

**Vero Beach Lifeguard Association
Yearly Report
For
The Beaches of Vero Beach**

2015



Mission:

To promote water safety and lifeguarding in Vero Beach and the surrounding communities

Email: VeroBeachLA@Yahoo.com

Website: www.VBLA.org

Our Objective:

The purpose of our yearly report is to disseminate information and educate the public about the beaches within The City of Vero Beach. Our four miles of beach to include three lifeguarded beaches at Jaycee, Humiston and South Beach Parks is the foundation for the economic, social and cultural life of our community. The report includes statistics, observations and recommendations gathered from the past year. In addition, we hope to educate those in the public who otherwise may not frequent the beach by providing statistical and environmental facts about our most important local resource. VBLA wishes to thank our members who have given their time, effort and passion towards our goal of promoting a better beach for all to enjoy.

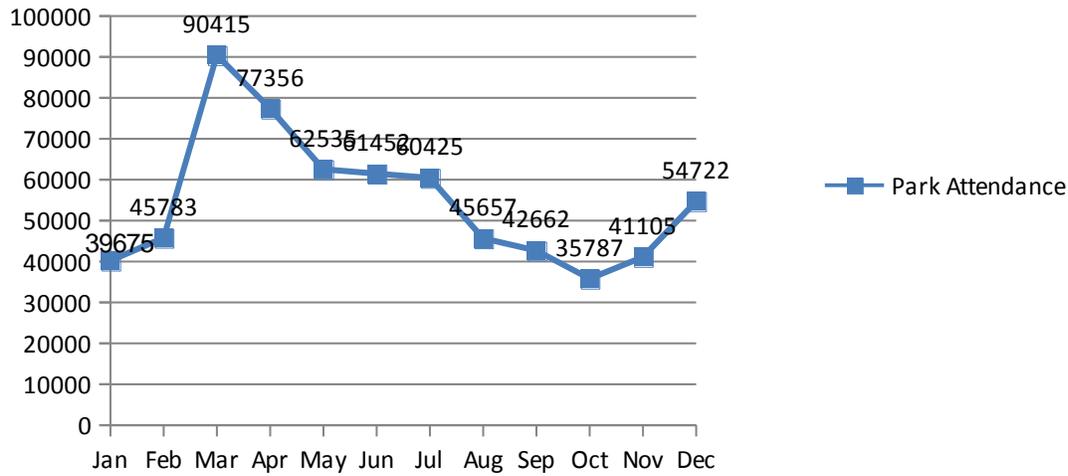
2015 STATISTICS

Total Park Attendance	658403
Preventative Actions	13447
Minor Medicals	521
Major Medicals	27
Rescues	39
Fatalities in Guarded Area	0
Fatalities in Unguarded Area	2

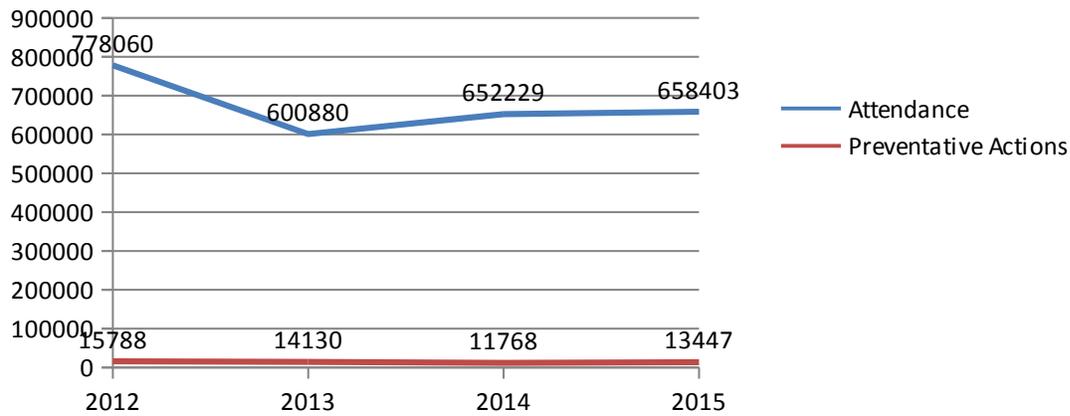
Total park attendance increase slightly by 6,000 patrons from 2014. The number of preventative actions (stopping potential incidents before they occur) and medical emergencies increased. Lifeguards rescued 39 people from drowning. Approximately one half of all water rescues occurred outside guarded areas. Unfortunately, 2 fatalities occurred in the water because the swimmers were either outside the guarded area and/or were swimming after lifeguard duty hours. Medical emergencies and water rescues occurred in almost every month despite the weather conditions or time of year.

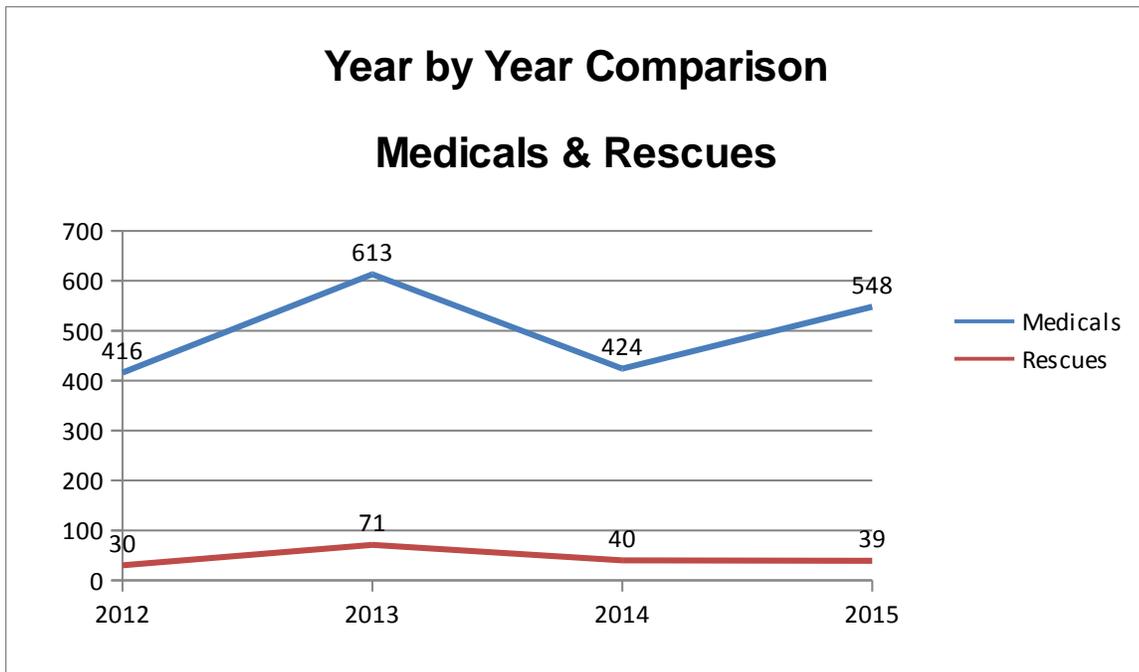
March, April and May saw the largest crowds on the beach. June and August combined saw 30,000 less patrons than the previous year. In contrast, September and November saw about 30,000 more patrons than the year before. The only month without any drowning rescues was the month of February. April was the busiest month for lifeguards who saved 10 people from drowning.

2015 Park Attendance (month to month)



Year by Year Comparison Attendance & Preventative Actions





Observations & Recommendations

Beach erosion seemed to be minimal except during times of large ocean swells when dunes and sea walls sustained damage around the areas of Conn Beach and Central Beach "The Cove" (the area from the start of Rio Mar reef south to Porpoise Point) beach seems to be growing every year as is evident by the need to move the South Beach lifeguard tower eastward once again.

The City provided beach grooming from November through March. The company performing the task is doing a fair job at keeping the beach free from debris and excess seaweed. It is important to note however that by grooming the beach we remove seaweed which traps seeds and other natural materials that promote dune growth. In addition, seabirds and crabs feed on insects and bugs found in the seaweed. The disadvantage of grooming the beach can be observed at South Beach Park where the groomed area is void of dunes. In contrast, the areas not groomed have accumulated

healthy dunes which protect private and public property during hurricanes.

Patrons bringing dogs on the beach is a problem. The law does not allow dogs on any beach within the City of Vero Beach, except for service dogs, however, countless owners bring their dogs on the beach. It is observed that a significant number of owners do not clean up after their dogs and/or are unaware of the ordinance. It is recommended that the law is enforced and an awareness campaign be initiated which educates dog owners about the law. Continued defecation by dogs is unpleasant and a health hazard.

Sexton Plaza located on Central Beach continues to be popular with beach patrons who are mainly tourists staying at the beach side hotels. Most of the these patrons are unfamiliar with ocean conditions and are unaware of potential threats including the PEP reef which runs the length of Central Beach and lies just beneath the ocean surface along the shoreline. Employees of the beach umbrella rental company who work along Central Beach have performed numerous "Good Samaritan" rescues in this area in 2015. VBLA recommends that this stretch of beach be staffed with lifeguards.

In an effort to be proactive, VBLA is presently raising money to build a lifeguard tower and headquarters at Humiston Park which will give lifeguards better fields of vision and protection from the elements and dangerous situations. In addition, we are producing a beach safety video specifically addressing the safety considerations and precautions at our local beach that will be available at no charge to area hotels, civic organizations, schools and the general public.

Key

Park Attendance: patrons within the park and areas immediately north and south of each park

Preventative Actions: stopping potential incidents before they occur

Minor Medicals: a medical incident which is treated on-site by lifeguard/EMT personnel

Major Medicals: a medical incident that required additional Emergency Medical Services

About VBLA

This report is furnished by the Vero Beach Lifeguard Association, a non-profit, 501C3 organization. Its mission is to promote water safety and lifeguarding in Vero Beach and the surrounding communities. Contact us at VeroBeachLA@Yahoo.com or (908)797-8725. Visit us at www.VBLA.org. Donations are appreciated. Monies raised are used to purchase equipment, supplies and training for the lifeguards from the city of Vero Beach. Donations via check can be mailed to : VBLA, 1351 White Heron Lane, Vero Beach, FL 32963.