

2015 Coastal Cleanup drew nearly 1,500 volunteers who collected almost 8 tons of trash and recyclables from 50 sites

DOVER – This year’s DNREC-sponsored 29th annual Delaware Coastal Cleanup held on Sept. 19 drew 1,492 volunteers, who collected 7.8 tons of trash from 50 sites along more than 80 miles of Delaware’s waterways and coastline stretching from Wilmington to Fenwick Island. About one-quarter of that trash – aluminum cans and glass and plastic bottles – was recycled this year.

DNREC organizes the annual cleanup with co-sponsors including: the Ocean Conservancy; Delmarva Power, which donates t-shirts; Edgewell Personal Care/Playtex Manufacturing Inc., which donates gloves; DelDOT, which donated safety vests for roadside sites; and Waste Management, which hauls trash and recyclables collected by volunteers.

“We think it’s fantastic that each year this event attracts a huge number of people who want to do something positive for the environment,” said Matt Likovich, spokesman for Delmarva Power, which has sponsored Coastal Cleanup for 24 consecutive years. “We appreciate the volunteers’ time and energy in helping to clean up our beaches and riverbanks.”

“In addition to marring the natural beauty of our beaches and waterways, trash can be dangerous to marine life and unhealthy for water quality,” said Delaware Coastal Cleanup Coordinator Joanna Wilson. “Each year, the Coastal Cleanup helps make a difference for marine life and water quality – and it’s the

hundreds of dedicated volunteers, many of whom come back year after year, who make the Cleanup possible.”

Some of the more unusual items found during this year’s cleanup were a raincoat, assorted underwear, numerous flip-flops, a rubber swim cap, a hair dryer and flat iron, a wig, more than a dozen pairs of sunglasses, a perfume bottle, a housekey on a ring, boat seat cushions, a can of Sterno, a tent, two propane tanks, a bow and arrows, a bike pedal, a dog leash and more than 20 bags of dog waste, beach chairs, a boogie board leash, an umbrella holder, children’s sand shovels and toys, a smoke detector, a recliner, a metal bed frame, four dozen condoms, light bulbs, a paint roller and paintbrush, ceiling tiles, buckets, plastic storage containers, a mop head, trash cans, coat hangers, a sink, a toilet seat, carpet pieces, batteries, lawn chairs, a rusty fire pit, flower pots, stakes, zip ties, a microwave, plastic and wood fencing, a teacup, chopsticks, tiki torch holders and four shotglasses, one of which was still full.

Some items were notable in their numbers. Statewide, volunteers picked up 20,410 cigarette and cigar butts, an increase of 1,533 from last year’s total of 18,877. The number of fishing-related items also increased from 989 last year to 1,317 this year, including more than 100 crab pots, nearly 500 yards of fishing line and 226 fishing nets and pieces; volunteers also found fishing rods, reels, lures and hooks. Balloons decreased, from 1,214 last year to 458 this year. Other items included 1,064 fireworks, 424 shotgun shells, eight tarps and 2,433 plastic bags. In addition to 36 passenger vehicle tires, car parts included a battery cable, license plate holder, taillight, hubcaps, fenders, a bumper, a car mat and a transmission.

This year, more than 23,000 pieces of food/beverage-related trash were picked up, a reduction compared to nearly 28,000 last year. This year’s notable numbers included 5,067 food wrappers, 3,603 plastic bottle caps, 1,747 lids, 1,657 straws,

3,785 plastic beverage bottles, 2,074 beverage cans, 1,698 glass bottles and 1,444 paper, plastic and foam cups and plates.

The Delaware Coastal Cleanup is part of the International Coastal Cleanup, the Ocean Conservancy's flagship program dealing with marine debris and data collection. The types and quantities of trash collected are recorded on data cards and forwarded to the Center for Marine Conservation, which compiles the information to help identify the source of the debris and focus efforts on eliminating or reducing it.

Delaware's next Coastal Cleanup is set for Saturday, Sept. 17, 2016. Registration will be posted on DNREC's website at www.delaware.dnrec.gov next July.

For more information on The Ocean Conservancy or the International Coastal Cleanup, please visit www.oceanconservancy.org.

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