

For immediate release

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***myBeachCast* mobile app now available for iPhone**

Ann Arbor, Mich. – The Great Lakes Commission, in partnership with LimnoTech and the Great Lakes states, is proud to announce release of updated versions of the *myBeachCast* mobile app, now available for both iPhone and Android smartphones.

As swimming season begins, beachgoers are encouraged to download *myBeachCast* (beachcast.glin.net), to get the latest swim advisories, weather conditions and hazard alerts for more than 2,000 beaches in the Great Lakes region.

“*myBeachCast* is a beach discovery tool as well as a way to get immediate information about weather and water conditions at your favorite beaches,” says Christine Manninen, communications director at the Great Lakes Commission and manager for the *myBeachCast* project. “There are too many fatalities on the Great Lakes, many of which could be avoided if people were better informed about beach conditions and heeded swim advisories.”

To help protect swimmers from dangerous currents, *myBeachCast* now features beach hazard statements issued by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). Beach hazard statements are issued for Great Lakes beaches by the NOAA National Weather Service when high winds and waves, and strong and dangerous currents are present or forecasted. The app also connects to health department databases across the region to alert users of contamination advisories.

At life guarded beaches, swimmers should look for posted green, yellow and red flags, which indicate the presence of dangerous currents. In addition, beachgoers can follow these tips to stay safe at all beaches:

- Ask children to wear a U.S. Coast Guard-approved life jacket
- Bring something that floats if going in the water
- Avoid swimming near piers, breakwalls and other structures
- If caught in a dangerous current, alert someone that you’re in trouble by shouting or waving your arms, and then float (don’t panic) until someone can assist or you can swim at an angle out of the current to shore
- In an emergency, call 911 and communicate your exact location
- If there are high winds or waves, stay on shore. **When in doubt, don’t go out!**

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Great Lakes Commission

Kelvin Burch (PA), Chair; Tim A. Eder, Executive Director

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myBeachCast is also working to add local lifeguard reports and beach flag status information to the app. Silver Beach County Park in Berrien County, Michigan, is the first beach to partner with the Great Lakes Commission to add this local, up-to-date information to the beach app.

“More than a half million visitors per year visit Silver Beach and protecting people’s safety is paramount for us,” according to Brian Bailey, director of the Berrien County Parks Commission. “The *myBeachCast* app is enabling us to reach more people with our beach condition reports and swim advisories, and beachgoers can check conditions even before they come to the beach, which helps them to be prepared and better plan their visit.”

The Great Lakes Commission – in partnership with the Great Lakes states and LimnoTech, an environmental consulting firm also based in Ann Arbor, Mich. – has developed *myBeachCast* to provide convenient, public access to swim advisories and related environmental conditions for public beaches in the Great Lakes region. The app also includes real-time and forecasted weather and lake conditions, and nearshore marine forecasts. For additional information, visit beachcast.glin.net.

Funding for the beach app enhancements comes through a grant from the NOAA Coastal Storms Program. Additional funding was previously provided through the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency-led Great Lakes Restoration Initiative.

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The Great Lakes Commission, chaired by Kelly Burch, executive director of oil and gas operations for the Pennsylvania Dept. of Environmental Protection, is an interstate compact agency established under state and U.S. federal law and dedicated to promoting a strong economy, healthy environment and high quality of life for the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence region and its residents. The Commission consists of governors’ appointees, state legislators, and agency officials from its eight member states. Associate membership for Ontario and Québec was established through the signing of a “Declaration of Partnership.” The Commission maintains a formal Observer program involving U.S. and Canadian federal agencies, tribal authorities, binational agencies and other regional interests. The Commission offices are located in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Learn more at www.glc.org.