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## Bacteria Levels At State Beaches Down, Study Says

### PERSISTENT PROBLEM AREAS INCLUDE SITE IN PORT RICHEY

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**TALLAHASSEE** — Floridians visited beaches last year that were slightly less contaminated with hazardous bacteria than the year before, according to a National Resources Defense Council report.

The annual study, released Thursday, still found persistent problem areas, particularly at the Energy and Marine Center in Pasco County and at several other Gulf beaches.

"These are not natural occurrences. These are not mysteries. These are problems that need to be addressed," Linda Young, southeast director of the Clean Water Network, said at a news conference.

Young said that county health departments issued 3,345 advisories to swimmers at 324 monitored beaches.

Stormwater runoff and leaky sewage systems were mostly to blame, she said.

In 2003, nearly 4,000 advisories were posted, 16 percent more than last year.

See **BEACH POLLUTION**, Page 6 ►  
*Advisories posted quickly, official says.*

### **BOTTOM 10**

*Conditions were unsafe for swimming at many Gulf beaches in 2004, a Natural Resources Defense Council report says. Here are Florida beaches with the highest frequency of unsafe conditions.*



Tribune map