



February 5, 2016

BACTERIA LEVELS ELEVATED AT SANDSPRIT PARK, LEIGHTON PARK AND THE ROOSEVELT BRIDGE

Residents are urged to avoid contact with waters in those areas

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Martin County, FL – An advisory is now in effect for the waters near Sandsprit Park in Stuart, Leighton Park near the old Palm City Bridge in Palm City and the Roosevelt Bridge in Stuart. Sample results taken on Wednesday show higher than normal levels of enteric bacteria under the new water quality testing criteria adopted by the Florida Department of Health.

The new water quality recommendations, established by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA), reflect the most current *Recreational Water Quality Criteria* requirements. The new guidelines, which prompt a No Swimming Advisory, have been lowered from 104 or greater Enterococci CFU (colony forming unit) to 71 or greater per 100 ml of marine water.

Enteric bacteria inhabit the intestinal tract of humans and animals and their presence in recreational waters is an indication of fecal pollution. The presence of these bacteria may come from storm water runoff, pets, wildlife and human sewage.

Potential health risks for those who ingest or come in contact with the water include upset stomach, diarrhea, eye irritation and skin rashes.

The advisory will remain in effect until results show consistent readings in the good range. The areas will be tested again on February 8.

The Florida Department of Environmental Protection has been notified of the rise in bacteria levels for review and follow-up.

The Florida Department of Health in Martin County conducts weekly water sampling at four sites along the St. Lucie River including the Roosevelt Bridge, Sandsprit Park, Leighton Park and the Stuart Sandbar.

River and beach water sample results can be viewed at:

<http://martin.floridahealth.gov/programs-and-services/environmental-health/beach-and-river-sampling/results/index.html>

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