
EASTERN LONG ISLAND
BLUE WATER TASK FORCE

WATER QUALITY REPORT

2025

bwtf.surfrider.org

BROUGHT TO YOU BY:



Front Cover: Sampling at Saggs Main Beach,
by Surfrider Foundation Eastern Long Island Chapter.

Inside Cover: Sampling at Saggs Main Beach,
by Surfrider Foundation Eastern Long Island Chapter.

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A sample from Georgica Pond: Beachside.
Photo: Surfrider Foundation Eastern Long Island

THANK YOU TO OUR VOLUNTEERS AND PARTNERS

The Blue Water Task Force aims to provide year-round water quality information to the public to supplement seasonal monitoring by the Suffolk County Department of Health. This data is used to inform safe beachgoing and water recreation on Eastern Long Island.

We are thankful to the volunteers, partners, and supporters of the Blue Water Task Force on Eastern Long Island, which includes the Surfrider Foundation Eastern Long Island Chapter, Concerned Citizens of Montauk, and Peconic Baykeeper. Your support and commitment make this program possible.

THANK YOU to our 48 volunteers and interns for your help with our 2025 sampling:

2025 EASTERN LONG ISLAND BLUE WATER TASK FORCE SAMPLERS

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**For more information about volunteering, please contact
bwtf@easternli.surfrider.org**

Photo: Hook Pond in East Hampton, by Surfrider Foundation Eastern Long Island Chapter.

INTRODUCTION

The Blue Water Task Force (BWTF) is the Surfrider Foundation's volunteer water quality monitoring program that generates critical water quality information in coastal communities around the country to inform safe beach-going. With a national network of more than 60 BWTF labs, Surfrider chapters use this program to raise awareness of local pollution problems and to bring together communities to implement solutions.

On the East End of Long Island, the **Surfrider Foundation Eastern Long Island Chapter** partners with two other nonprofit organizations – the **Concerned Citizens of Montauk** (CCOM) and **Peconic Baykeeper** – to perform year-round water quality monitoring. In 2025, we monitored 85 sampling locations on the East End. Our Blue Water Task Force team samples weekly during the summer, biweekly during the fall and spring, and monthly during the winter.

The BWTF water quality information augments the data provided by the

Suffolk County Department of Health Services through their seasonal beach program. The County only monitors lifeguarded bathing beaches during the summer swimming season, while the Blue Water Task Force covers a variety of popular recreational areas including ocean and bay beaches, estuaries, and coastal ponds, which may not have lifeguards present. The Blue Water Task Force also tests stormwater outflows and creeks as they can carry pollution into recreational waters.

Water quality samples are tested for enterococcus, a type of fecal bacteria that indicates the presence of human or animal waste in the water. Elevated levels of enterococcus increase the likelihood that other pathogens are present in the water, which can potentially make people sick. Water quality results are compared to the health standard used by New York State and Suffolk County, specifically 104 colony-forming units of enterococcus per 100 milliliters (104 cfu/100mL). Our water quality data is posted online at bwtf.surfrider.org. We encourage everyone to check the most recent test results before swimming or surfing.

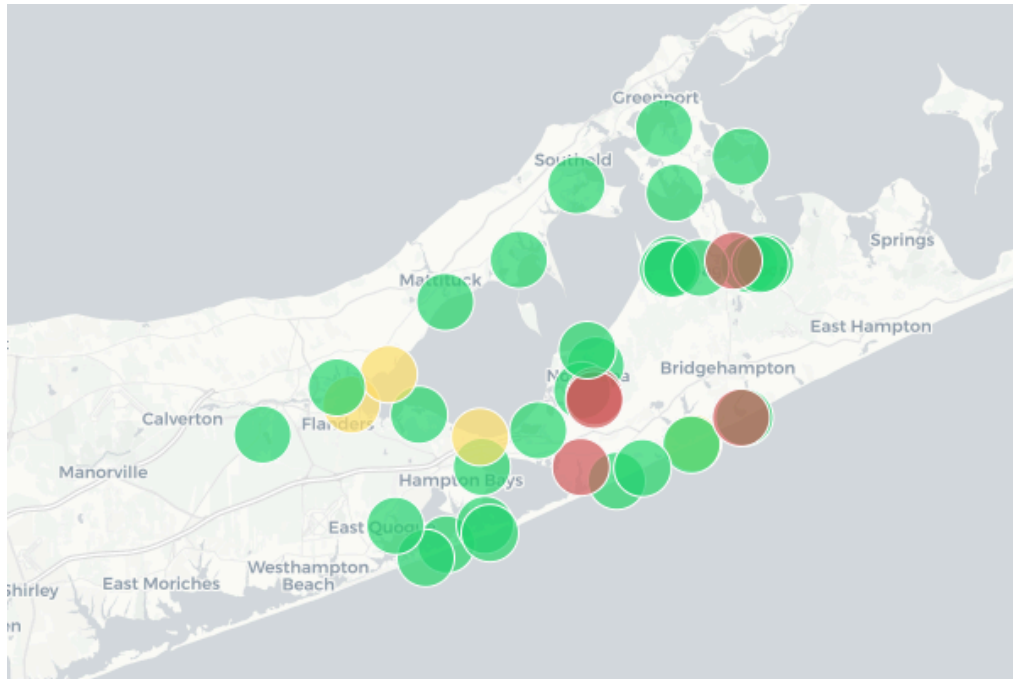


Our new lab in Noyac! Photo: Surfrider Foundation Eastern Long Island Chapter

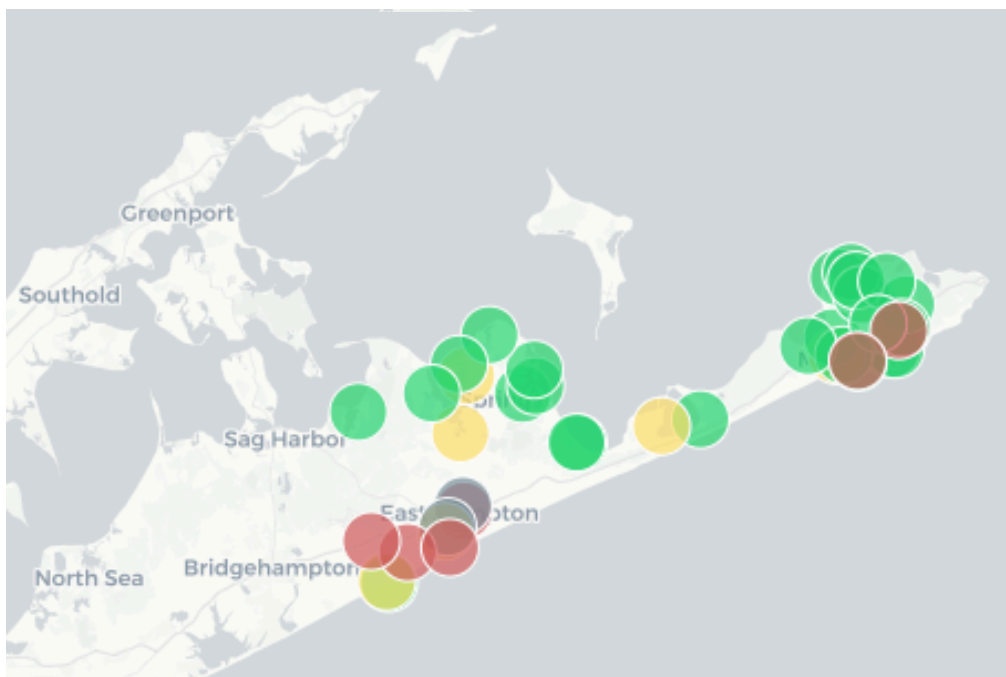
WHERE WE TEST

For the full list of sample locations and results, visit the interactive maps on the Blue Water Task Force website: bwtf.surfrider.org

NORTH FORK AND SOUTHAMPTON:



EAST HAMPTON AND MONTAUK:



PROGRAM UPDATES

In 2025, we added three new sites to our monitoring network. Two new sites are in Montauk: Fort Pond: East & Fort Pond: West. These sites are being used to collect data for CCOM's bacterial source tracking study, discussed further on page 13.

We also expanded our sampling in Springs by adding a site in Accabonac Harbor to complement our three existing sites and to monitor water quality near a new East Hampton Town community oyster gardening site.

We intentionally didn't add many sites this past year to protect staff and volunteer capacity. Instead, we focused on strengthening the quality and usefulness of the data we're already collecting.

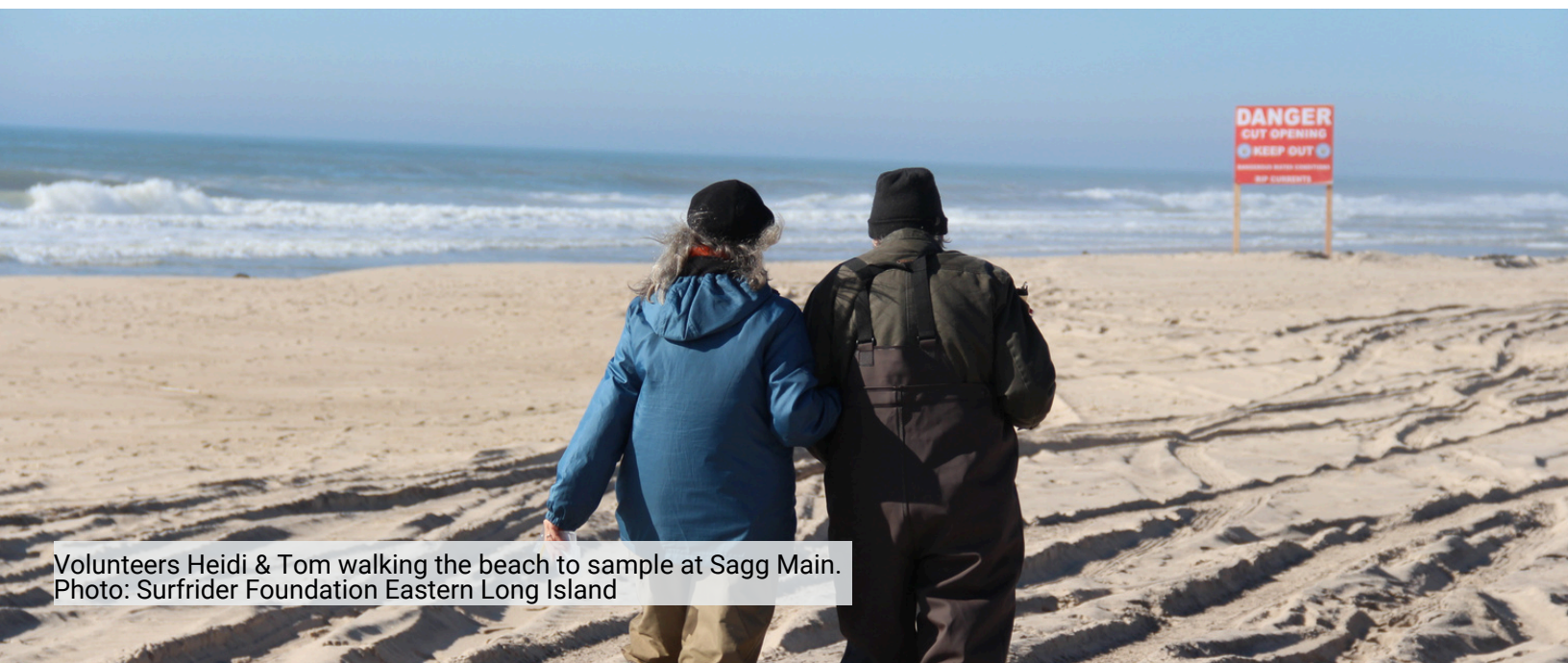
For that reason, we continue to implement and evaluate our Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP), developed in 2024,

NEW SITES IN 2025:

- Accabonac Harbor: North
- Fort Pond: East
- Fort Pond: West

for the Eastern Long Island Blue Water Task Force. Made possible by funding from the [New York Community Trust](#), this QAPP outlines our sampling and analysis methods, quality assurance protocols, and training practices that all three partner organizations follow to ensure that our program is producing reliable data that can be used by a growing audience of data users: local agencies and elected officials, other NGOs and community groups, academics, and the general public.

We released the [finalized QAPP](#) in 2024 and hope it will continue to be a useful resource to new data users.



Volunteers Heidi & Tom walking the beach to sample at Sagg Main.
Photo: Surfrider Foundation Eastern Long Island

2025 DATA SUMMARY

The Eastern Long Island Blue Water Task Force monitors bacteria levels at 85 locations from East Quogue to Montauk and on the North Fork and Shelter Island. Water samples are collected at popular recreational sites, including ocean and bay beaches, estuaries, and coastal ponds. We also test stormwater and other freshwater flows that discharge at the beach. Water samples are processed in the labs at the offices of Concerned Citizens of Montauk or Peconic Baykeeper.

In 2025, trained volunteers and staff collected 1,866 samples from sites located across the East End. This is a slight decrease from our record of 2,044 samples in 2024. This decrease was due to several weather-related cancellations and the decision to focus on ocean and high-use recreation sites during the winter of 2025/2026. We are grateful to our dedicated volunteers and partners for helping us maintain a robust and consistent program.

Tables 1-6 below provide summary statistics for all water quality results obtained during 2025. The tables show the percentage of samples collected at each site that resulted in enterococcus bacteria counts that exceeded the state health standard of 104 cfu/100mL seawater. This provides the percentage of samples with high bacteria levels at each site as an indication of safety for recreational use.



2025 DATA SUMMARY

TABLE 1. SUMMARY OF RESULTS FOR MONTAUK SITES IN 2025.

SITE NAME	Site Type	2025 Sample Count	% High Samples, 2025
Ditch Plains: East of Jetty	Ocean Beach	29	10%
Fort Pond: East	Pond	12	42%
Fort Pond: West	Pond	8	25%
Fort Pond: Industrial	Pond	26	27%
Fort Pond: Ramp	Pond	22	36%
L I Sound: Fort Pond Bay at Navy Rd	Bay Beach	25	8%
L I Sound: Fort Pond Bay at Tuthill Rd	Bay Beach	27	15%
L I Sound: Soundview Drive Beach	Bay Beach	24	0%
Lake Montauk: Causeway South	Harbor	23	13%
Lake Montauk: East Creek	Harbor	25	40%
Lake Montauk: Harbor	Harbor	25	12%
Lake Montauk: Little Reed Pond Creek	Harbor	27	37%
Lake Montauk: Nature Preserve Beach	Harbor	27	4%
Lake Montauk: South Beach	Harbor	26	8%
Lake Montauk: Stepping Stones	Harbor	26	12%
Lake Montauk: West Creek	Harbor	23	26%
Surfside Place: Ocean Beach	Ocean Beach	28	7%
Tuthill Pond	Pond	24	17%

Photos: Some of our 2025 sampling days, by Surfrider Foundation Eastern Long Island.



2025 DATA SUMMARY

TABLE 2. SUMMARY OF RESULTS FOR EAST HAMPTON SITES IN 2025.

SITE NAME	Site Type	2025 Sample Count	% High Samples, 2025
Accabonac Harbor: Landing Lane	Bay Beach	22	18%
Accabonac Harbor: Louse Point Beach	Bay Beach	26	12%
Accabonac Harbor: North	Harbor	19	0%
Accabonac Harbor: Shipyard Ramp	Harbor	25	24%
EH Town Pond	Pond	15	7%
Fresh Pond: Beach	Bay Beach	26	8%
Fresh Pond: Creek	Creek	26	15%
Georgica Beach Assoc./ Third Jetty	Ocean Beach	26	0%
Georgica Pond Beach-side	Pond	24	13%
Georgica Pond: Cove Hollow Access	Pond	22	55%
Georgica Pond: Rte 27 Kayak Launch	Pond	24	50%
Hook Pond South	Pond	14	21%
Hook Pond: Dunemere Lane	Pond	13	92%
Napeague Harbor: East	Harbor	25	0%
Napeague Harbor: West	Harbor	26	0%
Northwest Creek: Ramp	Harbor	21	5%
Three Mile Harbor: Folkstone Drive	Harbor	26	8%
Three Mile Harbor: Head of the Harbor	Harbor	25	8%
Three Mile Harbor: Settler's Landing	Harbor	20	10%



Juvenile Snapping Turtle at Georgica Pond: Cove Hollow.
Photo: Surfrider Foundation Eastern Long Island

2025 DATA SUMMARY

TABLE 3. SUMMARY OF RESULTS FOR SOUTHAMPTON SITES IN 2025.

SITE NAME	Site Type	2025 Sample Count	% High Samples, 2025
East Quogue: Tiana Bay Park	Bay Beach	23	0%
East Quogue: Triton Lane	Ocean Beach	22	0%
East Quogue: Weesuck Creek Boat Ramp	Bay Beach	19	5%
Hampton Bays: Argonne Rd. East	Bay Beach	26	15%
Hampton Bays: Meschutt Beach	Bay Beach	21	5%
Hampton Bays: Old Ponquogue Bridge- Marine Park	Bay Beach	21	14%
Hampton Bays: Ponquogue Beach	Ocean Beach	21	0%
Hampton Bays: Red Creek	Harbor	25	8%
Mecox Cut West	Bay Beach	25	52%
Scott Cameron Ocean Beach (now Mecox Cut West Oceanside)	Ocean Beach	25	8%
North Sea Harbor, Noyac Rd.	Harbor	19	0%
North Sea: Big Fresh Pond	Pond	23	4%
North Sea: Little Fresh Pond North	Pond	24	21%
North Sea: Little Fresh Pond West	Pond	24	13%
North Sea: Towd Point	Bay Beach	21	0%
Sagg Main Beach	Ocean Beach	27	0%
Sagg Pond	Pond	25	20%
Southampton: Gin Lane/Bathing Corp.	Ocean Beach	24	0%
Southampton: Heady Creek	Creek	25	36%
Southampton: Old Town Beach	Ocean Beach	25	0%
Tuckahoe: Cold Spring Pond South	Harbor	17	18%

TABLE 4. SUMMARY OF RESULTS FOR SAG HARBOR SITES IN 2025.

SITE NAME	Site Type	2025 Sample Count	% High Samples, 2025
Noyac: Circle Beach	Bay Beach	26	0%
Noyac: Circle Beach Estuary	Harbor	26	4%
Sag Harbor: Havens Beach	Bay Beach	26	4%
Sag Harbor: Little Northwest Creek	Creek	24	50%
Sag Harbor: Long Beach	Bay Beach	26	4%
Sag Harbor: Ninevah Beach	Creek	23	17%
Sag Harbor: Windmill Beach	Harbor	26	19%

2025 DATA SUMMARY

TABLE 5. SUMMARY OF RESULTS FOR RIVERHEAD & NORTH FORK SITES IN 2025.

SITE NAME	Site Type	2025 Sample Count	% High Samples, 2025
Cutchogue: Wickham Creek	Creek	24	0%
Flanders: Long Neck Blvd.	Bay Beach	25	4%
North Fork: Bay Ave, Mattituck	Bay Beach	25	4%
North Fork: S. Jamesport Ave.	Bay Beach	25	0%
Riverhead: Indian Island County Park	Bay Beach	17	12%
Riverhead: Wildwood Lake	Lake	21	5%
Shelter Island: Coecles Harbor Anchorage	Harbor	23	4%
Shelter Island: Dering Harbor	Harbor	23	0%
Shelter Island: West Neck Anchorage	Harbor	23	0%
Southold: Breezy Point Inlet	Bay Beach	20	5%
Southold: Conkling Point Inlet	Bay Beach	22	0%
Southold: Goose Creek	Creek	25	12%
Southold: Richmond Creek East	Creek	6	17%
Southold: Richmond Creek West	Creek	6	0%

TABLE 6. SUMMARY OF RESULTS FOR STORMWATER SITES IN 2025.*

SITE NAME	Site Type	2025 Sample Count	% High Samples, 2025
EH Fithian Lane: South Drain	Stormwater	25	80%
EH Methodist Lane Bioswale	Stormwater	6	83%
EH Village Green Bioswale	Stormwater	1	100%
Lake Montauk: Benson Dr. Culvert	Stormwater	16	69%
Northwest Creek: Culvert	Stormwater	9	44%
Surfside Place: Outfall Pipe	Stormwater	9	56%

*Note: These sites often have fewer samples because they are only collected when water is flowing. Our bioswales remained dry for most sampling days this year as the native plants soaked up the excess stormwater that previously flooded the area.



Sampling at Wildwood Lake in Riverhead. Photo: Peconic Baykeeper

CLEAN WATER SOLUTIONS

All three NGOs that collaborate to perform local Blue Water Task Force water testing also lead restoration projects to help improve water quality conditions on Eastern Long Island.

STUDYING FORT POND

In 2025, Concerned Citizens of Montauk (CCOM) took an important step toward addressing water quality issues in Fort Pond. In response to persistent fecal bacteria contamination and Harmful Algal Blooms, CCOM commissioned the Gobler Laboratory at Stony Brook University to conduct a 12-month study using continuous monitoring and microbial source tracking to identify pollution sources. Since CCOM began testing Fort Pond with Surfrider's Blue Water Task Force in 2013, high bacteria results have become increasingly problematic.

The study will help identify the sources of this pollution and guide future remediation efforts.

CCOM expects the full microbial source tracking report by September 2026. Updates are available at: preservemontauk.org.



Photo: Fort Pond's shoreline, by CCOM.

OYSTERS IN ACTION

With permission from the Southampton Town Trustees, Peconic Baykeeper has operated a Community Oyster Restoration Program in Southampton's Cold Spring Pond since 2020. This project is designed to grow up to 125,000 oysters per year for water quality improvement and shellfish enhancement in Southampton Town waters. Since the project's inception, approximately 392,713 oysters have been grown and seeded in Southampton Town waters.

In 2023, the project began a new "seed to sanctuary" initiative with all oysters being placed in designated shellfish sanctuaries. Peconic Baykeeper worked with the Southampton Town Trustees to establish two new sanctuary sites in Cold Spring Pond while also utilizing preexisting sanctuary areas in North Sea Harbor, Red Creek Pond, and Shinnecock Bay. In addition to water quality improvement and shellfish enhancement, the program serves as an outreach hub with volunteers helping with maintenance and educational programs offered throughout the field season. Those interested in volunteering for the Community Oyster Restoration Program can email Peconic Baykeeper at:

info@peconicbaykeeper.org.



Photo: Seeding oysters, by Peconic Baykeeper.

CLEAN WATER SOLUTIONS

OCEAN FRIENDLY GARDENS

Surfrider Foundation Eastern Long Island is addressing runoff that flows into Hook Pond with two Ocean Friendly Garden Bioswales installed in East Hampton Village—one at the Village Green (planted in 2017) and the other at Methodist Lane (planted in 2021). Both sites were formerly large grass lawn areas that frequently flooded when it rained.

Both gardens have grown into beautiful oases of native plants that provide much-needed habitat for local pollinators. They also absorb and filter pollution from massive amounts of stormwater and runoff that each site receives when it rains. By reducing the flow of polluted runoff, the garden helps to reduce the inputs of nutrients, pathogens and sediment into Hook Pond. In 2025, Surfrider continued to recruit community volunteers and joined forces with our community partners at [Piazza Horticultural at Whitmores](#) and [ReWild Long Island](#) to help steward and care for these large public gardens.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

1. Upgrade your septic to an Advanced Treatment System. **This is the most important action that residents can take to help stop water pollution throughout Suffolk County.**
2. Use [Ocean Friendly Gardening](#) practices to maintain your yard. Skip chemical fertilizers and pesticides. Plant more natives.
3. Pick up your pet's waste.
4. Stay safe at the beach:
 - Check water quality results [here](#) before heading to the beach.
 - Swim at ocean or bay beaches with lifeguards on duty.
 - Avoid swimming for up to 48 hours after it rains, especially in ponds and enclosed bay and lake sites. Keep your kids out of streams and runoff at the beach.
 - Do not enter the water where there are blue-green algae bloom signs posted, and do not let your dogs in the water either!
 - Rinse with freshwater before you eat or leave the beach.



Volunteers at a summer workday in our Methodist Lane bioswale.
Photo: Surfrider Foundation Eastern Long Island

THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTERS

Our 2025 water quality test results are made possible thanks to generous donations from:

- The Kate W. Cassidy Foundation
- The New York Community Trust (formerly the Long Island Community Foundation)
- The Walrath Foundation
- Southampton Bath and Tennis Club Charitable Fund

We'd also, once again, like to thank our dedicated volunteers for their continued efforts to inform our community about our local water quality.





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Photo of sampling at Sagg Main Beach by the
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