



COASTAL CLEANUP PROGRAM

Challenges

- Marine debris negatively affects the coastal ecosystem as well as coastal residents and the economy.
- Litter can kill wildlife when they ingest it or become entrapped by or wrapped in the debris.
- Humans can be harmed by debris when they ingest plastics via seafood or when they encounter sharp objects in the coastal environment.
- Dirty beaches have been proven to negatively affect coastal tourism, the region's largest employer.
- One of the most pervasive sources of marine litter is single-use plastics.

EXTENSION RESPONSE

The Mississippi Coastal Cleanup Program began in 2018 as a collaboration between the Mississippi State University Extension Service and Mississippi-Alabama Sea Grant to remove debris from the Mississippi Gulf Coast.

- The program addresses the issue by removing debris from beaches, waterways, wetlands, and roads in coastal Mississippi.
- Since 2018, **14,557** Coastal Cleanup Program volunteers contributed over **46,000 hours** to remove **131 tons** of debris in **235 events**.
- In 2024, **1,816** volunteers contributed **5,448 hours** of service to remove **4.5 tons** of debris in **42 events**.
- In addition, volunteers collected data on the specific types of litter removed. This data helps researchers identify sources of marine debris and design targeted prevention methods.
- In 2024, the program had eight corporate and agency sponsors that contributed **\$25,000**. Additionally, **\$886,503** in extramural grants and contracts supported the program.

ECONOMIC IMPACTS

- Volunteers are not paid, but the time they spend has an economic value, and they incur expenditures while fulfilling their roles. Volunteer hours are valued at an estimated **\$147,150**, and the ecosystem service impact is estimated to be **\$81,131**.
- Direct effects (including donations, grants, and contracts) could support an estimated **15 jobs** earning **\$775,716**, **\$1.1 million** in value-added, and **\$1.4 million** in total output for the three-county Mississippi Gulf Coast area.
- The program could generate an estimated **\$3,655** in municipal taxes, **\$8,571** in local special district (e.g., school district) taxes, and **\$6,280** in county government taxes, for a total of **\$18,506** in local taxes.
- The program also could generate estimated state taxes of **\$41,504** and federal taxes of **\$178,559**.



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