



ALLIANCE *for the* GREAT LAKES

Adopt-a-Beach Team Leader Talking Points

Thank you for being a Team Leader! Whether this is your first cleanup or your fiftieth, we know remembering everything to say can sometimes be challenging! We wrote these talking points not as a script, but as a helpful guide when giving your introduction to your group.

Always gather your group for an introductory talk. Introduce yourself, welcome the group, and thank them for coming and dedicating time to help protect the Great Lakes!

Introduce the Alliance for the Great Lakes

- The Alliance for the Great Lakes is a nonpartisan nonprofit working across the region to protect our most precious resource: the fresh, clean and natural waters of the Great Lakes. It does this through advocacy, education, research, and on-the-ground projects.
- The Alliance's programs touch all five Great Lakes and all eight Great Lake states.
- Learn more about the Alliance on their website: greatlakes.org.

Adopt-a-Beach Facts

- The Alliance for the Great Lakes Adopt-a-Beach program is the biggest volunteer program working to protect the Great Lakes.
- Adopt-a-Beach started in 1991 and engages thousands of volunteers each year across all five Great Lakes and all eight Great Lakes states.
- Volunteers remove hundreds of thousands of **pieces** of litter – and tens of thousands of **pounds** of litter – from Great Lakes shorelines each year. Most of the litter is made of plastic.

Great Lakes & Plastic Pollution Facts

- The Great Lakes hold the most surface freshwater in the world. The Great Lakes provide drinking water to over 40 million people between the U.S. & Canada.
- The Great Lakes are home to around 3,500 species of plants and animals.
- About 85% of the litter picked up at Adopt-a-Beach cleanups is plastic.
- The Rochester Institute of Technology estimates that 22 million pounds of plastic enters the Great Lakes each year. Adopt-a-Beach volunteers are making an important contribution to keeping plastic out of our lakes!
- Plastic never really goes away. It just breaks down into smaller and smaller pieces called microplastics. Wildlife can confuse microplastics for food. And plastic ends up in our drinking water.

Why we collect data

- Today you're a part of the most extensive volunteer program ever to collect data on Great Lakes beach litter.
- For 20 years, Adopt-a-Beach volunteers have been collecting data that shows litter patterns, raises awareness about plastic pollution, and helps pass policies to reduce plastic pollution and litter.
- The data we collect today will be added to the Alliance for the Great Lakes' database.

- This database is the largest source of Great Lakes-specific data on litter and plastic pollution. No lab or individual researcher could collect this large of a dataset on their own, and today you are contributing to this valuable resource.

Be sure to conclude your talk with the safety reminders and cleanup logistics outlined in the [How-to Guide](#).