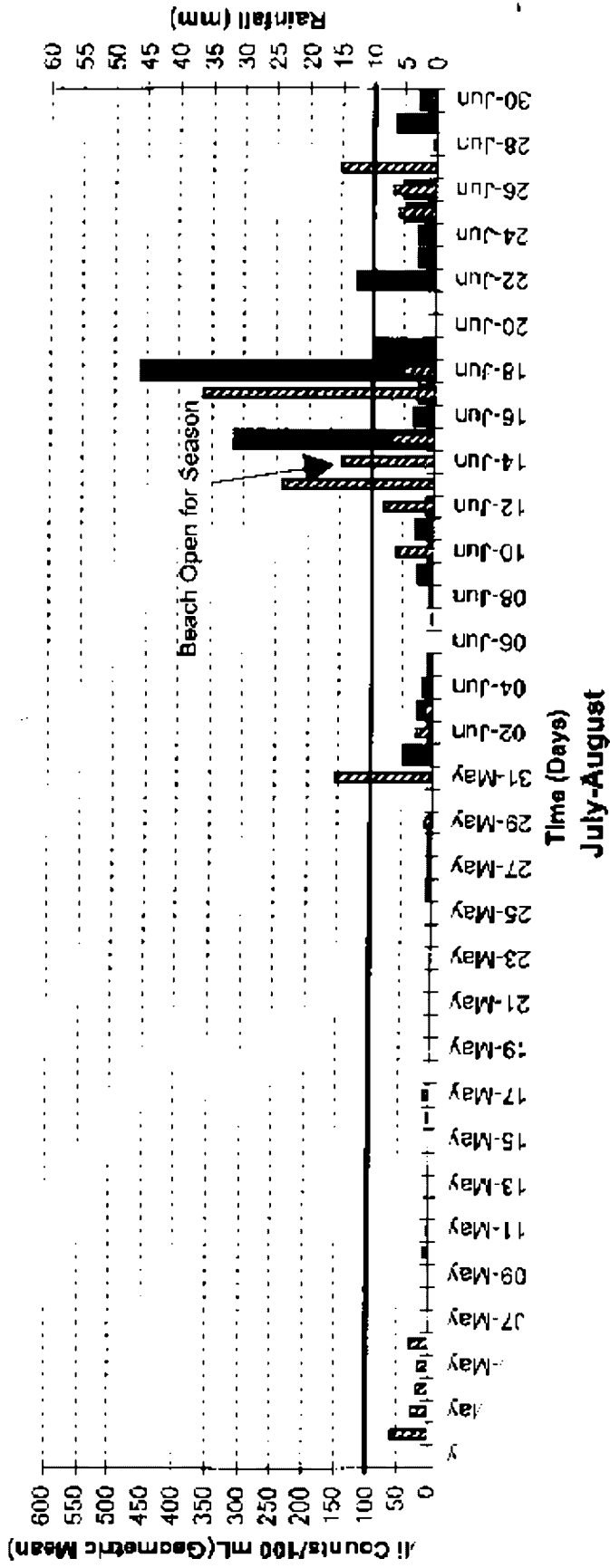
**Public Consultation**

No public consultation was required for this report. Under the Health Protection and Promotion Act, 1983 and the Mandatory Programs and Services Guidelines, 1997, the Medical officer of Health has a legislated responsibility to ensure that recreational waters are suitable for bathing purposes.

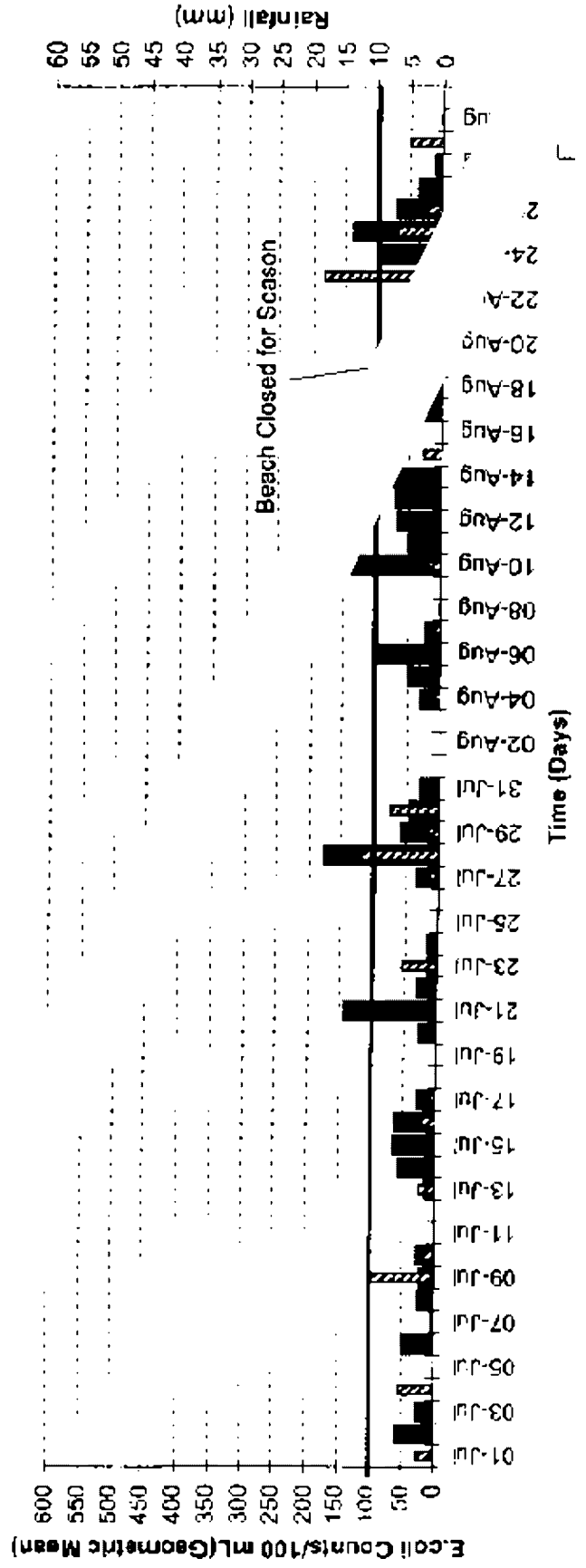
*Approved by  
Robert Cushman, MD, FRCPC*

# Mooney's Bay Beach 1998

## May-June

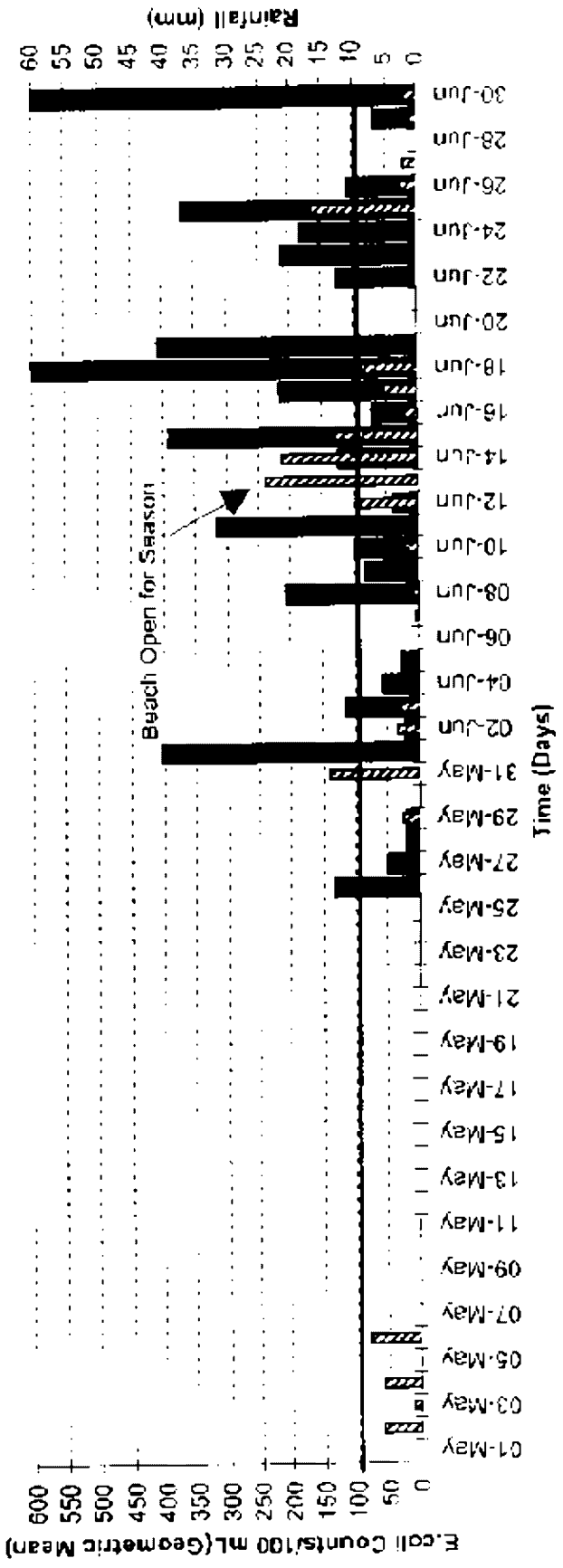


ANNEX A

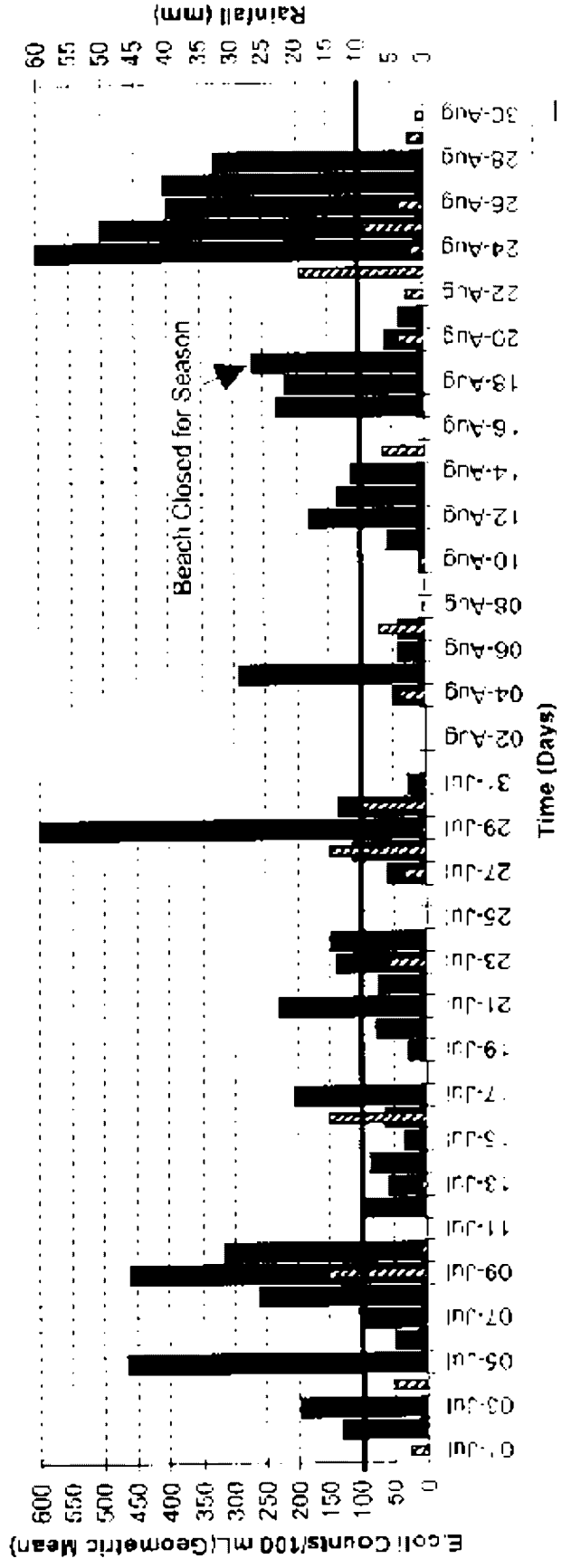


# Britannia Beach 1998

## May-June

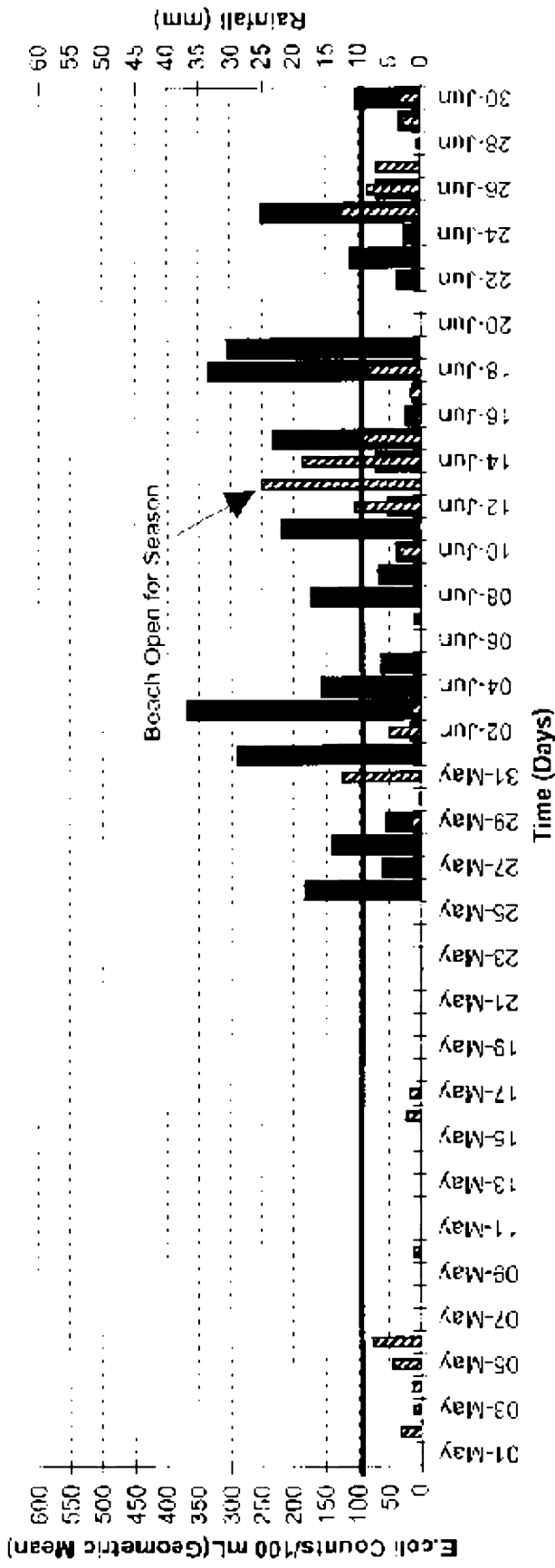


## July-August



# Westboro Beach 1998

## May-June



## July-August

