

Coastal Cleanup nets 71 tons of trash



On Oct. 18, boaters and land-based volunteers scoured Mississippi's beaches, islands and waterways picking up marine debris at 55 designated cleanup sites during the 20th 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 2,295 volunteers picked up 2,757 bags of trash along 132 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 142,235 pounds of trash—that's more than 71 tons of marine debris—including six 30-yard dumpsters, a 2-ton trailer and five large rubbish trucks full of marine debris too large to fit in trash bags, such as the car door and chair at Hiller Park. Other items collected were: a vacuum, television, abandoned houseboat, a toilet tank, tires, lawn mower, shards of Native American pottery, two tents, a boat door, thousands of cigarette butts, an unused military silhouette target, a tennis shoe with oysters growing on it, a plastic children's swimming pool and two \$20 bills.

There was a cat entangled in fishing line reported at Davis Bayou in Ocean Springs that was released apparently unharmed. In addition, there were at least 10 reported animal entanglements, including four blue crabs in a derelict trap, a snake in netting, two birds, two turtles and a fish. The most peculiar item reported was a Styrofoam leg found at the beach near Rodenberg Avenue in Biloxi. Although rough seas and a small craft advisory prevented many of the 400 boaters signed up to clean the Barrier Islands from participating on cleanup day, more than 70 volunteers cleaned West Ship and East Ship islands, including the DMR Fisheries Dive Team, who cleaned East Ship and conducted an underwater cleanup of the pier at West Ship Island on Oct. 17.

The Mississippi Coastal Cleanup, which was originally scheduled for the third Saturday in September in conjunction with the International Coastal Cleanup (ICC), was postponed to Oct. 18 due to Hurricanes Gustav and Ike. 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 the 2007 ICC, about 378,000 volunteers worldwide removed debris from more than 33,000 miles of shoreline spanning 76 different nations. They collected 6 million pounds of debris.

About 60 percent of the debris found during the 2007 Mississippi Coastal Cleanup came from shoreline and recreational activities such as beach picnics, festivals, sporting events, and general littering. The source of most debris is human activity.

"Man-made debris in our marine waters poses serious threats to marine wildlife, navigation and our communities," said Lauren Thompson, state coordinator of the Mississippi Coastal Cleanup and public relations director for DMR. "Most of the trash in our waterways in Mississippi and worldwide comes from land-based activities."

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 affect 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 international legislation and agreements.

After the Mississippi cleanup, Bob Taylor and Rob Heffner, owners of High Cotton Grill, and staff joined forces with The Grate Deli & Grille, Nezaty's Cafe, Blow Fly Inn, Tug's Wharf, Lil Ray's and Reddick's Cafe to serve a free lunch of grilled chicken sandwiches, hamburgers, chips, fruit and cold drinks to more than 900 volunteers between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. at Hiller Park in Biloxi. Sysco, Gulf Coast Produce and Coast Coca-Cola Bottling Co. also provided food and drink for the event. All volunteers filling out a Data Card received a meal ticket for the free lunch at Hiller Park and an eco-friendly tote bag from Chevron Pascagoula Refinery.

In Hancock County, the Office of Congressman Gene Taylor and the Bay St. Louis Rotary Club treated volunteers to a cookout held at the Washington Street Pier pavilion in Bay St. Louis, while BB's Snowballs provided snowballs. In Jackson County, about 500 volunteers received a free barbecue lunch, sides and drinks at the Estuarine Education Center at Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College in Gautier courtesy of Chevron Pascagoula Refinery and The Shed Barbeque & Blues Joint.

"More than 2,000 volunteers donated their time on a Saturday morning to come out and clean up the shoreline, islands and marine waters of South Mississippi, sharing in a worldwide effort to make our oceans and waterways safer and healthier for people and wildlife, and free from the hazards of marine debris," Thompson said. "This was a massive team effort and its success was due to the hard work of the Department of Marine Resources staff, Mississippi Marine Debris Task Force members, cleanup coordinators, zone captains, volunteers and the generosity of our sponsors."

[Visit mscoastalcleanup.org](http://mscoastalcleanup.org)

2008 STATISTICS

2,295 volunteers
142,235 pounds of debris
132 miles cleaned
2,757 bags filled
55 designated sites

Harrison County

963 volunteers
 1,256 bags of trash
 17 sites

Hancock County

207 volunteers
 358 bags of trash
 12 sites

Jackson County

1,056 volunteers
 1,076 bags of trash
 21 sites

Barrier Islands

69 volunteers
 67 bags of trash
 5 sites

Peculiar Items Found

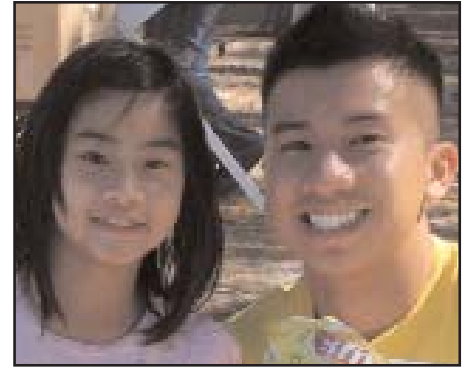
Two \$20 bills
 Styrofoam leg
 Shards of Native American pottery
 Television
 Unused military silhouette target



Avery Reif shows a model boat to Anthony Gruber with CNATTU Naval technical training unit at Keesler. Avery found the boat while cleaning up the beach near Rodenberg Avenue in Biloxi.



Bay St. Louis resident Pat Davis manages a hardworking crew in front of Old Town. Photo credit: Ellis Anderson



Volunteers Phuong Pham and Mark Tran enjoy a free lunch at Hiller Park in Biloxi courtesy of Coast Flavors.

2008 SPONSORS

SEA TURTLE (\$5,000+)

Chevron Pascagoula Refinery; High Cotton Grill; Mississippi Department of Marine Resources

SHARK (\$2,500-\$4,999)

Beverage Association of Mississippi; Delta Sanitation of Mississippi, LLC; Hancock County Board of Supervisors; Matthews Brothers Inc., Ocean Conservancy; Ship Island Excursions; The Sun Herald; Waste Management

DOLPHIN (\$1,200-\$2,499)

Allen Beverages, Inc.; Coast Coca-Cola Bottling Co., Inc.; Coca-Cola Bottling Co., Consolidated; Domino's Pizza; Fisher Safety; Kimberly-Clark Corporation, Professional Division; Lamar Advertising of South Mississippi; Milner Rental Center; Mississippi Media; The Shed Barbeque & Blues Joint

COBIA (\$500-\$1,199)

Biloxi-D'Iberville Press; City of Biloxi; Island View Casino Resort; K99FM, Magic 93.7, 92.5 The Beat and News Radio 104.9; Mississippi Department of Transportation; Sam's Club; Sea Coast Echo; Sorg Printing; WLOX-TV 13

MULLET (\$100-\$499)

BB's Bar-B-Que & Snak Shak; Cellular South; Coast Electric; Desporte's Biloxi Paper Company; The Dive Shop; Hancock Medical Center

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 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; Gulfport Police Department; Hancock County Chamber of Commerce; Hard Rock Cafe; Harrison County Beautification; Harrison County Board of Supervisors; Harrison County Sand Beach Department; Harrison County Sheriff's Department; Jackson County Chamber of Commerce; Jackson County Solid Waste Department; Keep Mississippi Beautiful; Keesler Air Force Base; Mississippi Air National Guard CRTC-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; Ocean Springs Chamber of Commerce; Office of Congressman Gene Taylor; Office of the Mississippi Secretary of State; Rotary International District 6840; Sea Coast Echo; U.S. Coast Guard; Waste Management.