

# Coastal Cleanup

## How to Guide



Trash makes it hard for everyone to enjoy a special place like Casco Bay. Litter and marine debris on our shores come from many sources. Careless beach goers, boaters, fishing vessels, and other ships can leave trash behind. Stormwater washes trash from yards and parking lots into storm drains that may empty directly into Casco Bay.

Trash that winds up on our shores can pollute our water, hurt marine life, and reduce the quality of life of those who live, work, and play on Casco Bay.

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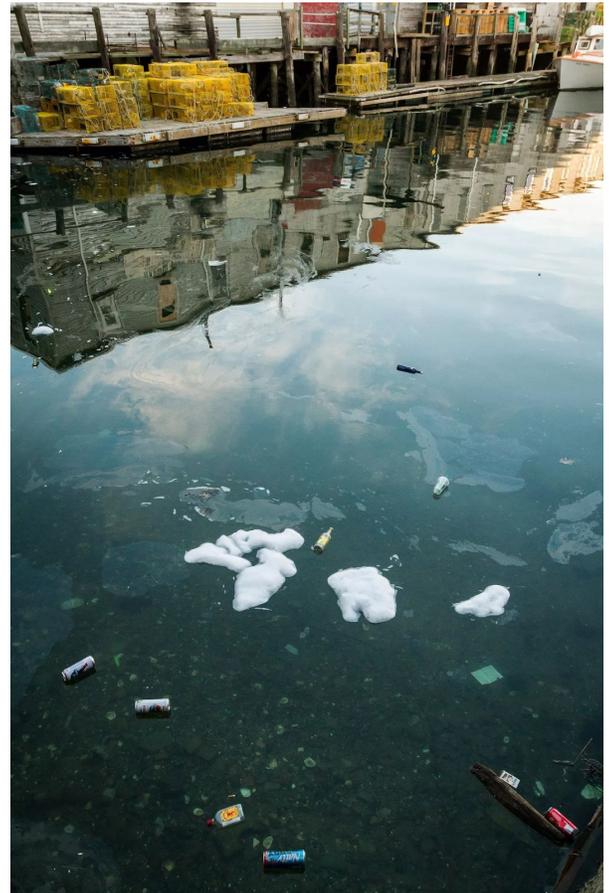
[Release and Authorization to Photograph, Film and Record Audio](#)

## Why organize a Coastal Cleanup?

Coastal Cleanups are a great hands-on activity for youth groups, and corporate volunteer days. We ask you to record data about the trash you pick up. That information is used to help create policies to reduce pollution in our coastal waters. Marine debris is a solvable problem if we work together to identify the sources and control them.

**By organizing a cleanup, you are:**

- Collecting data on the types and size of materials removed. The data is then used locally and internationally for marine debris advocacy efforts
- Making our shores cleaner and safer
- Ensuring our coast is a place people can go to recreate and relax
- Helping protect wildlife
- Supporting the local economy as our coast is part of Maine's brand; it is an ideal tourist attraction that creates a stream of revenue that supports our community
- Protecting our quality of life



**Items often found during cleanups include:**

- Styrofoam: Styrofoam is non-biodegradable, meaning it is not capable of being decomposed and remains in the environment for long periods of time.
- Remnants from lobster traps: Derelict fishing gear includes nets, lines, crab traps, and shrimp pots. Lost, discarded, and abandoned fishing gear continue to fish and trap animals, and may smother plants.
- Plastic: Plastic bags and soda can rings can ensnare wildlife, causing birds and other animals to choke and die. Plastics can break down into tiny particles and be carried far out to sea where they can be ingested by fish, birds, sea turtles, and whales. If an animal swallows plastic, it can fill its digestive system, causing it to starve.
- Syringes: Some waste is a biohazard, such as hypodermic needles, which threaten public health.
- Cans and bottles: Cans, bottles, and lids can be ingested by a variety of marine life, posing immediate risks of choking and more.
- Cigarette butts: Cigarette butts, our most commonly-found litter, are made from synthetic cellulose, which contains many toxic chemicals and takes centuries to degrade.

**Small trash is just as important as the big stuff!** Small plastics, called microplastics, pick up toxic pollutants and get into the food web, making it likely that they are getting into our seafood. That's why we suggest bringing paper bags to make it easier to remove smaller pieces of plastic before they break up into tiny microplastics. Working in teams of 3-4, each person can carry a small brown paper bag and fill it with Cigarette butts, pieces of plastic, and other litter before emptying it into the larger shared garbage bag. Working in teams also helps ensure the most litter in the area is spotted!

# Coastal Cleanup Checklist for Organizer

## Before the event

### A month before

- Identify the area for your coastal cleanup. You may consider an area where there is a lot of litter, but remember that tiny pieces count. Consider asking for suggested locations from your municipal public works department.
- While talking with public works, ask where you can bring the trash once it is bagged or inquire if they'd be willing to pick it up from your cleanup site.
- Be sensitive to the ecosystem. Stay away from areas that might be damaged by heavy foot traffic from a group cleanup. Also, be mindful of any protected areas nearby.
- Walk the area to see how accessible it is for a group cleanup effort. Survey the area yourself to look for hazards, such as heavy traffic, blind corners, etc. Look for areas that are far from busy roads with steep banks.
- Make parking easy. Be sure to scout out potential parking areas for participants.
- Find a central meeting place. You will need an area where you can set up a "base of operations" for check-in, supplies, etc.
- Pick a date and time, thinking about when folks will be available. You should pick a date at least a month in advance so you have time to prepare and recruit. The length of the cleanup is up to you – a few hours to a half-day is usually best. Set the end time well before dark, allowing extra time to wrap up the event so it concludes before nightfall.
- Let your group know about the cleanup, and ask folks to let you know if they plan to take part.
- Know the limits of your group, be it age, skill, or comfort level with the tasks at hand. Don't ask your volunteers to do more than they are able.
- Inform parents and guardians that they are responsible for the supervision of their children and see to it that each child has adult supervision.
- Identify where you will get materials from or request materials from Friends of Casco Bay at [volunteer@cascobay.org](mailto:volunteer@cascobay.org).
- Arrange for trash removal by either recruiting folks with pickup trucks to take debris to the drop off site or coordinating with the municipality to pick it up.
- Let Friends of Casco Bay know about the event and if you are requesting supplies from us.

### A week before

- Divide the area to be cleaned into sections for each team to pick up so that no area is overlooked.
- Read over [Coastal Cleanup Instructions](#).
- Download the [Clean Swell App](#), create your own account or use the username [volunteer@cascobay.org](mailto:volunteer@cascobay.org) and the password of cascobay. Either way, be sure to set your group to Friends of Casco Bay.
- If unable to use the app, print copies of the [Clean Swell Data Cards](#), being sure to fill out the site information section and get them ready for distribution. Black and white copies are fine.

### Two-three days before

- Check the weather to ensure that your cleanup will not be impacted. **Reschedule if you have uncomfortable or unsafe weather**

- Buy/gather materials or pick up supplies at Friends of Casco Bay's office, if you have requested them in advance. [Get directions here.](#)
- Send information to participants. Include the meeting place and time, what to wear, what to expect, as well as a contact person and cell phone number for last-minute changes.
- Encourage everyone to dress for the weather and the task. Insist that volunteers wear work or protective gloves. Long sleeves, sturdy pants, and hats help protect skin from poisonous plants, bug bites, and sunburn. Encourage participants to wear hats and work boots (preferably waterproof), or sneakers. Flip flops and sandals are discouraged.
- Everyone should bring a bottle of water, sunscreen, and some snacks to maintain their energy. Remind any participant with allergies to bring their meds.

## Day of

### Before you leave home:

- Look at the weather for the day. If heavy rain or severe weather is forecasted, you should postpone your cleanup.
- Fully charge your cell phone before leaving home.
- Practice remarks to kick off the event as well as to conclude the day.

### Bring

- Trash Bags
- Smaller paper bags
- Gloves
- Hand sanitizer
- Liability forms
- Pens
- Tracking sheets
- First Aid kit
- Name tags
- Friends of Casco Bay Buttons
- Water/snacks
- Sunscreen
- Sturdy/Closed toed shoes
- Optional: Name tags and markers

### Things to avoid

- Wearing nice clothes.
- Unleashed dogs. Even little ones can be territorial if they think you are trespassing on their property!
- High traffic roads, unless you have a traffic control officer with you.
- Man-made shelters. These are typically someone's home, so do not disturb them or try to clean them up.
- Sharps and biohazards. Do not pick up anything that could be potentially harmful to the participants health, even if they are wearing gloves. Instead, take a picture of the object and report it to the local authorities instead.

### When you arrive

- Reschedule if you have uncomfortable or unsafe weather**

- ❑ Check to make sure the area is safe, and there aren't any hazards.

### **When folks arrive**

- ❑ Welcome everyone.
- ❑ Ask participants to fill out the Release and Authorization to Photograph, Film, and Record Audio.
- ❑ Encourage folks to download the [Clean Swell App](#), create their own account or use the username: [volunteer@cascobay.org](mailto:volunteer@cascobay.org) and the password: cascobay. Either way, be sure to enter the date, the number of people in each individual group (adding them up should equal the total group number), and set the group to Friends of Casco Bay. Or, use the datasheet if you prepared those in advance.
- ❑ Ask participants to make name tags.
- ❑ Read through the [instructions](#) for everyone.
- ❑ Take a photo of your group with our Friends of Casco Bay banner.
- ❑ Take additional photos of people actively cleaning up. Try to get lots of faces in the photos.

### **After the event**

- ❑ Give Casco Bay buttons and to participants and discuss how they and their families can continue to help the environment. Our Website is a great resource for this: <https://www.cascobay.org/how-to-help/other-ways/>
- ❑ Share photos on Social Media tagging Friends of Casco Bay. We are on Instagram: [@friendsofcascobay](#), Facebook: [@FriendsofCascoBay](#) and Twitter: [@CascoBay](#)
- ❑ Join [Water Reporter](#) and encourage participants to do the same! Your observations combined with others' will provide a better understanding of conditions in Casco Bay.

### **Send/return to Friends of Casco Bay**

- ❑ **Any excess materials we provided**
- ❑ **Photos and photo releases** for every individual in the photos.

Return to Friends of Casco Bay, 43 Slocum Drive, South Portland. Contact (207) 799-8574 or [keeper@cascobay.org](mailto:keeper@cascobay.org) between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m.

# Coastal Cleanup Instructions



## **Suggestions for introductory remarks:**

**Friends of Casco Bay helped us get ready for this event.** Friends of Casco Bay's mission is to improve and protect the environmental health of Casco Bay. They work to keep Casco Bay blue by using science to monitor the health of the Bay, inspiring residents and businesses to take care of our coastal waters, supporting efforts to reduce pollution, and advocating for strong protections for the Bay. Friends of Casco Bay works to defend the Bay on many fronts: stormwater and sewage overflow remediation, addressing nitrogen pollution, shining the spotlight on coastal acidification, supporting oil spill preparedness, keeping pollution and pesticides out of the Bay, and responding to emerging issues as they arise.

## **Litter and marine debris**

- Degrades the environment.
- Reduces the quality of life of those who live, work, and play on Casco Bay.
- Threatens our coastal economy; it is a hideous eyesore that may spark expensive management efforts, and discourages local residents and tourists from visiting our shores.

## **Litter and marine debris on our shores comes from many sources, including:**

- Careless beach goers, boaters, fishing vessels, and ships.
- Stormwater from yards and parking lots into storm drains that empty into Casco Bay.

## **Benefits of clean ups:**

- Coastal shores will be cleaner and safer.
- Ensuring the coast remains a place people can go to recreate and relax.
- May save wildlife.
- Clean-ups also help the local economy as our coast is part of Maine's brand; it is an ideal tourist attraction that creates a stream of tourism revenue that supports our community.

## **Things usually found during clean ups include:**

- Styrofoam: Styrofoam is non-biodegradable, meaning it is not capable of being decomposed, and appears to remain in the environment forever.
- Remnants from lobster traps: Lost or abandoned fishing gear continues to fish and trap animals, and may smother habitat.
- Plastic: Plastic bags and soda can rings can ensnare wildlife, causing birds and other animals to choke and die. Plastics can break down into tiny particles and be carried far out to sea where they can be ingested by fish, birds, sea turtles, and whales. Once swallowed by an animal, plastic can fill its digestive system, causing it to starve.
- Syringes: Some waste is a biohazard, such as hypodermic needles, which threaten public health. **DO NOT** pick up needles, instead, report them to your police station using their non-emergency number
- Cans and bottles: Cans, bottles, and lids can be ingested by a variety of marine life, posing immediate risks of choking and more.
- Cigarette butts: Cigarette butts, our most commonly-found litter, are made from synthetic cellulose, which contains many toxic chemicals

## Go over best practices and get ready

- **Small trash is just as important as the big stuff!** That's why we have paper bags to make it easier to pick up the little stuff. By working in teams of 3-4, each person can carry a small brown paper bag and fill that before emptying into the larger shared garbage bag.
- **Handling Trash:** Don't pick up anything sharp or dangerous, such as hypodermic needles, leaky batteries, glass, and chemical containers, even with gloves! Report it to the authorities instead, being sure to get a photo or describe the location very well. Never handle ammunition or explosives – immediately alert the authorities if these items are discovered during your cleanup. Garbage can be dirty, rusty, slimy, and/or sharp. Be careful when handling trash to avoid cuts and abrasions. Emphasize to everyone: don't be afraid to ask for help; don't try to lift heavy objects alone.
- **Collect data** using the Clean Swell App or the Clean Swell Data Sheets, being sure to fill out the forms completely.
- **Let's get a group photo** (using the Friends of Casco Bay banner, if you have it).
- **Let's meet back here at [Insert Time]**, 1.5-2 hours is usually ideal.
- **Break into** teams of 3-4.
- **Everyone gather supplies.**
- **Get photos of folks participating in the cleanup.**

## Cleaning up

- When your cleanup is finished, it's time to celebrate!
- Say thank you! Follow up with volunteers after the event to say thanks again for making the cleanup a success.
- What else can you do to help? Share ideas from this list:  
<https://www.cascobay.org/how-to-help/help-casco-bay/>
- Post photos on Social Media, tagging Friends of Casco Bay. We're on Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter.

# Release and Authorization to Photograph, Film and Record Audio

I hereby grant full permission to use the following items which I have checked off:

- \_\_\_\_\_ Photograph
- \_\_\_\_\_ Film
- \_\_\_\_\_ Videotape
- \_\_\_\_\_ Audiotape
- \_\_\_\_\_ My name \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ My child's name \_\_\_\_\_

I agree that the item(s) I checked above can be used in any way or manner by Friends of Casco Bay and the organizer.

Name of Parent or Guardian (Please print) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you!