

2022 Shoreline Cleanup Summary & Review

2022

Georgian Bay Forever
Written by Ashley Morrison

Thank you, Volunteers!

The amount of garbage we collect each year is always shocking. We are so thankful to all the volunteers who generously donated their time and efforts to protect Georgian Bay. Many families, students, and individuals became regulars at cleanups, dedicating their time to our local environment. We are so grateful for the 265 volunteers who helped to protect Georgian Bay this summer.



Through your efforts, you have demonstrated the impact that each one of us can make. We thank you for creating a lasting impact alongside us. Your support greatly enables our work.

Introduction

Georgian Bay is a globally unique ecosystem and classified as a UNESCO world biosphere. With more than 30,000 islands and 2000 kilometers of shorelines it is the largest freshwater archipelago in the world. This region is an important transitional ecosystem that contains a wide diversity of habitats from rocky shorelines to coastal wetlands, and sandy beaches. These shorelines support an incredible array of organisms; more species of reptiles and amphibians live here than anywhere else in Canada, including species at risk such as the Blanding's turtle.

These beautiful shorelines were shaped by glaciers during the most recent ice age, roughly 11,000 years ago. Now, several areas are undergoing physical and chemical shifts due to pollution in various forms. Primary causes in this shift are due to the rise of consumer and

convenience culture. Convenient single-use plastic products that are used for mere minutes are among the most littered items plaguing entire ecosystems. According to the Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup, single-use plastics comprise more than a third of all plastic waste and are among the top twelve most collected items during shoreline cleanups.



Plastic litter can break into progressively smaller pieces known as microplastic. Concentrations of microplastics in the Great Lakes have reached an estimated 1.25 million particles/km², which is equal and/or greater than the concentrations of microplastics found in the Great Pacific Garbage patch. Given their size, microplastics can easily enter the food web, impacting all living beings.

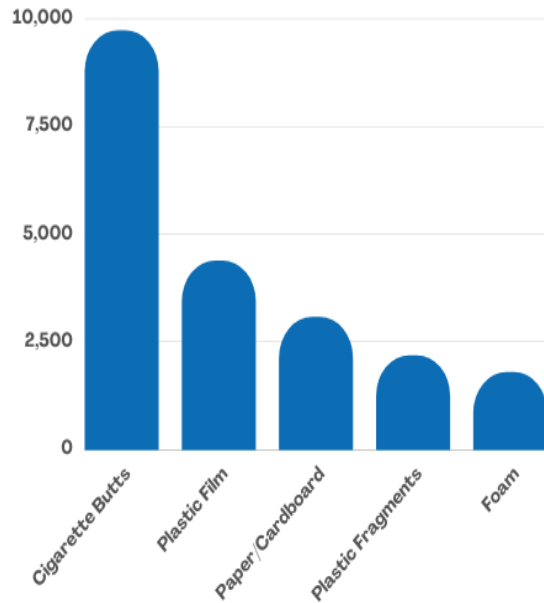
Shoreline cleanups help to reduce the amount of pollution entering waterways while increasing community awareness. At each shoreline cleanup, we quantify and track waste collected allowing for transparent communication between multiple stakeholders regarding the severity of plastic pollution, which enables us to advocate for change.

While COVID-19 restrictions were lifted significantly in 2022, we continued to exercise caution and follow public health recommendations. The data collected in 2022 is comparable to the data collected from 2021, 2020 and 2019. These pollution trends can be found throughout the shorelines of the Great Lakes and across the world.



Top 5

MOST COMMONLY COLLECTED LITTER



Overview

In 2022, we hosted a total of 36 successful cleanups along the shorelines of Georgian Bay, including weekly cleanups in Collingwood, Wasaga Beach, and Thornbury. In total, we diverted 964.19lbs of litter with the help of 265 volunteers. This report contains information and highlights from cleanups, along with next steps to continue protecting Georgian Bay.

Georgian Bay Forever is combating pollution by planning, organizing, and hosting shoreline cleanups. We are also advancing our outreach by attending and hosting events to increase public education and awareness through displays, conversations, youth education programs, and guest speaker presentations.

To learn more about the programs lead by Georgian Bay Forever please visit <https://www.georgianbayforever.org/>

2022 Shoreline Cleanups

- May 10 – Sunset Point, Collingwood
- May 11 – Sunset Point, Collingwood
- May 21 – Sunset Point, Collingwood
- May 31 – Sunset Point, Collingwood

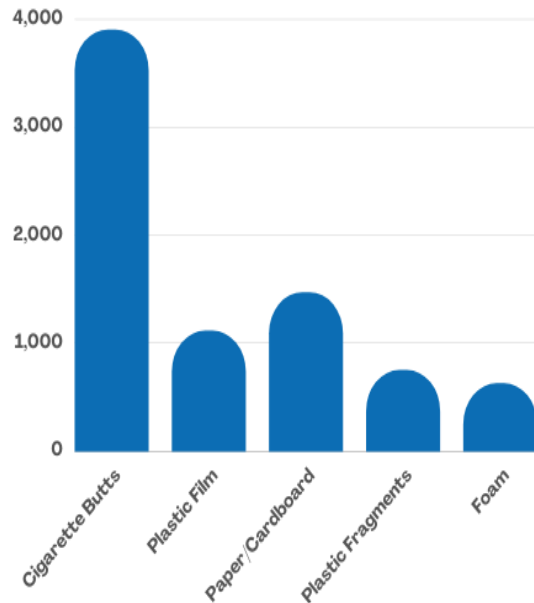
- June 11 – Big Tub, Tobermory
- June 14 – Sunset Point, Collingwood
- June 15 – Harbourview Park, Collingwood
- June 18 – Woods Bay
- June 21 – Sunset Point, Collingwood
- June 28 – Sunset Point, Collingwood
- July 4 – Little River Park, Thornbury
- July 6 – Sunset Point, Collingwood
- July 11 – Little River Park, Thornbury
- July 12 – Sunset Point, Collingwood
- July 13 – Rugged Trail, Parry Sound
- July 18 – Beach 3, Wasaga Beach
- July 19 – Sunset Point, Collingwood
- July 25 – Beach 3, Wasaga Beach
- July 25 – Little River Park, Thornbury
- July 26 – Sunset Point, Collingwood
- July 28 – Champagne Street, Parry Sound
- August 2 – Sunset Point, Collingwood
- August 8 – Beach 3, Wasaga Beach
- August 8 – Little River Park, Thornbury
- August 9 – Sunset Point, Collingwood
- August 15 – Beach 3, Wasaga Beach
- August 15 – Little River Park, Thornbury
- August 16 – Sunset Point, Collingwood
- August 22 – Beach 3, Wasaga Beach
- August 22 – Little River Park, Thornbury
- August 23 – Sunset Point, Collingwood
- September 11 – Beach 3, Wasaga Beach
- September 19 – Little River Park, Thornbury
- September 23 – Sunset Point, Collingwood
- September 24 – Delphi Point, Blue Mountains
- November 4 – First Street, Collingwood

Sunset Point, Collingwood Cleanups

Sunset Point Park is located at 79 St. Lawrence Street and is a popular spot due to its waterfront location, vast green space, volleyball courts, playground, food vendor, rocky beaches, and waterfront trails. The Park is occupied by beachgoers, dog-walkers, windsurfers, cyclists, and more.

In total, we collected 225.38lbs of litter from Sunset Point with the help of 78 volunteers. The collected litter was comparable to current trends of shoreline-related litter, with cigarette butts being our most collected item.

Collingwood's Top 5 MOST COMMONLY COLLECTED LITTER



Cigarette butts were found in abundance near parking lots, picnic tables and benches, as well as driftwood along the beach, indicating that these locations are utilized as gathering points as well as littering sites.

Despite having garbage cans and recycling bins along the waterfront and parking lots, we collected numerous bags of garbage at each event. Many of the items collected were stuck within rock break walls, and under trees and shrubs surrounding the beach. Often, trees and shrubs were used as dumping points for beverage cans, food containers, and utensils.

Sunset Point proved to be an interesting place to harbour decades-old treasures including cups, cans, bags, and electronics hidden amongst the rocks.



This bag was our oldest find yet, nearing 50 years

old! Based on our research, Valley Foods was located on Ste. Marie Street and closed in 1975.

The following items are dated from the early 80s onwards, and are comprised of (in order) Styrofoam, glass, and plastic film/foil:



These items are evidence that once anthropogenic items enter our environment, they are nearly impossible to get rid of. Each of

these items have been degraded, contributing to the microplastic pollution crisis.

Wasaga Beach Cleanups

A special thank you to our partners at the Rotary Club of Wasaga Beach for

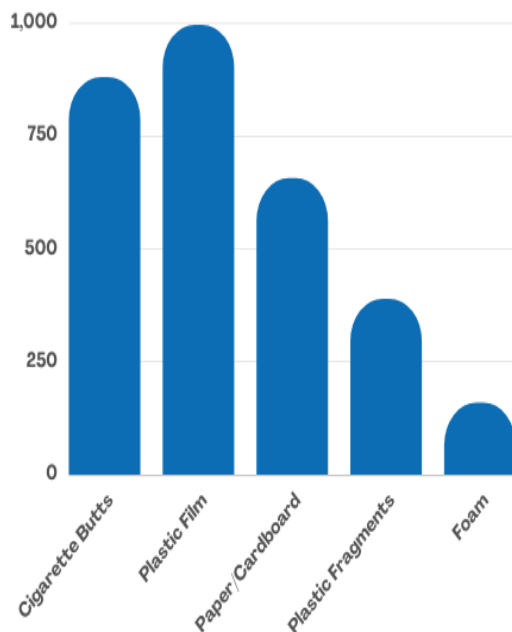


partnering with Georgian Bay Forever to host 6 successful weekly shoreline cleanups at Beach Area 3 at Wasaga Beach Provincial Park.

We are grateful to the Rotary Club for bringing so many of their passionate members and volunteers to participate in the shoreline cleanups. A special thank you to Bryan Davies for the wonderful photos taken at these events.

The most collected item at the Wasaga Beach cleanups was plastic film such as plastic wrap and plastic wrappings that are used on products like beach umbrellas, tents, and other beach-related toys.

Wasaga Beach's Top 5 MOST COMMONLY COLLECTED LITTER

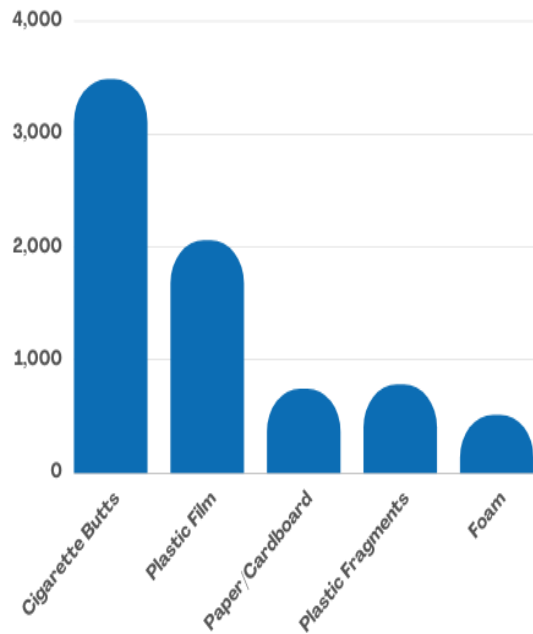


Town of Blue Mountains Cleanups

Little River Park is a popular pebble beach located adjacent to the Thornbury Pier and Harbour. Our bi-weekly shoreline cleanups were in popular demand and moved to weekly shoreline cleanups in July and August. Our findings at this location were comparable to both Wasaga Beach and Sunset Point, excluding fishing-related litter.

However, with the Harbour being in proximity and a popular fishing spot, we found a significant increase in fishing-related paraphernalia including fishing lures, monofilament fishing line, and rope. Monofilament poses a threat of entanglement to both wildlife and humans. Such products are not recyclable in Canada, which has led us to investigate alternative ways to ensure anglers can responsibly pack their gear in and out.

Town of Blue Mountains Top 5 MOST COMMONLY COLLECTED LITTER



Woods Bay Cleanup

A special thank you to the Woods Bay Cottage Association for co-hosting a spectacular cleanup. With the help of 17 volunteers, we cleaned the shores of Woods Bay by boat,

collecting any litter we found floating on the water, tangled in wetlands, or on shorelines of public lands. Together we collected a total of 209.41lbs of litter in just under four hours.



With most of these cottages being on the waterfront, we saw a large spike in collected foam in comparison to the public shorelines. The top three most collected items were glass, foam, and metal.



Additional Cleanups

Throughout the summer we hosted additional shoreline cleanups at popular shorelines around Georgian Bay including:

- Harbourview Park, Collingwood

- Rugged Trail Salt Dock, Parry Sound
- Champagne Street, Parry Sound
- Delphi Point Park, The Blue Mountains
- Big Tub Lighthouse, Tobermory

The data trends continue to be comparable to global litter pollution trends with common findings of cigarette butts, food containers and wrappers, beverage cans, as well as plastic film, fragments, and paper/cardboard.

Conclusion

From May 10 to November 4, 2022, Georgian Bay Forever had an exciting year with a grand total of 62 Shoreline Cleanups along Georgian Bay, 26 of which were self-organized by many wonderful volunteers and groups.

In 2022, we worked with 265 volunteers, who together cleaned a total of 71.37 kilometers of shoreline, collecting 964.19lbs of garbage from Georgian Bay! Our most collected items included 9,726 cigarette butts, 4,387 pieces of plastic film, 3,079 pieces of paper/cardboard, 2,189 plastic fragments, and 1,800 pieces of foam, of which 361 were large pieces of foam greater than 5mm in size.

A special thank you to all our volunteers and funders who make hosting shoreline cleanups possible!

Reducing your Impact on Shorelines

As you partake in beach activities in 2023, we encourage you to be mindful of your impact. An easy way to tackle this task is ensuring you pack in and pack out all your garbage. Leaving waste behind can cause it to end up in the water, or lodged under rocks for nearly 50 years, as we saw with the Valley Foods bag.

When you visit a beach, park, or cottage, please consider:

- Packing a picnic from home with reusable containers and beeswax wraps.

- Reuse items. Yogurt containers and other recyclables can make great tools for building sandcastles on the beach.
- Pack in and pack out all your garbage. Do not leave items behind.
- Carry a small container to collect visible litter on shorelines and trails while spending time outside.
- Clean up after your pets and children. Dog poop and diapers are common beach finds. Ensure they are placed in garbage bins!
- Ensure any garbage left is placed in a secure bin to avoid wildlife scavenging.

- Tagging Trash Trips is a new initiative where we track how trash is dispersed in our waters, giving us the data, we need to divert it.

For more information on the following programs, please contact sean.mullin@gbf.org:

- Participate in Families for Change to take on simple to challenging tasks in your lives to reduce your plastic consumption.
- Join Plastic Free Georgian Bay to support your business or school in creating an action plan to eliminate, reduce and replace plastics.

Next Steps: Summer 2023

Summer 2023 will mark the fifth year for shoreline cleanups hosted by Georgian Bay Forever. Our goal is to increase recruitment of volunteers, expand waste diversion strategies to protect Georgian Bay and its shorelines, and support local community groups.

In summer 2023, you can expect to see bi-weekly to monthly raffle draws for local vendor prize packs, cigarette waste receptacles in the Town of Blue Mountains, and on-going support for those interested in hosting their own shoreline cleanups.

Georgian Bay Forever Programs

Georgian Bay Forever has several programs to mitigate waste and plastic pollution in the environment. Join us by registering, volunteering, or attending our hosted events.

For more information on the following programs, please contact ashley.morrison@gbf.org:

- Organize and host a shoreline cleanup in your community.
- Request a youth education program that focuses on clean water.
- Education workshops and presentations are available for adult groups on reducing plastic waste.

Acknowledgements

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Foundation



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And thank you to our valuable partners:

The Town of Collingwood, The Town of Blue Mountains, The Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority, Blue Mountain Watershed Trust, Rotary Club of Wasaga Beach, Wasaga Beach Climate Action Team