

PALM CITY/TESORO YOUR VOICE NEWS & VIEWS

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Coastal cleanup partakers doing their best for the environment

FOR YOUR VOICE NEWS & VIEWS

PALM CITY — The 2015 International Coastal Cleanup is right around the corner and Keep Martin Beautiful is encouraging residents to join the community by taking action to help improve the quality of our beaches and waterways.

Approximately 560,000 volunteers from more than 100 nations around the world come together on a single day to participate in the waterway cleanup. Spear-headed 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. 19 from 8 a.m. to 11 a.m.

"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



Photo Courtesy of Tiffany Smith

The 2015 International Coastal Cleanup is right around the corner and Keep Martin Beautiful is encouraging residents to join the community by taking action to help improve the quality of our beaches and waterways. Photographed here are KMB President & AmeriSweeps Sponsor, Craig Ahal; Captec Engineering Sponsor, Cherie McCarthy; KMB Secretary, Mary Kindel; Martin County Solid Waste Sponsor, Wendy Parker; Cook Electric Sponsor, Jeffrey Cook; KMB Director & Martin County Solid Waste Sponsor, Pat Yancey; Cook Electric Sponsor, Ty Dowling; Cook Electric Sponsor, Penny Cook; Organic Laboratories Sponsor, Rosanna Lewis.

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protectors of our beaches and waterways," said Craig Ahal, KMB president.

"It is always inspiring 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 debris that can cause harm to marine life. It's an important task and wouldn't happen without the support of 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 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, over 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 Allison Schutes, 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, but 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. All volunteers are invited to attend a volunteer appreciation party at Stuart Beach from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. to thank volunteers, sponsors and community supporters. The event will feature food, drinks and family-friendly

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**Craig Ahal
KMB president**

activities.

Keep Martin Beautiful thanks the generous sponsors and community supporters of the 2015 International Coastal Cleanup, which include: Amerisweeps; Captec Engineering; Cook Electric; FPL; Indiantown Co-Generation; Jenkins Landscape; Kohl's; Martin County Solid Waste; Organic Laboratories; Pineapple Cove Apartments; R3 Recycling; Ram Realty; Sailor's Return; Wallace Nissan; and Whiticar Boat Works.

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 2015 International Coastal Cleanup, or to register your family, business, civic or school group, contact KMB at (772) 781-1222 or info@keepmartinbeautiful.org.