

OCEAN WISE

SHORELINE CLEANUP



2023 Shoreline Cleanup Impact Report

Our Collective Impact

Every year, it's inspiring to see the impact people have on our ocean through the Shoreline Cleanup program.

This year was no exception! 2023 saw thousands of incredible volunteers joining together in their communities, from coast to coast to coast, taking direct action against plastic pollution. Here's a snapshot of the time and energy dedicated to Shoreline Cleanups this year.

8,375 kg of litter removed

equivalent to the weight of **670,000 coffee cups!**

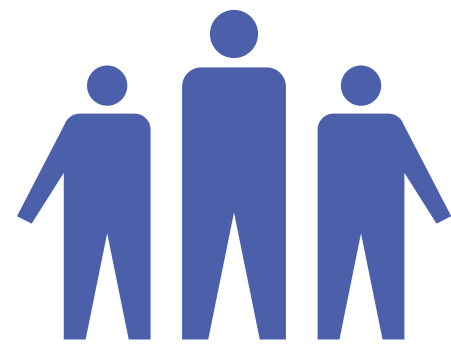
That's a lot of litter removed from our shorelines!



Your Impact



1,349
CLEANUPS



35,346
PARTICIPANTS



1,188 km
OF SHORELINE
CLEANED



8,375 kg
OF LITTER
REMOVED





Our Volunteers

The only way to make a meaningful and lasting impact on plastic pollution is with enthusiastic people! We could not have done it without you. Volunteers are the backbone of our program, and we owe our success to those who passionately plan, lead, and participate in cleanups.

SCHOOLS AND UNIVERSITIES

 **5,859**
PARTICIPANTS

 **143**
CLEANUPS

COMMUNITY GROUPS

 **7,574**
PARTICIPANTS

 **301**
CLEANUPS

WORKPLACE GROUPS

 **18,211**
PARTICIPANTS

 **770**
CLEANUPS

YOUTH GROUPS

 **3,702**
PARTICIPANTS

 **132**
CLEANUPS

In fact, our volunteers aren't just participants, they're citizen-scientists engaged in shaping a better future for our ocean. Beyond collecting the litter itself, our volunteers contribute vital data, helping us to develop new technologies and influence policy changes. Over the years, the data collected has helped shape decisions like the **Canadian Federal Government's Single Use Plastic Ban** in 2022. Together, we've made a tangible difference in the health of our ocean.



We hosted a Shoreline Cleanup in partnership with the University of Lethbridge, offering a unique experience for exchange students to learn more about our watershed while building awareness about the problem of shoreline litter. Participants were shocked by how many cigarette butts they found (approximately 66% of all items found). It was interesting to hear the students' reflections about the experience. **It provided a good reminder that we are all downstream and connected.**

CURTIS GOODMAN
CITY OF LETHBRIDGE



Digging into Litter Data

For 30 years Ocean Wise has been collecting data on the litter found on our shorelines. What began as a few cleanups around Vancouver quickly grew across Canada and has now expanded into the United States. By tracking the different types of litter picked up during cleanups using our data cards, volunteers are contributing to national and international databases that help us better understand the sources and impacts of shoreline litter across Canada and the world. It also helps advise government bodies, researchers, and the public, fostering awareness about shoreline litter and informing potential solutions.

Did you know that our data is open source and available by request. Email shoreline@ocean.org





The 2023 Dirty Dozen

We know plastic pollution is a problem, but did you know some items are more likely to be littered than others? Annually, Ocean Wise highlights the 12 most found items during cleanups across Canada. We call those items the Dirty Dozen, and here's what made the list in 2023!

1. Cigarette Butts	174,608
2. Plastic Pieces	97,898
3. Paper	41,907
4. Food Wrappers	37,164
5. Bottle Caps	26,062
6. Styrofoam Pieces	23,436
7. Soft Plastic Packaging	14,406
8. Rigid Plastic Bottles and Jugs	13,653
9. Beverage Cans	11,904
10. Plastic Bags	9,435
11. Plastic Bottles	8,547
12. Coffee Cups and Lids	8,089

Positive Signs of Change

The Dirty Dozen allows us keep a close watch on items impacted by [Canada's Single Use Plastic Ban](#). In 2023, we noticed some interesting changes to the list:

Straws have finally exited the Dirty Dozen after a decade-long presence. Interestingly, straws were one of the first items banned. We will be watching this trend closely!

Another item that continues to dominate the Dirty Dozen is cigarette butts. Accounting for a significant one-third of the shoreline litter collected during Shoreline Cleanups nationwide last year.

We will continue to track trends, focusing on provincial and municipal plastic bylaws to better understand the long-term impacts. Thanks to our citizen scientists, we're well positioned to continue tracking the impact of plastic policies.



Shoreline Cleanups in the United States

In 2023, we achieved significant milestones in the United States. Our Shoreline Cleanup in collaboration with Sail GP in San Francisco marked a pivotal moment in our journey, while our efforts in Chicago reinforced our commitment to combat plastic pollution.

We also added new sites in the US to encourage cleanups in more locations, and we're actively cultivating partnerships with like-minded individuals and organizations to establish a robust data collection program similar to what we've accomplished in Canada. This will allow for meaningful comparisons between regions and empower us to identify effective strategies for conservation efforts on both sides of the border.



Strange Things Found on the Shoreline

All sorts of things end up in our ocean, and volunteers have found several unusual items during their cleanups this year!

Here are our top three.

This year a set of dentures washed up on the shores of Sunset Beach in Vancouver and ended up being the strangest find of International Coastal Cleanup Day.

A rubber chicken was found at Hanlan's Point Beach on Toronto Island.

During a cleanup in Montreal, an old bicycle wheel was found washed up in Parc Arthur-Therrien during our Fall Series Cleanup.

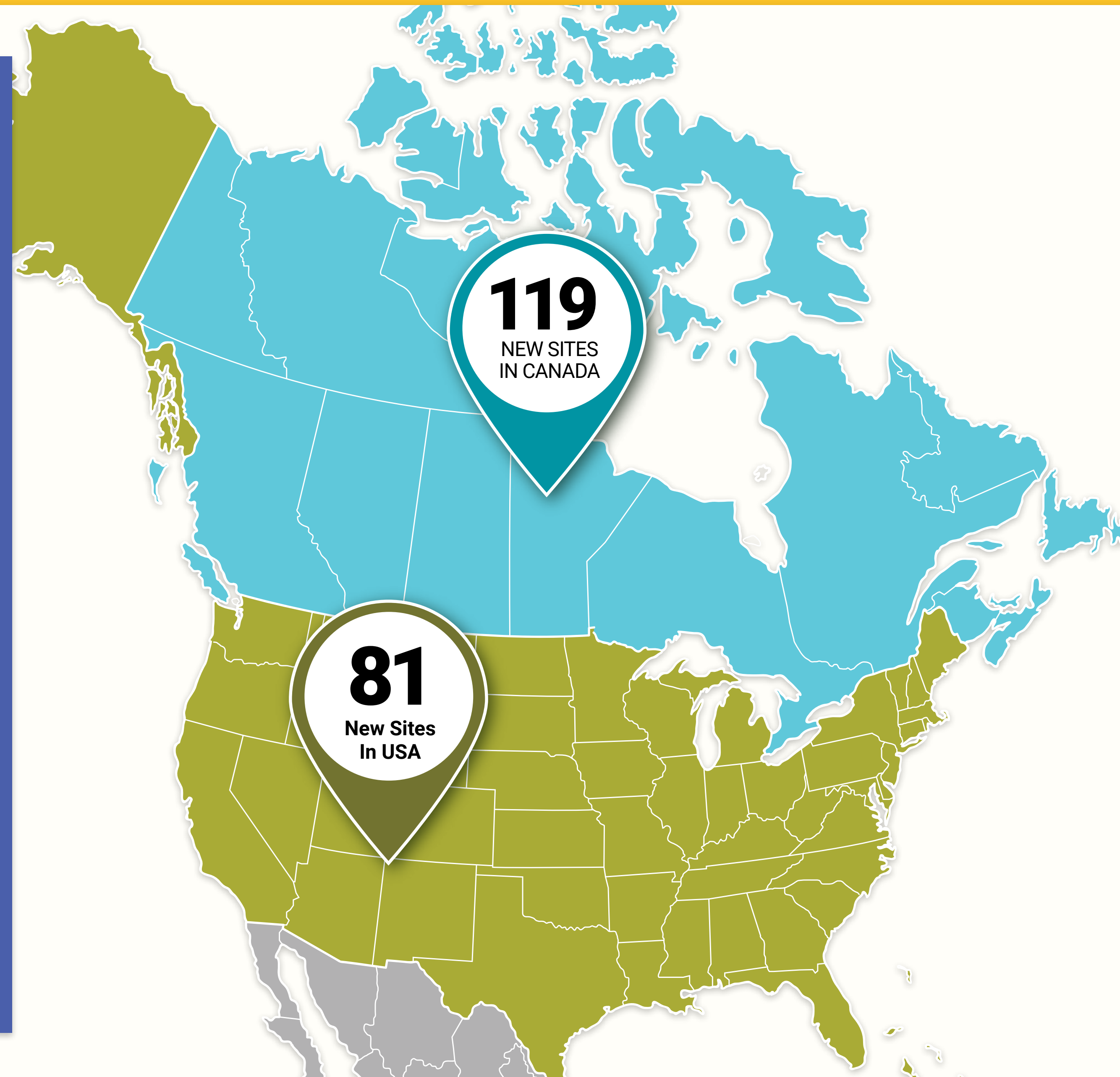


Expansion of Cleanup Site Locations

New cleanup sites help make a greater impact in the fight against plastic pollution, and this year, we added 200 of them! This includes 81 new sites across the United States and 119 new sites in Canada, bringing us to a total of **3,207 Shoreline Cleanup sites**.

Volunteers can suggest a new site through the [Ocean Wise portal](#), and it can be wherever water meets land. The removal of trash from inland sites diverts litter that could eventually end up in the ocean.

FUN FACT Of the 200 sites added this year, 33 of them were not on an obvious shoreline!



Ocean Wise Cleanup Series

Ocean Wise made waves across Vancouver, Toronto, and Montreal with our Ocean Wise Cleanup Series. Together, the Spring, Summer and Fall events encapsulated a spirit of environmental stewardship among the enthusiastic participants who came out to support their shorelines.

Summer Cleanup Series!



Vancouver

Montreal

Toronto



Celebrating Our Superhero Cleanup



Plastic pollution in our ocean is detrimental to every species living there, and ultimately the earth itself. I was inspired by Ocean Wise's Superhero Cleanup and am excited to see that there are people in my city who understand the importance of conservation without being reminded every day! It is so important to work together as a community to keep the environment clean; every little bit counts no matter how small you think your impact is!

KENNEDY TOWLER

RIPLY'S AQUARIUM OF CANADA



International Coastal Cleanup Day

International Coastal Cleanup Day is a globally-celebrated day that reminds us to take positive action for our communities! In 2023, Ocean Wise hosted Shoreline Cleanup events in Toronto and Vancouver. Collectively, over **382 volunteers collected an impressive 158 kg of litter.**

In Toronto, 228 participants were on a mission to clean three kilometres of shoreline along Woodbine Beach. Their collaborative efforts culminated in the removal of 71 kg of litter.

On the shores of Vancouver, 154 participants contributed to the cleanup at Sunset Beach. Together, they removed 87 kg of litter in just one kilometer of shoreline. This included 1,123 cigarette butts collected by one volunteer!

Not only did these events remove plastic pollution from waterways, but they were also a ton of fun!



Shoreline Champions

This year marked the official launch of our Ocean Wise Shoreline Champions program! Designed for businesses seeking a fun, engaging, and impactful team-building activity, this program offers a customizable Shoreline Cleanup. Our dedicated Ocean Wise team collaborates closely with each Champion, ensuring they have an unforgettable day while acting for our ocean.

Throughout the year, our Shoreline Champions made waves, with over **2,400 participants joining in 81 cleanups across Canada and removing a total of 4,448 kgs of litter** from our shorelines!

Is your business ready to make a positive impact? Our Shoreline Champions program fosters team building, promotes environmental stewardship, and contributes to corporate social responsibility.
Become Champions Today!



Thank You to Our Sponsors & Supporters

The work done by the Ocean Wise Shoreline Cleanup team would not be possible without the support and collaboration of our sponsors, corporate partners, and individual donors. Your gifts have played a role in sustaining the work our team and volunteers do for our ocean, lakes, and rivers. We couldn't have done it without you. From all of us here at Ocean Wise, thank you for your support.

We hope you will join us in tackling the threat of plastic pollution.

Here is how you can get involved:

- › [Lead a Shoreline Cleanup](#)
- › [Join a Shoreline Cleanup](#)
- › [Become a Shoreline Champion](#)

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#BeOceanWise

Together, we have the power to rebuild a resilient and vibrant ocean – for our children and future generations.

Curious about how you can continue your journey with Ocean Wise in reducing plastic waste from our ocean?

1. Join our [#BeOceanWise](#) Campaign and Help Stop Plastic Pollution from Source to Shore!
2. Compete head-to-head with the Lunch Box Challenge at school or work.
3. Schedule a Shoreline Champions event! Contact our team at shoreline@ocean.org.
4. Join our Ocean Matters newsletter to receive news and monthly updates.
5. Donate now to support ocean conservation work with Ocean Wise at ocean.org/donate



[Learn more at ocean.org](https://ocean.org)