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Slocum Creek only site to fail this week's Swim Guide test

From Sound Rivers

NEW BERN [Aug. 8, 2024] — All sites on the Lower Neuse passed the Swim Guide water-quality test this week, with the exception of one: Slocum Creek in Havelock. Slocum Creek has failed to meet state and federal recreational water-quality standards since weekly testing began Memorial Day weekend.

It's a vast improvement over last week's results, according to Clay Barber, Sound Rivers' program director.

"Last week, we saw the results of all the heavy rain we had in July," Barber said. "All that stormwater runoff, and the bacteria it carries, made its way into the river, and we had seven sites fail in the lower Neuse. But this week, we're back to pretty normal levels."

A Swim Guide fail means elevated levels of fecal bacteria in the water, which can come with increased risk of gastrointestinal illness and skin infections for pets and humans alike.

"If there's a fail, that means use common sense when recreating on the water: keep your head above water and make sure the water doesn't come into contact with open wounds," Barber said.

Swim Guide is an international water-quality program conducted locally by Sound Rivers, an environmental nonprofit based in Raleigh, New Bern and Washington whose mission to keep North Carolina's waterways fishable, swimmable and drinkable.

Swim Guide runs from Memorial Day weekend to Labor Day weekend. Each week, a team of Sound Rivers' volunteers gathers water samples at more than 50 popular recreation sites from the Piedmont to the Pamlico Sound. Sound Rivers' staff test samples for E. coli in fresh water and enterococci in salt water and pass/fail results are released to the public, providing an easy way to find out where it's safe to swim.

Nineteen of the sites are located in the lower Neuse River basin: the boat ramp, Buscoe Beach and Ferry Bridge in Goldsboro; the Highway 11 boat ramp near Kinston; Maple Cypress boat ramp at Fort Barnwell; Cowpen Landing and Spring Garden boat ramps; Glenburnie Park, Town of Bridgeton Park, Black Beard Sailing Club on upper Broad Creek, Lawson Creek Park, River Bend kayak launch, Trent Woods and Brice's Creek — all in or near New Bern; the East Street boat ramp in Pollocksville; Slocum Creek boat ramp in Havelock; Rice Creek off the Bay River; and the Midyette Street boat ramp and Sea Harbour Yacht Club at Pierce Creek in Oriental.

Sound Rivers' Swim Guide program is sponsored by the Water-Quality Fund in memory of Gene Pate, Grady-White Boats, Public Radio East, Cummins, UNC Lenoir Health Care, Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation, UNC Pavel Molchanov Scholars, ECU SECU Public Fellows Internship Foundation, City of Greenville, Lake Royale Property Owners Association, Greenville Evening Rotary Club, Melinda Vann and David Silberstein, and Wendy and Tim Wilson.

To sign up for Swim Guide notifications, go to www.soundrivers.org/swimguide or text "SWIM" to 833-686-5322 for weekly water-quality results. For more information about Sound Rivers, visit soundrivers.org.