

## New Saginaw Bay Beach Testing Method for the 2019 Summer Season

You are invited to hear about the new beach testing protocol that will be used at Bay County beaches and several other Saginaw Bay beaches this year.

A new state of the art and faster testing method to identify potential Saginaw Bay beach fecal contamination will be presented by Dr. Tami Sivy, professor of chemistry at Saginaw Valley State University (SVSU), at the annual meeting of the Partnership for the Saginaw Bay Watershed (PSBW) which will be held at the Wirt Public Library at 500 Center Ave., Bay City on Tuesday June 4, 2019 at 1:00PM in the Community Room. The new testing method will be used to test water samples at all Bay County public beaches on the Saginaw Bay as well as those in Arenac County. The new test method will allow for results in four hours as compared to the previous method which required an overnight incubation period.

SVSU is contracted by the Bay County Health Department and other counties to collect and analyze beach water samples taken on a weekly schedule starting in the end of May and continuing through August. In recent years samples indicating levels of fecal contamination above local, state and national levels has resulted in the closing of several beaches during the summer months. The PSBW has been working with state and local leaders to reduce the number of beach closing incidents that have been occurring on the Saginaw Bay.

In addition to faster test results with funding from the Office of the Great Lakes (OGL), a division of the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy, the new test method may also be used to identify the sources of the beach fecal contamination. Once the fecal contamination is identified as a human, animal or bird source it may be possible to implement measures which will reduce future beach contamination.

The Partnership for the Saginaw Bay Watershed (PSBW) is the non-governmental oversight organization created to coordinate the information and activities regarding the Saginaw Bay Watershed Area of Concern. The Saginaw River and Saginaw Bay were designated as an Area of Concern (AOC) by the International Joint Commission in 1987. According to the USEPA, an AOC is a region along the Great Lakes with water quality problems and degraded environmental conditions which are likely to cause impairment of beneficial use or of the area's ability to support aquatic life.

The Partnership for the Saginaw Bay Watershed was formed to coordinate efforts and monitor progress toward restoration goals with an ultimate goal of removing the Saginaw River and Bay from the list of AOCs throughout the Great Lakes. For more information regarding the Partnership please visit the website [PSBW.org](http://PSBW.org).