



# 2004 International Coastal Cleanup

*Summary Report  
United States*

The Ocean Conservancy  
Office of Pollution Prevention and Monitoring  
1432 N Great Neck Rd, Suite 103  
Virginia Beach, VA 23454 USA

## THE INTERNATIONAL COASTAL CLEANUP

*The International Coastal Cleanup engages people to remove trash and debris from the world's beaches and waterways, to identify the sources of debris, and to change the behaviors that cause pollution.*

From plastic pieces littering the shores of remote islands to furnishings and car parts clogging rivers and streams to fishing nets and line smothering and entangling coral reefs, marine debris is one of the most insidious problems facing our oceans today. Virtually no shoreline or beach on earth is free from trash. And the scene looks much the same underwater, where the ocean bottom becomes a veritable trash can for discarded goods.

The truth is, every piece of trash has the chance of becoming marine debris. And once it does, it can stay that way for weeks, months, and even years, affecting ocean life and habitats for miles. That's because today's world relies heavily on synthetic materials—such as beverage bottles, cigarette butts, and fishing line—that are durable and highly buoyant. Once this debris enters oceans and waterways, it degrades slowly and can travel thousands of miles away from its point of origin. These properties make marine debris one of the most difficult ocean problems to address.

Not that people aren't trying: for the 19<sup>th</sup> year, volunteers across the globe joined together on September 18, 2004 to remove debris from the world's oceans, streams, and waterways as part of the International Coastal Cleanup (ICC).

Today, the ICC is held around every major body of water in the world. But the Cleanup isn't just about pollution cleanup; it's also about pollution prevention. The ICC educates and empowers people to take action and become part of the solution. In addition to collecting and removing debris, volunteers record the types of debris they pick up. The Ocean Conservancy compiles and analyzes this information each year to

### LAWS AND TREATIES

**International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL 73/78):** This law provides a comprehensive approach when dealing with ocean dumping by creating international guidelines to prevent ship pollution. MARPOL (enforced by the International Maritime Organization [www.imo.org](http://www.imo.org)) has six annexes covering oil discharge, hazardous liquid control, hazardous material transport, sewage discharge, plastic and garbage disposal, and air pollution. As of March 2005, 119 countries have ratified Annex V, which controls the disposal of plastics and garbage into the oceans.

**Marine Plastic Pollution Research and Control Act (MPPRCA):** To implement Annex V of MARPOL, each individual country must develop its own national implementation legislation. The U.S. Congress created the MPPRCA to implement Annex V in the United States. Under MPPRCA, it is illegal to throw plastic trash off any vessel within the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone (within 200 nautical miles of the U.S. shore). It is also illegal to throw any other garbage overboard while navigating U.S. waters (including inland waters) or within three miles of shore.

**Clean Water Act:** This act established pollution discharge regulations for U.S. waters, set water quality standards, and gave the country's Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) authority over pollution control programs. ([www.epa.gov/region5/water/cwa.htm](http://www.epa.gov/region5/water/cwa.htm))

**Beaches Environmental Assessment and Coastal Health Act of 2000 (B.E.A.C.H. Act):** This act amended the Clean Water Act, requiring adoption of minimum health-based water quality criteria, comprehensive water testing, and notification of the public when water contamination levels are unsafe. ([www.epa.gov/waterscience/beaches/act.html](http://www.epa.gov/waterscience/beaches/act.html))

**Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA):** This act works to preserve, protect, develop, restore, and enhance the United States' coastal zone resources. ([www.ocrms.nos.noaa.gov](http://www.ocrms.nos.noaa.gov))

identify the activities and general sources causing the debris. The final information is then used to educate the public, business, industry, and government officials about the marine debris problem.

### **THE 2004 ICC: A GLOBAL PHENOMENON**

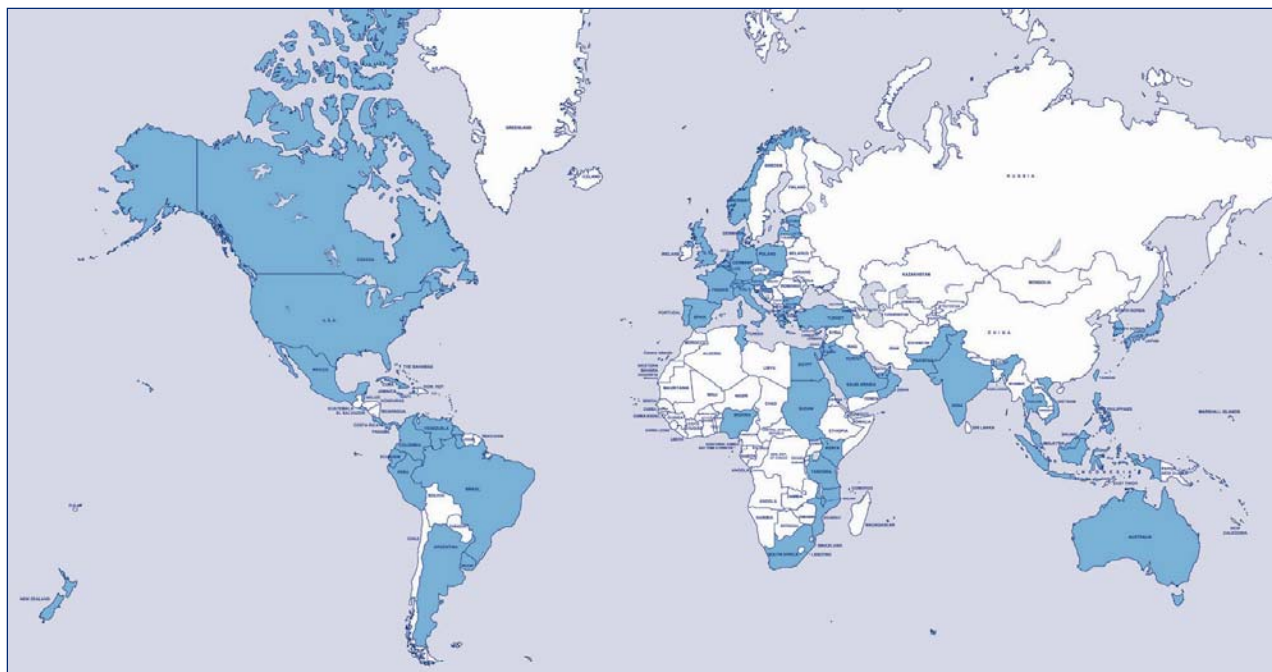
In 2004, volunteers from the United States were joined by people from 87 other countries in cleaning up debris from our beaches, rivers, and lakes. Worldwide, more than 305,000 people removed over 7.7 million pounds of debris from more than 11,000 miles of shoreline. More than 6,600 divers participated in underwater cleanups, gathering over 155,000 pounds of debris from 382 miles of riverbed and seafloor.

The 2004 Cleanup—held on September 18, 2004—saw growth in several areas. Five new countries—Brunei, Malawi, Samoa, Sudan, and Tunisia—joined in the cleanup efforts. Volunteer participation also increased in several countries. In India, 20,160 people volunteered



for the ICC—an increase of 9,044 volunteers from last year. Nigeria more than quadrupled its volunteer participation, going from 1,632 volunteers in 2003 to 7,319 in 2004. In the United States, Georgia's cleanup efforts expanded to include "Rivers Alive" activities, increasing statewide participation to 22,198 volunteers.

### **2004 International Coastal Cleanup – Worldwide Participation**



### 2004 ICC: United States

During the 2004 ICC in the United States, 158,885 volunteers came out to clean-up shorelines and waterways. Volunteers covered 8,229 miles, picking up 3,362,510 debris items that weighed 3,758,552 pounds. Among ICC participants in the United States were 1,614 divers, who removed 59,360 pounds of debris from below the water's surface. In total 17,351 debris items were retrieved from 77 miles of underwater area.

*In United States, cigarettes, food wrappers, and caps and lids accounted for nearly half of all the debris items collected.*

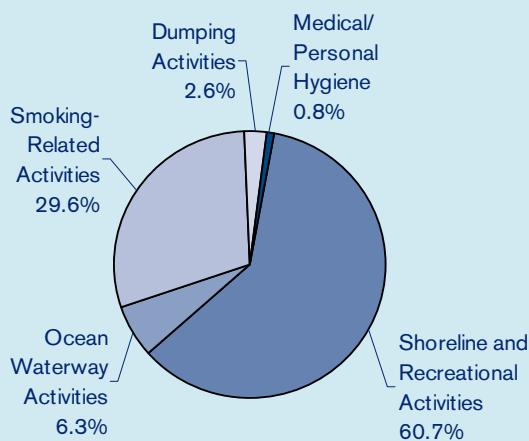
Overall, 61 percent of the debris found in the United States originated from land-based recreational activities such as picnics, festivals, sports, and days at the beach. Litter washed from streets, parking lots, and storm drains also contributed to this category of debris. Worldwide, shoreline and recreational activities accounted for 61 percent of the debris collected.

Smoking-related activities, in the form of cigarette filters, cigar tips, and tobacco packaging, accounted for 30 percent of the debris found in the United States. Globally, debris from smoking-related activities made up 21 percent of the debris collected.

Debris items from ocean and waterway activities-activities that originate offshore-accounted for six percent of the debris found in the United States. Worldwide ocean and waterway activities represented only 11 percent of the debris collected during the Cleanup.

Each year, the ICC tabulates a "Top Ten" list of the 10 most prevalent items found during the Cleanup. In addition to being some of the most abundant items, the Top Ten also account for 83 percent of all the debris found in United States. The top three items alone – cigarettes, food wrappers, and caps and lids – account for nearly half of all debris in the United States. Cigarettes, the number one item in the United States, comprised over one quarter of the 3.4 million debris items.

### United States: Marine Debris SOURCES OF DEBRIS



### "TOP TEN" DEBRIS ITEMS

Debris Items	Amount	Percent of Total
1. Cigarettes/Cigarette Filters	880,807	26.2%
2. Food Wrappers and Containers	390,995	11.6%
3. Caps/Lids	339,841	10.1%
4. Beverage Bottles (Plastic) 2 liters or less	209,075	6.2%
5. Beverage Bottles (Glass)	199,804	5.9%
6. Beverage Cans	189,132	5.6%
7. Cups/Plates/Forks/ Knives/Spoons	188,262	5.6%
8. Straws/Stirrers	158,984	4.7%
9. Bags	158,037	4.7%
10. Building Materials	59,255	1.8%
Totals:	2,774,192	82.4%



Since 1990, most of the items found during the ICC have been waste from consumable goods—from cigarettes to prepackaged food and beverage products—that are discarded after the product is used or consumed. Pinpointing these types of debris and the activities that cause them aids in the tracing of sources of debris and in the creation of educational programs to help people develop a new mind set toward littering and purchasing.

### DANGERS OF MARINE DEBRIS

Each year, volunteers find animals caught in a variety of debris. The results can be deadly: debris entanglement can cause lethal cuts, hampered mobility, suffocation, drowning and debris ingestion—when animals mistake debris for food—can lead to strangulation and starvation.

In 2004, volunteers found 186 animals entangled in debris worldwide. Discarded fishing line was responsible for nearly half of all entanglements, with rope and fishing nets closely following. Even though these items represent less than 10 percent of the total number of recorded items, debris such as fishing line, plastic bags, rope, and balloons can be more hazardous to wildlife. For a list of entangled animals found during the ICC in the United States, refer to the table in Appendix.

While marine mammal entanglements may be the most well known, they comprise only 10 percent of the total entanglements found during the 2004 ICC. Fish and invertebrates accounted for more than half of all recorded entanglements. Seabirds are also victims of debris: volunteers found 46 entangled birds, nearly a quarter of the total entangled wildlife. These findings illustrate that marine debris affects all aspects of the ocean ecosystem, even those species that spend less time in and on the water.

### United States: Dangerous Debris Items

Bags	158,037
Balloons	43,136
Crab/Lobster/Fish Traps	3,685
Fishing Line	25,981
Fishing Nets	5,359
Plastic Sheeting/Tarps	40,436
Rope	47,871
Six-Pack Holders	18,897
Strapping Bands	16,858
Syringes	2,937
<b>Total</b>	<b>363,197</b>

### WHAT'S BEING DONE?

Marine debris is such a pressing issue that the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy dedicated an entire chapter on the subject in its 2004 report, which was designed to create a blueprint for a new comprehensive national ocean policy. In it, the Commission recommended several actions the United States should take to address the problem of marine debris. The report tasked the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) to work in concert with the Environmental Protection Agency to establish a



marine debris management program that would focus on education and outreach, working with communities and industry, and improving debris source identification, monitoring, and research. The report also encouraged the agencies to coordinate and implement expanded marine debris control efforts. In addition, the Commission urged the United States work on reducing derelict fishing gear and ensuring adequate facilities for garbage disposal from ships. In its findings, the Commission cited data from the ICC on several occasions.

Interest in curbing marine debris has also sparked recent Congressional action. Senators Daniel Inouye (HI) and Ted Stevens (AK) introduced the Marine Debris Research and Reduction Act to Congress in early 2005. Among other actions, the bill creates a new marine debris program within NOAA, enhances Coast Guard efforts against marine debris, and enacts a federal marine debris information clearinghouse. While it has yet to become law, the bill has garnered support in the U.S. Department of Commerce and NOAA.

Data from the last decade indicates that the majority of people do not consider their contributions to marine debris to be significant enough to warrant a change in personal behavior. This is the real problem that the ICC seeks to solve: to increase people's awareness of their contribution to the problem and inspire change. Consequently, continued education on the harmful effects debris has on our oceans, waterways, and our own lives is vital to help alter the behaviors that cause this problem. The 2004 ICC report is one of several tools The Ocean Conservancy uses in its ongoing efforts to educate society and create solutions to this long-standing problem.

## WHAT YOU CAN DO

Marine debris is one of the most frustrating environmental threats because it is easily one of the most preventable: the solution is in our hands. Consequently, individual action to curb marine debris is just as important as legislative or political edicts, if not more so. Here are some steps you can take to do your part to reduce the amount of marine debris that enters our oceans and waterways:

- Dispose of trash properly. This helps to reduce the amount of trash that washes into waterways from storm drains.
- Reduce, reuse, and recycle.
- Look for alternative materials or avoid excessive packaging when deciding on purchases.
- Cut the rings of six-pack holders. This lowers the risk of entanglement to marine animals if the holders do make it out to sea.
- Participate in local beach, river, or stream cleanups.
- Educate others about marine debris
- Get involved locally

**2004 United States Participation**

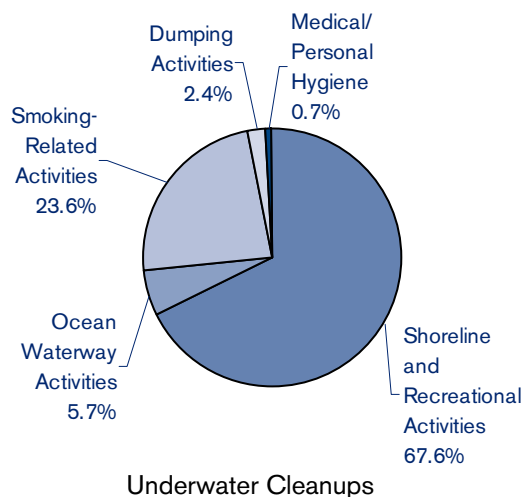
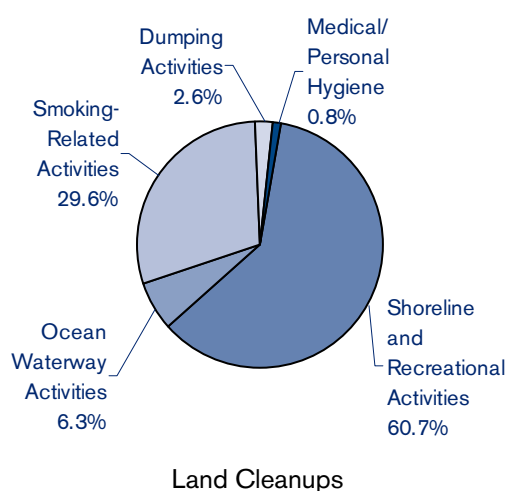
State:	Land			Underwater			Total		
	People	Pounds	Miles	People	Pounds	Miles	People	Pounds	Miles
Alaska	110	1,043	41	-	-	-	110	1,043	41
Arizona	205	12,325	20	72	777	4	277	13,102	24
Arkansas	89	260	3	48	1,003	26	137	1,263	29
California	51,785	956,043	1,931	87	2,445	2	51,872	958,488	1,933
Colorado	9	96	7	-	-	-	9	96	7
CNMI	96	721	3	-	-	-	96	721	3
Connecticut	411	2,734	16	-	-	-	411	2,734	16
Delaware	777	9,476	52	-	-	-	777	9,476	52
District of Columbia	25	293	8	-	-	-	25	293	8
Florida	15,093	284,360	871	28	76	1	15,121	284,436	872
Georgia	22,198	580,116	1,210	-	-	-	22,198	580,116	1,210
Guam	1,271	15,233	0	15	10	0	1,286	15,243	0
Hawaii	2,353	53,891	105	105	797	4	2,458	54,688	109
Idaho	50	500	0	-	-	-	50	500	0
Illinois	1,330	9,129	33	80	1,120	1	1,410	10,249	34
Indiana	1,499	105,362	46	29	2,170	4	1,528	107,532	50
Iowa	19	220	1	-	-	-	19	220	1
Louisiana	2,045	56,619	72	-	-	-	2,045	56,619	72
Maine	2,495	13,490	135	-	-	-	2,495	13,490	135
Maryland	386	8,502	38	-	-	-	386	8,502	38
Massachusetts	1,732	10,810	93	2	-	-	1,734	10,810	93
Michigan	2,394	10,247	174	-	-	-	2,394	10,247	174
Minnesota	129	818	109	28	50	7	157	868	117
Missouri	774	11,360	105	15	290	2	789	11,650	107
Montana	18	180	4	2	70	1	20	250	4
Nebraska	282	5,920	55	-	-	-	282	5,920	55
Nevada	14	210	4	-	-	-	14	210	4
New Hampshire	162	1,943	7	6	400	1	168	2,343	8
New Jersey	3,258	48,149	83	34	164	0	3,292	48,313	83
New Mexico	12	50	1	12	75	0	24	125	1
New York	7,649	214,101	346	56	2,111	4	7,705	216,212	350
North Carolina	12,745	411,210	1,186	18	140	1	12,763	411,350	1,186
North Dakota	43	1,175	8	7	10	1	50	1,185	9
Ohio	509	15,776	39	7	115	1	516	15,891	40
Oklahoma	7	40	0	21	2,010	1	28	2,050	1
Oregon	2,669	42,273	366	17	40	1	2,686	42,313	367
Pennsylvania	618	46,683	47	-	115	-	618	46,798	47
Puerto Rico	3,172	46,541	60	61	1,750	4	3,233	48,291	64
Rhode Island	748	9,008	90	19	200	0	767	9,208	90
South Carolina	2,031	21,106	174	-	-	-	2,031	21,106	174
South Dakota	2	50	2	14	250	1	16	300	3
Tennessee	35	450	11	-	-	-	35	450	11
Texas	9,076	456,900	196	769	42,626	5	9,845	499,526	201
U.S. Virgin Islands	931	12,376	6	8	131	1	939	12,507	7
Utah	32	3,100	2	-	-	-	32	3,100	2
Vermont	16	750	2	-	-	-	16	750	2
Virginia	3,940	176,647	258	-	-	-	3,940	176,647	258
Washington	1,180	38,610	107	-	-	-	1,180	38,610	107
Wisconsin	847	2,296	28	54	415	6	901	2,711	34
<b>Total</b>	<b>157,271</b>	<b>3,699,192</b>	<b>8,152</b>	<b>1,614</b>	<b>59,360</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>158,885</b>	<b>3,758,552</b>	<b>8,229</b>

## Debris items collected during the 2004 ICC in the United States

DEBRIS ITEMS	LAND	UNDERWATER	TOTAL
<b>Shoreline and Recreational Activities</b>			
Bags	157,057	980	158,037
Balloons	43,009	127	43,136
Beverage Bottles (Glass)	198,381	1,423	199,804
Beverage Bottles (Plastic) 2 liters or less	207,739	1,336	209,075
Beverage Cans	187,229	1,903	189,132
Caps/Lids	338,675	1,166	339,841
Clothing/Shoes	48,031	262	48,293
Cups/Plates/Forks/ Knives/Spoons	187,169	1,093	188,262
Food Wrappers and Containers	388,582	2,413	390,995
Pull Tabs	43,604	300	43,904
Shotgun Shells/Wadding	14,154	93	14,247
Six-Pack Holders	18,824	73	18,897
Straws/Stirrers	158,606	378	158,984
Toys	37,971	183	38,154
<b>Ocean and Waterway Activities</b>			
Bait Containers/Packaging	18,296	233	18,529
Bleach/Cleaner Bottles	11,255	35	11,290
Buoys/Floats	12,059	51	12,110
Crab/Lobster/Fish Traps	3,678	7	3,685
Crates	2,138	2	2,140
Fishing Line	25,754	227	25,981
Fishing Lures/Light Sticks	11,851	104	11,955
Fishing Nets	5,336	23	5,359
Light Bulbs/Tubes	4,595	19	4,614
Oil/Lube Bottles	10,255	76	10,331
Pallets	2,051	0	2,051
Plastic Sheeting/Tarps	40,356	80	40,436
Rope	47,756	115	47,871
Strapping Bands	16,834	24	16,858
<b>Smoking-Related Activities</b>			
Cigar Tips	56,305	246	56,551
Cigarette Lighters	17,752	93	17,845
Cigarettes/Cigarette Filters	877,266	3,541	880,807
Tobacco Packaging/Wrappers	39,144	209	39,353
<b>Dumping Activities</b>			
55-Gallon Drums	859	5	864
Appliances (refrigerators, washers, etc.)	1,779	9	1,788
Batteries	5,807	29	5,836
Building Materials	59,032	223	59,255
Cars/Car Parts	10,092	114	10,206
Tires	7,997	34	8,031
<b>Medical and Personal Hygiene</b>			
Condoms	7,312	17	7,329
Diapers	5,825	38	5,863
Syringes	2,929	8	2,937
Tampons/Tampon Applicators	11,815	59	11,874
<b>Totals</b>	<b>3,345,159</b>	<b>17,351</b>	<b>3,362,510</b>



**United States 2004 ICC - Sources of Marine Debris - Land and Underwater Cleanups**



**United States 2004 ICC "Top Ten" Debris Items – Land and Underwater Cleanups**

**Land Cleanups Only**

Debris Items	Amount	Percent of Total
1. Cigarettes/Cigarette Filters	877,266	26.2%
2. Food Wrappers and Containers	388,582	11.6%
3. Caps/Lids	338,675	10.1%
4. Beverage Bottles (Plastic) 2 liters or less	207,739	6.2%
5. Beverage Bottles (Glass)	198,381	5.9%
6. Beverage Cans	187,229	5.6%
7. Cups/Plates/Forks/ Knives/Spoons	187,169	5.6%
8. Straws/Stirrers	158,606	4.7%
9. Bags	157,057	4.7%
10. Building Materials	59,032	1.8%
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>2,759,736</b>	<b>82.4%</b>

**Underwater Cleanups Only**

Debris Items	Amount	Percent of Total
1. Cigarettes/Cigarette Filters	3,541	20.4%
2. Food Wrappers and Containers	2,413	13.9%
3. Beverage Cans	1,903	11.0%
4. Beverage Bottles (Glass)	1,423	8.2%
5. Beverage Bottles (Plastic) 2 liters or less	1,336	7.7%
6. Caps/Lids	1,166	6.7%
7. Cups/Plates/Forks/ Knives/Spoons	1,093	6.3%
8. Bags	980	5.7%
9. Straws/Stirrers	378	2.2%
10. Pull Tabs	300	1.7%
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>14,533</b>	<b>83.8%</b>

**United States 2004 ICC - Entangled Animals**

Entangling Debris	Birds	Fishes	Invertebrates	Mammals	Reptiles	Total
balloon ribbon/string	7	0	1	1	0	9
crab/lobster/fish traps	0	1	2	1	0	4
fishing line	20	31	16	2	2	71
fishing nets	4	9	2	0	0	15
miscellaneous	0	4	8	2	2	16
plastic bags	1	0	1	1	1	4
rope	4	8	6	6	1	25
six-pack holders	5	0	0	0	0	5
<b>Totals</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>149</b>

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 Friends of Arcola Creek  
 Lake MetroParks  
 Maumee RAP  
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 Mill Creek Watershed Partnership  
 Ohio Division of Wildlife  
 Ohio Division of Parks & Recreation  
 Ohio Division of Natural Areas and Preserves  
 U.S. Coast Guard – Sea Partners

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Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District  
Badger Meter  
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