



MISSISSIPPI COASTAL CLEANUP PROGRAM

2023 SPRING NEWSLETTER

Hi there! Welcome to the Mississippi Coastal Cleanup Program Seasonal Newsletter.

The Mississippi Coastal Cleanup Program (MSCCP) is an educational program that promotes the conservation of our local marine environment by influencing active stewardship within our community. This program is housed at the Mississippi State University's Coastal Research and Extension Center in Biloxi, MS.

Check out what we've been up to!

Monthly Cleanups

Each month, the MSCCP hosts volunteer-powered cleanups across the Mississippi coast. So far this year, volunteers have participated in beach cleanups at **Jones Park, Biloxi Lighthouse, Pass Christian Harbor, and Pascagoula Beach** removing over **500 pounds** of trash and debris.

Monthly Cleanups are a great way to stay involved with the latest MSCCP cleanup efforts. With the busy summer season upon us, there is a great need for **public awareness and stewardship - join us for a cleanup near you!**



MONTHLY CLEANUP INFO



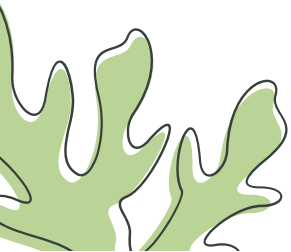
Earth Day Celebration Cleanup

Earth Day is an annual event on April 22nd that demonstrates support for environmental protection and provides a wonderful opportunity to spread awareness of how polluted environments can threaten wildlife and human health. In celebration of Earth Day, we hosted a cleanup event at the **Biloxi West Beach Boardwalk** that brought over **170 volunteers** and removed over **260 pounds** of debris from the beach. Milo's Tea provided participants with refreshing tea and lemonade during the cleanup event!

Other organizations hosted Earth Day Cleanups including the Institute of Marine Mammal Studies and Thalassas.



EARTH DAY





WELL DONE!

The Mississippi School for Mathematics and Science
An Opportunity for Excellence

Inland Cleanups

This spring, the **Mississippi Inland Cleanup Program** has traveled to Jasper, Neshoba, and Lowndes counties to remove a total of **170 pounds** of litter! We'd like to highlight the student volunteers from the **Mississippi School for Mathematics and Science** who assisted with a **campus-wide cleanup** in Columbus. Their hard work helped to remove a total of 66 pounds. of litter, including plastic confetti, food wrappers, cigarette butts, construction materials, and tiny plastic pieces.



MS INLAND
CLEANUP PROGRAM

Lacrosse athletes take to the beach!

Every year, student-athletes with the **St. Stanislaus Lacrosse** team requests supplies from the MSCCP to do their very own beach cleanup. These athletes take to the beach across from campus in an effort to **remove trash and debris** from the sand and shoreline. In addition to removing marine debris and litter from the environment, this group **collects data on what type and how much debris** they collect. This year, the team removed **over 1,200** pieces of trash and debris that mostly consisted of cigarette butts, food wrappers, cigar tips, and plastic pieces. **Way to go team!!**



Can't make it to one of our scheduled events? The MSCCP can provide groups with guidance and all the supplies they need to **perform their very own cleanup**. *Our only requirement - volunteers must collect data!* We do this at each of our cleanup events and we want to know how much and what types of trash you are picking up. Supplies provided include gloves, trash bags, trash grabbers, buckets, a first aid kit, hand sanitizer, and data collection materials.

REQUEST A BIN



Share the shore!

It's nesting season! Every spring and summer, our Mississippi beaches provide critical nesting habitat for several species of ground-nesting shorebirds including least terns, black skimmers, snowy and Wilson's plovers. These birds migrate into the area to raise their young on our beaches.



Please be aware of flagged & signed off areas and keep a respectful distance.



Many of our cleanup sites are located near shorebird nest areas. The eggs and chicks of these beach-nesting birds are hard to see and very camouflaged, blending in perfectly with our sands. These areas are protected and are flagged, signed, and sometimes roped off by the Audubon Mississippi Coastal Bird Stewardship Program.

Sharing the shore best practices:

- **Give the birds space.** Adult birds will often make noise and dive at intruders who are too close for comfort.
- **Leave no trash behind.** Please take your trash with you and make sure nearby trash cans don't overflow.
- **Be careful where you walk.** Chicks may explore and they blend in with the sand.
- If you see trash within a nesting area - **leave it.** Do not venture into the protected area.

MS COAST
AUDUBON SOCIETY



Least tern chicks seeking shade in a littered plastic cup.
Photo by Melinda Averhart, MS Audubon.

CALL for VOLUNTEERS

Interested in participating in a research study? Wish to learn more about **microplastics** and **marine debris**? Sign up today to join our ***citizen science litter sampling survey!***

This opportunity is in support of an MSU graduate student seeking to learn more about volunteer demographics, volunteer recruitment, and retention.

Volunteers **MUST** be at least 18 years old and be fluent in the English language.

For more information, please contact Dr. Eric Sparks at (228) 388-4710 or eric.sparks@msstate.edu

REGISTER TO
BECOME A CITIZEN
SCIENTIST!



Upcoming Events

Here are a few of our upcoming events. All events have online registration volunteers must fill out prior to attending.

June 10th, 2023

World Ocean Day Beach Cleanup
@ Ken Combs Pier in Gulfport, MS

June 17th, 2023

June Monthly Cleanup
@ Waveland Beach, Waveland, MS

July 8th, 2023

Star-Spangled Cleanup
@ multiple cleanup sites across the MS coast.

July 15th, 2023

July Monthly Cleanup
@ Front Beach, Ocean Springs, MS

*** Please note that all events are subject to cancellation & most events have a backup date.*



June 8th, 2023 is

WORLD OCEAN DAY!

On World Ocean Day, people around our blue planet celebrate and honor our one shared ocean, that connects us all.

EVENT CALENDAR



See you at the beach!



DID YOU KNOW?

Plastic ingestion by marine wildlife is typically a case of mistaken identity with the animal confusing plastic items for food. Ingestion of plastic is harmful to animals as it can lead to internal injury, starvation, and death. While the ingestion of plastic by humans is most likely not intentional, we are drinking, breathing, and eating plastics (1,2,3). These plastics are small, secondary forms of plastic debris known as microplastics.

The research on the impacts of plastic ingestion on human health is ongoing. The biggest concern is toxicity but the impacts of this on human health could depend on the level and amount of exposure.

1. Calafat, A. M., Ye, X., Wong, L.-Y., Reidy, J. A., & Needham, L. L. (2008). Exposure of the US population to bisphenol A and 4-tertiary-octylphenol: 2003–2004. *Environmental Health Perspectives*, 116, 39–45.
2. Jenner, L. C., Rotchell, J. M., Bennett, R. T., Cowen, M., Tentzeris, V., & Sadofsky, L. R. (2022). Detection of microplastics in human lung tissue using μ FTIR spectroscopy. *Science of the Total Environment*, 831, 154907.
3. Waring, R. H., Harris, R. M., & Mitchell, S. C. (2018). Plastic contamination of the food chain: A threat to human health?. *Maturitas*, 115, 64-68.

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