



GREAT CANADIAN  
**Shoreline  
Cleanup**  
OCEAN WISE & WWF

# 2019 Annual Report

HELP KEEP OUR WATER ECOSYSTEMS HEALTHY FOR EVERYONE

A CONSERVATION PARTNERSHIP BY





# 2019 in Review

So much can be accomplished when we come together as a team. This past year, an incredible number of volunteers took to their shorelines, making this a record-breaking year for the Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup. In total, 3,012 cleanups were registered, with over 83,800 people contributing to their shorelines.

Let's break down how remarkable of an impact this is. In 2018, 61,631 people picked up 116,429 kg of litter. This equals 1.89 kg per person on average. With an almost 36 percent increase in helping hands in 2019, volunteers picked up even more litter. In total, they collected 163,505 kg of litter, which is equal to 1.95 kg collected per person.

The amount of litter collected per person continues to see an increase. If the issue of shoreline litter was on the decline, we would expect more helping hands to gather less litter per person, but in fact the numbers show that there is still a lot of work to be done.

Shoreline cleanups are an important step in keeping litter out of nature. In recovering more harmful pollutants like cigarette butts and tiny pieces of plastic in communities across the country, volunteers are preventing ingestion, entanglement and other impacts on wildlife and ecosystems. We are thrilled to see growth in all provinces including Quebec, where our outreach and Nature Sans Plastic campaign drew new volunteers to the program. The citizen science data collected by volunteers on shorelines is helping to raise awareness on the impacts of litter.

Thank you to all the tremendous volunteers who made this year a success. We can't wait to see what you accomplish together for shorelines in 2020.



## A Big Year for Shorelines

This 26th year of the Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup was the biggest on record yet. Volunteers from workplaces, schools, youth and community groups, and concerned citizens enthusiastically showed their dedication to healthy waterways by taking action. The number of cleanups and participants surpassed any from past years, and even exceeded 2018 by over 40 per cent more cleanups and volunteers on the shoreline.

The program started in 1994, when a group of Vancouver Aquarium staff came together to help a shoreline in Stanley

Park. Since that time, the growing number of accumulated voluntary participation now sits at 937,000, covering 44,200 km of shoreline since the program began. **This is the distance of walking once around the entire globe.**

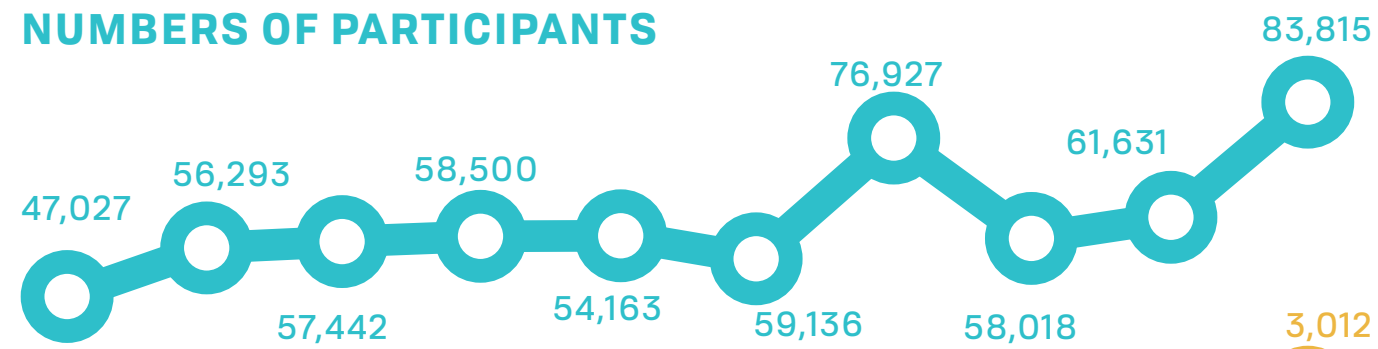
Shorelines across Canada received a helping hand this year, from as far north as Iqualuit, to the southernmost areas of Point Pelee; the eastern city of St. John's also saw a cleanup, as did the most western banks of the Yukon River. Volunteers from coast to coast to coast made this a record-breaking year for shorelines.

“ We are enormously proud that this program is now more than a quarter of a century old, and attracting new volunteers every day. The most important aspect of it is that it's fuelled by citizen action. Not only are volunteers out there making a difference, they are also informing themselves about the kinds of pollution that we should all avoid creating in order to ensure that our communal legacy is healthy lakes, rivers and oceans. ”

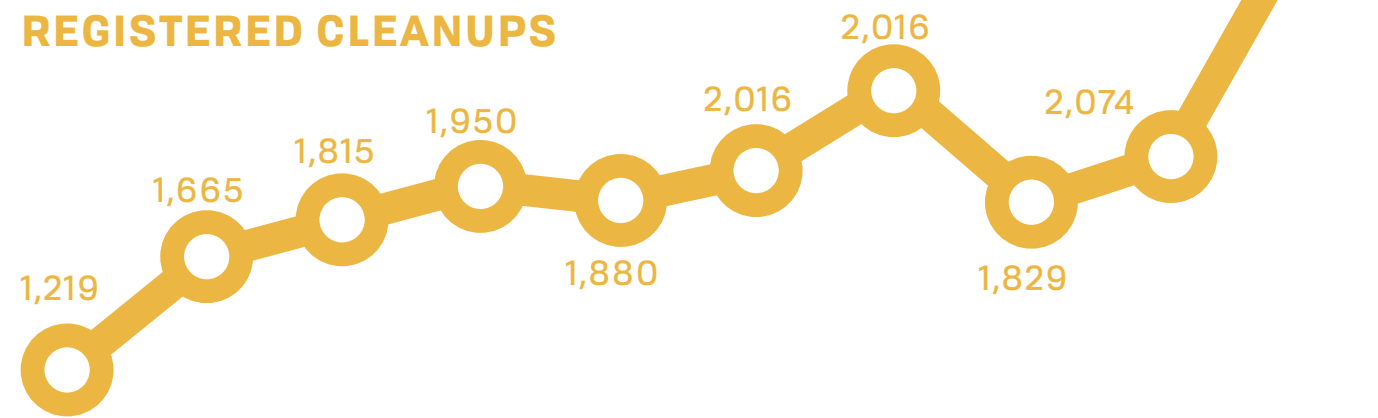
**LASSE GUSTAVSSON**  
PRESIDENT AND CEO OF OCEAN WISE

# The last 10 Years

## NUMBERS OF PARTICIPANTS



## REGISTERED CLEANUPS



2010 2011 2012 2013 2014 2015 2016 2017 2018 2019

# Distance cleaned since 1994



CIRCUMFERENCE OF THE EARTH

40,075 km

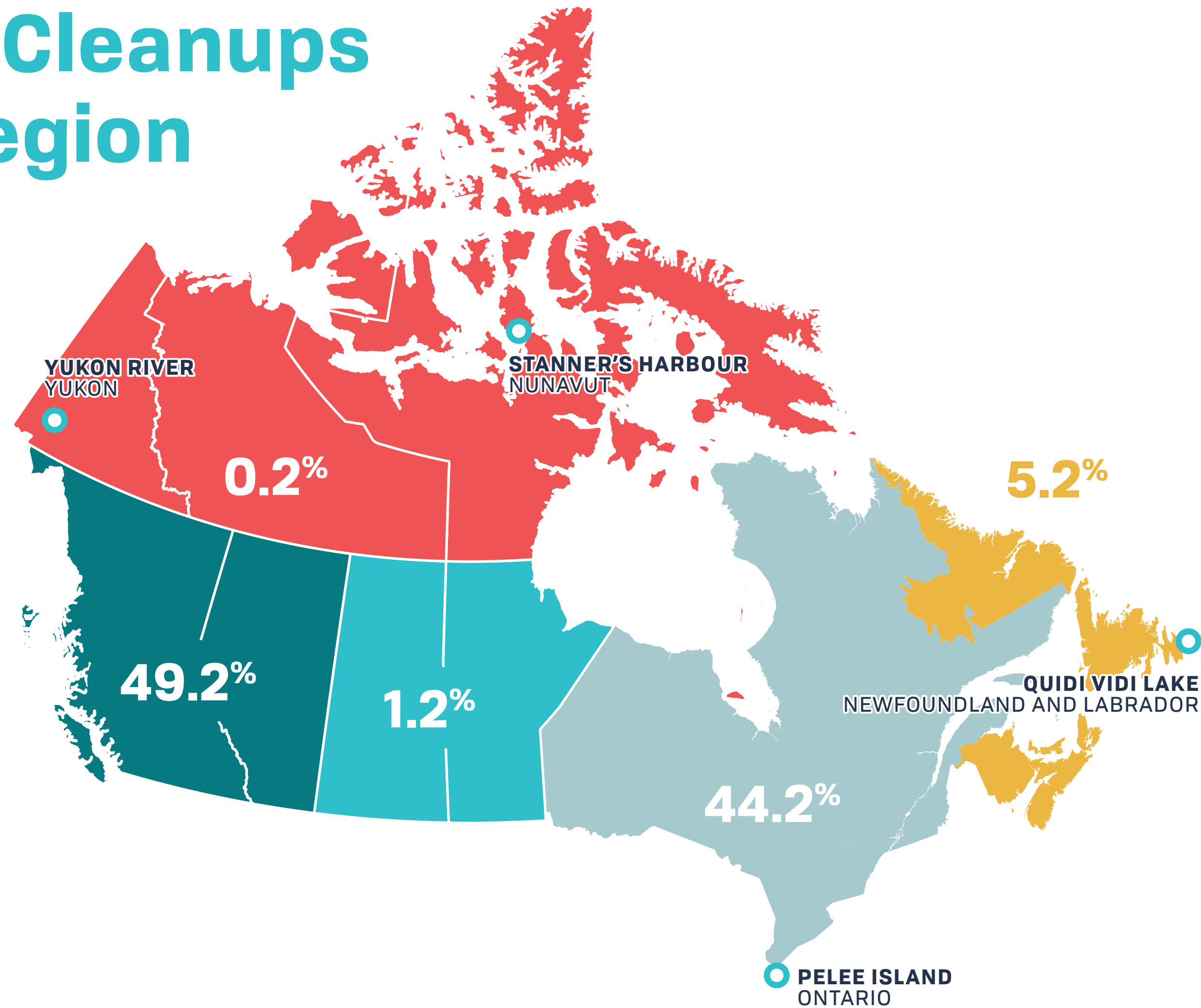


DISTANCE OF SHORELINE CLEANED SINCE 1994

44,262 km



# 2019 Cleanups By Region



○ MOST NORTHERN, EASTERN, SOUTHERN AND WESTERN CLEANUPS

# The Nationwide Data

Number of registered cleanups **3,012**

Number of registered participants **83,815**

Distance of shoreline cleaned (km) **3,937**

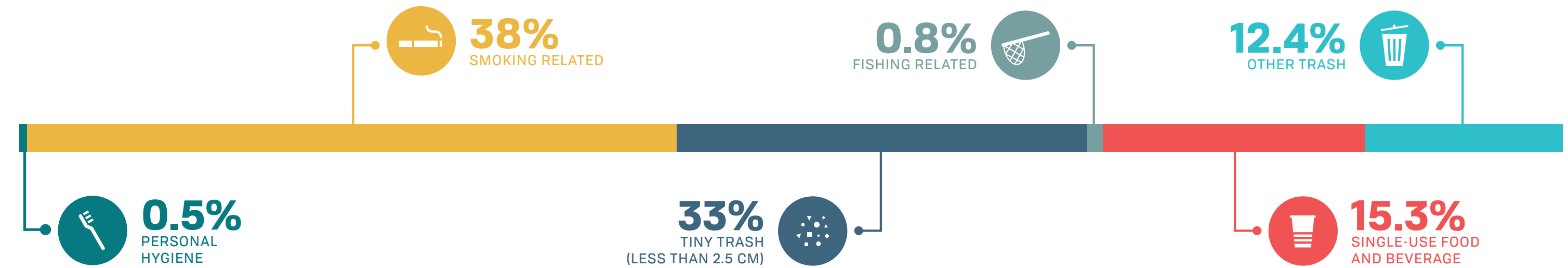
Weight of litter removed (kg) **163,505**

Trash bags filled **15,044**

Recycling bags filled **3,779**



# Types of Litter Found in 2019



# Volunteers on the Shoreline

## SCHOOLS AND UNIVERSITIES

**18,968**  
PARTICIPANTS

**15,416 kg**  
OF LITTER REMOVED

**545 km**  
OF SHORELINE CLEANED

**14,624**  
FOOD WRAPPERS REMOVED

## CORPORATE GROUPS

**24,751**  
PARTICIPANTS

**32,570 kg**  
OF LITTER REMOVED

**1,423 km**  
OF SHORELINE CLEANED

**151,151**  
CIGARETTE BUTTS REMOVED

## COMMUNITY GROUPS

**26,559**  
PARTICIPANTS

**100,377 kg**  
OF LITTER REMOVED

**1,154 km**  
OF SHORELINE CLEANED

**18,389**  
BEVERAGE CANS/  
BOTTLES REMOVED

## YOUTH GROUPS GUIDES & SCOUTS

**13,537**  
PARTICIPANTS

**15,142 kg**  
OF LITTER REMOVED

**815 km**  
OF SHORELINE CLEANED

**14,725**  
FOOD WRAPPERS REMOVED

# The 2019 Dirty Dozen

Each year we identify the 12 litter items most commonly found by our volunteers. This year it was a close call between cigarette butts and tiny plastic and foam. Once again, they both topped the list as the items most frequently found. This record-breaking year means that volunteers generated a large amount of data — this data is in turn shared with researchers, media and the public to help raise awareness of shoreline litter.

1.	<b>Cigarette Butts</b>	<b>686,055</b>
2.	<b>Tiny Plastic or Foam</b>	<b>595,227</b>
3.	<b>Food Wrappers</b>	<b>74,224</b>
4.	<b>Bottle Caps</b>	<b>51,992</b>
5.	<b>Paper Materials</b>	<b>63,371</b>
6.	<b>Plastic Bags</b>	<b>31,164</b>
7.	<b>Beverage Cans</b>	<b>28,192</b>
8.	<b>Plastic Bottles</b>	<b>26,212</b>
9.	<b>Straws</b>	<b>26,157</b>
10.	<b>Other Packaging</b>	<b>22,470</b>
11.	<b>Foam</b>	<b>24,213</b>
12.	<b>Coffee Cups</b>	<b>17,170</b>

In 2017 we combined two categories on the Shoreline Cleanup Data Card to make “**Tiny Plastic and Foam**”. Since then, the new category has been in the top two Dirty Dozen items, and nearly 1.3 million pieces have been collected in three years. As we learn more about the impacts of microplastics on wildlife and ecosystems, it is more important than ever to track and report on small plastic litter.





# International Coastal Cleanup Day

The Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup had one of its most successful International Coastal Cleanup Day events to date. On September 21st, teams from Ocean Wise and WWF-Canada hosted cleanups with program sponsors and conservation partners. More than 700 hardworking volunteers came out to take part in the four cleanup celebration events across Canada. The cleanups took place in Richmond, BC, Toronto, ON, Montreal, QC and Halifax, NS. Scouring the shorelines in search of litter, volunteers collected an impressive 1,294 kg of litter from their community shorelines.

# Shoreline Spotlights



## Jana Sneep

COMMUNITY GROUP  
EDMONTON, AB

“Being a photographer, I’d take a lot of photos during cleanups and wanted to share these in a creative way. I decided to turn them into fun and memorable videos that clearly showed the impact we had. For the audio, I’d search for an upbeat song to complement all our hard work and then share the final videos with my participants when inviting them to join us again next year. My top tip is to invite the people who live in the area or near the shoreline. We focus on a group of committed people that live in Village Beaumaris, right on the lake.”

## Vanessa Fladmark

OCEAN BRIDGE AMBASSADOR  
HAIDA GWAI, BC

“There’s a ripple effect in the act of cleaning your shoreline; by cleaning up we become more aware of waste we produce. I’ve noticed people in my life switching to reusable bags, containers, mugs and starting discussions on sustainability. Seeing others looking to reduce their use of single use plastics makes me incredibly hopeful.”



## Tracy Nessinis

GIRL GUIDES GROUP  
NEWMARKET, ON

“The girls really loved the fact they were helping the community and environment at the same time. They were talking to people in the area and explaining what we were doing and how important this cause was. They loved to sort and weigh and take notes of everything that we were collecting. It was so nice to see the girls come together as a group and all be united in its cause. The girls want to go back and set up booths and hand out flyers on the advantages of cleaning up our community and the good we are doing. Their passion for this has been ignited.”



## **Lee Brubacher**

**COMMUNITY GROUP  
HAMILTON, ON**

“We did this cleanup because we care. We care for our city and the people in it. We care for the planet and all its creatures. It was certainly dirty work, but not terribly difficult. A simple commitment of time and energy was required. It was encouraging to arrive back at our launch spot and be greeted by the other boaters and walkers — each with multiple bags full of garbage.”



## **Taylor Penzes**

**OCEAN BRIDGE AMBASSADOR  
WATERLOO, ON**

“In a fourth-year course, my arts professor asked the class a question: ‘What will you bring to this world when you leave this program?’ I was stumped. I wanted to bring people together with the environment, but our environment has also been so damaged by people, and I didn’t think our land had healed from our dangerous impacts. I thought about shoreline cleanups, specifically the Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup, and the positive impact it has made on Canadians and their communities. Our shoreline collects everything that floats on the water’s surface, but what about items that sink, or are too heavy to be carried away in floods? That’s when I came up with Project Snorkel. We ended up completing six cleanups in communities across southwestern Ontario this summer.”

## **Marc Borins**

**WORKPLACE GROUP  
TORONTO, ON**

“Our Green Standards team thoroughly enjoyed the Shoreline Cleanup. It was a beautiful day and it was great to have members of our Toronto team out together, trying to do our part for wildlife, our shorelines and the community in which we operate. It’s a terrific initiative to get behind and we’re happy to have supported it.”



# Clean Shoreline Communities

In 2017 the Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup created the Clean Shoreline Communities designation — a collaboration with participating municipalities to raise awareness on shoreline litter and engage more citizens to steward their parks and shorelines throughout the year. Municipalities receive the designation by committing to host municipal cleanups, provide logistical support for volunteers, and through education and outreach, help reach new shorelines for community-led events.

In May 2019, the Shoreline Cleanup team was happy to announce that the City of Lethbridge would be the fifth Canadian municipality to be presented with the Clean Shoreline Community designation, joining the City of Calgary, the City of Hamilton, the City of Vancouver and the District of West Vancouver.

“ It might seem odd to call Lethbridge a Clean Shoreline Community given we aren’t anywhere near the ocean, but we know that anything we put in our rivers can end up in the ocean as well. We’ve been doing great things here in Lethbridge for many years to protect the Oldman River and keep the shorelines clean and this designation will help us continue to grow our local conservation programs.

**COREEN PUTMAN**  
MANAGER AT THE HELEN SCHULER NATURE CENTRE





# Youth Summer Educators

This summer, The Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup was excited to welcome four educators to the team. The youth educators were based in Vancouver and Toronto (the opportunity in Toronto made possible thanks to the support of the United Nations Association in Canada's Green Spaces program). The educators took to the community each week to engage with youth, schools, workplace teams and other community members on the importance of shoreline cleanups, sustainability and waste reduction.

Throughout the summer, the Toronto educators engaged more than 1,500 individuals through 22 events, including an incredible opportunity to attend the World Scout Jamboree in West Virginia, USA. At this event, the educators ran two days of workshops on ocean health and spoke with hundreds of youth from over 30 countries.

In Vancouver, the educators engaged over 2,300 individuals at 28 events. Youth in summer camps in the lower mainland experienced hands-on learning as educators led workshops on ocean conservation. Educators connected with community members of all ages at community festivals, fairs, and even engaged with 160 Scouts at the Pacific Jamboree in Sooke, BC.

“ No matter how pristine a park seems from a distance, I guarantee that if you look closely, you'll find a staggering amount of cigarette butts, tiny plastic pieces, bottle caps, food wrappers, etc. Our parks need more help than I think most of us recognize. ”

**CONNOR**  
GREEN SPACES EDUCATOR 2019

# Nature Sans Plastic

Plastic pollution doesn't belong in nature. Yet each year plastic is one of the most common types of litter found on shorelines. Oceans and lakes, rivers and forests, all bear the burden of our waste, and the diverse wildlife that call these habitats home can ingest or become entangled in plastic.

We have an enormous impact on our world, and many of us want to make a difference. In 2019, we launched a call to action to mobilize cleanups to collect plastic litter, from the Great Lakes to the Atlantic, all along the St. Lawrence River.

In Quebec, the Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup joined

forces with three organizations that share the same vision: Stratégie Saint-Laurent, Mission 100 Tonnes and the Blue Organization. Thanks to this collaboration, more than 8,000 volunteers participated in upwards of 270 shoreline cleanups and collected more than 76,000 kg of trash in 2019. Along with the Blue Organization and co-working project, Nouvelle Vague, we also organized a conference that brought together over 200 people around the subject of litter and plastic in nature.

From the Great Lakes to the Atlantic, cleanups were held

in celebration of the environment for World Oceans Day on June 8th, when more than 100 cleanup activities were organized and almost eight tonnes of garbage collected.

Keeping plastics and other litter out of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River can help prevent it from flowing into the Atlantic Ocean, showing that local action can have a global impact.

“ I'm incredibly proud of the work that we accomplish through the Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup every year. Our staff and volunteers are helping to keep plastics and other litter out of our waters. They are also contributing data that helps inform decisions about how to deal with waste as it impacts ecosystems and wildlife, ensuring we can live in a world where nature and people thrive. ”

**MEGAN LESLIE**  
PRESIDENT AND CEO OF WWF





## Citizen Scientists in the News

2019 marks our biggest and best year yet. We had the most media coverage we've received, with articles spotlighting findings from our 26 years of gathering litter data, reports of many successful cleanups across the country, and appreciation of our story maps (each year we create interactive ArcGIS maps that showcase our litter data). In June 2019 our maps were chosen as the App of the Month

by GIS company ESRI Canada, allowing us to share our citizen science data with an even wider audience. Later that month, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's office announced that Canada would be banning single use plastics starting in 2021. The press release shared the Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup as an example of direct-action solutions and cited our litter data as a source of information on plastic pollution

Canada-wide. News outlets highlighted events around the country, including a dedicated paddleboarder cleaning up a prominent lake in the Okanagan, the CEO of BC Ferries out on the shoreline in Nanaimo, and University of Toronto students stewarding their campus many weekends in a row.

Read more stories at [aquablog.ca/shoreline-cleanup](https://aquablog.ca/shoreline-cleanup)



The Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup, presented by Loblaw Companies Limited and the Coca-Cola Company, is one of the largest direct-action conservation programs in Canada. A conservation partnership by Ocean Wise and WWF Canada, the Shoreline Cleanup aims to promote understanding of shoreline litter issues by engaging Canadians to rehabilitate shoreline areas through cleanups.

[ShorelineCleanup.ca](http://ShorelineCleanup.ca)



Ocean Wise is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to inspiring the global community to join forces to protect the health of our oceans. Specifically, we work to engage, inform and inspire people to experience curiosity, wonder, and a desire for an ever-deeper understanding about oceans, as well as a way to conserve them.

[ocean.org](http://ocean.org)



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World Wildlife Fund Canada creates solutions to the environmental challenges that matter most for Canadians. We work in places that are unique and ecologically important, so that nature, wildlife and people thrive together. Because we are all wildlife.

[wwf.ca](http://wwf.ca)

# Our Donors and Supporters

Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup's work is made possible through the generous contributions of individual donors and corporate partners. We are deeply grateful for your trust, commitment and recognize your role in our achievements this past year. Thank you for your gift to our oceans, lakes and rivers and for believing in our mission.

## Presenting Sponsors



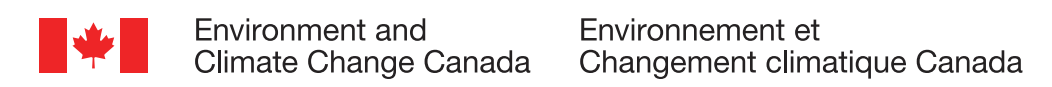
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## Regional Sponsor



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We also acknowledge the financial assistance provided by the province of British Columbia.