



PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

April 26, 2014

Contact on Saturday, April 26:

Catie Tobin, Ocean Advocacy and Education Fellow, Clean Ocean Action
(201) 965-1285

Contacts on and after Monday, April 28:

Catie Tobin (732) 872-0111
Jennifer Cubias, Press Inquiries (732) 872-0111

NEW JERSEY BEACHES BENEFIT FROM STATEWIDE BEACH SWEEPS

Thousands of Volunteers Mobilize to Clean Up NJ Beaches and Waterways

Coastal New Jersey – Today, over 4,000 volunteers hit the beaches to participate in Clean Ocean Action's 29th Annual Spring Beach Sweeps at over 65 sites from Essex County to Cape May County. Volunteers removed and catalogued each piece of debris, helping to document ongoing pollution issues. Robust crowds were reported up and down the coast.

Devoted volunteers traveled from all over New Jersey as well as New York, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, Delaware and Maryland to participate in the Beach Sweeps this year. Many volunteers came as teams from local businesses, corporate and grassroots organizations, school and church groups, and families, all with personal ties to the Shore and some with decades of Sweeps participation.

“When people arrive at their Sweeps site, they are so eager to get started. For residents and visitors alike, the Beach Sweeps create a real sense of community pride in the Shore’s overall marine health,” said **Cindy Zipf, Executive Director of Clean Ocean Action**. “There’s an instant gratification for people knowing they’ve personally prevented debris from entering the ocean and harming marine life.”

The data recorded today will be combined with data collected in the fall at the October 25th Beach Sweeps, then analyzed and presented in an annual report produced by Clean Ocean Action. The Beach Sweeps annual report identifies pollution problems and educates citizens on the quantities and types of marine debris. Legislators will receive the cumulative data and use it to implement stricter litter bans and enforce laws to protect the marine environment.

US Representative Frank Pallone (NJ-6) focused on the need to protect our ocean, saying, “What you are doing is very important, and I urge you to stay involved year-round because threats from seismic testing and climate change are always on the horizon.”

State Senator Jim Whelan (NJ-2) addressed the large group of volunteers in Atlantic City this morning, saying, "The beaches and ocean have gotten cleaner over time because of the efforts you make at this event. We still have a long way to go but know what you are doing really does makes a difference."

"Whether a first time participant or a Sweeps veteran, today's volunteers witnessed first-hand how their lifestyle can impact the environment downstream from where they live or work," said **Catie Tobin, Beach Sweeps Project Manager**. "We can only hope that this eye-opening and empowering experience translates into changed behavior so that eventually the Beach Sweeps are no longer needed."

Clean Ocean Action Beach Captains, lead volunteers who direct the entire group of participants at each Beach Sweeps location, are essential to the program's success. They are the heart and soul of Beach Sweeps.

"I am so honored to be a part of a great event and an organization that makes a big impact on local beaches, global ocean, and the future," said **Tracy Vollbrecht, Marine Academy of Science and Technology Site Coordinator** that organized the Sandy Hook clean up, where over 1,000 citizens participated.

Selected totals from Sandy Hook included: 7,145 plastic pieces; 3,857 caps and lids; 849 cigarette filters; 125 plastic toys; 151 Mylar balloons; and 53 shoes/sandals.

"I have been participating in the Beach Sweeps for five years because I live up the street and I care about my beach," said **Jesse Beutell, Beach Captain at the Belmar 16th Avenue site**. "I volunteered one year then have been a Beach Captain for the past four. It's great to help other volunteers make the connection that the waste they collect could be from their personal footprint."

In addition to logging standard debris counts for various plastics, glass and lumber items, Sweeps participants also logged the strange objects that make their way to the beach from various nonpoint sources. Some of the ridiculous items catalogued today included an air mattress plug, an unopened gallon of paint, dog tick medicine, and a printer cartridge.

With gratitude, Clean Ocean Action thanks Aveda, Bank of America, and Kohl's for their 2014 Beach Sweeps **Statewide Sponsorship**. The Spring Beach Sweeps are made possible by support from many generous sponsors.

"Aveda's mission calls on us to care for the world we live in and a key way we do that is through our annual Earth Month campaign to protect clean water," stated **Katie Galloway, Aveda Earth Fund Director**. "Clean Ocean Action has been a longtime partner of that program and we're proud to be working with an organization doing such impressive and important work to protect New York and New Jersey's marine environment."

"Every year, Bank of America volunteers gather to help collect, tally and remove hundreds of thousands of pounds of garbage and debris from our waterways," said **Bob Doherty, New Jersey President, Bank of America**. "Beach Sweeps is a simple but powerful way we can positively impact our environment and improve our communities."

The 2013 Clean Ocean Action Beach Sweeps Annual Report can be downloaded [here](#) at cleanoceanaction.org.

Clean Ocean Action's mission is to improve the degraded water quality of the marine waters off the New Jersey/New York coast. Clean Ocean Action will identify the sources of pollution and mount an attack on each by using research, public education and citizen action to convince public officials to enact and enforce measures which will clean up and protect the Atlantic Ocean.

###