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YEAR OF THE BEACH | GLOBE EDITORIAL
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Rover takes over in Lynn

THE GOLDEN age of Lynn's King's Beach was probably in the 1950s and 1960s, when battalions of baby boom children marched over from the residential neighborhood across Lynn Shore Drive and enjoyed the sand and surf. The beach does not draw the numbers it did back then, but it is still a convenient place to swim or sunbathe. It is also easy on the eyes, with the ocean view framed by Nahant to the south and the point of Swampscott to the north. Egg Rock island stands by itself in between.

"The water's clean. There's great potential there," said state Senator Thomas McGee of Lynn, a member of the Metropolitan Beaches Commission that recently recommended a greater public investment in the state's beaches from the North Shore to Hull. But McGee said lack of funding leaves the state Department of Conservation and Recreation with too few full-time employees for maintenance and year-round cleanup.

King's Beach is one of three DCR properties in close proximity that offer differing ways to appreciate the waterfront. Nearby Nahant Beach is longer than King's and attracts more bathers. Red Rock Park is a grassy bluff with benches and trees for shade. The park juts out into the ocean and serves as a setting for a summer-long series of concerts that are co sponsored by DCR and the Friends of Lynn and Nahant Beach.

Maureen Gilroy, 62, can remember her childhood days when King's Beach was as packed as Nahant Beach often is now. Back then, she lived in the neighborhood. Now she lives farther away but still comes by occasionally to read in the

sun. Another reader on a recent midweek morning was Sean Degan, 42, of Salem, who finds King's less crowded than other North Shore beaches and easy to reach from the parking places along Lynn Shore Drive.

Degan said he occasionally swims, "when it gets too hot, when I have to." Sometimes when he does, he said, he will come out of the water with some brown algae sticking to his legs.

The algae are a recurring summer problem on this stretch of shoreline. Blooms of *Pilayella littoralis* often come ashore in hot weather, usually between Red Rock Park and the Nahant beach, and smell horrible as they decompose.

According to the report by the beaches commission, *Pilayella littoralis* is unique to the area. The report says an MIT study concluded that the best short-term approach to handling the algae is quick removal and disposal in an appropriate landfill. Although McGee said he and other legislators succeeded in getting specific funds in the state budget for dragging off the offending algae, one of the report's recommendations is that Lynn and Nahant undertake a pilot program to remove the algae, dry them out, and dispose of them appropriately.

Two other problems at King's Beach are dogs and trash. From May 1 to Sept. 30, dogs are banned on the beach, but owners still bring them there. Two grandparents playing with their grandson on the sand said they worried about the health hazard of dog feces. Others mentioned the danger of romping dogs knocking over small children.

Enforcement of the no-dog rule is the responsibility of DCR personnel and State Police officers. But state officials acknowledge that patrols are infrequent. Michael Celona of Lynn, a member of the board of directors of the Friends of Lynn and Nahant Beach, said he thinks a public education campaign about the problems caused by dogs to both humans and wildlife could help reduce their number.

As far as Senator McGee is concerned, a bigger problem than dogs is trash. He would like to see enough trash barrels in place -- and regularly emptied -- along the walkway above the King's Beach seawall.

Still, for McGee and others, King's Beach is a glass at least half full. "There's a real strong feeling of opportunity there," he said, specifically mentioning the consistent use it gets even in winter months. "It's just a question of the commitment of personnel and equipment."

Celona said he is looking forward to the Red Rock Park concerts, which will begin July 3. That night's music will be followed by Lynn's fireworks from a barge in the water. He said the performers were often local bands, with local followings. He described most of the music as "rockish, but family friendly."

Family friendly also describes King's Beach, but it could be more so with better maintenance and better enforcement of laws against dogs. ■