

International Coastal Cleanup

Media Release

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For Immediate Release

More than 240 volunteers participated in the International Coastal Cleanup

Saturday, September 20, was the area's largest recorded participation in International Coastal Cleanup!

Fernandina Beach, Florida, September 22, 2025: International Coastal Cleanup® (ICC) is the world's largest organized cleanup designed to keep litter and debris out of our oceans. Since the first ICC, more than 18 million volunteers have collected more than 380 million pounds of trash. ICC began more than 35 years ago, when communities rallied together with the common goal of collecting and documenting the trash littering their coastline. The movement was catalyzed by the passion and spirit of two committed individuals. They asked volunteers to go beyond picking up trash and record each item collected on a standardized data card to identify ways to eliminate ocean trash in the future. Over the years, this movement has created a family that spans oceans and country borders. It is a network that works together for something bigger than us.

This year's local cleanup, held on Saturday, Sept. 20, was organized by Keep Nassau Beautiful with participating organizations as site captains including Conserve Nassau, Eight Flags Jeep Club, Girl Scouts Troop 269 & 509, Keep Nassau Beautiful, Memorial United Methodist Church, Paddle Jax Amelia, and St. Peter's Episcopal Church sponsoring sites at Main Beach, Seaside/Sadler, Peter's Point, Burney Park, Dee Dee Bartels, Fernandina Beach waterfront, Wade's Place under the Shave Bridge, and a paddle on Lofton Creek. Local Adopt A Road partners also participated in litter clean-up, including Coast One Tours, LLC at American Beach, and Amelia Island Rotary Sunrise at Dee Dee Bartels.

242 volunteers including Nassau County residents and visitors, with supplies provided by KNB and reusable bags provided by Mocama Beer Company and White Oak Conservation, spent their Saturday morning helping remove improperly discarded litter and debris. During the cleanup event, volunteers worked in teams to record the type and quantity of litter collected. The results are shared with Ocean Conservancy through their free app, Clean Swell. Volunteer tracking has enabled the Ocean Conservancy to build the world's largest database on marine debris, totaling nearly 400 million items.

Following the cleanup, participants were invited to a volunteer appreciation lunch of pizza, wings, and salad at V Pizza. Volunteers also received an event t-shirt while supply lasted. Results from the cleanup were shared and gift cards were awarded for the largest item, most unusual item, most cigarette butts collected, youngest participating volunteer, and largest participating family.

Locally, more than 3,700 pieces of litter were reported as collected, at an estimated weight of 2,381 lbs. The most collected items were cigarette butts and plastic beverage bottles. The largest items collected included a portion of a boat at Dee Dee Bartels and a muffler and tail pipe at Wade's Place. The most unusual item collected was a message in a bottle during the paddle on Lofton Creek. A volunteer at Dee Dee Bartels reported the removal of 117 cigarette butts, which was the most collected item overall and reported at a total of 1,384 pieces removed as litter. The volunteer effort made an impact in keeping litter from entering our ocean and harming our natural environment and the wildlife that call it home.

"We appreciate the incredible commitment our community makes to cleanup events. These events raise awareness and remove visible litter, but they need to be supplemented by a commitment to reducing the use of single-use plastics," said Lynda Bell, Executive Director. "With the support of sponsors and volunteers, KNB brings visibility during festivals and events with the Water Refill Station, asking event planners to eliminate bottled water and encourage participants to bring a refillable water bottle."

The event would not be possible without support from sponsors. Supplies for the cleanup and the Volunteer Appreciation Lunch held after the cleanup were sponsored by Surfing's Evolution and Preservation Foundation. V Pizza of Fernandina Beach hosted the volunteer appreciation lunch, providing pizza, wings, salad, and fountain drinks using the limited-edition infinitely recyclable aluminum cup. The City of Fernandina Beach and Nassau County Public Works departments provided disposal of the collected litter.

To learn more about how you can get involved, visit Keep Nassau Beautiful's website or the website of any of the participating organizations.

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For over 30 years, Keep Nassau Beautiful has been dedicated to conservation, sustainability, and beautification efforts in Nassau County, Florida. Through its flagship programs—including Wild Amelia, Planting Nassau's Future, and Gardens of Amelia —Keep Nassau Beautiful educates, engages, and activates residents and visitors to protect the natural environment, reduce litter and waste, and expand and preserve the local tree canopy. Recognized with numerous state and local awards, in 2024, the organization collected and properly disposed of over 84 tons of waste, planted over 800 trees, and educated over 7,000 individuals.



International Coastal Cleanup Volunteers participating with Conserve Nassau at Burney Park.



Paddle Jax Amelia crew and volunteers participate in International Coastal Cleanup with a paddle along Lofton Creek. Recognized during the Volunteer Appreciation lunch at V Pizza with the removal of the "Most Unusual Item", a message in a bottle.