



Save Our Shores
345 Lake Ave. Suite A
Santa Cruz, CA 95062



Capitola Beach Cleanups Fiscal Year 2023-2024

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Overview

In 2023 Save Our Shores (SOS) and the City of Capitola partnered to host quarterly public cleanup events at Capitola Beach throughout the 2023-2024 fiscal year. The four beach cleanup events recruited **176 community volunteers** who participated to aid in debris removal and the collection of community science data by recording the types and quantity of trash items collected. In total, we removed and prevented **656.5 pounds** of debris from littering Capitola Beach and entering the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary.



Event Details

Save Our Shores is the Monterey Bay regional leader in coordinating and hosting highly successful and impactful community beach cleanup events. Our team consists of experts in beach cleanup and safety protocols, data collection, and knowledge of the sites in need of cleanup around the bay. Our history, expertise, and operating procedures allow us to successfully engage diverse members of the public in stewardship of clean shores and healthy marine ecosystems of the Monterey Bay.

Save Our Shores hosted one beach cleanup per quarter at Capitola Beach during the fiscal year. Cleanups were prioritized to take place on weekends to recruit the most volunteers and engage with higher numbers of beach visitors. At each event, Save Our Shores staff and volunteers collected debris and recorded community science data on the types and quantities of litter found using the Save Our Shores Marine Tally mobile app or SOS paper data cards. The SOS cleanup leader began each event by delivering a welcome and safety talk to introduced participants to the concept of marine debris and its impact on the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary, discuss the land to sea connection (watersheds), and marine debris prevention techniques. Participants received important safety information and instructions for proper data collection before cleanup activities commenced. Volunteers then proceeded to clean the beach for the duration of the event and return with the items and data they collected. At the end of the event, the cleanup leader hosted a debrief to discuss the categories of items collected and brainstorm techniques for litter prevention. Finally, the cleanup leader sorted, weighed, and disposed of all debris collected.

Outreach and volunteer recruitment for all cleanup events was conducted via the Save Our Shores website events calendar, SOS supporter monthly e-newsletters, paid advertisements in the Good Times, promotional flyers for City of Capitola newsletter distribution, and SOS social media posts and stories. Advanced volunteer registration for all events was required. The publicized event description and registration confirmation emails detailed how volunteers can prepare to participate and informed them of the meeting location, accessibility, and services available at the cleanup site.



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Beach cleanup events serve as an excellent outreach and recruitment tool for cleanup and coastal stewardship activities in our communities. Visitors to the beach frequently participate unplanned and many mentioned how convenient it was that we were set up at the entrance with all the supplies available for people to use. These actions demonstrated the power of community engagement, and how conducting these events can attract attention and inspire action in the present and for future events. This incidental outreach paired with the direct messaging delivered to cleanup volunteers ensures that these events are meaningful and potentially transformative to both participants and observers.

Event Metrics & Cleanup Data

The data collected from these events follow the historic trends we see across all sites around Monterey Bay. The data continues to highlight a need to shift away from single-use plastic, disposable packaging in the food and beverage industry by prioritizing refill stations, incentivizing the use of reusable food ware, and developing sustainable packaging solutions.

Data was entered into the Save Our Shores debris database and analyzed to determine the most common trash items and identify items of concern. The data indicates that 4 of the top 5 items collected during these cleanups consisted of plastic materials. The top 5 items collected were: paper pieces (949), plastic pieces (912), plastic food wrappers (546), cigarette butts (430), polystyrene pieces (422).

Across all 4 cleanup events a total of 4,483 individual pieces of trash were removed from the environment. The results of our project suggest the continued need for beach cleanups to remove litter and prevent land-based trash from becoming harmful marine debris.

Table 1: Cleanup event metrics including number of volunteers (adults/youth) and pounds of debris collected (trash/recycling).

#	Event Date	# of Adults	# of Youth	Pounds of Trash	Pounds of Recycling
Totals		114	62	648	8.5
1	8/19/2023	14	2	26	0
2	11/12/2023	25	19	57	0.5
3	3/16/2024	36	20	173	7
4	5/11/2024	39	21	392	1



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Table 2: Itemized cleanup data collected per event and the totals across all cleanup events.

Date of Cleanup	8/19/2023	11/12/2023	3/16/2024	5/11/2024	TOTALS
Common Items					
Cigarette Butts	18	224	28	160	430
Plastic Pieces	122	316	228	246	912
Plastic Food Wrappers	52	180	137	177	546
Polystyrene Pieces (foam)	21	270	43	88	422
Plastic To-Go Items	13	75	57	58	203
Paper Pieces	67	550	177	155	949
Plastic Items					
Shopping bags	7	5	2	4	18
Balloons	2	2	3	2	9
Plastic Bottles	7	8	23	9	47
Bottle Caps and Rings	11	33	3	8	55
Polystyrene Foodware (foam)	3	26	1	1	31
Straws and stirrers	3	35	14	11	63
Toys and Beach Accessories	2	16	12	0	30
Glass Items					
Glass Bottles	5	4	8	11	28
Pieces and Chunks	3	28	63	23	117
Paper Items					
Cardboard	0	24	1	5	30
Food containers, cups, plates, bowls	18	9	7	10	44
Metal Items					
Beer Cans	15	6	11	8	40
Soda Cans	2	1	24	4	31
Bottle Caps	3	15	14	13	45
Hazardous Items					
Band aids	1	4	2	4	11
Batteries	0	3	0	0	3
Personal Hygiene	0	8	3	9	20
Disposable lighters	0	0	0	0	0
Syringes or needles	0	0	0	1	1
Vape items/ E-smoking devices	0	0	0	0	0
Smoking, tobacco (not e-waste or butts)	0	24	4	0	28
Bagged Pet Waste	0	0	3	2	5



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Personal Protective Equipment (masks, gloves)	0	0	5	2	7
Other Items/Misc.					
Wood pallets, pieces, and processed wood	1	40	19	47	107
Fishing gear (lures, nets, etc.)	0	4	8	8	20
Clothes, cloth	0	28	24	14	66
Other, large	0	1	2	2	5
Other, small	5	17	75	63	160

Appendix

Figure 1: Example of promotional flyer created for City of Capitola newsletter distribution.



Figure 2: Example of paid event advertisement placed in the Good Times.

