

**CRITERIA FOR BLUE WAVE CERTIFICATION**  
**Criteria Review Form**  
**Revised January 2009**

**RURAL BEACHES**

A rural beach is one that has limited facilities and has not been developed as a resort. Rural beaches are generally more remote than resort beaches, with virtually no commercial beachfront development. However, they may be populated with residential dwellings. Rural beaches also include park facilities. Rural beaches are visited and enjoyed for their intrinsic qualities. Local management maintains a clean environment while promoting considerate use by visitors.

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**I. Water Quality**

1) Beach shall use the 1986 Ambient Water Quality for Bacteria guidelines recommended by EPA (or as protective as the EPA guidelines) during the 2003/04 high use season:

<b>Bacteriological Indicators</b>	<b>Recommended Guideline</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enterococci (marine)</li> <li>• Escherichia coli (fresh water)</li> </ul>	1986 EPA Ambient Water Quality Criteria for Bacteria

- 2) Beach must take at least 5 samples over 30-day intervals or appropriate number of samples as deemed by EPA during the high use season.
- 3) Mechanisms are in place to issue health advisories or closures as necessary.
- 4) Mechanisms are in place to issue advisories or closures due to severe incidences of algal growth, red tide, or oil spills.

**II. Beach and Intertidal Zone**

- 5) Industrial or municipal discharges are in compliance with appropriate standards, causing minimal adverse effects on environment, human health or aesthetics.
- 6) Large, post-storm build-ups of vegetative matter or algae should be removed from the beach. Natural levels of algae on the beach are acceptable.
- 7) No or minimal presence of trash or debris on the beach.
- 8) Procedures are in place for the appropriate handling or removal of stranded or dead marine organisms.

**III. Safety**

- 9) First aid or emergency response is available for a swimming beach (e.g., paramedics, EMT).
- 10) Unguarded beaches display adequate warnings of potential hazards to swimmers and pedestrians (e.g., rip tides, sting rays, jetties). The use of a beach flag warning system utilizing a standard red/yellow/green color scheme is highly recommended.
- 11) Appropriate pest management measures are taken if insect or pest outbreaks become problematic.

**IV. Services and Maintenance**

- 12) Beach is actively managed under a custodial scheme.
- 13) Access is safe and well maintained. Where appropriate, road access and parking for vehicles (e.g., handicapped) is adequate. Although not necessarily paved, the road surface is well maintained.

- 14) Clearly marked and protected sources of drinking water for public within walking distance of the beach, where feasible.
- 15) The beach has either appropriate litter bins in adequate numbers or an effective carry-in/carry-out program in place. Litter and animal waste are not allowed to accumulate either on the beach or the surrounding area.

**V. Habitat Conservation**

- 16) The beach promotes peaceful and protective coexistence of sensitive/plant wildlife habitats with recreation (e.g. zoning for turtle nest sites, bird nest sites, manatee areas, sensitive vegetation, etc.).

17) The beach has evidence that protected sites and rare or protected species have been addressed in partnership with local fish and wildlife services and conservation groups.

18) Management measures are in place, where possible, to address the presence of exotic or invasive species.

## **VI. Information and Education**

19) The beach provides evidence of local conservation educational materials and programs for the public.

20) Laws covering beach use and appropriate codes of conduct are easily available to the public (including in local tourism centers and civic offices).

21) Local ordinances affecting driving, dumping and camping on the beach are clearly displayed and enforced.

22) Local ordinances regarding the presence of animals and pets on the beach are clearly displayed and enforced.

23) The beach provides an easily identified information point with emergency contact information (e.g. local 911, emergency responders, etc.)

24) Where necessary, methods to control competition for free use of the beach and swimming areas (e.g. fishermen, boaters, water-skiers) are in place and communicated clearly to the public.

## **VII. Erosion Management**

25) The beach has an ongoing program to evaluate techniques and implement sustainable approaches to beach enhancement and nourishment.

26) Vegetated structures are in place, where possible, to help control erosion.

27) Areas sensitive to erosion, such as dunes, should be closed to the public and demarcated with adequate signage. The use of walkovers or walkthroughs to control dune trampling is highly encouraged.