

Joint News Release Contacts

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Dare County Lifts Precautionary Public Health Advisory and Cape Hatteras National Seashore Re-Opens Buxton Beach Following Cleanup Efforts and Soil Testing

The Dare County Department of Health & Human Services (DHHS), after consultation with Cape Hatteras National Seashore (Seashore) and the U.S. Public Health Service, is lifting the precautionary public health advisory for the Seashore's Buxton Beach Access, also known as the Buxton Formerly Used Defense Site (FUDS).

Additionally, the Seashore is re-opening the approximately three-tenths-of-a-mile section of beach, located just south of the southernmost house at the south end of Old Lighthouse Road to the southernmost jetty in Buxton.

This section of beach had been [closed since September 1, 2023](#), due to health and safety concerns related to petroleum contamination and potentially hazardous remnant military infrastructure.

The decision to lift the precautionary public health advisory and re-open the three-tenths-of-a-mile closure area adjacent to the Buxton FUDS was based on multiple factors which included:

- The Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) performed an extensive petroleum removal project which included removal of most of the remnant military infrastructure from the area. Since the cleanup, which began in September 2024, there have not been any reported petroleum sheens or odors, nor have there been any complaints of symptoms associated with petroleum exposure.
- Dare County DHHS and the Seashore have conducted separate analyses in which two different laboratories were used. Results indicated no levels of petroleum-contaminated soil that would create any public health concerns.
- The Coast Guard conducted a Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA) investigation at Buxton Beach Access which sought to determine actionable remediation levels associated with volatile

organic compounds, semi-volatile organic compounds, heavy metals, and chlorinated solvents. The CERCLA investigation, [released by the Coast Guard on Oct. 4, 2024](#), concluded that there are no actionable levels of these contaminants resulting from the past Coast Guard use of the site.

During the Corps' cleanup efforts, the Corps reported the removal of the following items from Buxton Beach:

- 4,599 cubic yards of petroleum-impacted soil,
- 99,526 gallons of petroleum-impacted water,
- 278,000 pounds of concrete,
- 1,153 feet of pipe, and
- 1,088 feet of metal cable and wire

The parking lot at Buxton Beach Access will remain temporarily closed to support the Corps' upcoming work to restore the dunes and conduct continued soil sampling. Until the Corps' work is completed, a beach walkover is available at the entrance to Buxton Beach Access.

For more information on the Seashore's Buxton Beach Access, including updated frequently asked questions, visit: www.nps.gov/caha/learn/news/buxton-beach-access.htm.