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Mississippi Coastal Cleanup Nets 3,120 Bags of Trash

Boaters and land-based volunteers scoured Mississippi's beaches, islands and waterways picking up marine debris at 70 designated cleanup sites during the 21st annual Mississippi Coastal Cleanup, part of the International Coastal Cleanup—the world's largest single-day volunteer effort to clean up the marine environment. In just three hours, more than **3,770** volunteers picked up **3,120** bags of trash along **144** miles of Coastal waterways in Hancock, Harrison and Jackson counties and the Barrier Islands during the Mississippi Coastal Cleanup. The cleanup is organized by the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources and Mississippi Marine Debris Task Force.

Volunteers collected **49,305** pounds of trash including 167 tires—that's about **24.6** tons of marine debris. Also collected was four dump truckloads of non-baggable items such as household appliances. Other items found were: bullets, a pile of animal bones, a live copperhead snake, a sealed metal cylinder, car batteries, a bathing suit, mattresses, a box spring, propane tanks, a brass headboard, a weight bench, a partial stove, crabnets, found at Deer Island were remnants of eight pop-up tents, an electric water cooler/heater, a giant tire, the back of a plasma TV, eight 55-gallon drums, an orange traffic can, a plastic trellis, lots of foam products, a wooden orange channel marker; and a set of minivan seats were found at Bayou Heron in Jackson County.

In Long Beach there were two entanglements reported, a pelican and a catfish. Both were dead and entangled in fishing line. There was a live jellyfish entangled in a six-pack ring reported at the Courthouse Pier site in Gulfport, which was released. The most peculiar item reported was a foosball table in pieces found west of Long Beach Harbor. Although rough seas and a small craft advisory prevented divers and the 350 boaters who had signed up to clean the barrier islands from participating on cleanup day, about 65 of those volunteers assisted in land-based cleanup efforts, including the DMR Fisheries Dive Team, who on Thursday cleaned a mile of Horn Island. Two volunteers ventured out to clean a mile of Cat Island, picking up 8 bags of trash.

During the ICC, 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 ICC about 390,881 volunteers worldwide removed debris from more than 17,000 miles of shoreline spanning 104 different nations. They collected 6.8 million pounds of debris.

"Trash doesn't fall from the sky it falls from our hands," said Lauren Thompson, state coordinator of the Mississippi Coastal Cleanup and public relations director for the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources. "Every year during the Mississippi Coastal Cleanup about 60 percent of the marine debris that volunteers collect comes from shoreline and recreational activities like festivals, beach picnics and general littering."

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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 and Rob Heffner, owners of the High Cotton Grill, treated more than 800 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 Courthouse Pier parking area in Gulfport. Sysco, Gulf Coast Produce, Sara Lee and Coast Coca-Cola Bottling Co. also provided food and drink for the event. All volunteers filling out a data card identifying the types of debris collected received a meal ticket for the free lunch at the Courthouse Pier parking area and an eco-friendly cooler tote from Chevron Pascagoula Refinery.

In Hancock County, the Office of Congressman Gene Taylor and the Bay St. Louis Rotary Club treated about 150 volunteers to hotdogs at a cookout held at the Washington Street Pier pavilion in Bay St. Louis while BB's Snowballs provided snowballs. In Jackson County, about 1,000 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 and Chevron Pascagoula Refinery. Volunteers who cleaned the beach and filled out data cards, documenting what litters our shores and waterways, received a green cooler tote, compliments of Chevron Pascagoula Refinery.

“This year, the Mississippi Coastal Cleanup grew in number of sites cleaned, number of volunteers and number of community sponsors. Close to 4,000 volunteers cared enough about their coastal resources to dedicate their Saturday morning to cleaning the shoreline, islands and marine waters of South Mississippi,” Thompson said. “This was truly a coastwide community effort and on behalf of the Department of Marine Resources, I would like to thank the Mississippi Marine Debris Task Force, our sponsors, and the cleanup coordinators, zone captains, and volunteers who came out and supported this educational and prevention effort on behalf of our marine environment.”

The Mississippi Coastal Cleanup is made possible by the Mississippi Marine Debris Task Force, which includes representatives from Ashman & Son Construction; Chevron Pascagoula Refinery; City of Gulfport; City of Biloxi; City of Moss Point; City of Ocean Springs; City of Pascagoula; Coastal Rivers; DMR Marine Patrol; Eco-Tours of South Mississippi; Grand Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve; Gulf Islands National Seashore; 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; Heritage Trails Partnership; Jackson County Board of Supervisors; Jackson County Chamber of Commerce; Jackson County Solid Waste Department; 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 Department of Rehabilitation Services; Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College; Mississippi State University Coastal Research & Extension Center; Naval Construction Battalion Center; NOAA Fisheries; North Gulfport Community Land Trust; Office of Congressman Gene Taylor; Rotary International District 6840; Sea Coast Echo; University of Southern Mississippi-Gulf Coast Research Laboratory; Waste Management.

This year's sponsors are as follows:

SEA TURTLE (\$5000+): Chevron Pascagoula Refinery; High Cotton Grill; Matthews Brothers, Inc.; Mississippi Department of Marine Resources

SHARK (\$2500-\$4999): Beverage Association of Mississippi; Delta Sanitation of Mississippi, LLC; J.E. Borries, Inc.; Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality; Mississippi Media; Ocean Conservancy; Ship Island Excursions; The Shed Barbeque & Blues Joint; The Sun Herald; Waste Management

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DOLPHIN (\$1200-\$2499): Allen Beverages, Inc.; Best Gloves Co.; Coast Coca-Cola Bottling Co., Inc.; Coca-Cola Bottling Co., Consolidated; Domino's Pizza; Fisher Safety; Gulf Coast Produce; Kimberly-Clark Corporation, Professional Division; Lamar Advertising-Mississippi Gulf Coast; Microflex; Milner Rental Center; Sysco Foods

COBIA (\$500-\$1199): American Canoe Association; Biloxi-D'Iberville Press; Hancock Medical; Island View Casino Resort; K99FM, Magic 93.7, 92.5 The Beat and News Radio 104.9; Keep Mississippi Beautiful; Knight Abbey Printing & Direct Mail; L.L. Bean; Mississippi Department of Transportation; Sea Coast Echo; WLOX-TV 13

MULLET (\$100-\$499): Academy Sports + Outdoors; Ashman & Son Construction; BB's Bar-B-Que & Snak Shak; Coast Electric; Coastal Rivers; Desporte's Biloxi Paper Company; D'Iberville Walmart; The Dive Shop; Dixie White House Nursing Home; The Ocean Springs Gazette; Ocean Springs Walmart; Pascagoula Walmart; Waveland Walmart

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

Harrison County: 1,180 volunteers collected 1,070 bags of trash

•Keegan Bayou	33 volunteers and 70bags
•Deer Island	42 volunteers and 51 bags
•Popp's Ferry Bridge Boat Launch	24 volunteers and 24 bags
•Fountain Pier	56 volunteers and 40 bags
•Biloxi Small Craft Harbor	18 volunteers and 26 bags
•Forrest Avenue Pier	10 volunteers and 12 bags
•Gulfport Lake	9 volunteers and 15 bags
•Kremer Landing	13 volunteers and 12 bags
•James Hill Park	20 volunteers and 14 bags
•Long Beach Harbor at Cleveland Ave.	113 volunteers and 59 bags
•Pass Christian Harbor at Market St.	53 volunteers and 62 bags
•Lower Turkey Creek	31 volunteers and 60 bags
•Hiller Park	95 volunteers and 80 bags
•Courthouse Road	259 volunteers and 172 bags
•Rodenberg Ave.	15 volunteers and 10 bags
•Porter Ave. (Biloxi Lighthouse)	60 volunteers and 120 bags
•Edgewater Mall-Biloxi Beach	195 volunteers and 75 bags
•D'Iberville Boat Launch	44 volunteers and 28 bags
•Preservation Oaks Park	90 volunteers and 140 bags
•Tuxachanie	Cleanup scheduled for next week.

Hancock County: 323 volunteers collected 361 bags of trash

•McLeod Park/Jourdan River	Cleanup scheduled for next week.
•Jourdan River Shores	2 volunteers and 7 bags
•Beach Blvd., Hwy. 90 to Bookter St.	80 volunteers and 40 bags
•Beach Blvd., Bookter St. to Bay Oaks Dr.	Awaiting report
•Beach Blvd., Bay Oaks Drive to Coleman Ave., Waveland	Awaiting report
•Beach Blvd., Coleman Ave. to Buccaneer State Park	Awaiting report
•Beach Blvd., Buccaneer State Park to Pointset Ave.	16 volunteers and 15 bags
•Beach Blvd., Jourdan River to Dunbar Ave.	Awaiting report
•Dunbar Ave. from Beach Blvd. to Hwy.90	15 volunteers and 30 bags
•Bayou La Croix & Canals	15 volunteers and 35 bags
•Diamondhead Community	11 volunteers and 20 bags
•Kiln Community	17 volunteers and 39 bags
•Bay Marina/Washington Street	14 volunteers and 24 bags

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- Garden Isles/Jourdan River 11 volunteers and 31 bags
- Bayou Caddy Public Boat Launch Awaiting report
- Pearlington Awaiting report
- Lakeshore – Pointset to Bayou Caddy 5 volunteers and 14 bags

Jackson County: 2,261 volunteers collected 1,668 bags of trash

Awaiting individual results by site for Jackson County. The following is a list of sites cleaned.

- Pollock Ferry Landing
- Belle Fontaine Beach
- Davis Bayou (GINS)
- East Beach
- Fort Bayou Boat Launch
- Front Beach/Ocean Springs Harbor
- Graveline Bayou Pier & Boat Launch
- Gulf Park Estates Public Pier
- Gautier City Park
- Graveline Road/Shepard State Park
- Pine Island (West Pascagoula River)
- Indian Point/Sioux Bayou
- West Pascagoula River Bridge
- Hwy 63 Boat Ramp
- I-10 Boat Launch
- The Riverfront (Moss Point)
- Old Spanish Fort
- Pascagoula Beach
- The River Park
- Grand Bay NERR (Bayou Heron)
- Singing River Island
- Bluff Creek
- Pascagoula Causeway
- Round Island
- Bellview St. Boat Launch
- I.G. Levy Park

Barrier Islands: * 7 volunteers collected 21 bags of trash

- Cat Island 2 volunteers and 8 bags
- Horn Island 5 volunteers and 13 bags
- West Ship Island *
- East Ship Island *
- Petit Bois *
- Sand Island *

**(#volunteers and #bags for Barrier Islands are preliminary due to the small craft advisory; many boaters said they plan to clean up the barrier islands at a later date while others participated on land.)*

PHOTO CAPTIONS

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#1 Volunteer Antonia Mozader, age 8, of Gulfport, fills out a data card documenting the types and quantity of trash she and her mom, Jennie Mozader, collected while cleaning the beach near Courthouse Pier during the 21st annual Mississippi Coastal Cleanup held Oct. 17 at more than 70 sites along the Mississippi Gulf Coast. Among the finds they reported on was a live jellyfish entangled in a plastic six-pack ring, which Jennie Mozader was able to untangle and release. (Photo courtesy of Mississippi Department of Marine Resources)



**#2 A volunteer cleans the marsh at South Beach Blvd. by the Bay-Waveland Yacht Club.
Photo credit: Shannon Williams**



**#3 A group of volunteers search the marsh in Ocean Springs for debris.
(Photo courtesy of Mississippi Department of Marine Resources)**



#4 Members of the Department of Marine Resources Fisheries Dive Team display about 200 pounds of trash they picked up while cleaning Horn Island. (Photo courtesy of Mississippi Department of Marine Resources)