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University of Southern Mississippi-Gulf Coast Research Laboratory



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## Mississippi Coastal Cleanup Nets 2,218 Bags of Trash

More than **3,100** volunteers scoured Mississippi's beaches and waterways picking up marine debris at **77** designated cleanup sites during the 23rd annual Mississippi Coastal Cleanup, part of the International Coastal Cleanup—the world's largest volunteer effort to clean up the marine environment. During the 2011 Mississippi Coastal Cleanup, **3,102** volunteers picked up **2,218** bags of trash, including **55** bags of recyclables, along **262** miles of Coastal waterways in Hancock, Harrison and Jackson counties. The cleanup is organized by the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources and Mississippi Marine Debris Task Force. The Mississippi Coastal Cleanup returned to the beaches and barrier islands and again expanded its reach through its partnership with Mississippi Power's Renew Our Rivers program, cleaning four sites on the days leading up to the October 15 cleanup and one additional site on cleanup day.

**All told, 3,102 volunteers collected 123,032 pounds of trash including 171 tires—that's 61.5 tons of marine debris.** This included items too large to fit in trash bags such as household appliances and remnants of homes washed away during Katrina. More than 20 tons of debris was removed from the Ansley Preserve alone using heavy equipment as part of the Renew Our Rivers program. Other items found were: a channel marker, remnants of homes, jet ski, car bumper, propane tanks, more than one refrigerator, coffee maker, furniture, golf club, tractor tire, blow-up mattress, fire alarm, parking barricade, electrical wire, plastic window, baby carriage, wooden door, dead alligator gar, hypodermic needle, Bacardi sign, television child's car seat and 500 square feet of plastic sheeting was found on Sand Island. Also, volunteers collecting trash at four sites in Jackson County separated out and filled **55** bags with recyclable items.

During the International Coastal Cleanup, hundreds of thousands of people across the world spend three hours combing the beaches and waterways to pick up trash that pollutes our waters, harms marine life, hampers tourism and poses health risks to beach-goers. During last year's International Coastal Cleanup, more than 600,000 volunteers in 108 countries removed more than 8 million pounds of debris from the ocean, rivers, lakes and waterways.

"Our coastal waterways provide food for our families, recreation and livelihoods for many of us," said Lauren Thompson, state coordinator for the Mississippi Coastal Cleanup and public relations director for the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources. "It's the lifeblood on which our fisheries and marine wildlife depend. Our annual coastal cleanup is a reminder that, yes, we can make a difference in keeping our shorelines clean and litter-free: One cigarette butt at a time, one piece of fishing line at a time, one plastic bag at a time."

The mission of the International Coastal Cleanup is to remove debris from shorelines, bayous, bays, rivers, waterways and beaches; collect valuable information on the amount and types of debris collected; educate people on the issue of

marine debris; and use the data collected to effect positive change. Volunteers clean beaches and collect information on what they find, using the International Coastal Cleanup Data Card, so that sources of marine debris can be targeted for education or pollution prevention campaigns. State coordinators mail the data cards to the Ocean Conservancy in Washington, D.C. where the data is tabulated. Over the years, data from the cleanups have been used to enact local, state, national, and even international legislation and agreements.

After the Mississippi Coastal Cleanup, Bob Taylor, president of the Gulf Coast Restaurant Group (which includes Half Shell Oyster House, Bob's Burger Factory, Southern Flavor Catering & Events, High Cotton Grill and The Quarter), treated **550** volunteers to a free lunch of hotdogs, hamburgers, chips, fruit and cold drinks served by their staff from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Ken Combs Pier parking area at Courthouse Road and Hwy. 90 in Gulfport. Sysco, Gulf Coast Produce, Cabot Cheese and Coast Coca-Cola Bottling Co. also provided food and drink for the event.

In Hancock County, the Office of Congressman Steven Palazzo and the Bay St. Louis Rotary Club treated volunteers to hotdogs at a cookout held at the Depot in Bay St. Louis while BB's Snowballs provided snowballs. In Jackson County, 850 volunteers received a free barbecue lunch of pulled pork and beef brisket, chips and drinks at the Estuarine Education Center at Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College in Gautier courtesy of The Shed Barbeque & Blues Joint.

Volunteers who cleaned the beach and filled out data cards, documenting what litters our shores and waterways, also received a re-usable fold-up tote, compliments of Chevron Pascagoula Refinery.

"The turnout today and the support that the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources has received from the Mississippi Marine Debris Task Force and our more than 80 sponsors is a clear indicator that many Mississippians do care about our coastal environment," Thompson said. "They understand and see it as an extension of our own backyards that we can care for, maintain and protect not just today, but each and every day by choosing to dispose of our trash properly."

The Mississippi Coastal Cleanup is made possible by the Mississippi Marine Debris Task Force, which includes representatives from Ashman & Son, LLC; Chevron Pascagoula Refinery; City of Biloxi; City of Gautier; City of Gulfport; City of Moss Point; City of Ocean Springs; City of Pascagoula; Coastal Rivers; Delbert Hosemann Secretary of State; DMR Marine Patrol; Eco-Tours of South Mississippi; Gautier Pride; Grand Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve; Gulf Coast Heritage Trails Partnership; Gulf Islands National Seashore; Hancock County Beautification Committee; Hancock County Board of Supervisors; Hancock County Chamber of Commerce; Hancock County Solid Waste; Harrison County Beautification Commission; Harrison County Board of Supervisors; Harrison County Sand Beach Department; Harrison County Sheriff's Department; Harrison County Utility Authority; Ingalls Shipbuilding; Jackson County Board of Supervisors; Jackson County Chamber of Commerce; Jackson County Solid Waste Department; Keep Mississippi Beautiful; Keesler Air Force Base; Mississippi Air National Guard CRTG-Gulfport; Mississippi-Alabama Sea Grant Consortium; Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality; Mississippi Department of Marine Resources; Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College; Mississippi Power; Mississippi State University Coastal Research and Extension Center; Naval Construction Battalion Center; North Gulfport Community Land Trust; Office of Congressman Steven Palazzo; Rotary International District 6840; Sea Coast Echo; University of Southern Mississippi-Gulf Coast Research Laboratory

Other sponsors include:

**SEA TURTLE:** BP; Chevron Pascagoula Refinery; Gulf Coast Restaurant Group; Matthews Brothers Inc; Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality; Mississippi Department of Marine Resources; The Bait Box

**SHARK:** Cable One Advertising; Delta Sanitation, A Waste-Pro Company; Lamar Outdoor Advertising-Mississippi Gulf Coast; Mississippi Media; Ocean Conservancy; The Shed Barbeque and Blues Joint; The Sun Herald; Waste Management

**DOLPHIN:** Allen Beverages Inc.; Beverage Association of Mississippi; Coast Coca-Cola Bottling Co., Inc.; Coca-Cola Bottling Co., Consolidated; Conrad Yelvington Distributors Inc.; Fisher Safety;

Milner Rental Center; RPM/Domino's Pizza; Ship Island Excursions; Sysco Foods

**COBIA:** Biloxi-D'Iberville Press; Ingalls Shipbuilding; Keep Mississippi Beautiful; K99FM, Magic 93.7, 92.5 The Beat & News Radio 104.9; Knight-Abbey Printing and Direct Mail; Mississippi Power; Ocean Springs Gazette; Sea Coast Echo; The Dive Shop; WLOX-TV 13

**MULLET:** Academy Sports & Outdoors; Ashman and Son, LLC; Bay Ice; BB's Bar-B-Que & Snak Shak; Cabot Cheese; Coast Electric; Gulf Coast Produce

The preliminary cleanup site statistics for Hancock, Harrison, Jackson counties and the Barrier Islands are as follows:

**Hancock County: 19 sites, 391 volunteers collected 375 bags of trash**

• Diamondhead Community	7 volunteers and 14 bags
• Kiln Community	2 volunteers and 9 bags
• McLeod State Park	24 volunteers and 12 bags
• Beach Boulevard from Pointset Boulevard to the mouth of Bayou Cadet	3 volunteers and 4 bags
• Third Marsh Area between Lakeshore and Clermont Harbor	10 volunteers and 29 bags
• Bay Marina, Washington St. / Old Lazy River Road	3 volunteers and 2 bags
• Bayou LaCroix	8 volunteers and 16 bags
• Beach Boulevard from Bookter Street to Bay Oaks Drive	79 volunteers and 42 bags
• Beach Boulevard from U.S. 90 to Bookter Street	76 volunteers and 60 bags
• Dunbar Avenue, Beach Blvd. to U.S. Highway 90	27 volunteers and 20 bags
• Garden Isles Community	5 volunteers and 25 bags
• Jordan River Shores	2 volunteers and 4 bags
• Jourdan River Estates	15 volunteers and 35 bags
• Beach Boulevard from Buccaneer State Park to Pointset Avenue	19 volunteers and 35 bags
• Boulevard from Nicholson Avenue to Vacation Lane	29 volunteers and 18 bags
• Boulevard Bay Oaks Drive to Nicholson Avenue	45 volunteers and 7 bags
• Boulevard from Vacation Lane to Buccaneer State Park	15 volunteers and 7 bags
• Beach Boulevard from Buccaneer State Park to Pointset	19 volunteers and 35 bags
• Depot District	3 volunteers and 1 bags

**Harrison County: 21 sites, 1,370 volunteers collected 1,069 bags of trash**

• Beauvoir	11 volunteers and 18 bags
• Biloxi Small Craft Harbor to Oak St.	8 volunteers and 12 bags
• Deer Island	34 volunteers and 66 bags
• Edgewater Mall	94 volunteers and 46 bags
• Forrest Avenue Pier	20 volunteers and 20 bags
• Hiller Park	98 volunteers and 56 bags
• Keegan Bayou	12 volunteers and 32 bags
• Popp's Ferry Bridge Boat Launch	40 volunteers and 25 bags
• Porter Avenue/Lighthouse	87 volunteers and 76 bags
• Rodenberg Avenue/Biloxi Beach	89 volunteers and 37 bags
• D'Iberville Boat Launch	60 volunteers and 43 bags
• Fountain Pier	42 volunteers and 23 bags
• Tuxachanie Waterway	15 volunteers and 18 bags
• Courthouse Road	348 volunteers and 301 bags
• Dedeaux Park	12 volunteers and 22 bags
• James Hill Park	13 volunteers and 14 bags
• Kremer Landing	4 volunteers and 2 bags
• Lower Turkey Creek (two locations)	40 volunteers and 38 bags
• Preservation Oaks	64 volunteers and 65 bags
• Long Beach Harbor/Pavilion	140 volunteers and 75 bags
• Pass Christian Harbor/Highway 90	139 volunteers and 80 bags

**Jackson County: 28 sites, 1,004 volunteers collected 696 bags of trash**

• Jackson County - Bluff Creek	1	volunteer and 1 bag
• Jackson County - Grand Bay NERR	7	volunteers and 6 bags
• Ocean Springs - Fort Bayou Boat Launch & Waterway	12	volunteers and 7 bags
• Ocean Springs - Gulf Park Estates Public Pier	28	volunteers and 38 bags
• Ocean Springs - Davis Bayou (GINS)	154	volunteers and 43 bags
• Ocean Springs - Graveline Bayou Pier & Boat Launch	22	volunteers and 44 bags
• Ocean Springs - East Beach	32	volunteers and 25 bags
• Ocean Springs - Front Beach Ocean Springs Yacht Club	118	volunteers and 54 bags
• Ocean Springs - Front Beach Harbor End	65	volunteers and 43 bags
• Gautier - Gautier City Park	20	volunteers and 10 bags
• Gautier - Graveline Road/Shepard State Park	51	volunteers and 35 bags
• Gautier - Indian Point/Sioux Bayou	3	volunteers and 12 bags
• Gautier - Pine Island/West Pascagoula River	3	volunteers and 4 bags
• Gautier – Pt. Clear	40	volunteers and 50 bags
• Gautier - Mary Walker waterways	4	volunteers and 4 bags
• Gautier - West Pascagoula River Bridge	56	volunteers and 40 bags
• Moss Point - Bellview Street Boat Launch & Park	8	volunteers and 9 bags
• Moss Point - I-10 Boat Launch	18	volunteers and 12 bags
• Moss Point - Hwy 63 Boat Launch	12	volunteers and 16 bags
• Moss Point - River Front	111	volunteers and 42 bags
• Pascagoula - Old Spanish Fort	2	volunteers and 1 bag
• Pascagoula - I.G. Levy Park, N.	19	volunteers and 28 bags
• Pascagoula - Pascagoula Causeway & River Park	9	volunteers and 36 bags
• Pascagoula - The Point	40	volunteers and 50 bags
• Pascagoula - Beach Park & Front	150	volunteers and 37 bags
• Pascagoula - Singing River Island	4	volunteers and 23 bags
• Pascagoula - Round Island	8	volunteers and 11 bags
• Pascagoula - Lower Pascagoula River Islands	7	volunteers and 15 bags

**Barrier Islands: 4 sites, 70 volunteers collected 78 bags of trash**

• Cat Island	7	volunteers and 11 bags
• Horn Island	13	volunteers and 22 bags
• Sand Island	10	volunteers and 20 bags
• West Ship Island	40	volunteers and 25 bags

**RENEW OUR RIVERS CLEANUP SITES**

**Hancock County: 1 site; 50 volunteers, 20 tons of trash**

- Ansley Preserve; cleaned Oct. 13

**Harrison County:**

**Biloxi: 1 site; 40 volunteers collected 5 tons of trash**

- Back Bay Biloxi & Tchoutacabouffa River; cleaned Oct. 12

**Gulfport: 1 site; 57 volunteers collected 5.25 tons of trash**

- Industrial Seaway & Bayou Bernard; cleaned Oct. 13

**Jackson County: 2 sites; 120 volunteers collected 10 tons of trash**

- Pascagoula River; cleaned Oct. 14
- Cedar Point; cleaned Oct. 15

**PHOTO CAPTIONS:**

**Photo A:** Students from North Bay Elementary in Hancock County fill bags full of trash found along the seawall at the beach. (Photo courtesy of Sarah Underwood)

**Photo B:** Hancock County High School's science club came out in full force early in the morning to help with the 23<sup>rd</sup> Mississippi Coastal Cleanup by collecting trash at McLeod Park.  
(Photo courtesy of Sarah Underwood)

**Photo C:** A firefighter and his family help clean up debris from East Beach in Ocean Springs as part of this year's Coastal Cleanup.  
(Photo courtesy of Cynthia A. Moncreiff)

**Photo D:** Mai Dang and her daughters Ashlyn Le, 6, and Kaitlyn Le, 4, of Biloxi, went to the Porter Avenue site to help with the cleanup. (Photo courtesy of Mississippi Department of Marine Resources)

**Photo E:** A group of volunteers on Cat Island hold up their data card to show how much and how far trash travels.  
(Photo courtesy of Jim Foster)

**Photo F:** A young lady, who is a member of the Boys and Girls Club of the Gulf Coast's East Biloxi Unit, thoughtfully places trash in a bag at the Porter Avenue site in Biloxi.  
(Photo courtesy of Mississippi Department of Marine Resources)

**Photo G:** At the Rodenberg Avenue site, members of the Phi Theta Kappa honor society at Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College work as a team to collect as much trash as possible in the morning hours.  
(Photo courtesy of Mississippi Department of Marine Resources)

**Photo H:** Michelle Gelacio, a member of the Keesler youth group, holds up a golf score card she found under the bridge at Keegan Bayou in Biloxi.  
(Photo courtesy of Mississippi Department of Marine Resources)

**Photo I:** A group of 38 students and faculty from Hinds Community College took the 3-hour trip down to the Coast to participate in the cleanup. After collecting trash at the Rodenberg Avenue site, they were among the 550 volunteers who enjoyed a free lunch courtesy of the Gulf Coast Restaurant Group at the Ken Combs Pier in Gulfport.  
(Photo courtesy of Mississippi Department of Marine Resources)

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