

Your News

JENSEN BEACH, STUART, PALM CITY, HOBE SOUND

ENVIRONMENT



Keep Martin Beautiful board members and International Coastal Cleanup community sponsors join together to promote the 2014 event, which strives to create trash free seas throughout Martin County. Pictured (from left) are Craig Ahal of AmeriSweeps; Mary Kindel with the City of Stuart; Holly Laiben of Character Counts!, a United Way program in Martin County; Cindy Willson with Friends of Harbor Branch (FAU); Chris Shultz of American Custom Yachts; Matt and Penny Cook of Cook Electric; Suzi Simonelli and Alice Hurd with the Stuart-Jensen Elks Lodge 1870; Rosanna Lewis and Rick Barr of Organic Laboratories.

Keep Martin Beautiful seeks local volunteers

Join in global coastal cleanup on Sept. 20

By Jayne Johnson
Your News contributor

PALM CITY— The state of our river has left many residents of Martin County feeling helpless and looking for ways to get involved. With the 19th annual Keep Martin Beautiful International Coastal Cleanup right around the corner, this is the perfect opportunity for the community to take action to help improve our beaches and waterways.

Approximately 300,000 volunteers from more than 100 nations around the world come together on a single day to participate in the waterway cleanup. Spearheaded globally by the Ocean Conservancy and coordinated locally by Keep Martin Beautiful (KMB), this year's International Coastal Cleanup will take place on Saturday, Sept. 20 from 8 a.m. to noon.

"The volunteers who participate in this

cleanup each year are a dedicated and passionate group. From every walk of life, young and old, they are the quiet heroes in Martin County and the real stewards of our beaches and waterways," said Jim Dragseth, KMB president. "It is rewarding to go to different sites during this coastal cleanup and see the mass of people with garbage bags, gloves, pick up sticks and data cards, combing the coastal waterfront and beaches and removing the unsightly debris that can cause harm to marine mammals. It's an important task and wouldn't happen without our volunteers."

The cleanup efforts are a vital part of motivating people to do something tangible in their community — to remove trash and debris from beaches and waterways. More importantly, the cleanup educates people to

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become aware of the problems associated with litter and challenges citizens to change the behaviors that cause the pollution in the first place. Last year, more than 2,000 KMB volunteers removed more than 41,000 pounds of litter and marine debris from our shorelines.

"Every piece of trash that is picked up during the cleanup should be a challenge for change," said Nicholas Mallos, marine debris specialist of Ocean Conservancy's Trash Free Seas program. "The trash that tops our top 10 list every year — things like cigarette butts, bags and bottle caps — include disposable plastics meant for one-time usage. These items simply do not belong in our natural environment."

Groups and individuals are welcome to join the cleanup effort at Stuart Beach. KMB encourages volunteers to sign up in advance to clean the beach or waterway of their choice to ensure clean waterways all over Martin County. Volunteers are invited to attend a Volunteer Appreciation Party at Stuart Beach behind The Elliot Museum from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

WHAT VOLUNTEERS NEED TO KNOW

■ The International

Coastal Cleanup targets waterways throughout Martin County, from Lake Okeechobee to the Atlantic Ocean and everything in between

■ Pre-registration is highly recommended to ensure volunteers are assigned to areas most in need

■ Volunteers who do not pre-register can join Keep Martin Beautiful at Stuart Beach on the morning of the cleanup

■ The unique data-gathering feature of this cleanup records every piece of litter collected

■ Volunteers should wear closed-toed shoes

■ Participants will be provided with water and cleanup supplies, as well as a complimentary T-shirt (while supplies last)

For more information about the 2014 International Coastal Cleanup, or to register your family, business, civic or school group, contact KMB at 772-781-1222 or info@keepmartinbeautiful.org.

Keep Martin Beautiful (KMB) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit community organization founded in 1994 as an affiliate of Keep America Beautiful. Its mission is to preserve and enhance the quality of life in Martin County through litter prevention, the promotion of recycling, improvement of solid waste management practices, and beautification and community revitalization activities. KMB signature events and programs include the annual Environ-

mental Stewardship Awards, the International Coastal Cleanup, the Great American Cleanup, the Adopt-A-Road and Adopt-A-Street programs, and other educational and outreach activities. Find

KMB on Facebook at <http://facebook.com/KeepMartinBeautiful>, follow KMB on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/KMBmartin>, visit <http://KeepMartinBeautiful.org> or call 772-781-1222.