



**OCEAN
WISE**
SHORELINE CLEANUP
Presented by Loblaw Companies Limited

2024 Shoreline Cleanup Impact Report

Our Collective Impact

This year marks the 30th anniversary of the Ocean Wise Shoreline Cleanup program!

For three decades, volunteers have been taking action to remove litter from shorelines and green spaces across Canada, and recently, in the United States. **More importantly, over the past 30 years volunteers have collected vital data on the types and quantities of litter showing up on our shorelines.** With this robust litter database, Ocean Wise has directly influenced policy interventions—including Canada’s single-use plastics ban—and provincial and municipal bylaws. This year, we’re excited to celebrate these wins and continue to strive to expand our impact for the decades to come!

“

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



Looking back at the last 30 years



Employees and volunteers at the Vancouver Aquarium decide to clean up a beach in Stanley Park. The **idea for the Great BC Beach Cleanup** program is born.

1994

1997

2002

The program grows to operate from **coast to coast** with participants leading cleanups across Canada.

2010



The Vancouver Aquarium expands to become Ocean Wise, a global conservation organization **focused on protecting and restoring our world's ocean.**

2017

2017

Ocean Wise parts with the Vancouver Aquarium and the Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup rebrands as the **Ocean Wise Shoreline Cleanup.**

2020

Ocean Wise Shoreline Cleanup data is used in British Columbia's **What We Heard on Marine Debris in BC**, highlighting polystyrene foam as a key problem facing BC's marine environment.

2020



2021

Canada launches the Single-use Plastics Prohibition Regulations, informed by Ocean Wise Shoreline Cleanup data.

2022

Ocean Wise reaches **one million volunteers** and launches the **Shoreline Champions** corporate engagement program.

2024

Ocean Wise begins **collaborating with municipalities across Canada** like the City of Vancouver, City of Nanaimo and Halifax Regional Municipality to leverage shoreline litter data to inform evidence-based local plastic reduction interventions.

2025

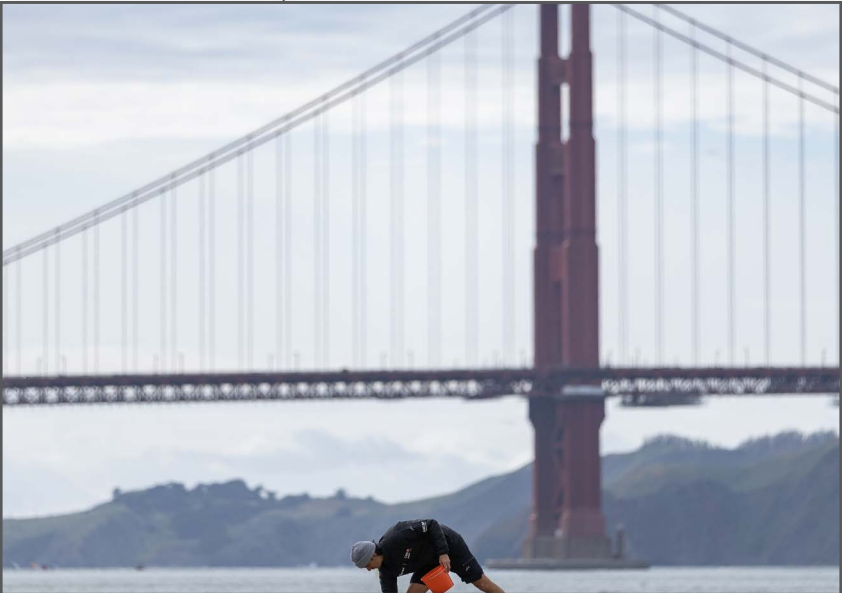
Ocean Wise will continue to work with citizen scientists across Canada and the US to **grow and strengthen our litter dataset to monitor and track plastic reduction policies** and interventions at scale.

The Great BC Beach Cleanup expands across British Columbia with **400 volunteers participating at 20 sites.**



Ocean Wise **partners with WWF Canada** to create the Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup, a **national conservation initiative** taking place in every province and territory in Canada.

The White Rock and Surrey Naturalist Society uses Ocean Wise litter data to campaign for restricted use of expanded polystyrene foam on waterways.



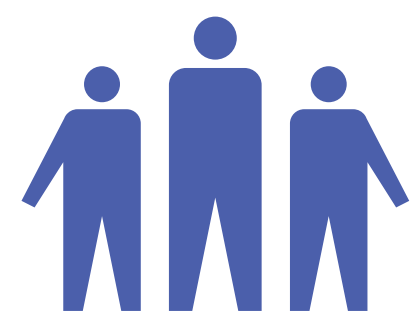
Ocean Wise hosts its first Shoreline Cleanup in the United States – paving the way for international growth.



Your Impact



1,068
CLEANUPS



25,807
PARTICIPANTS



17,149 kg
OF LITTER
REMOVED



1,233 km
OF SHORELINE
CLEANED



401,449
ITEMS REMOVED

2024 marked an impressive year on the shorelines! We saw tremendous volunteer efforts from coast to coast and a surge of cleanups in the United States – ramping up our international expansion. Thanks to our *Presenting Sponsor, Loblaw Companies Limited*, we've been able to make an impact on waterways across Canada and continue to build our robust litter database.



The 2024 Dirty Dozen

Every year we highlight the ‘Dirty Dozen’ – the 12 items that were found most often on shorelines. Check out the worst offenders below and read on to see what else we can learn from our litter data!

1.	CIGARETTE BUTTS	133,767
2.	PLASTIC PIECES	68,417
3.	PAPER	31,769
4.	STYROFOAM PIECES	29,959
5.	FOOD WRAPPERS	28,938
6.	BOTTLE CAPS	18,325
7.	SOFT PLASTIC PACKAGING	11,041
8.	BEVERAGE CANS	9,255
9.	PLASTIC BAGS	8,577
10.	PLASTIC BOTTLES	7,021
11.	COFFEE CUPS AND LIDS	6,161
12.	STRAWS	4,922



Data Highlights

This year we used our litter database to take a closer look at plastic items that repeatedly show up in the environment. We were particularly interested in the impacts of federal, provincial and municipal plastic regulations on specific plastic items such as straws, plastic utensils and plastic bags. Our analysis compares the average number of items collected per person, per cleanup, year-over-year and across different regions, with a focus on the items included in single-use plastic bans.

Regulatory Landscape

The [Single-use Plastics Prohibition Regulations](#) started in December 2022, restricting the import and manufacture of certain single-use plastic products for sale and distribution in Canada. However, in November 2023, Canada's Federal Court struck down the ban, calling it invalid and unlawful. The courts are still working to come to a resolution. In the meantime, the prohibitions remain in place. This means that, at a minimum, some of the most familiar single-use items used in retail and food service (like plastic shopping bags, cutlery, food service ware, stir sticks, and straws) are restricted across Canada. Several provinces and municipalities, including Manitoba, Montreal, PEI, Nova Scotia and Newfoundland, have also implemented their own plastic regulations that operate alongside the federal ban, and in some cases, impose stricter regulations or earlier timelines for compliance.



“

My favourite part of Shoreline Cleanups is knowing that I'm making a difference by keeping public spaces clean and safe for outdoor adventurers, pets, and wildlife. My advice to anyone else considering solo cleanups is to just try it! It is rewarding and a great excuse to go for a hike on one of the endless beautiful beaches of our incredible city.

MAX, VANCOUVER

13 CLEANUPS, 45KM CLEANED, 60KG OF LITTER REMOVED

Key Findings

Across Canada, our data shows a reduction in the number of straws, plastic bags and utensils collected per person from 2023 to 2024! This is a promising indicator that the single-use plastic ban – which targeted these particularly problematic items as some of the first to be regulated – is having a positive impact!



Provinces that moved first to implement plastic bag bans, like Prince Edward Island (2019), Nova Scotia (2020) and Newfoundland (2020), have seen a greater reduction in plastic bags collected per person than provinces that do not have additional regulations beyond the federal single-use plastic ban. **This is an encouraging indication that evidence-based regulations at the provincial level are working.**

In Ontario, our data shows consistently higher annual averages for plastic bags, straws and

utensils, when compared to all other regions and the national average. For example, in 2024, cleanup participants in Ontario found on average 3.6 straws per person, per cleanup, compared to the national average of 1.9 straws. Ontario does not currently have additional plastic bans beyond what is restricted federally, and while we cannot say for certain what has caused more of these items to turn up at cleanups in Ontario than elsewhere in Canada, our data suggests an urgent need for further action in the province to tackle single-use plastics.

Though not included in the federal single-use plastic ban, we included coffee cups and lids in our data analysis. Our data shows that the average number of coffee cups collected per person, per cleanup, doubled between 2017 and 2020. Since 2021, we've started to see a decline in the average number of coffee cups collected, and we want this to continue! This is a simple area where individual choices can make a big impact. Check out our [blog post](#) ranking the most eco-friendly options for your hot drink to help you lessen your impact on the environment!

Check out the [Appendix](#) of this report to see our full data analysis and findings!



Leveraging Data for Action

In 2024, we launched a new program for municipalities, funded in part by the [Canada Water Agency](#), aiming to amplify the efforts of data collection by working directly with municipal governments to offer data-informed plastic reduction recommendations. To do this, we analysed our litter data to identify location-specific and evidence-informed interventions that can support municipalities with their plastic reduction priorities, creating an even greater impact on plastic pollution at the source. In 2024, we worked with three municipalities on this project.

City of Vancouver

Shoreline Cleanup data is supporting the City of Vancouver in their efforts to curb cigarette butt litter. With our data, we were able to pinpoint hotspots where cigarette butts accumulate year after year and examined the seasonality of cigarette butt litter to identify when mitigation efforts would be most effective.

City of Nanaimo

The City of Nanaimo is working on a waste free event guide to reduce the amount of litter generated at large events in the area. We found a regional rise in the average number of recyclable items collected per person during cleanups. Most commonly found were plastic bottles, beverage cans, and glass bottles. To reduce the prevalence of these items on the shorelines, the City of Nanaimo is piloting recycling infrastructure to three destination parks this summer and updating their waste free event guide to encourage more diversion by vendors and attendees.



Leveraging Data for Action Cont'd

Halifax Regional Municipality & Nova Scotia

Single-use items have been a key focus of outreach campaigns by province-wide organizations like Divert NS. Shoreline Cleanup data shows that more single-use items like cans, plastic bottles, coffee cups and lids, and utensils have been collected in recent years compared to 2019 (a year chosen as a baseline by the region). To prevent this trend from continuing, recommendations include ongoing awareness campaigns throughout Nova Scotia to promote refusal of single-use items and return recyclables to local depots.

**Engagement with
municipal governments is
continuing in 2025.**

To get involved or learn more, email
shoreline@ocean.org

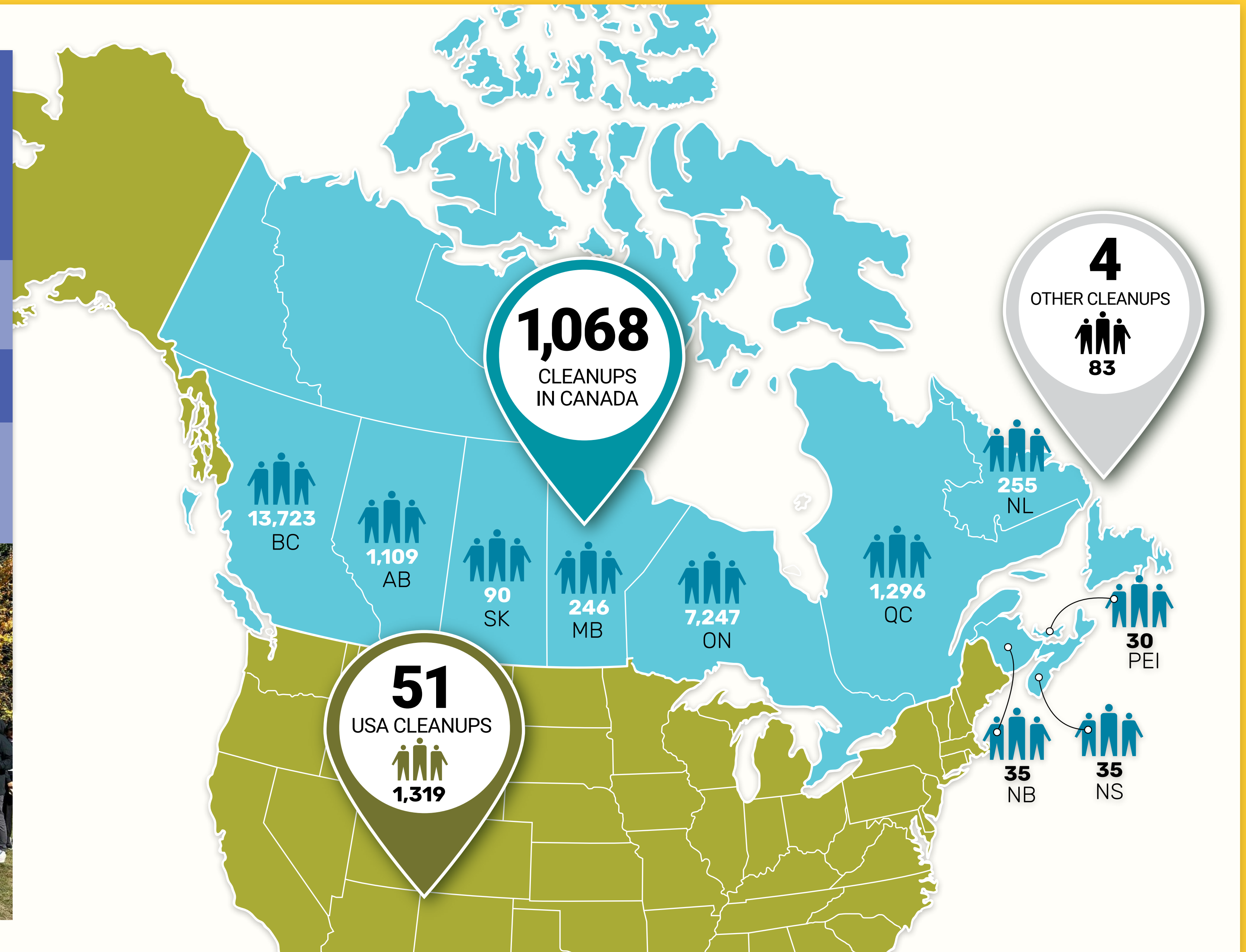


2024 Spotlights

Over 430 Shoreline Cleanups
were hosted by businesses.

52 people led solo cleanups!

Over 6,300 of Shoreline Cleanup
participants were students or
youth groups!





Shoreline Cleanups in the United States

2024 marked several milestones for Shoreline Cleanup in the United States, including new cleanup sites and inspiring new partnerships! The goal? To create a solid data foundation to inform policies and business decisions that reduce plastic waste and measure the effectiveness of existing bans. This marks a critical step in our mission to combat plastic pollution globally.

Tru Earth

Our United States Founding Sponsor, Tru Earth, showed their unwavering commitment to addressing plastic pollution in 2024. The Tru Earth team led cleanups across California that mobilized volunteers, collected crucial data on plastic pollution and made a meaningful impact. We were pleased to join them in California at LA Climate Week and the Net Zero Conference in Anaheim, collaborating for an ocean-friendly future.

Girl Up USA

Ocean Wise and Girl Up USA kicked off a new collaboration this year 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 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.



EarthEcho International

In 2024, Ocean Wise and EarthEcho International teamed up to engage an international community of young leaders through an online platform for young leaders called GenSea. From the shores of the United States to Kenya and China, 20 GenSea members took action for waterways around the globe.

“We’ve been hosting beach cleanups in Vancouver for five years and have seen a growing interest in protecting our shores, with larger turnouts and increasing participation from younger volunteers, especially high school students. We’ve also noticed more companies joining our cleanups as part of their team building. It’s inspiring to see how eager people are to help, and we’ve observed a heightened awareness of plastic pollution. While the problem persists, we’ve seen positive changes as communities and organizations unite to clean the beaches, we all enjoy and love.

ALEXA
VANCOUVER, OCEANSPIRE



Strange Things Found on the Shoreline

Occasionally we find an item on the shoreline that makes us wonder - how did this end up here? Here are the top three unusual items volunteers found during Shoreline Cleanups this year:

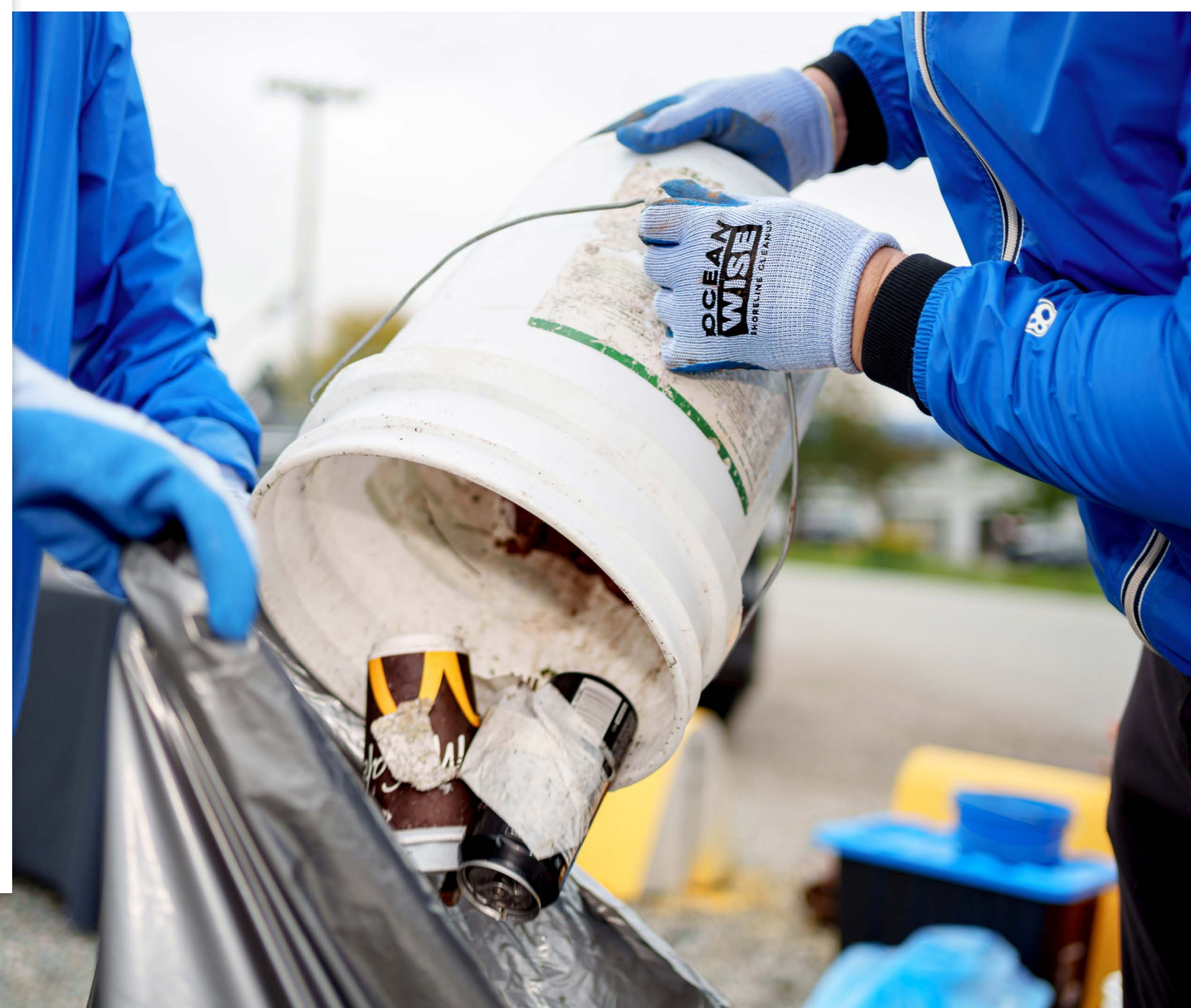
1. **A painting of a liger** was found during a cleanup in Calgary, AB.
2. During a cleanup in Vancouver, BC a **Pokémon costume** was found on the shore of Sunset Beach.
3. **Several buckets of paint and construction materials** were removed from the shores of the Fraser River in Richmond, BC.



Shoreline Champions

Through the Shoreline Champions Program, our customizable program for businesses, Ocean Wise offers engagement opportunities that go beyond a typical cleanup. In 2024, we were thrilled to welcome nearly **2,300 Shoreline Champion participants** to **70 cleanups across Canada and the US**, removing an astonishing total of **4,311 kilos of litter from shorelines!** We are inspired to see several Shoreline Champions return year after year. The positive impact doesn't just end after the cleanup, these Shoreline Champions often go on to take further sustainable actions both individually and within their organizations.

The Shoreline Champions Program is a unique opportunity to strengthen team connections while also contributing to environmental stewardship and healthy communities. Is your business ready to become a Shoreline Champion? [Learn more HERE!](#)





“

The Nature's Way Canada team was able to mobilize for Earth Day 2024 with a company-wide Shoreline Cleanup in Nova Scotia, Ontario, and BC. This was the first time that our satellite teams and remote employees were able to work together, on the same day, with head office on such a worthy cause. The team was overwhelmingly surprised by the amount of small plastic pieces collected, which would normally go completely unnoticed on your average day. And our small but mighty team of 52 were able to make their impact by removing 152.5kgs of waste from our shorelines.

KELLY
NATURE'S WAY CANADA



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.

Get involved in 2025!

- › [Lead or join a Shoreline Cleanup](#)
- › [Become a Shoreline Champion](#)
- › [Ask about Shoreline Cleanup data](#)

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This project was undertaken with the financial support of
Ce projet a été réalisé avec l'appui financier de



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

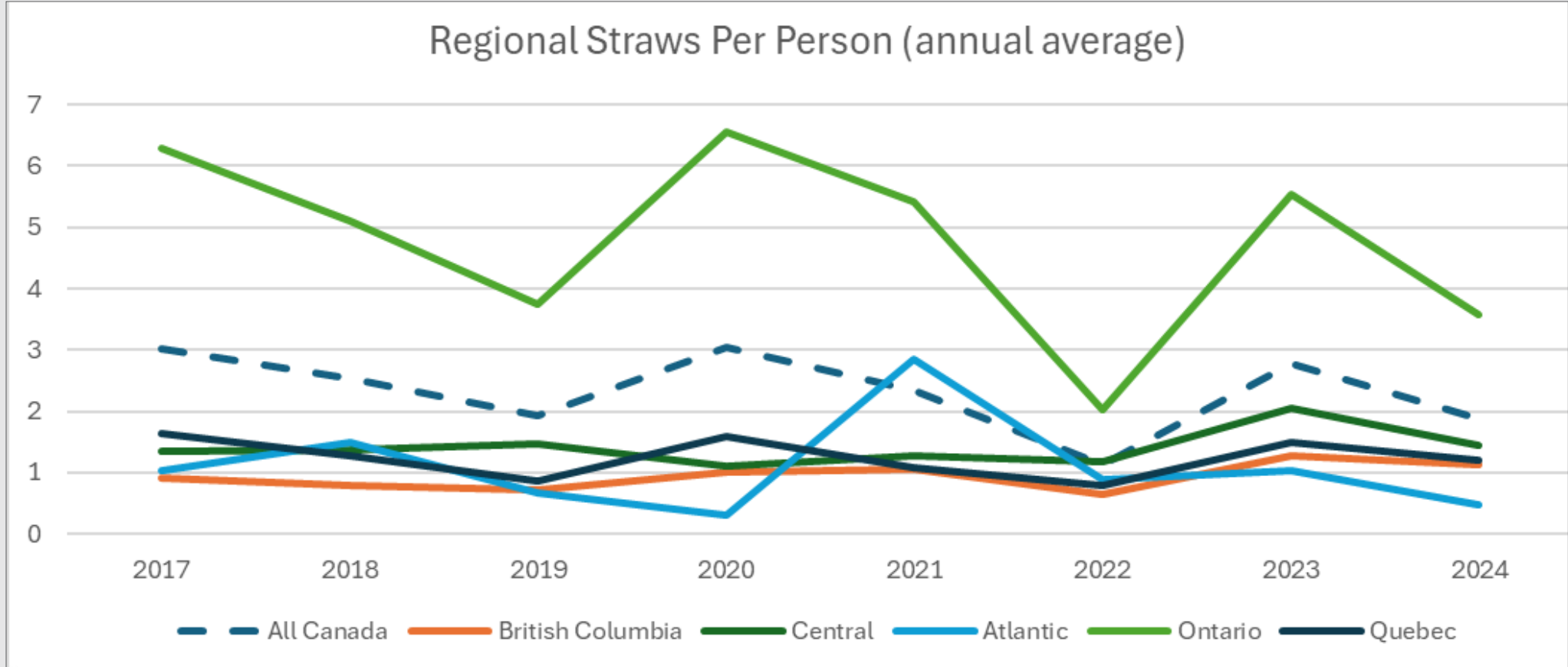
Curious about how you can continue your
journey with Ocean Wise?

1. Schedule a Shoreline Champions event!
Contact our team at shoreline@ocean.org!
2. Join our **[Ocean Matters newsletter](#)** to receive
news and monthly updates.
3. Donate now to support ocean conservation work
with Ocean Wise at ocean.org/donate

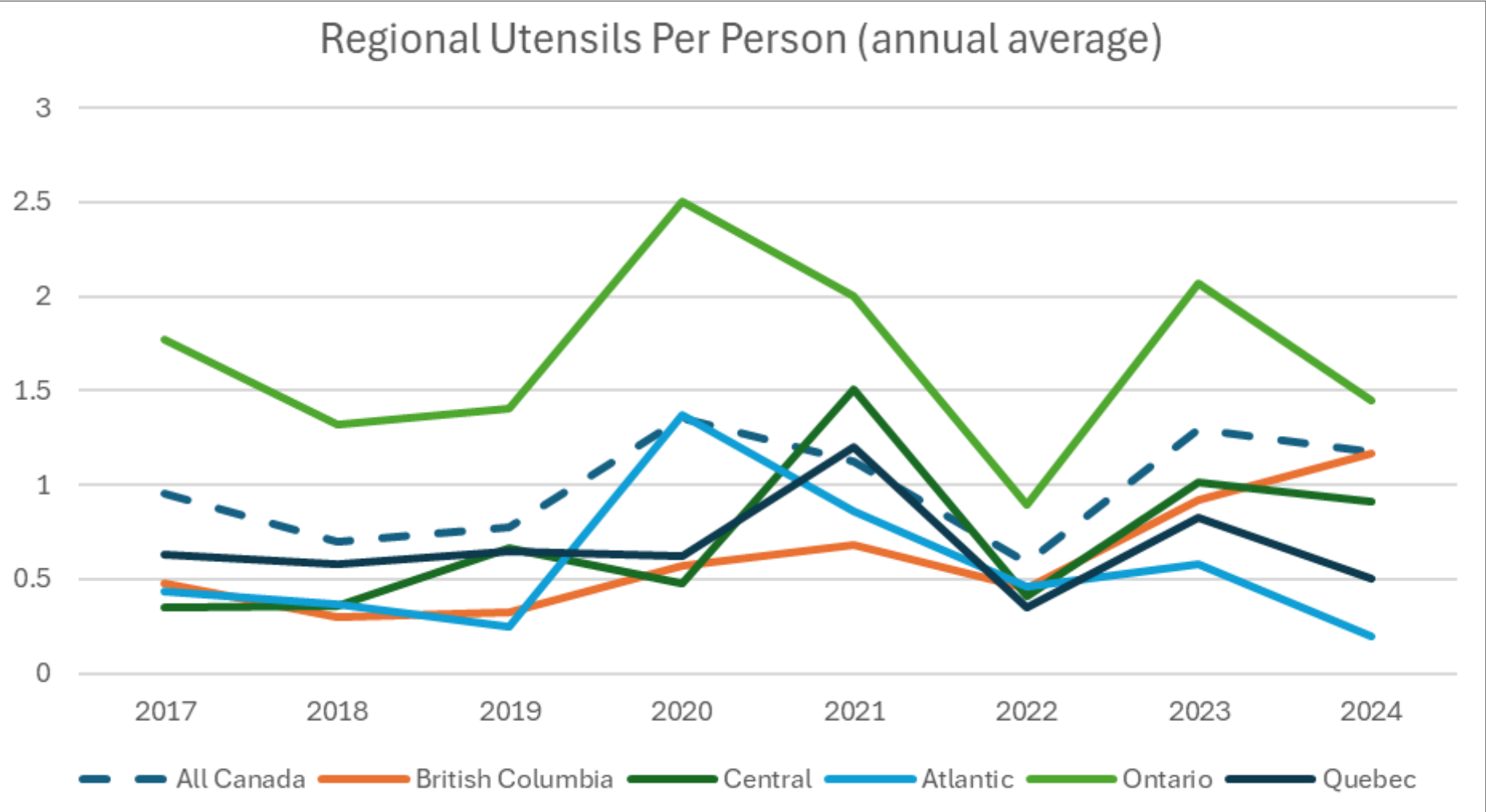


[Learn more at ocean.org](https://ocean.org)

Appendix Straws + Utensils

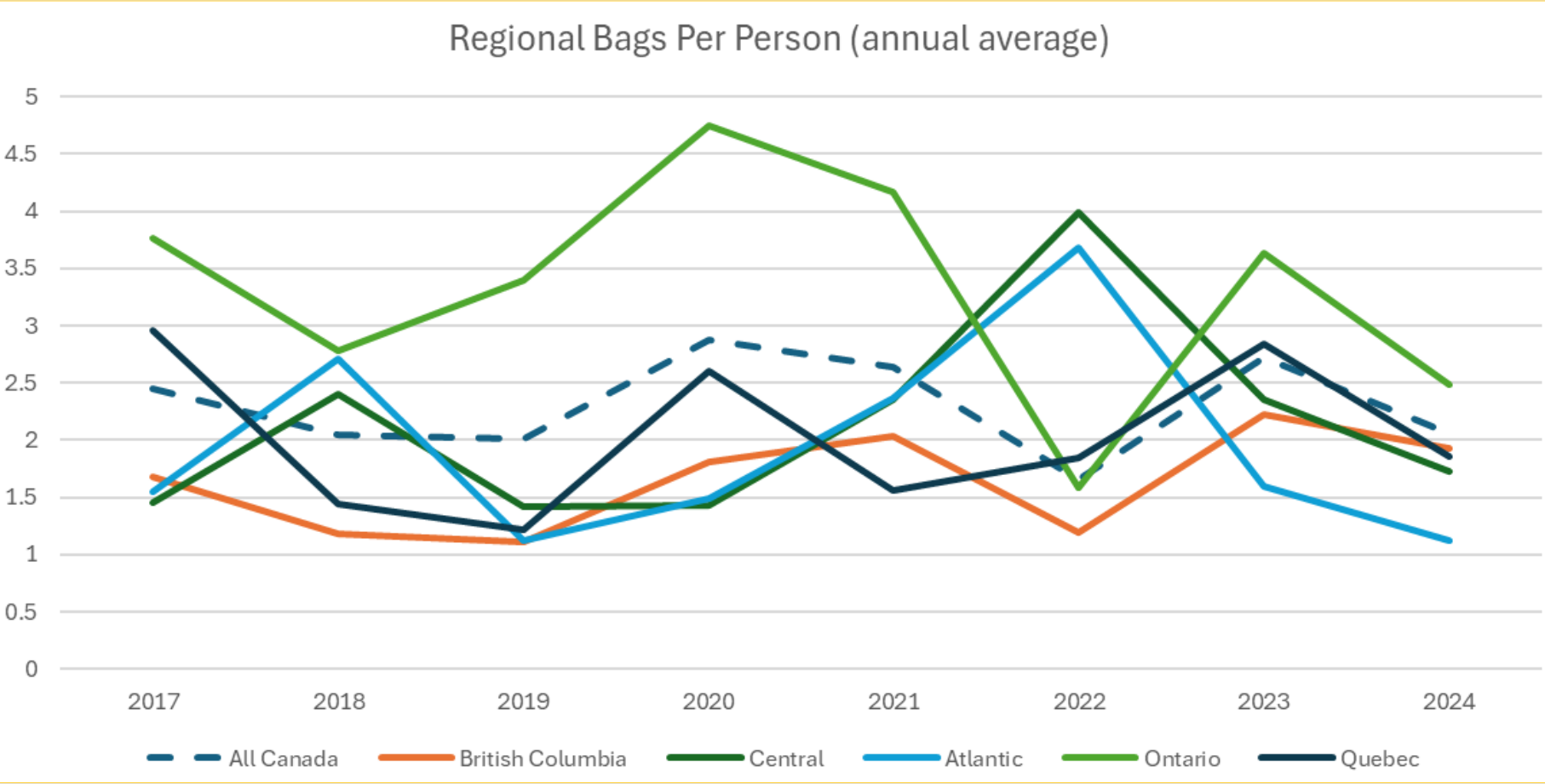


Average Straws Collected Per Person								
Location	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
All Canada	3.0	2.5	1.9	3.0	2.3	1.1	2.8	1.9
Alberta	1.2	1.3	1.3	1.2	1.4	1.3	1.9	1.6
British Columbia	0.9	0.8	0.7	1.0	1.1	0.6	1.3	1.1
Manitoba	1.3	1.3	2.9	0.8	0.1	0.8	3.4	0.7
New Brunswick	0.4	0.9	0.5	0.1	9.6	1.1	-	0.1
Newfoundland	1.4	2.5	0.8	0.7	0.9	0.9	0.2	-
Nova Scotia	1.6	1.5	0.8	0.2	2.7	0.8	1.5	0.5
Ontario	6.3	5.1	3.7	6.6	5.4	2.0	5.5	3.6
Prince Edward Island	0.2	0.2	0.0	0.5	0.6	1.3	-	-
Quebec	1.6	1.3	0.9	1.6	1.1	0.8	1.5	1.2
Saskatchewan	3.2	1.6	1.4	0.8	1.1	0.0	0.4	-
North	0.6	0.0	0.4	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

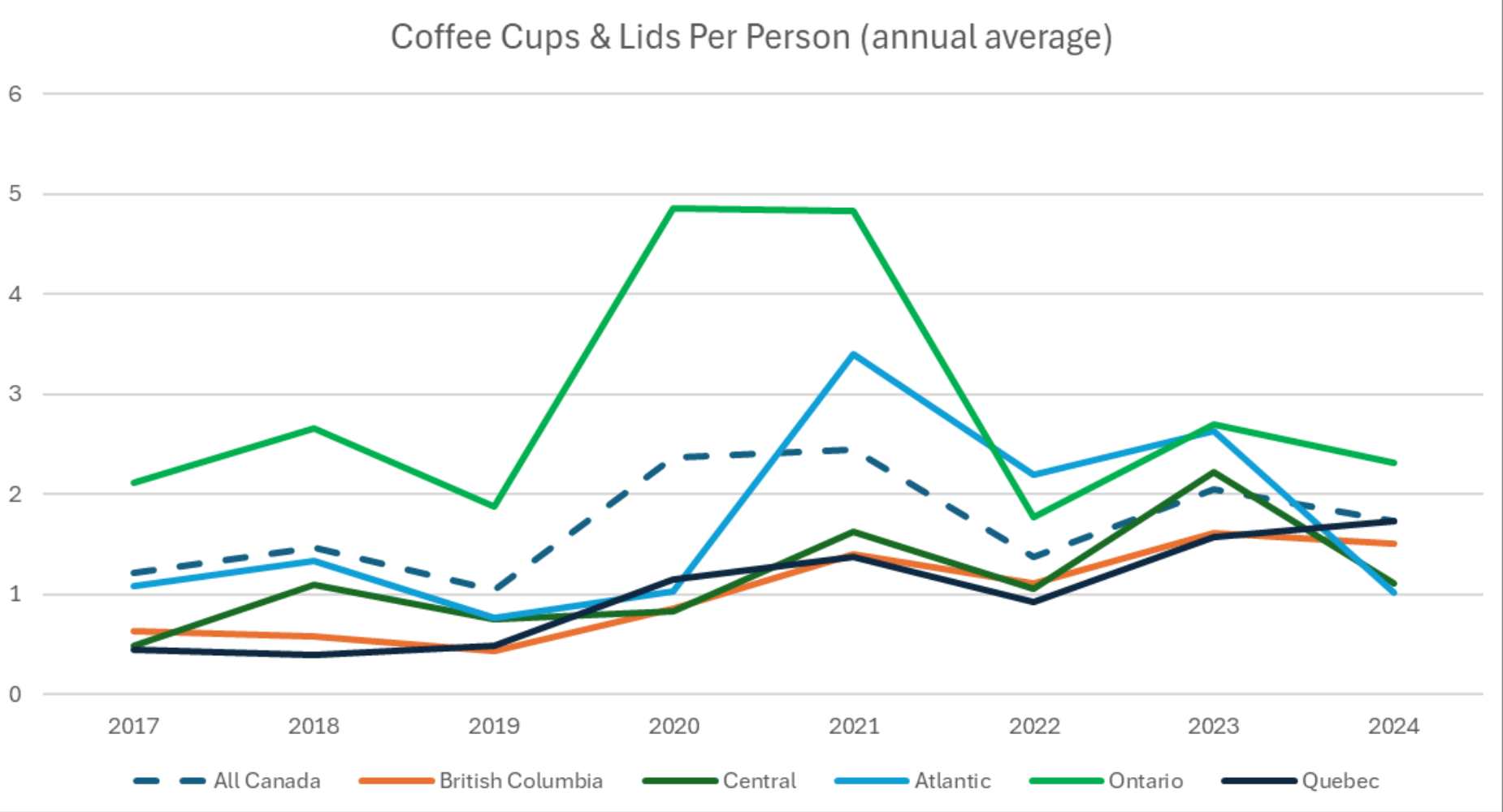


Average Utensils Collected Per Person								
Location	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
All Canada	1.0	0.7	0.8	1.4	1.1	0.6	1.3	1.2
Alberta	0.3	0.4	0.6	0.5	1.7	0.4	0.8	1.0
British Columbia	0.5	0.3	0.3	0.6	0.7	0.5	0.9	1.2
Manitoba	0.3	0.4	1.5	0.3	0.1	0.3	2.4	0.4
New Brunswick	0.5	0.4	0.4	2.1	4.6	0.6	-	0.1
Newfoundland	0.4	0.5	0.2	0.3	0.2	0.3	0.1	
Nova Scotia	0.5	0.3	0.2	0.1	0.6	0.5	0.9	0.2
Ontario	1.8	1.3	1.4	2.5	2.0	0.9	2.1	1.5
Prince Edward Island	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.1	-	-
Quebec	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	1.2	0.4	0.8	0.5
Saskatchewan	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.2	0.4	0.0	0.0	-
North	0.3	-	0.7	1.3	1.0	-	-	-

Appendix Bags + Coffee Cups



Average Bags Collected Per Person								
Location	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
All Canada	2.4	2.0	2.0	2.8	2.6	1.7	2.7	2.1
Alberta	1.4	2.1	1.1	1.4	2.3	4.6	1.9	1.4
British Columbia	1.7	1.2	1.1	1.8	2.0	1.2	2.2	1.9
Manitoba	1.5	4.0	3.4	1.7	2.4	0.8	4.8	4.1
New Brunswick	2.1	2.0	0.9	1.7	4.0	0.9	0.0	0.3
Newfoundland	1.1	5.2	1.7	1.3	2.5	1.8	2.3	0.0
Nova Scotia	1.7	2.1	1.1	0.4	2.2	5.0	1.2	1.2
Ontario	3.8	2.8	3.4	4.8	4.2	1.6	3.6	2.5
Prince Edward Island	0.8	0.6	0.1	0.7	0.2	0.2	0.0	0.0
Quebec	3.0	1.4	1.2	2.6	1.6	1.9	2.8	1.9
Saskatchewan	2.2	2.5	1.6	1.0	2.3	3.0	0.3	0.0
North	0.6	0.5	1.6	2.5	13.0	-	-	-



Average Coffee Cups & Lids Per Person								
Location	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
All Canada	1.2	1.5	1.0	2.4	2.4	1.4	2.0	1.7
Alberta	0.5	0.8	0.7	0.8	1.7	1.1	1.2	1.0
British Columbia	0.6	0.6	0.4	0.9	1.4	1.1	1.6	1.5
Manitoba	0.5	2.8	1.6	0.8	1.0	0.7	6.6	1.7
New Brunswick	1.9	0.6	0.6	1.1	13.8	1.8	-	0.5
Newfoundland	0.4	1.6	1.5	1.1	0.7	1.6	1.7	-
Nova Scotia	1.1	1.8	0.7	0.2	3.0	2.5	3.2	1.0
Ontario	2.1	2.7	1.9	4.9	4.8	1.8	2.7	2.3
Prince Edward Island	0.4	0.6	0.0	1.1	0.6	0.4	-	-
Quebec	0.4	0.4	0.5	1.1	1.4	0.9	1.6	1.7
Saskatchewan	0.2	1.0	0.5	0.8	1.0	0.0	0.2	-
North	0.3	-	2.4	0.5	-	-	-	-