



## Improving Water Quality at Poenisch Park Beach A Project to Protect Recreational Uses

High concentrations of bacteria such as *E. coli* and *Enterococcus* may indicate a health risk to people who swim or wade in natural waters—activities called “contact recreation” in the state’s standards for water quality.

Several public beach parks along Corpus Christi Bay are monitored as part of the Texas Beach Watch Program. When bacteria counts are greater than the criteria, Texas Beach Watch recommends that people be advised not to swim in the area.

In 2014, the Beach Watch program indicated bacteria concentrations were higher than the criteria for protecting the contact recreation use at Poenisch Park beach, assessment unit 2481CB\_06 of the Texas Bays and Estuaries Basin.

Bacteria are commonly found in the intestines of warm-blooded organisms such as humans, livestock, poultry, cats, and dogs. Bacteria from human and animal waste sometimes indicate the presence of disease-causing microorganisms, which can pose a health threat to people who engage in contact recreation.

To address these concerns, TCEQ is developing a total maximum daily load (TMDL) for Poenisch Park beach. The TMDL determines the amount (or load) of a pollutant that a body of water can receive and still support its assigned uses. The allowable load is then allocated among categories of sources within the watershed.

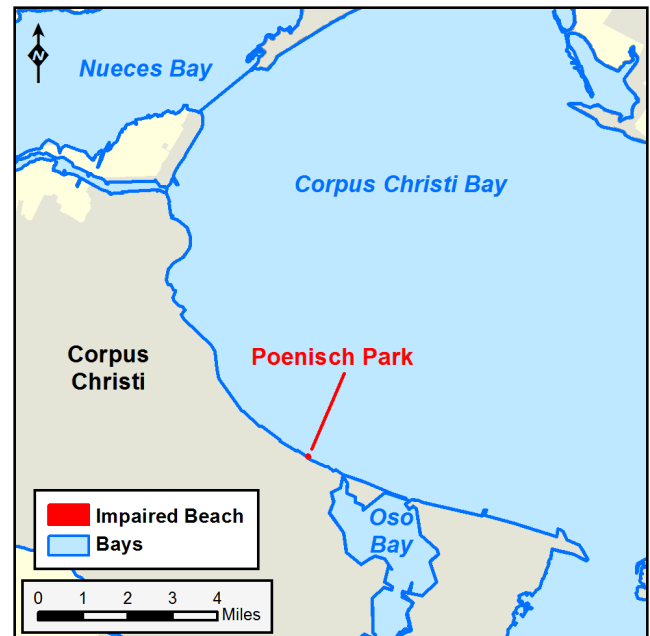
Stakeholders develop the plan to implement the TMDL (I-Plan), with measures that reduce pollution. The goal of this project is to reduce bacteria concentrations to within acceptable risk levels for contact recreation.

Learn more about water quality standards, monitoring, and TMDLs by reading [Preserving and Improving Water Quality](https://www.tceq.texas.gov/publications/gi/gi-351)<sup>1</sup>, available on our website and in print.

### Project Watershed

The beach being assessed for this TMDL is in Nueces County, in the City of Corpus Christi, adjacent to Claremore Street and Ocean Drive.

Corpus Christi’s bays and estuaries are nursery grounds for fish and shellfish, and provide essential food and habitat for birds, fish, and other plants and animals. They are also home to ports, marinas, and commercial shipping activities. Corpus Christi’s



beaches and estuaries are popular destinations for fishing, boating, swimming, sandcastle building, and bird watching.

### Project Development

In November 2015, TCEQ contracted with Texas A&M University at Corpus Christi (TAMU-CC) to collect background and historical data. In September 2017, the Conrad Blucher Institute began technical report development. Water quality monitoring was conducted in 2018 and 2019. A draft technical support document is under development by TAMU-CC and will be finalized later this year.

### Public Participation

In all its projects, TCEQ seeks to gather opinion and information from people who represent government, permitted facilities, agriculture, business, environmental, and community and private interests.

Throughout the project, the City of Corpus Christi, the Coastal Bend Bays and Estuaries Program (CBBEP) and other stakeholders and communities that use and affect this public beach are being engaged in developing a strategy to improve water quality.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.tceq.texas.gov/publications/gi/gi-351>

### For More Information

Contact one of the project managers listed, or visit the project webpage at:

[www.tceq.texas.gov/waterquality/tmdl/97-corpusbeachesbacteria.html](http://www.tceq.texas.gov/waterquality/tmdl/97-corpusbeachesbacteria.html)

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### TMDL Status

**Start Date:** November 2015

**Projected End Date:** 2022

**TCEQ Adoption:**

**EPA Region 6 Approval:**

### I-Plan Status

**Projected TCEQ Approval:** 2023

### Project Highlights

- In fiscal year 2016 (FY16), TCEQ contracted with TAMU-CC to collect background and historical data.
- Conrad Blucher Institute is currently developing a technical support document for the TMDL.

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