



Shoreline Cleanup Protocol

How to Host a Successful Cleanup Event

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2018*

INTRODUCTION

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INTRODUCTION

Introduction

KEEPING IT CLEAN!

Lake Huron's sparkling blue waters and natural beauty attracts a diverse economy and numerous vacationers to its shores. An issue that is far from new is the large amount of plastic debris washing up on the beaches along the coast, casting a shadow of the problem that lays beneath the surface of the lake. Plastic pollution can present issues of entanglement, asphyxiation, and ingestion for wildlife, in addition to health risks for people caused by the accumulation of persistent organic toxins like DDT which are attracted to plastic compounds in water.

By hosting a community beach cleanup, the public is engaged in the major pollution threats faced by Lake Huron. Interest, concern and disgust are all expressed by the participants at the cleanups, especially when using the number of collected cigarette butts as a metric of success. It's important to properly execute a shoreline cleanup to ensure the future commitment of volunteers and dedicated beach goers. These guidelines will help the Coastal Centre meet its minimum of ten Shoreline Cleanups each year and reflect the priorities of coastal health. This document will go over how to organize a beach cleanup, what materials you will need on the day of the cleanup, recommendations on how to organize your volunteers based on number of participants and general best practices that have been useful in prior cleanups with the Coastal Centre.

GREAT CANADIAN SHORELINE CLEANUP

The Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup is an excellent way to measure collected waste from beach cleanups. Why is that important? "Because what is not measured, is not managed". By collecting usable data from these cleanups, organizations can have a better understanding of the major sources of beach litter and therefore, attempt to reduce the waste at its source. Through an understanding that a high proportion of beach litter is cigarette butts or other tobacco products, programs like "Butt Free Beach" were created to directly reduce or eliminate pollutants through educational signage and strategically placed recycling receptacles.

In the past, not all partnering organizations have agreed to the process of the Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup. The efforts of this process are more time consuming and tedious, and concerns that the focus of cleaning the beach is shifted to the reporting process and ultimately undermining the real purpose of why the beach cleanup was scheduled in the first place. Although beach cleanups do not have to be completed under the Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup, there will be tips on how to effectively manage volunteers to make the entire process run smoothly.

To register a cleanup, go to www.shorelinecleanup.ca. Here, you can fill in the details of the cleanup, send invitations to partners and participants and download data sheets and waivers for your cleanup. This will also be where you input the collected data after the cleanup.

SCHEDULING THE CLEANUP

Scheduling the Cleanup

IDENTIFY PARTNERS

Creating partnerships with local organizations and grassroots groups can help create a more successful shoreline cleanup. Not only will the additional people increase participation at cleanup events, but the added advantage of having numerous groups advertising for an event can help increase participant numbers.

Past cleanup efforts have partnered with organizations like Zehrs, who have generously provided participants with a complementary barbecue lunch. Other options for sponsors to get involved with shoreline cleanups include offering discounts at their establishments or contributing financial support to assist with incentives for participants on the day of the event.

Any partners or sponsors for the event should be identified in flyers, social media posts or media releases to recognize their contribution and ensure a good relation with them for future initiatives.

PICK A DATE

Some partnering organizations are interested planning a cleanup for a specific date, whereas others have no limitations. Planning cleanups with a fixed date first can be more beneficial in figuring out where and when to plan additional cleanups. Groups like Blue Bayfield are generally interested in hosting a cleanup event in September for example.

Try not to schedule too many cleanups in the same geographic areas. If multiple partners from the same area are wanting to organize a cleanup on the same weekend, offer a suggestion for combining the cleanups or moving it to another date in the season to maximize exposure for them and impact from your participants.

REGISTER THE CLEANUP

Any cleanups that are using the Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup protocol can be registered at www.shorelinecleanup.ca. When working with a network of volunteers and sponsors/partners, there is an option for sending them an invite through the event. This can help with advertising by being promoted on social media!

ARRANGE FOR WASTE / RECYCLING REMOVAL

Beach cleanups can collect a lot of garbage and recycling. That's sort of the point. It's just as important to make sure that collected waste is properly disposed of after cleanups. Mismanagement of waste is often a culprit for beaches with high amounts of litter, so making sure a cleanup doesn't contribute to that issue is key. Contact the Municipality's Parks Department to organize a designated "Waste Drop-Off" zone and make sure that an appropriate pick up time is scheduled.

SCHEDULING THE CLEANUP

WASHROOM AND WATER REQUIREMENTS

Making sure that participants have access to washrooms and water to wash their hands is important. Communication with the Town and bringing them into the organization of the cleanup can insure that these facilities are open and in place at the time of the cleanup. Keep in mind that water access might be limited for spring and fall shoreline cleanups, so additional facilities (ie. Port a Potty's) may need to be rented for larger events.

ADVERTISE, ADVERTISE, ADVERTISE!

Advertising is key to any beach cleanup. Create flyers to put up in local coffee shops and municipal buildings, post on social media, tag any partners or groups of interest. Anything you can do to get attention for the beach cleanup. Creating an infographic post for the website to post on the Events section is a good start! Local radio stations will also advertise the event closer to the date. Getting the word out there about the event can help make it extremely successful.

TIP: Let participants know ahead of time that they can download the cleanup data sheet on their mobile device!

THE DAY OF THE CLEANUP

The Day of the Cleanup

PRINT WAIVERS AND DATA SHEETS

Each cleanup will have a DIFFERENT Participant Waiver that is downloadable from the Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup website. To access it, log in as an admin, and select the Shoreline Cleanup that you want to download the forms from. There will be a section with required documentation and forms that includes the waivers and the data cleanup cards. Make sure you have enough for the expected number of participants!

SET UP A VOLUNTEER SIGN IN STATION

A volunteer station can help streamline volunteers and participants to a central meet up location. Set up an event shelter with a table and some chairs and set out waivers for participants to sign. This can also be where a water refill station, data cards and information sheets on beach litter can be stationed.

COORDINATE BEACH LIASONS AND SECTION OFF THE BEACH

When expecting a beach cleanup to have a large number of participants, its best to organize “Team Leaders” to be responsible for sections of the beach. Team leaders can be given a brightly coloured t-shirt or a reflective vest to be visible to volunteers. Pylons can be used to section off the beach and a set number of volunteers can be designated to each section (ie. 10 volunteers in section A). This keep clean ups from being chaotic and can make sorting efforts easier at the end of the day

WELCOME VOLUNTEERS

Start off the day with a positive and cheerful message, no matter the weather! Welcome all of the participants and volunteers to the beach cleanup and thank them for coming out. Explain how to use the data sheets and the importance of the Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup data collection for future projects. Go over the agenda for the day and the health and safety rules before sending everyone on their way or to their designated area on the beach. Make it clear to participants that they are only cleaning up man-made garbage, and should leave feathers, sticks, and dead animals behind. Have each volunteer sign the waiver, and provide them with gloves, a bag or bucket, a data card, and pencil.

WEIGH GARBAGE

At the end of the cleanup, all collected garbage and waste can be weighed using a digital hanging scale. This number can be written down and inputted into the Shoreline Cleanup data entry on the website after the cleanup has been completed.

THE DAY OF THE CLEANUP

OPTIONAL: SORTING STATION

Having a sorting station is an excellent way to utilize volunteers and efficiently sort the collected waste into recyclables, cigarette butts (for Terra Cycle) and waste. Make sure you have extra gloves on hand and the proper sorting receptacles ahead of time.

TAKE A GROUP PHOTO

There's nothing better than ending a great cleanup with a smile! All participants that have signed the waiver and photo release can crowd around their piles of garbage with pride to get a group photo of their efforts. Don't forget to add it to the website!

TIPS AND TRICKS

A few lessons that have been discovered during the years of coastal cleanups at the Coastal Centre:

1. Don't give every participant a garbage bag. Many bags come back partially full, which in itself is wasteful. Instead, pair up or create groups of participants to share one bag. Even better, bring buckets or bins to minimize plastic pollution.
2. Practice what you preach! If you show up to a beach cleanup with a disposable coffee cup, and then talk to the public about how coffee cups are one of the top waste products found on beaches, you're bound to get a few weird looks.
3. Encourage any sponsors of the events to consider a waste-free alternative meal. Many sponsors will bring bottled water or juice boxes to beach cleanup events, generating more waste on the beach. Options like paper plates and cups are more environmentally friendly options than plastic or Styrofoam.

SHORELINE CLEANUP CHECKLIST

Shoreline Cleanup Checklist

- Data Cards
- Waivers
- Clipboards
- Pens
- Gloves
- Garbage/Recycling Bags
- Sharps Container
- Digital Hanging Scale
- Informational Pamphlets
- Folding Table and Chairs
- Event Shelter

AFTER THE CLEANUP

After the Cleanup

ENTER CLEANUP DATA

Enter collected data under your cleanup tab on www.shorelinecleanup.ca. Tallying up the data cards prior to inputting the data will save you some time! Make sure to include the data card information and the weight of the garbage - this is important for the final year summary.

SHARE SUCCESS

Show off your success by posting pictures and results on Facebook, Instagram, newsletters and news outlets that would be interested in picking up the story. Successful cleanups, especially the really big ones, help garner attention from additional sponsors willing to get involved in future clean up events.

THANK SPONSORS, PARTNERS AND VOLUNTEERS

Let everyone know how appreciated their effort is and how they have made an impact. Thank-you cards should be sent to any major sponsors or partners of the event.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Contact Information

Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup

shorelinecleanup@vanaqua.org

Conservation Authorities

Saugeen Valley Conservation Authority

Maitland Valley Conservation Authority

Grey Sauble Conservation Authority

Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority

Towns and Municipalities

City of Sarnia

Municipality of Lambton Shores

Town of Goderich

Lake Huron Centre for Coastal Conservation

Coastalcentre@lakehuron.ca

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The Lake Huron Centre for Coastal Conservation