

Beacon Hill Times

SHSB Releases Annual Beach Quality Report Card

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By Beacon Hill Times Staff

The environmental advocacy organization Save the Harbor/Save the Bay (SHSB) released their annual Beach Water Quality Report Card on the Metropolitan Region's public beaches – just in time for summer.

The report card is based on water quality data collected during the 2017 beach season on 15 public beaches in 10 communities, including Lynn, Swampscott, Nahant, Revere, Winthrop, East Boston, South Boston, Dorchester, Quincy and Hull.

As one can see, M Street, City Point and Carson Beach in South Boston, and Nantasket Beach in Hull were at the top of the list, while Tenean Beach in Dorchester was the lowest-scoring beach in the region again in 2017.

According to Bruce Berman, Director of Strategy & Communications at Save the Harbor/Save the Bay, we saw a slight decline in water quality in 2017 over 2016, which is not surprising, since 2017 was a relatively rainy swimming season for Boston Harbor; the seasonal rainfall total was 12.1 inches, which is markedly higher than the 5.3 inches we saw in 2016.

There was surprising news from King's Beach in Lynn and Swampscott, which has consistently lagged behind other area beaches in water quality since 2012, when we began this project. King's scored 92% this year, compared to last year's 83%. While this year's results may well be an anomaly, working with EEA and Save the Harbor's Beaches Science Advisory Committee both Lynn and Swampscott have planned improvements to their sewer and storm water systems, which we expect will result in significant improvement in water quality on King's Beach when they are completed.

“This variation is why we are reluctant to draw conclusions from a single year's sampling results” said Berman. Though we understand why it's interesting to see where water quality improved or declined versus the previous year, we urge the public to use the multi-year averages we have provided in comparing relative water quality among beaches.”