



Memorandum

File #: 22-00638

Environmental Advisory Board

6/2/2022

DISCUSSION ITEM

SPONSOR: Kristin Bennett, Chair

SUBJECT:

WATER TESTING AT BRUCE BEACH

SUMMARY:

On April 28, 2022, City Council received a presentation from Jane Caffrey and Barbara Albrecht regarding their initial findings.

On May 23, 2022, City Council received a presentation from J. Bruce Woody, Executive Director of ECUA regarding actions being taken in this area.

On August 12, 2021, City Council passed an item to enter into an agreement with UWF and the Center for Environmental Diagnostics and Bioremediation to conduct Bruce Beach Stormwater Source Tracking and Weekly Monitoring of publicly accessible areas where the public might encounter human pathogens.

Council allocated approximately \$88,505 for this project.

In an attempt to identify sources of water borne pathogens detected in surface waters around Bruce Beach certain tracking and monitoring needs to take place. Downtown Pensacola is currently experiencing a rebounding economy, including the waterfront. The interest and attention of the Community Park at Bruce Beach has developed a large, dedicated community of visitors all with the goal of stewardship, including several schools, researchers, paddlers, birders, fishermen, and many others.

This loosely organized stewardship consortium is attracted to this waterfront parcel in part because of the easy access, as well as the seasonal flora, migratory fauna, and the reestablishment of a maritime coastal forest.

The city and stakeholder partners have committed resources towards tourism, which promote walkable, bikeable, access to clean water, and various outdoor recreational opportunities to both the community and visitors. Examples of water sports include the designated Blue Ways Trail, coastal rowing, sailing, regattas, Dragon Boat Racing, and the famous beaches, which invite the public to recreate in area waters.

Encouraging the public to use and enjoy the water brings a responsibility to the city to know and

understand local water quality, especially at access points. Should water quality be degraded to the point where human health may be affected, the city would be accountable to post signage warning of concerns and possible shut down access until concentrations of contaminants are no longer a threat to human health. The public trusts the city to implement measures to keep them safe while recreating.

In February 2021, students and staff from the University of West Florida began sampling water quality and monitoring concentrations of Enterococcus using USEPA Method (Enterolert (QT)) in a NELAC certified Lab. This study was supported by City of Pensacola Councilwoman Hill, who provided seed money to the Bream Fishermen Association (BFA).

Over fifty percent (50%) of the time, samples collected at the three sampling locations were found to be above acceptable threshold levels for human health exposure between Feb 8 and June 24.

Monitoring of water quality has shown the waters along Bruce Beach would be unacceptable for recreational activities much of the time. If not investigated and addressed, the city may be forced to post "No Swimming" signs along the shoreline. This may obstruct the efforts proposed to revitalize this area of the downtown shoreline.

The attached presentations made to City Council provide an update on the project along with relevant findings.

PRIOR ACTION:

April 18, 2022 - City Council received a presentation regarding the Source Tracking and Weekly monitoring of the Bruce Beach area

May 23, 2022 - City Council received a presentation from Bruce Woody regarding the initial findings of the Source Tracking efforts and steps moving forward

STAFF CONTACT:

Don Kraher, Council Executive

ATTACHMENTS:

- 1) Source Tracking at Bruce Beach Presentation
- 2) Bruce Woody Presentation

PRESENTATION: No