



# PRESS RELEASE

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### **New Jersey's Top Ten Beaches Appointed Rip Current Outreach Ambassadors**

(Sandy Hook, NJ).....The beaches named best in New Jersey by voters in the 2009 NJ Top Ten Beach Survey ([nitoptenbeaches.org](http://nitoptenbeaches.org)) have taken on a new assignment as Ambassador Communities for Rip Current Awareness and agreed to actively participate throughout the summer in the recently updated public education campaign created by the New Jersey Marine Sciences Consortium/NJ Sea Grant (NJMSC/NJSG). All of the winning 2009 NJ Top Ten Beach towns and municipalities took part in the original rip current outreach campaign launched by NJMSC/NJSG 5 years ago and have committed to expanding their efforts to educate the beach going public about rip currents and promote safer swimming practices at the Jersey Shore this summer.

In 2004, NJMSC/NJSG created a comprehensive rip current awareness campaign for New Jersey which included designing, producing and distributing thousands of metal signs in English and subsequently in Spanish, warning swimmers about the danger of rip currents and illustrating what to do if caught in one. The signs were posted at high-traffic beach access and bathing points in essentially every shore community along the New Jersey coast. Thousands of rip current awareness brochures were also printed and distributed at municipal buildings, beach badge check-points and other strategic locations from Sandy Hook to Cape May. The initial project was a multi-partnership effort of NJMSC/NJSG, Stevens Institute of Technology, the NJDEP, NJDOT, NJ Travel and Tourism, NOAA-NWS and the NJ State Police OEM.

NJMSC/NJSG has since adapted its project to be more compatible with one developed by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, National Weather Service (NOAA/NWS)

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which is now embraced by Sea Grant and other programs nationwide as well as regional and state agencies and associations. The effort focuses on helping beachgoers learn how to “Break the Grip of the Rip”. By using the same signs, posters, brochures, podcasts, videos and web technologies the national campaign is meant to provide a uniform, cohesive message and means of educating everyone about rip currents and their potential danger.

Timed to coincide with the upcoming busy July 4<sup>th</sup> weekend, each of the towns named as favorites in the 2009 NJ Top Ten Beach survey received complimentary metal rip current awareness signs, laminated stickers and a supply of revised rip current awareness brochures that can be distributed at municipal offices, borough halls, badge sales offices and beach checkpoints throughout the summer season to educate visitors to their beaches about the potential danger of rip currents. The materials reflect the transition from the original rip current outreach materials to those being used nationwide by NOAA, The National Weather Service, the National Sea Grant Program and other organizations. The newly appointed Rip Current Awareness Ambassador Communities are urging others up and down the New Jersey coastline to become more involved in the effort by placing or replacing rip current signs on their beaches and distributing brochures throughout the summer season.

The New Jersey Marine Sciences Consortium/New Jersey Sea Grant is an affiliation of colleges, universities and other groups dedicated to advancing knowledge and stewardship of New Jersey’s marine and coastal environment. NJMSC/NJSG meets its mission through its innovative research, education and outreach programs. For more information about the NJMSC/NJSG Rip Current Initiative, visit: [http://www.njmssc.org/Sea\\_Grant/RipCurrent.html](http://www.njmssc.org/Sea_Grant/RipCurrent.html)

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