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COASTSWEEP: The Massachusetts Coastal Cleanup Program

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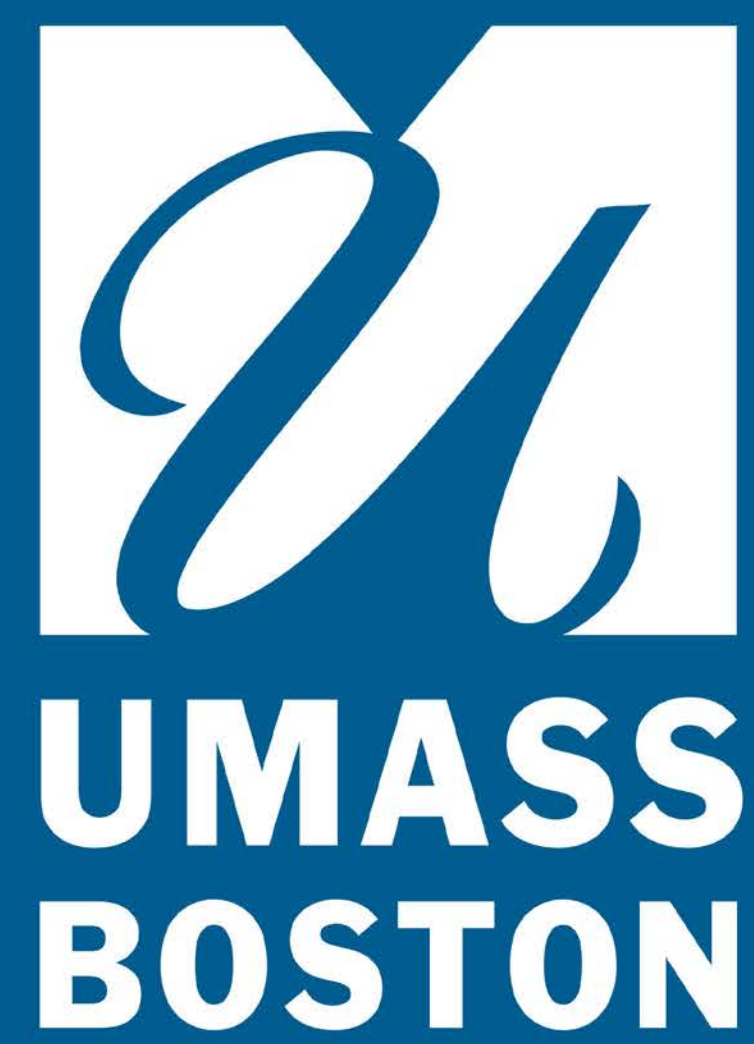


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COASTSWEEP: The Massachusetts Coastal Cleanup Program

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Summary/Abstract

Volunteers in communities throughout Massachusetts turn out in large numbers each September and October for COASTSWEEP, the statewide coastal cleanup program sponsored by the Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management (CZM) and coordinated by the Urban Harbors Institute (UHI) University of Massachusetts Boston.

COASTSWEEP is part of the International Coastal Cleanup (ICC) organized by Ocean Conservancy in Washington, DC. Through the efforts of the ICC, volunteers from all over the world collect marine debris and record information about the trash they collect. This information is then analyzed and used to identify sources of debris and to develop education and policy initiatives to help reduce marine debris globally.



International Coastal Cleanup 2012 Data Release - Volunteers at the ICC in South Africa, 2011. Photo: Thomene Dilley

Goals and Objectives

COASTSWEEP Promotes a cleaner environment through education and community service. The program's goals include:

- Educating people about marine debris (the sources, impacts, and solutions)
- Encouraging people to participate in COASTSWEEP events
- Removing marine debris from the environment
- Contributing to the ICC's efforts to reduce marine debris globally



Top Ten Items Found During COASTSWEEP 2012 Cleanups

Item(s)	# Found
1. Cigarettes/butts	37,247
2. Food Wrapper/Containers	13,741
3. Caps/Lids	11,274
4. Plastic Bags	5,972
5. Straws/Stirrers	4,545
6. Rope	4,466
7. Beverage Plastic Bottles	4,206
8. Beverage Glass Bottles	3,199
9. Cups, Plates, Plastic Utensils	3,109
10. Beverage Cans	2,897

COASTSWEEP Volunteers: Making a Difference, Changing the World

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has." –Margret Meade

Approaches and Methods

COASTSWEEP partners with community volunteers who offer to serve as coordinators for specific events. Coordinators work with COASTSWEEP to:

- Identify the cleanup site(s)
- Recruit volunteers
- Secure permission from beach managers
- Notify the press; and
- Collect data from volunteers

In return, COASTSWEEP provides Coordinators with:

- Cleanup supplies (bags, gloves, safety instructions, data cards, pencils)
- Educational information about marine debris
- Event publicity on the COASTSWEEP Webpage, FaceBook Page, and Twitter



Results/Impacts

2012 marked the 25th Anniversary of COASTSWEEP, and more than 40 Massachusetts towns hosted 150+ cleanups from Plum Island to Provincetown! This year alone, 2,700 volunteers removed and recorded the details of 14,620 pounds of marine debris from 145 miles of coastline. Since 2003, nearly 25,000 volunteers have participated and removed more than 234,000 pounds of debris which would have otherwise ended up in our oceans. The data from cleanups is used to:



- Deepen the understanding of marine debris sources and impacts
- Build a social movement to demand Trash Free Seas
- Engage industry to develop solutions
- Promote policy reform

COASTSWEEP continues to advance the University's commitment volunteerism and the environment throughout Massachusetts.

For More Information

Visit www.coastswEEP.umb.edu to learn more about Marine Debris and COASTSWEEP. To learn more about the global effort to end marine debris please visit www.oceanconservancy.org/our-work/marine-debris