

**Efforts of the Mackinac County Water Safety Review Team to Promote Great Lakes Rip Current Education and Beach Safety—Ron Kinnunen (Michigan Sea Grant Extension)**

In recent years several drownings and numerous near-drownings occurred along a seven-mile segment of northern Lake Michigan shoreline near highway U.S.-2 west of St. Ignace, Michigan. The most recent drowning occurred in the summer of 1998 at the Hiawatha National Forest Service Campground and rescuers reported conditions that indicated an active rip current. U.S. Forest Service personnel began to question the safety of these waters for swimmers. In the winter of 1999 the U.S. Forest Service Assistant Ranger and Recreation Manager met with interested parties dealing with Great Lakes water safety issues that led to the formation of the Mackinac County Water Safety Review Team (MCWSRT). The MCWSRT first task was to address the drownings along the U.S.-2 shoreline and work to prevent future drownings. The MCWSRT has made tremendous strides through its programs to prevent additional rip current related drownings. These efforts will be reviewed and hopefully utilized by other communities that are posed with a similar rip current drowning hazard.

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