



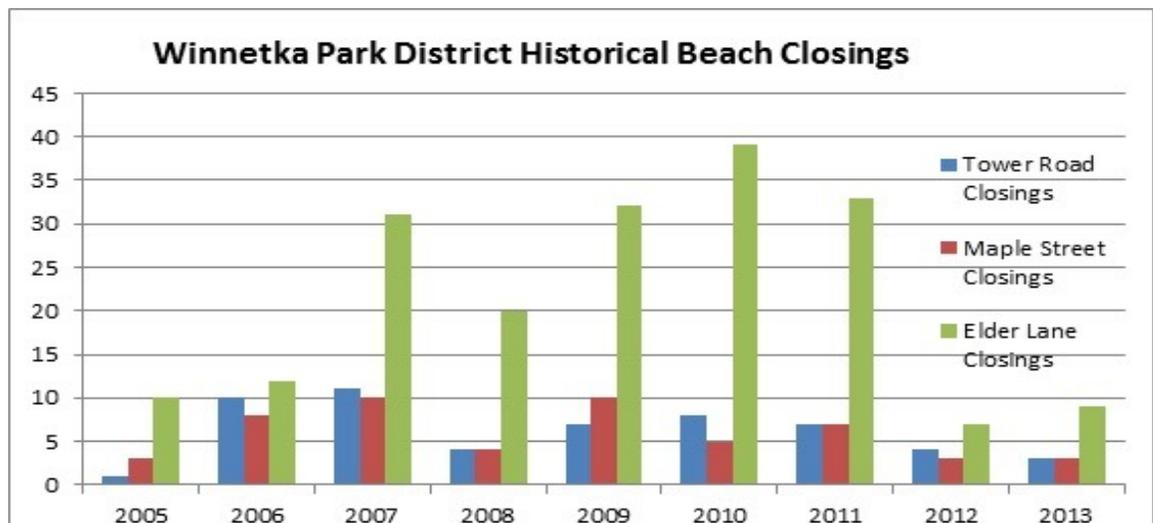
Winnetka Beach Conditions

The Winnetka Park District operates three beaches in Winnetka: Tower Road, Maple Street, and Elder Lane. At all three beaches, water quality is monitored daily for bacteria levels, such as coliform and E.coli to ensure the safety of all patrons. On occasion, beaches may be closed due to higher than acceptable bacteria levels, or due to the presence of unsafe environmental conditions such as rip currents.

In the recent past, bacteria monitoring results exceeded State standards—causing numerous closures at Elder Lane Beach. A much discussed 2011 report by the National Resources Defense Council indicated that Elder Lane Beach was the most frequently closed beach in Illinois, based on bacteria-related beach closure data from 2010. What is not so often discussed is that in 2011, the Village worked closely with the Park District to investigate the cause of the closings. The Village determined 15 instances where broken residential sanitary sewer pipes (privately maintained) and two public sewer locations were leaking into the Village’s stormwater system. The Village is a “separate sewer” community—meaning it has separate underground systems to convey wastewater and stormwater. The illicit connections were causing release into Lake Michigan at Elder Lane Beach.

The identified issues were repaired, and in 2012 and 2013 water quality at Elder Lane began to improve substantially and fall in line with historical closing levels. In 2011, Elder Beach was closed 33 times. Subsequently, it has only closed 7 and 9 times (in 2012 and 2013 respectively) due to bacteria presence in the waters. The chart below reflects the closings, by beach, related to high bacteria levels, over the past several years.

It is important to keep in mind the beaches may be closed more frequently than is attributable to bacteria levels. For example, Tower Road beach was closed a total of 10 times in 2013—3 for bacteria levels and 7 due to the presence of rip currents.





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