



Swimmable Shore Rivers – A Bacteria Monitoring Program

“Is it safe to swim in the water?” This is a common question ShoreRivers gets asked throughout the summer months when members of our community are hoping to find a refreshing place to cool off from the seasonal heat. To better answer this question, and to identify potential pollution hotspots, ShoreRivers runs a seasonal bacteria monitoring program.

ShoreRivers and our partners monitor **28 sites** where people frequently come in contact with water, including popular swimming locations, marinas, yacht clubs, and towns. We monitor weekly or bi-weekly from Memorial Day to Labor Day and before holiday weekends. By collecting, analyzing and distributing data on bacteria levels in the river we aim to provide the public with the information they need to make educated decisions about their contact with the water.

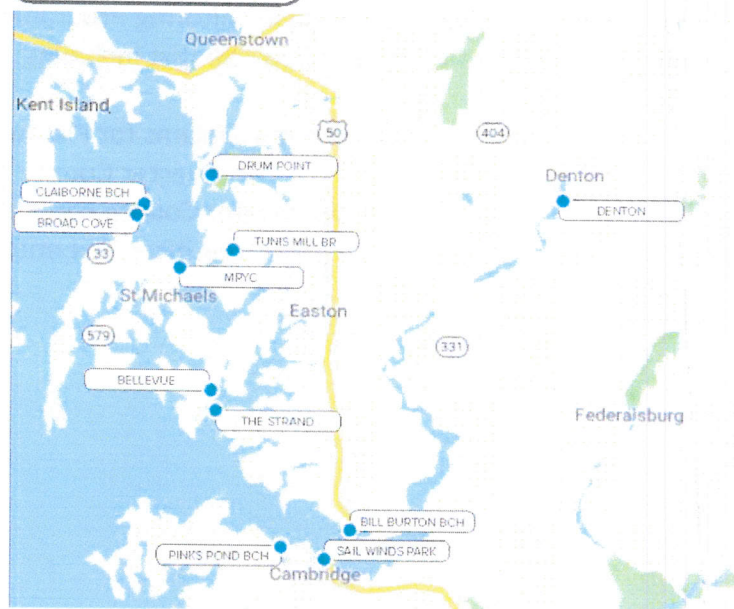
TIPS FOR SAFE SWIMMING

There are inherent risks associated with coming in contact with river water, but you can lower your risk by following these guidelines and staying informed about the current health of your river.

1. [Check Swim Guide](#) for current information.
2. **Do not swim within 48 hours of a major storm event.** A major storm event is any storm that creates runoff, which provides a vehicle for bacteria to be transported from our land to our rivers.
3. **Do not swim if you have open wounds, scratches, skin lesions, an ear infection, or a comprised immune system.**
4. **Do not swallow river water.**
5. **Always shower or rinse off** after swimming in open water.
6. **When in doubt, stay out** - Never swim in cloudy or murky water, or if the water has an odd smell or appearance described as being more green or more brown than usual. Avoid areas where oil slicks, fish kills, or ‘scum’ is visible in the water.



CHECK THE LATEST BACTERIA RESULTS



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SAMPLING PROTOCOL

ShoreRivers follows EPA's standard protocols for collecting and analyzing samples for enterococci, a type of bacteria commonly found in human and animal waste. Enterococci can enter our rivers when rain washes it in from failing septic systems, animal fertilizer off farm fields, livestock waste, sewer spills or overflows, pet waste, or wildlife.

The protocol uses a pass/fail system to determine if enterococci levels are safe or unsafe for swimming. For a single sample taken at one location, 104 MPN*/100 ml is the threshold used to determine if the concentration meet acceptable swimming levels. Maryland regulations identify this threshold to determine safety at designated swimming beaches throughout the state (Code of Maryland Regulations 26.08.09.01). At a site where three or more samples are collected at once, a geometric mean is calculated and 35 MPN*/100 ml is used as the threshold for safe swimming.

*MPN = Most Probably Number of enterococci colonies.

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

The Swimmable Shore Rivers Bacteria Monitoring Program is made possible by the support from community partners and trained citizen scientist including:

Dorchester Citizens for Planned Growth (DCPG)
Dorchester County Tourism
Dorchester County Parks and Recreation
Trained Citizen Scientist Volunteers

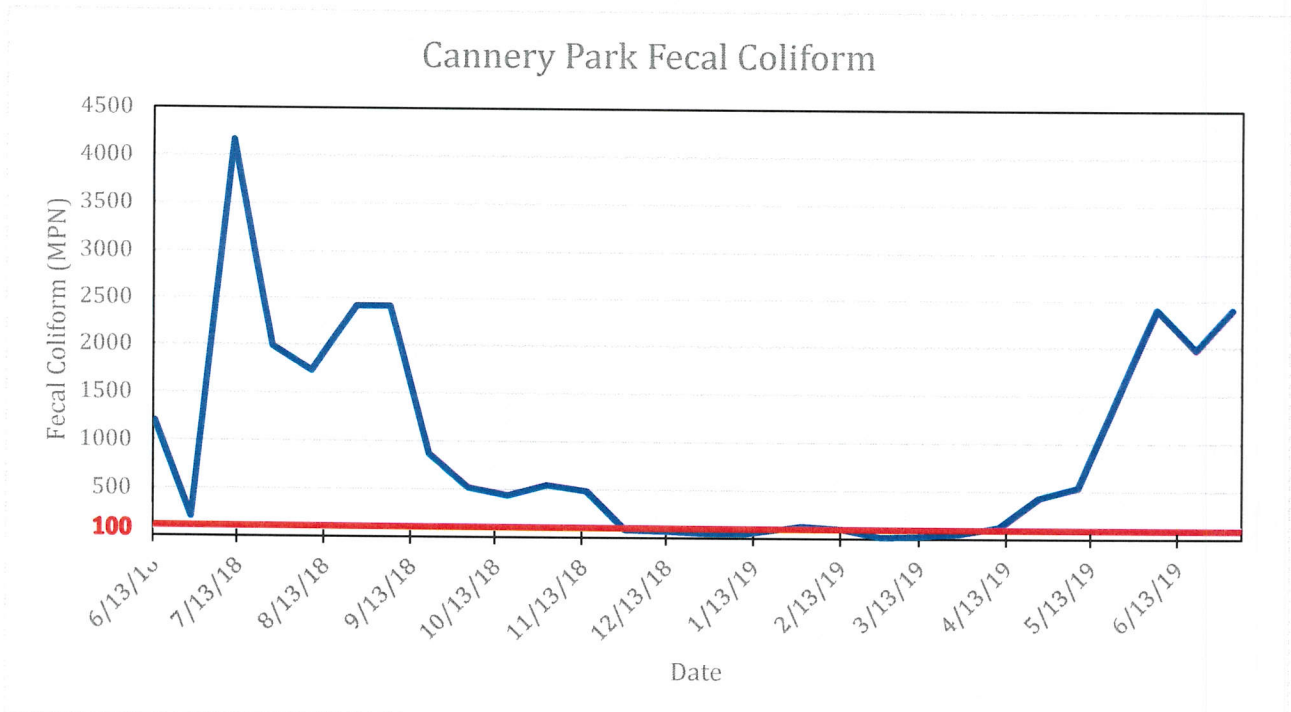
If you are interested in learning the latest results from our bacteria monitoring, visit www.swimguide.org or follow **#swimmableshorerivers** on Facebook or Instagram.



CAMBRIDGE-AREA BACTERIA RESULTS:

#SwimmableShoreRivers Bacteria Monitoring Program: Choptank River*								
	Station	6-Jun	13-Jun	20-Jun	27-Jun	2-Jul	11-Jul	18-Jul
35 MPN Limit***	Sailwinds Beach	1 MPN	79 MPN	23 MPN	2 MPN	13 MPN	20 MPN	20 MPN
	Great Marsh Beach**	45 MPN	78 MPN	-	-	-	-	-
	Pinks Pond Beach	-	-	26 MPN	47 MPN	155 MPN	22 MPN	166 MPN
104 MPN Limit	Bill Burton Beach	10 MPN	31 MPN	51 MPN	160 MPN	44 MPN	30 MPN	520 MPN
	The Strand, Oxford	1 MPN	30 MPN	30 MPN	10 MPN	<1 MPN	20 MPN	10 MPN
	Bellevue Beach	0 MPN	187 MPN	86 MPN	10 MPN	30 MPN	10 MPN	10 MPN
	Denton (new site)	-	-	-	-	-	-	52 MPN

* check theswimguide.org and follow @ChoptankRiverkeeper for current conditions.
 ** On June 20th the sampling location changed from Great Marsh Beach to a the more popular Pinks Pond Beach
 *** 35 MPN limit is used when 3 or more samples are collected at the same site and the same time. 104 MPN is a single sample limit.



*This site is not part of the Swimmable Shore Rivers program but bacteria samples are collected monthly at Cannery Park by Dorchester Citizens for Planned Growth.

