

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 11, 2020
Michelle Dunn, Program Coordinator
Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful
Tel: (724) 836-4121 x113
Email: mdunn@keeppabeautiful.org
Web site: www.keeppabeautiful.org



Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful Reports 488,135 Pounds of Trash and Tires Removed during the Fall 2019 PICK UP PENNSYLVANIA *supporting the International Coastal Cleanup*



During the fall 2019 PICK UP PENNSYLVANIA initiative, supporting the International Coastal Cleanup, Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful worked with local groups and organizations to mobilize 12,610 volunteers who coordinated 382 events across Pennsylvania. Organized groups, civic organizations, families and friends canvassed their communities to remove 488,135 pounds of trash and tires from Pennsylvania's watersheds and waterways, preventing litter and trash from making its way downstream and eventually ending up in our oceans.

Litter reaches the ocean by way of storm drains and waterways. When it rains, litter on sidewalks and streets accumulates and is swept into storm drains. The recent Pennsylvania Litter Research Study by Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful, in partnership with the Pennsylvania Departments of Environmental Protection and

Transportation, identified over 500 million pieces of litter along Pennsylvania roadways. The most common items identified were cigarette butts (37%) and plastics (30%), with plastic film and beverage containers most prevalent. (All documents and related material, including Fact Sheets, News Releases, etc., can be viewed and shared from DEP's website, www.dep.pa.gov/litteringactionplan)

The fall cleanup results mirrored those of the litter study. The top five items collected during the fall cleanup initiative were:

Cigarette butts – 14,348
Plastic bottles – 4,637
Food wrappers – 4,016
Tires – 3,499
Beverage cans – 3,418

"Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful offers Pick Up Pennsylvania initiatives in the spring and fall to encourage folks to keep our neighborhoods clean and beautiful. While cleanups are necessary, we also need strategies to prevent litter from happening in the first place," explained Shannon Reiter, President of Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful. "The Pennsylvania Litter Research Study will help inform a customized, strategic plan to reduce littering that could include expanding solid waste and recycling infrastructure and developing effective school-based and consumer education."

One of the many groups participating in the fall pick up was Heritage Conservancy, based in Doylestown. Over 60 volunteers of all ages joined them for National Public Lands Day to support the conservation of the Bristol Marsh Nature Preserve.

"By removing 65 trash bags full of items like plastic bottles, food wrappers, and cigarette butts, our volunteers stopped many harmful materials from polluting the marsh and our drinking water. There were many partners represented during the cleanup, including volunteers from The Home Depot, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Bucks County, Toyota USA, Conwell-Egan Catholic High School in partnership with the Danaher

Lynch Family Foundation and The Nature Conservancy. Throughout the cleanup, volunteers were encouraged to learn more about the Delaware River Watershed and to sign a pledge to reduce their use of single-use plastics like bags, utensils, and straws. It was inspirational to see so many people come together for the betterment of the community and the Watershed," said Elizabeth Barmach Community Engagement Associate, Heritage Conservancy.

"We are honored to partner with the Ocean Conservancy and grateful for groups such as the Heritage Conservancy 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 Reiter. "Thank you to all the volunteers who gave up their personal time to get wet and dirty to help keep our waterways clean."

PICK UP PENNSYLVANIA is held in support of the International Coastal Cleanup, 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.

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 programs offered by Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful, visit www.keeppabeautiful.org.

###

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 141 million pounds of litter from Pennsylvania's roadways, greenways, parks, forests, and waterways. To learn more about Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful, visit www.keeppabeautiful.org.