



2014 Florida Marine Debris

Dive Cleanup

September 2014

A state-wide environmental event to support Florida's ocean conservation, aquatic health, and environmental stewardship.



WHAT: Tampa Bay Green Consortium (TBGC), Florida's regional coordinator for Project Aware's "Dive Against Debris" Program, would like to invite you to participate in a statewide dive cleanup in September to support Ocean Conservancy's International Coastal Cleanup Day. In partnership with volunteer organizations and individuals around the globe, Ocean Conservancy's International Coastal Cleanup engages people to remove trash from the world's beaches and waterways. "Dive Against Debris" is organized worldwide by the Project AWARE Foundation, a nonprofit organization that mobilizes divers to protect the ocean.

TBGC is asking all Florida dive shops and dive clubs to organize and conduct a local marine debris cleanup event, using the attached marine debris data card, and record all debris data collected. Once completed, we ask that you submit your data back to TBGC so we can aggregate Florida's findings for submission to the Ocean Trash Index. This data will be used to inform, persuade and empower Florida policy makers and other stakeholders to establish and improve integrated solid waste management practices. In addition, the data will provide an invaluable location-by-location and item-by-item snapshot of what is polluting our Florida beaches and waterway, identifying debris hot spots and inform policy solutions to the marine debris problem.

Since 2009, nearly 152,000 volunteer divers and supporters in Florida have participated in this annual cleanup, with over 2 million pounds of marine debris collected along the Florida coast. We want you to be part of this event and support marine conservation.

WHEN: Anytime in the month of September (International Coastal Cleanup Day is September 20th, 2014). The data cards must be submitted to partnership@tampabaygreenconsortium.org by September 30th, 2014.

WHERE: At your local Florida beach, dive site, waterway, reef, or other body of water.

WHY: Marine debris – a politically correct way to say "our trash in the ocean" – makes its way to our underwater environments by the tons. Ocean trash is a problem in Florida which affects human health and safety, endangers our marine wildlife and costs Florida millions in wasted resources and lost revenue each year. One of the biggest impacts to marine debris in Florida is the impact to our sea turtles, one of our oldest creatures on Earth. These beautiful marine creatures are very vulnerable to plastics and other marine debris. They commonly swallow plastic bags, mistaking them for jellyfish. They are often found off the Florida coasts entangled in discarded nets and fishing lines, and are frequently found with ingested fish hooks. Florida is a large nesting ground for sea turtles and hatchlings are also affected by marine debris. When hatchlings move towards the water, physical objects like trash and marine debris, endangering their lives, often obstruct them.

Media: When you have your event scheduled, contact us so we can promote your event and dive shop/club in our weekly media release to all Florida papers and TV stations.

About Tampa Bay Green Consortium

Through strategic alliances, partnerships and people, the Tampa Bay Green Consortium, a 501(c) non-profit organization, provides the guidance, resources, and tools to help increase environmental awareness within the community to promote the sharing of knowledge, people and resources needed for environment projects focusing on sea turtle conservation, marine debris, and environmental education.

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