

A group of people are swimming in a lake. In the foreground, a young girl is on the left, and a young boy is in the center. In the background, a man is on the left and a woman is on the right. The water is clear and blue.

Lake of the Ozarks

What the experts are saying about water quality

“Considering the level of development around the Lake, I personally thought the values would be much higher. I have been pleasantly surprised by the low bacteria values found at nearly every cove monitored at the Lake of the Ozarks so far.”

Tony Thorpe 10/9/2009
University of Missouri-Columbia
Coordinator Lakes of Missouri Volunteer Program

“Despite some higher numbers in May and June 2008 partly due to heavy rain events, the overall numbers for the year were very similar to 2007 and indicate overall good health for the Lake in terms of bacteria levels.”

Scott Robinett 4/2009
Missouri Department of Natural Resources
Water Quality Specialist

“Lake of the Ozarks is a healthy lake, we (LOWA and the lake community) are being proactive to protect the Lake. We want to keep it healthy for the future.”

Donna Swall 1/26/10
Executive Director
Lake of the Ozarks
Watershed Alliance

“The Missouri Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) December 2009 Water Quality Report indicates that the overall water quality of the Lake is generally good and fairly typical of most Midwestern reservoirs. Monitoring performed by MDNR and others previous to this particular sampling event also demonstrates that overall quality of the Lake of the Ozarks is typically good. In 2009, relatively elevated levels of bacteria were observed during isolated events that were apparently affected by wet weather, a condition that is typical of runoff influenced water quality conditions throughout the state.”

Randy Crawford 1/27/2010
Senior Water Quality Scientist
Geosyntec Consultants

“If the Lake were filled with pollutants and contaminants, fishing would not be a multi-million dollar industry with hundreds of tournaments drawing thousands of anglers season after season. There would be no egrets, eagles, herons, kingfishers, or osprey who depend on the fisheries for their food source. If you don’t have a healthy environment, you are not going to have a healthy fish population.”

Greg Stoner 8/29/2008
Missouri Department of Conservation
Fisheries Biologist

“All fresh water streams, lakes and rivers, including Lake of the Ozarks, have E. coli, but it is by no means a contaminated body of water. One of the issues on Lake of the Ozarks that is different from other waterways is the shoreline development. That means more potential sources for problems. As would be true with any lake or river, swimmers should avoid drinking the water and take other normal precautions such as washing their hands before handling food, but it is safe to come and swim, ski and enjoy the water.”

Kevin Hess 8/2008
Missouri Department of Natural Resources
Springfield Regional Office

9 Things You Need to Know:

About the Lake of the Ozarks, E.Coli and water quality.

- 1 Lake of the Ozarks is the most tested lake in Missouri. Its overall water quality is very good and is considered to be one of the best places in the country to fish and play in.
- 2 In the past three years, there have been no confirmed cases of sickness from the E.Coli bacteria due to swimming in the Lake of the Ozarks.
- 3 All lakes contain levels of E. Coli. There are usually wildlife, farms and humans that exist around a lake. As a result, E. Coli – at some level - will always be present in every body of water.
- 4 There are hundreds of E.Coli strains, most of which are relatively harmless; some are even beneficial to humans. However, some (*though rare*) can cause illness.
- 5 It's never wise to drink water from any lake (*and it doesn't taste that good anyway*).
- 6 As it is with many lakes around the country, E. Coli levels are influenced by heavy rainfall. At the Lake of the Ozarks, if the levels are high enough around our two public beaches – those beaches may be closed.
- 7 Around Memorial Day Weekend 2009, some samples from the lake were taken that showed high E. Coli levels. These samples were taken immediately after a period of heavy rainfall.
- 8 In accordance to EPA standards (*as stated in a Missouri Department of Natural Resources report*), test results in the months following Memorial Day Weekend 2009 revealed that the lake was clean and healthy.
- 9 **The Lake of the Ozarks is healthy and safe.** We are taking proactive steps to insure the future environmental health of the Lake of the Ozarks continues. **Please join us in our efforts.**

Information provided by Citizens for the Betterment of the Lake of the Ozarks.

For more information about the lake and how you can help keep it healthy please visit www.lakewaterquality.org