

Marine Debris



NOAA Marine Debris Program | Office of Response and Restoration | NOAA National Ocean Service

NOAA Marine Debris Program Caribbean Region

The NOAA Marine Debris Program (MDP) supports national and international efforts to research, prevent, and reduce the impacts of marine debris. The MDP serves as a centralized capability within NOAA, coordinating and supporting activities within NOAA and with other federal agencies, as well as using partnerships to support projects carried out by state and local agencies, tribes, non-governmental organizations, academia, and industry. The MDP has headquarters in Silver Spring, MD and has regional staff members positioned around the country to support regional coordination efforts, track progress of projects, review performance measures, and conduct regional marine debris outreach to local audiences. The Program's Caribbean regional coordinator is based out of Seattle, WA.

“Hey! Don’t Litter My House” by Tita the Whale

An education and outreach effort by G Works, Inc, in Puerto Rico, led to the creation of a character specifically addressing marine debris, educating over 2,500 students, and hosting a summer camp stressing ecosystems. Children were reached through school and marina events. Work was also done with fishermen. Several general cleanups were held, and all materials developed for students and teachers are available on the Web at www.operacionexito.com.



Beachgoer trash, a source of marine debris, litters the shore in Puerto Rico.

Caribbean Center for the Reduction of Aquatic Debris

Starting in 2006, NOAA has had a partnership with the University of Puerto Rico at Aquadilla and the new Caribbean Center for the Reduction of Aquatic Debris (CCRAD) to address monofilament recycling and general marine debris through cleanups, providing recycling bins, and education and outreach activities. Forty-seven monofilament recycling bins were installed throughout the coast of Puerto Rico (including Vieques and Culebra) in order to facilitate the recovery

Marine debris is

any persistent solid material that is manufactured or processed and directly or indirectly, intentionally or unintentionally, disposed of or abandoned into the marine environment or the Great Lakes.

and recycling of this material. This program also includes an aggressive outreach and publicity component to reach many different demographic groups in Puerto Rico. A series of monofilament clean ups of coastal areas have been held. The project was recognized by an EPA Quality Award in 2008. Activities in 2009 and 2010 will expand the volunteer force maintaining bins, create more education and outreach awareness, and continue community events.

Surfrider Foundation in Reserva Marina Tres Palmas

The Surfrider Foundation began an effort in 2008 to work with local fishermen to use boat and dive equipment to conduct survey, clean up and monitoring activities on the water around Reserva Marina Tres Palmas, Puerto Rico. In addition to the marine debris clean up activities, a series of beach clean ups will be conducted along the beaches and nearby creeks to investigate possible sources of tires entering the marine reserve. Building on a successful educational program, an extensive education and outreach program will be implemented that will include Commonwealth agency staff participating in clean up efforts, as well as educational programs in schools.

Clean Sweep USVI

The University of the Virgin Islands and Clean The Bay are undertaking Clean Sweep USVI, a project to remove 125 tons of marine debris from the mangrove and seagrass habitats within Jersey Bay/Benner Bay, St. Thomas. This debris – including boats, docks, tires, lobster pots, buoys, derelict fishing gear, and other forms of garbage – is generally from two sources: large and medium debris has accumulated following 4 major storm events in the past 30 years, and small debris washes into the marine system during heavy-rain events. In some places, the debris is shading and smothering seagrass, in other places it is crushing and degrading mangrove habitat. In all cases it poses threats to species and nursery habitat through leaching of chemicals, entanglement, and asphyxiation. This project began in 2008 and is expected to end at the end of 2009.

USVI Careening Cove Cleanup

Beginning December 2007, a coalition of groups including Friends of Virgin Islands National Park, St. Thomas Historical Trust, the National Park Service, Gov. John P. deJongh's office, Delegate to Congress Donna Christensen's office came together to begin the long and costly process of restoring Hassel Island with the goal of reversing the damage that has been done through lack of care, and opening it to visitation. Last year, more than \$100,000 in private funding was raised and spent to launch this effort, removing approximately 240 tons of debris from the island's shores. In 2009, NOAA became a partner to support Phase IV of the Hassel Island Restoration Project focused on the shoreline cleanup of Careening Cove.

Marine debris is

a problem we can solve together. Reduce, reuse, recycle, and participate in local beach or stream cleanups. If we each do a little, together we can make a big difference.

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