



2003  
Mississippi Marine Debris  
Task Force

BFI  
Chevron Pascagoula Refinery  
Disposal Inc.  
Grand Bay National Estuarine Research  
Reserve  
Gulf Islands National Seashore  
Hancock County Chamber of Commerce  
Hancock Insurance  
Harrison County Sand Beach Department  
Jackson County Solid Waste  
Keesler Air Force Base  
Mississippi Air National Guard

Mississippi-Alabama Sea Grant Consortium  
Mississippi Department of Marine Resources  
Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College  
Mississippi State University Coastal  
Research & Extension Center  
National Marine Fisheries Service  
Naval Construction Battalion Center  
Naval Station Pascagoula  
Office of Congressman Gene Taylor  
Office of the Mississippi Secretary of State  
Outback Steakhouse  
Sea Coast Echo



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## ***Mississippi Ranks 9th in U.S. for Participation in 2002 Coastal Cleanup***

According to results released recently by The Ocean Conservancy in Washington, D.C., of the 50 U.S. states and territories taking part in the 2002 International Coastal Cleanup—the world's largest single-day cleanup effort on behalf of the marine environment—Mississippi was in the top 10 for number of volunteers participating in the annual event. Officially held on Sept. 21, 2002, the 17th annual International Coastal Cleanup involved more than 391,000 volunteers from 100 countries who combed over 12,400 miles of shorelines and waterways and collected 8.22 million pounds of trash—the same weight as 37 blue whales, the Earth's largest living creature. In Mississippi, 3,477 volunteers removed 50,172 pounds of marine debris from 107 miles of beaches and waterways along the Mississippi Gulf Coast during the Mississippi Coastal Cleanup.

“Mississippians are known as some of the most giving people in the country, and that doesn't just mean we just donate money,” Governor Ronnie Musgrove said. “The contributions of time and energy are just as important, and this ranking demonstrates our commitment to maintaining the beauty of the Mississippi Gulf Coast.”

### **Recreational Activities**

Overall, shoreline and recreational activities like sports, picnics, games and going to the beach caused 53 percent of the debris found in Mississippi during the 2002 International Coastal Cleanup. Litter washed from streets and parking lots into storm drains also falls under these activities. Shoreline and recreational activities accounted for 58 percent of all the debris found worldwide.

In 2002, the 10 most frequently found items—Mississippi's “Top Ten” debris items list—comprised 82 percent of all the debris collected in Mississippi. Of those 10, the top three items—cigarettes, food wrappers and caps and lids—account for nearly half of all debris. Cigarettes were the most commonly found debris item, comprising more than one quarter of the 106,000 debris items collected in the cleanup.

Debris from cigarettes, cigars and their wrappers made up 37 percent of the items collected in Mississippi. Worldwide, smoking-related activities accounted for 40 percent of all the debris collected, with over 1.6 million cigarettes removed from our beaches and waterways.

### **Animal Entanglements**

It is estimated that worldwide more than a million birds and 100,000 marine mammals and sea turtles die each year from ingesting or getting entangled in marine debris. Sea turtles often mistake plastic bags for jellyfish, one of their favorite foods. Items from ocean/waterway

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activities, such as fishing line, fish traps, nets and lures are the most common types of entangling debris and don't always make it to land. Instead, they can remain in the water, where they pose a continual threat to wildlife and humans. Volunteers discovered 259 entangled animals worldwide during the 2002 International Coastal Cleanup. Volunteers in Mississippi reported 16 animal entanglements, including birds, crabs, fish and a stingray caught in fishing line, rope, balloon ribbon, nets, plastic sheeting and plastic bags.

"Each piece of debris that enters the ocean or waterway has the potential to harm wildlife," Lauren Thompson, Mississippi's state coordinator for the International Coastal Cleanup said. "In Mississippi, our volunteers found more than 10,000 dangerous debris items such as fishing line, plastic bags, rope, plastic tarps and six-pack holders, which made up 10 percent of the debris collected during the cleanup."

### **Trash Travels**

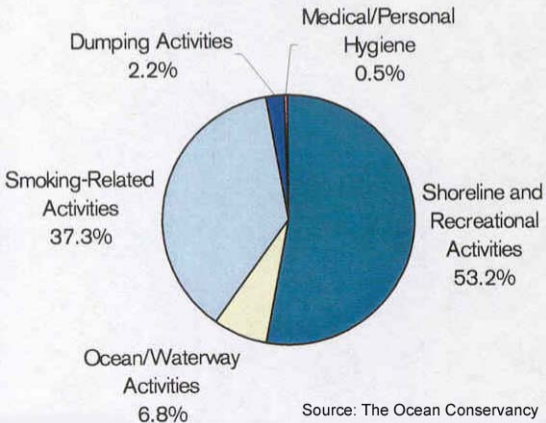
Most of the debris found during the 2002 Cleanup in Mississippi and worldwide came from land-based sources such as beach picnics and general littering. "What people don't realize is that trash travels," said Seba Sheavly, Director of the Office of Pollution Prevention and Monitoring for The Ocean Conservancy, organizer of the International Coastal Cleanup. "A piece of trash on the street gets washed into storm drains and eventually winds up in our oceans."

**For more information or to volunteer for the 2003 Mississippi Coastal Cleanup to be held Sept. 20, please call 1-877-9 CLEAN 5 or visit us online at [masgc.org/cleanup](http://masgc.org/cleanup).**

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# - Mississippi -

## Sources and Activities of Marine Debris





Mississippi Marine Debris Task Force

BFI  
 Chevron Pascagoula Refinery  
 Disposall Inc.  
 Grand Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve  
 Gulf Islands National Seashore  
 Hancock County Chamber of Commerce  
 Hancock Insurance  
 Harrison County Sand Beach Department  
 Jackson County Solid Waste  
 Keesler Air Force Base  
 Mississippi Air National Guard

Mississippi-Alabama Sea Grant Consortium  
 Mississippi Department of Marine Resources  
 Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College  
 Mississippi State University Coastal Research & Extension Center  
 National Marine Fisheries Service  
 Naval Construction Battalion Center  
 Naval Station Pascagoula  
 Office of Congressman Gene Taylor  
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 Outback Steakhouse  
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## 2002 International Coastal Cleanup Results

### "Top Ten" in Number of Volunteers – U.S.

#### Total

State	People	Pounds	Miles
1. California	46,460	863,829	1,875
2. Florida	32,497	593,857	2,413
3. North Carolina	15,145	573,945	1,206
4. New York	10,923	271,375	385
5. Texas	9,800	303,985	212
6. South Carolina	5,717	110,259	156
7. Oregon	4,482	60,460	362
8. Puerto Rico	3,832	208,192	53
<b>9. Mississippi</b>	<b>3,477</b>	<b>50,172</b>	<b>107</b>
10. Massachusetts	3,389	40,124	191

Source: The Ocean Conservancy

### "Top Ten" Debris Items - Mississippi

#### Total

Item	Amount	Percent
1. Cigarettes/Cigarette Filters	31,171	29.5%
2. Food Wrappers/Containers	10,413	9.9%
3. Caps, Lids	9,622	9.1%
4. Beverage Cans	6,076	5.8%
5. Cups, Plates, Forks, Knives, Spoons	5,577	5.3%
6. Beverage Bottles (Glass)	5,007	4.7%
7. Beverage Bottles (Plastic) 2 liters or less	4,886	4.6%
8. Cigar Tips	4,750	4.5%
9. Straws, Stirrers	4,507	4.3%
10. Bags	4,355	4.1%
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>86,364</b>	<b>81.8%</b>

Source: The Ocean Conservancy