



SHORELINE CLEANUP

Founding USA Sponsor TRU EARTH

2024 Shoreline Cleanup Impact Report USA



Our Collective Impact

In 2024, the Ocean Wise Shoreline Cleanup program celebrated exciting milestones as we ramped up efforts to extend our impact in the United States. From collaborating with incredible partners to empowering dedicated cleanup leaders, we've witnessed the power of collective action. Together, we are not only tackling plastic pollution but also building a foundation for long-lasting change, supported by our US Founding Sponsor Tru Earth.

A big THANK YOU to everyone who has been part of this exciting endeavour—we're just getting started!

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Organizing a cleanup for the GenSea Shoreline Cleanup Challenge was amazing and inspiring! This experience demonstrated that anyone can conduct a cleanup in their community and make a difference, regardless of their proximity to a beach.

EMMA K.

GENSEA SHORELINE CLEANUP CHALLENGE PARTICIPANT



Your Impact



51

CLEANUPS



580

PARTICIPANTS



2,081 lbs

OF LITTER
REMOVED



51.85 miles

OF SHORELINE
CLEANED



205

LOCATIONS



2024 US Dirty Dozen

Introducing the US Dirty Dozen! The Dirty Dozen is a list of the top 12 most commonly found types of litter on shorelines each year. We've been compiling this list for decades in Canada, and we're excited to share our first-ever Dirty Dozen list for the United States.

1.	PLASTIC PIECES	12,161
2.	STYROFOAM PIECES	5,441
3.	CIGARETTE BUTTS	3,901
4.	BOTTLE CAPS	2,687
5.	PAPER	2,157
6.	FOOD WRAPPERS	1,692
7.	CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS	1,268
8.	SOFT PLASTIC PACKAGING	1,096
9.	BALLOONS	744
10.	PLASTIC BOTTLES	675
11.	BEVERAGE CANS	618
12.	PLASTIC BAGS	569



Common Litter Updates

Cigarette butts are a major issue, ranking among the top items found on both the US and Canadian Dirty Dozen lists. Their consistent presence highlights the need for better disposal habits and awareness.

Plastic pieces are among the worst offenders both in Canada and the US, showing just how pervasive waste from the breakdown of larger plastic items is. This reinforces the need for upstream measures at the source to reduce plastic production and usage.

Plastic straws landed just short of the Dirty Dozen in 2024, coming in at number 13. Plastic straws are still prevalent and an important single-use item to reduce. Calls to bring back plastic straws may make headlines, but the data tells a different story: every bit of plastic we avoid helps protect our ocean.



Making Waves Through Collaborations

In 2024, we were pleased to collaborate with several environmentally conscious and action-oriented organizations to help make Shoreline Cleanups happen across the United States. It is thanks to the amazing volunteers who have taken part, leading the way by setting an example and inspiring others to take action, that we've been able to collect drive our mission to tackle plastic pollution and collect integral data while doing so.



1

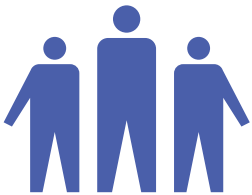
Manhattan Beach Cleanup with Tru Earth


**13**
PARTICIPANTS

**25 lbs**
OF LITTER REMOVED

2

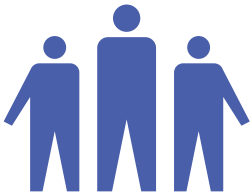
Will Rogers State Beach Cleanup with Tru Earth


**30**
PARTICIPANTS

**109 lbs**
OF LITTER REMOVED

3

Venice Beach, LA Climate Week with Tru Earth

**45**
PARTICIPANTS

**33 lbs**
OF LITTER REMOVED

4

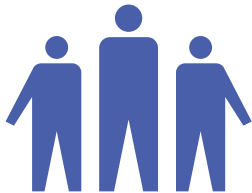
Anaheim, Net Zero Conference with Tru Earth


**20**
PARTICIPANTS

**36 lbs**
OF LITTER REMOVED

5

Venice Beach with Entertainment Industry Foundation

**39**
PARTICIPANTS

**65 lbs**
OF LITTER REMOVED



Girl Up USA x Ocean Wise: Heal Our Planet Campaign

Ocean Wise and Girl Up kicked off a new collaboration in 2024 by launching the Heal Our Planet campaign, supporting young leaders across the United States to lead cleanups in their communities. From **California to Texas, to Florida and other states in between, 20 incredible youth took action for their local waterways, contributing valuable data to understand and address plastic pollution.** This collaboration culminated in a group Shoreline Cleanup at Venice Beach, California as part of the 2024 Girl Up USA Leadership Summit.



20 CLEANUPS



272 PARTICIPANTS



1038 LBS OF LITTER REMOVED



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The way we treat the Earth is how we are treating our future. Taking initiative through Heal Our Planet's day of action will encourage my community to better protect the Earth by tackling these issues on a local scale.

NADIA K., FLORIDA

HEAL OUR PLANET PARTICIPANT

This was an amazing opportunity to learn to organize a cleanup and visibly see a positive change!

HEAL OUR PLANET PARTICIPANT

My friends and I were shocked at how many microplastics were hidden in the sand. After the cleanup, my grandparents became more aware of their plastic use, and even my parents have started making changes. It's been an eye-opening experience.

HEAL OUR PLANET PARTICIPANT



EarthEcho x Ocean Wise GenSea Shoreline Cleanup Campaign

Another highlight in 2024 was beginning our partnership with EarthEcho International to engage their online GenSea community in leading cleanups in their local areas. **EarthEcho is building a global youth movement to protect and restore our ocean planet, and GenSea—a dynamic virtual community of ocean advocates aged 13-25—is at the heart of their efforts.** From the shores of the United States to Kenya, and China, GenSea members led impactful cleanups around the globe.



23 CLEANUPS



144 PARTICIPANTS



**567 LBS OF
LITTER REMOVED**



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The park looked clean at plain sight but after an hour of cleaning we collected a lot of stuff, including over 230 cigarette butts! We were all shocked at the quantity.

CAMILA I.,

GENSEA SHORELINE CLEANUP CHALLENGE PARTICIPANT

By participating in the GenSea Shoreline Cleanup Challenge I was empowered to make a change in the community around me and to continue my passion for minimizing the plastic pollution that is so popular in the harbors and waterways of Southern California.

ISABELLA M.,

GENSEA SHORELINE CLEANUP CHALLENGE PARTICIPANT



2024 U.S. Actions Against Plastic Pollution

Even though the United States doesn't currently have a federal single-use plastic ban, actions are being taken on a local scale that make us feel optimistic. States, cities, and counties are stepping up with their own policies. For example, Connecticut, California, Delaware, Hawaii, Maine, New York, Oregon, and Vermont have implemented bans on plastic bags. These efforts showcase the power of local leadership in creating meaningful change. **Here are a few that stand out:**

Santa Cruz Bans the Butt

Cigarette butts are a top litter item in both the US and Canada's Dirty Dozen lists. In October 2024, [Santa Cruz County, California passed the first ban](#) on selling filtered cigarettes and cigars. This regulation, created by the Tobacco Waste Ad Hoc Subcommittee, was supported by a coalition of environmental, health and educational groups. The ban will go into effect in January 2027. This bold move by Santa Cruz County tackles one of the most persistent and harmful types of litter at its source.

Seattle's Single-Use Plastic Ban Expansion

Seattle, Washington has **expanded its ban on single-use plastics to include utensils, cups, and other food-service related items**. This means that businesses are required to offer compostable or reusable alternatives. Plastic pieces dominate both the US and Canada Dirty Dozen lists, proving how widespread plastics are in polluting our environments. Seattle's ban is a fantastic step forward, directly addressing these problematic items by replacing them with compostable or reusable alternatives.

Colorado Bans Styrofoam

Since January 1, 2024, retail food businesses in Colorado are no longer allowed to give out Styrofoam containers and cups. This change is part of the Plastic Pollution Reduction Act, which was passed in 2021 to tackle waste and pollution. The act also bans stores and retail food businesses from offering single-use plastic bags.

Why Does this Matter?

Leading Shoreline Cleanups in your community is critical to make sure we have the data needed to evaluate the impact of these bans. Your hard work helps us track progress, identify gaps, and build the case for other regions to adopt similar policies. **By taking action, you're playing a vital role in shaping a future with less plastic pollution.**



Our 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.

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Get involved in 2025!

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- › [Ask about Shoreline Cleanup data](#)