

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Only Princess Beach Deemed Unsafe, But D.P.N.R. Expects Negative Environmental Impacts Caused By Storm-Water Runoff

Community Center / **Published On November 05, 2016 10:35 AM /**

Staff **November 05, 2016**



In a release issued on Friday, the Department of Planning and Natural Resources said that while only one of the territory's beaches out of the 32 that it tested was not safe for swimming and fishing -- Princess Beach (Condo Row) in St. Croix -- heavy showers throughout the week are expected to have negative impacts on the territory's coastal waters. D.P.N.R. is urging residents to exercise caution when attending beaches this weekend.

Parents are advised to keep their children away from storm-water impacted beaches, as well as areas with manholes and storm water flooding. There may be an elevated health risk to anyone swimming in storm water-impacted areas as a result of increased concentrations of bacteria, D.P.N.R. said.

On St. Croix, they are: Stoney Ground, Protestant Cay, Buccaneer, Cramer Park, New Fort (Ft. Louise Augusta), Dorsch, Frederiksted Public Beach, Pelican Cove (Comorant), Shoy's, Rainbow, Cane Bay, Chenay Bay, A – Mill Harbour, Halfpenny and B – Breezez Grapetree Bay.

On St. Thomas, they include: Lindquist, Coki Point, Vessup Bay, Brewer's Bay, Bluebeards, Secret Harbor, Bolongo Bay, Sapphire, Water Bay, Frenchman's Bay, Hull Bay, Lindbergh Bay and Magen's Bay.

And on St. John, the safe beaches are: Oppenhiemer, Johnson Bay, Frank Bay, Cruz Bay and Great Cruz Bay.

High levels of enterococci bacteria and turbidity may be caused by runoff due to heavy rains, heavy marine vessel traffic, high wave activity near the shoreline, irresponsible recreational use, etc. Runoff can consist of sediment, pesticides, animal feces and oil & grease, all of which are harmful to the waters of the territory, says DPNR.

The department, led by Commissioner Dawn L. Henry, says it will continue to monitor these popular swimming areas. DPNR also recommends that residents use their discretion when swimming or fishing at the designated beaches. If the waters appear muddy or murky or have foul odors, do not swim or fish.

For additional information regarding water quality, call the Division of Environmental Protection at 773-1082 in St. Croix.

Correction: November 5, 2016

Because of a text error that was quickly corrected, the beach stated in this article's headline was incorrect. Princess Beach, according to D.P.N.R., is not safe this weekend; not Rainbow Beach. The story has been updated to reflect the correct information.