

# BOSTON Herald

Meghan Ottolini | July 16, 2021

## King's Beach on Boston's North Shore plagued by pollution



Lynn, MA. - July 16: No Swimming signs along King's Beach in Lynn on July 16, 2021 in , Lynn, MA. (Staff Photo By Stuart Cahill/MediaNews Group/Boston Herald)

This month's record-busting wet weather is putting an extra damper on a popular beach in the commonwealth: King's Beach in Lynn and Swampscott, which continues to be plagued by polluted stormwater that pours out of one massive drain on the coast.

More than 189,000 gallons of untreated wastewater poured directly into the beach from overwhelmed sewer pipelines over the rainy July 4th weekend, according to city data, but environmental experts estimate that's only a minuscule piece of the pollution that's gushing into the three-mile coastline.

There's no measurement of the putrid stormwater that

continuously rushes from the pipe at the center of the beach, known as the Stacey Brooke Outlet. The state mandates local wastewater treatment plants notify the public of combined sewer overflows like the one that occurred over the holiday weekend, but that amount alone was discouraging to local officials.

"I'm just very disappointed. It's disheartening," said Lynn City Councilor Brian LaPierre, who noted these incidents seem to coincide with the months residents want to enjoy the famous shoreline the most.

An environmental nonprofit recently labeled the beach the Commonwealth's most

"potentially unsafe" area for swimmers due to high levels of fecal bacteria in the water, which they attribute to both storm runoff and combined sewer overflows.

In 2020, high levels of fecal bacteria made the beach unfit for swimming by EPA standards on 75% of the days the water was tested. People who swim in such contaminated water can get sick with skin rashes and diarrhea.

Despite the "no swimming" signs and flags that lined King's Beach Thursday and Friday after days of rain, small children splashed and dove in the water to escape the 90-degree heat.

Locals who avoid the water told the Herald they're fed up with the often-squalid conditions of the beach.

"One of the reasons why we moved here is the access to the beach and the ocean, raising my kids here, growing up on the beach and going swimming. We come down here, we walk, and that's it. It's very frustrating," said Lynn resident Sarah Arcotta, who was strolling by the beach with her two young children Thursday.

Despite its stunning shoreline, Lynn resident Todd Gielgud described the beach as have a constant "fetid smell" and said the beach "worries" him.

Director of strategy at environmental non-profit Save the Harbor/Save the Bay Bruce Berman told the Herald it's critical to help cities like Lynn find a fix for outfalls like the one at King's Beach, and noted beaches in Quincy are in a similar condition.

"We're leaving cities like Lynn and Quincy to go it alone," he said.

Help could come from Washington through the American Rescue Plan Act. Gov. Charlie Baker, a Swampscott resident, recommended \$400 million in grants go towards sewer and water improvements across the state. The median household income for Lynn residents in 2018 was \$53,315, compared to a statewide median household income of \$74,167.