



Marine Debris Report – May 2006

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NOAA Marine Debris Program Grant Awards Announcement

In April, the NOAA Marine Debris Program (MDP) distributed throughout NOAA \$1.2 million for projects to address marine debris issues. Since 2005, the NOAA MDP has used its funding to help build collaborations within NOAA to support a wide variety of important marine debris efforts, promoting strong partnerships at the national, regional, and local levels to address marine debris issues. This \$1.2M will enhance NOAA capabilities within several focus areas, including education and outreach, protocols and training, derelict fishing gear impacts, and coordination among partners to reduce and prevent marine debris. Together, funds from 2005 and 2006 are building NOAA’s capacity to address marine debris issues.

The range of projects funded this year include such areas as emergency response, research and development of new technologies, cleanup efforts in targeted areas, nationwide education programs, monofilament recycling programs, and projects that reduce the impact of marine debris on marine mammals and seabirds.

Recycling Program “Nets” Over 5,500 lbs.

The port reception bin for the Honolulu Derelict Net Recycling Program was emptied for the first time on Saturday, May 6th, testing the "gears" of this new program. The large amount of derelict fishing nets and longline in the bin weighed in at 5,680 pounds.

Launched on January 13, 2006 the Honolulu Derelict Net Recycling Program is a private-public partnership funded

by the NOAA Marine Debris Program and made possible by the generous support of eleven partners including Hawai'i Longline Association, Schnitzer Steel Hawai'i Corp., United Fishing Agency, Pacific Ocean Producers, Covanta Energy, Matson Navigation Co., NOAA, Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council, Department of Transportation–Harbors Division, City and County of Honolulu, and University of Hawai'i Sea Grant College Program.

Derelict fishing nets voluntarily retrieved by Hawaii's longliners and various community groups are collected in a dedicated container located on Pier 38, Honolulu Harbor. Periodically, Schnitzer Steel Hawai'i Corp. transports the debris to its facility, where it is chopped into smaller pieces suitable for incineration at the City and County of Honolulu's H-Power waste-to-energy facility. Through this process, the debris is recycled to create electricity.

Olympic Coast Cleanup Gathers Many Volunteers

Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary staff joined over 750 volunteers participated in the 7th Annual Olympic Coast Cleanup event on Earth Day, April 22nd. Caches of marine debris left on remote beaches are currently being removed along the rugged Olympic National Park coastline. The estimate for this year's effort is over 20 tons of trash.

Organizers are now focusing primarily on removing marine debris cached in remote areas along the wilderness coast. Volunteer crews have been packaging and hauling trash from these remote sites to trailheads and parking lots where it can be disposed of properly.

Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary and Olympic National Park share jurisdiction of nearly 65 miles of shoreline on the Olympic Peninsula. Of that, 48 miles is designated wilderness and is critical habitat for marine mammals, seabirds and other wildlife. Each year, tons of debris washes up on Olympic Coast beaches and includes abandoned or lost fishing gear, garbage, hazardous materials and other drifting debris.

Marine Debris Program Projects Highlighted in Admiral's Newsletter

VADM Lautenbacher highlighted NOAA's Marine Debris Program in a recent newsletter, focusing on the aerial survey and removal project being implemented by NOAA's Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center in Hawaii.

As part of a national effort to address marine debris, NOAA staff was trained to work from helicopters to spot and survey debris around the coastlines of the main Hawaiian Islands. The helicopter surveys were a key element of this new, comprehensive effort to determine the distribution, abundance and effects of marine debris, about which relatively little is known. Working with a broad-based partnership, NOAA designed a multi-step program that has included using survey information to create maps showing the distribution and abundance of debris.

The surveys of Kauai, Molokai, Lanai, Maui, Oahu and the Big Island of Hawai'i are now complete. With over 650 debris sites reported, the marine debris problem has proven to be greater than expected. Statistical information derived from the surveys will aid communities and federal, state and local coastal managers to identify and prioritize clean-up areas and target sites for future monitoring.

South Point Cleanups have Great Impact on Hawaii Coast

Results are in. The Hawai'i Wildlife Fund conducted its last scheduled cleanup for the Waiohinu-Ka Lae coast marine debris removal project in April. During the 5 days of cleanups, volunteers conducted a full cleaning of this coastline, educated the community about the problem, and organized a consortium of interested community groups and individuals to begin a regular cleanup schedule. With each cleanup tackling a different section of the coastline over four to six months, the Waiohinu-Ka Lae coast is now cleaner and safer for everyone. Cleanups were completed on November 19th and December 17th of 2005 and February 18th and 19th and April 22nd of 2006. These NOAA-funded cleanups were contracted by the Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary to the Hawai'i Wildlife Fund, an environmental not-for-profit organization known for its work in research, conservation, and education about Hawai'i's native wildlife.

Over 220 volunteers participated in these cleanups, some from as far away as Japan and the West Coast of the United States. In total, 35 tons of marine debris was removed from nine miles of coastline. Approximately 30 tons were derelict fishing nets, and plastic made up 82% of other debris items.

Through the cooperation of various state and county agencies, private businesses, and community groups, the marine debris removed was disposed of in the most proactive and environmentally friendly way possible. Recyclables were kept separate and given to the County of Hawai'i to recycle. Fishing net debris was put into a donated Matson Navigation Co. container and barged over to O'ahu where Schnitzer Steel Hawaii Corp. (formerly Hawai'i Metal Recycling Co.) picked it up and transported it to their facility, where the nets are chopped into smaller pieces. From there, Schnitzer takes the net debris to the City and County of Honolulu's H-Power waste-to-energy facility where it is recycled to create electricity. All services are being provided free of charge.

Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary Jumps into 'Operation Clean Sweep'

The Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary, Santa Barbara Harbor Waterfront Department, and Surfrider Foundation hosted "Operation Clean Sweep," a sea floor debris removal program. City officials hope to make this an annual event and cover all areas of the harbor. Volunteer divers retrieved a wide variety of discarded items including crab traps, bicycles, batteries, electrical boat stuff, pipes, cans, and nets. Overall, 4,000 pounds of marine debris were removed from the harbor. Participation in this program gave the sanctuary the opportunity to reach Santa Barbara boaters and citizens on the importance of clean boating practices and protecting ocean water quality by maintaining healthy watersheds. This was also an important opportunity for the sanctuary to strengthen its partnership with Santa Barbara Harbor, which implements several clean boating and water quality programs.

Marine Debris in the News

Coastal Cleanup: Volunteers netted 35 tons of marine debris from Big Isle

Hawaii Tribune Herald, 4/27/06

http://www.hawaiitribune-herald.com/articles/2006/04/27/local_news/local02.txt

Volunteers pick up debris: 35 tons of trash removed from Waiohinu-Ka Lae coast

West Hawaii Today, 4/27/06

<http://www.westhawaiiitoday.com/articles/2006/04/27/local/local02.txt>

NOAA Fisheries and Ocean Service working together to save monk seals

<http://www.honoluluadvertiser.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20060528/NEWS01/605280361/1190/NEWS>

California High School develops creative way to recycle

<http://www.dailybreeze.com/news/articles/2797626.html>

Sea Turtles and marine debris impacts in the Virgin Islands

http://www.virginislandsdailynews.com/index.pl/article_features?id=17590925

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