

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful Reports 523,855 Pounds of Trash and Tires  
Removed During the 2018 International Coastal Cleanup of PA**



(January 10, 2019) – During the 2018 International Coastal Cleanup, held from September through October, Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful worked with local groups and organizations to mobilize 13,297 volunteers who coordinated 577 events across Pennsylvania. Organized groups, civic organizations, family and friends canvassed their communities to remove 523,855 pounds of trash and tires from Pennsylvania’s watersheds and waterways, preventing litter and debris from making its way downstream.

The International Coastal Cleanup is the world’s largest volunteer effort to improve the health of the world’s oceans and waterways. The cleanup gives citizens around the world the opportunity to clean up their local waterways and to be a part of a larger movement. Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful coordinates the effort in Pennsylvania.

One of the many groups participating was Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful affiliate, PA CleanWays of Elk County. The Elk County affiliate has participated in the International Coastal Cleanup for 4 years. This year, volunteers from the community, and the local St. Marys Area High School Ecology Club, collected over 2,380 pounds of trash and tires from a 2.5 mile section of the Clarion River.

“Local clubs, organizations, and volunteer groups have been cleaning up portions of Elk County for decades. When the Conservation District heard about the International Coastal Cleanup through Bekki Titchner, Elk County Recycling/Solid Waste Coordinator, we knew that it was something we wanted to be involved in. 2019 will be my fifth year working on this event and I couldn’t be more excited. Every year it grows and every year we add new partners. Since much of the Clarion River flows through PA State Game Lands, our local PA Game Commission land management crew has been helping us

transport material from the collection points along the river, to the landfill. Advanced Disposal has continued to be a great partner, working with us on free disposal costs. The Western Pennsylvania Conservancy Ridgway based office has offered time, staff, and volunteers to continue to make this event successful. It is truly amazing all that can be accomplished when like-minded, passionate, individuals get together with a common goal. We are very appreciative of Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful, PA CleanWays of Elk County, and the International Coastal Cleanup for helping make it all possible,” stated Kate Wehler, Resource Conservation Specialist, Elk County Conservation District.

“We are honored to partner with the Ocean Conservancy to provide support for our affiliates and local individuals and groups. We are grateful for groups such as the Elk County Conservation District and local volunteers who have become annual participants in the program. Our oceans connect the entire planet. Once trash reaches our oceans, it can cause harm to sea life by entangling them or being mistaken for food. Plastics and other debris work their way up the food chain, affecting what we consume. It really has dire consequences,” said Shannon Reiter, President of Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful. “Thank you to all the volunteers who gave up their personal time to get wet and dirty to help keep our waterways clean.”

Funding for the International Coastal Cleanup coordination in Pennsylvania is provided by the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection – Bureau of Waste Management and Coastal Resource Management. For more information about the International Coastal Cleanup visit <http://www.keeppabeautiful.org/CleanIt/IntlCoastalCleanup.aspx>.

#### **About Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful**

Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful’s mission is empowering Pennsylvanians to make our communities clean and beautiful. Since 1990, Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful and its volunteers have removed over 133 million pounds of litter from Pennsylvania’s roadways, greenways, parks, forests, and waterways. To learn more about Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful, visit [www.keeppabeautiful.org](http://www.keeppabeautiful.org).

#### **About International Coastal Cleanup**

The International Coastal Cleanup began in 1985 as an environmental study undertaken on the behalf of the Environmental Protection Agency's Office of Toxic Substances. The first volunteer-driven Cleanup occurred in 1986 at South Padre Island, Texas. International Coastal Cleanup is one of the largest international volunteer events. The Cleanup gives citizens around the world the opportunity to clean up their local waterways and to be a part of a large, organized event. For more information visit <http://www.oceanconservancy.org/>.