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AMANDA SABGA / BOSTON HERALD

SQUEAKY CLEAN: People walk along Pleasure Bay in South Boston on Sunday. Pleasure Bay rated 100% clean in 2020 testing for harmful bacteria.

LOCAL BEACHES GET AN A

But report points finger as King's Beach in Lynn and Swampscott stays polluted

By MARIE SZANISZLO

South Boston beaches boast some of the cleanest water in the country after a four-decade-old federal court order to clean up Boston Harbor, according to an environmental report that pointed to the continuing need to clean up the water at King's Beach in Lynn and Swampscott.

Pleasure Bay, City Point and Carson beaches all scored 100%, as did Revere and Winthrop, according to Save the Harbor/Save the Bay's annual Water Quality Report Card for the Metropolitan Beaches from Nahant to Nantasket, a report that used monitoring data from the 2020 beach season.

The beach safety scores were calculated as the percent of water samples that comply with the Massachusetts Department of Public Health single sample limit for bacteria, a way to evaluate seasonal beach water quality and potential impacts on public health.

Save the Harbor spokes-



man Bruce Berman attributed South Boston's high rankings to the more than \$5 billion rate payers in 43 cities and towns primarily inside Route 128 have paid since a 1980s federal court order to clean up the harbor.

The two beaches with the worst water quality were Tenean Beach in Dorchester, although it improved from 67% in 2019 to 79% last year, and King's Beach in Lynn and Swampscott. Those two towns were not included in the court order to clean up. The

water quality ratings there dropped from 79% in 2019 to 70% in 2020.

Overall, the water quality at Boston Harbor's regional beaches managed by the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation improved from 89% in 2019 to 93% last year, according to Save the Harbor's report. The six-year average safety rating for the beaches also was 93%.

"While we are delighted with the progress that we have made on most of the region's public beaches, we are disappointed to report



JIM MICHAUD PHOTOS / BOSTON HERALD

SEWAGE WATER ON THE BEACH: Chris Mancini, Save the Harbor's executive director, is seen next to the combined streams of sewage water from Lynn and Swampscott, also seen at left, as it flows onto King's Beach and into the ocean in Lynn on Sunday.

that Tenean Beach in Dorchester and King's Beach in Lynn and Swampscott were still unsafe for swimming more than one out of every five days in 2020," said Chris Mancini, the group's executive director. "We are particularly concerned about the situation at King's Beach, where filthy, bacteria-laden discharges from both Lynn and

Swampscott at Stacey Brook continue to threaten public health."

Lynn Mayor Tom McGee acknowledged that water quality at King's Beach has been a persistent problem and said he hopes to solve it by using some of a \$20 million bond bill signed by former Gov. Deval Patrick and reauthorized Gov. Charlie Baker.

The report also raises concerns about the accuracy of the beach flagging and posting protocols that occur when bacteria testing triggers swimming advisories.

The delay between testing and the availability of lab results means that postings are always a day late as beach managers wait up to 36 hours for results, said Berman.