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COASTSWEEP: The Massachusetts Coastal Cleanup Program

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COASTSWEEP: The Massachusetts Coastal Cleanup Program

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Summary/Abstract

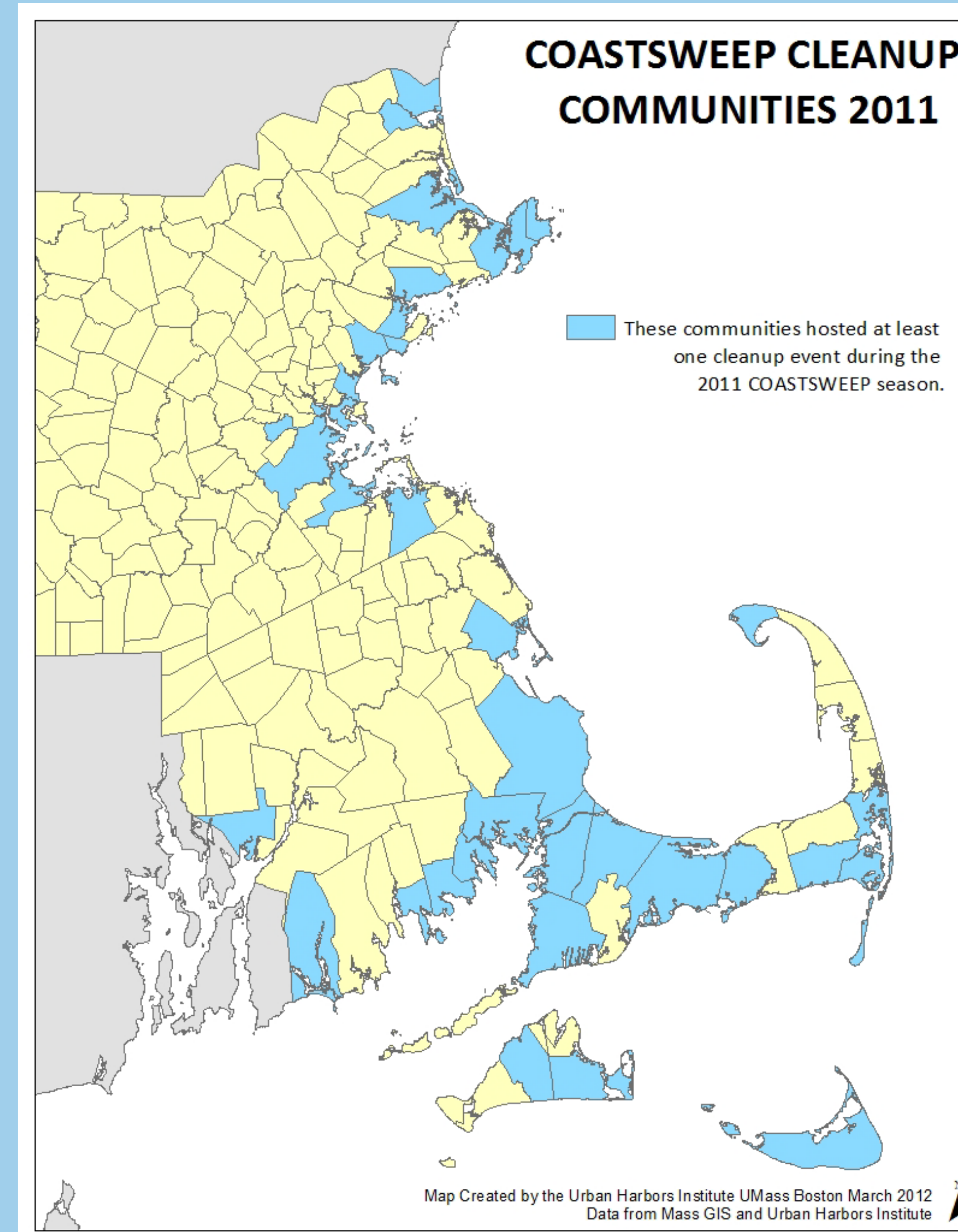
Volunteers in communities throughout Massachusetts turn out in large numbers each September and October for COASTSWEEP, the statewide coastal cleanup program sponsored by the Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management (CZM) and coordinated by the Urban Harbors Institute (UHI) of the University of Massachusetts Boston.

COASTSWEEP is part of the International Coastal Cleanup (ICC) organized by Ocean Conservancy in Washington, DC. Through the efforts of the ICC, volunteers from all over the world collect marine debris and record information about the trash they collect. This information is then analyzed and used to identify sources of debris and to develop education and policy initiatives to help reduce marine debris globally.

Goals and Objectives

COASTSWEEP promotes a cleaner environment through education and community service. The program's goals include:

- Educating people about marine debris (the sources, impacts, and solutions)
- Encouraging people to participate in COASTSWEEP events
- Removing marine debris from the environment
- Contributing the ICC's efforts to reduce marine debris globally



COASTSWEEP

Top 10 Items Found During COASTSWEEP 2011 Cleanups

| Item(s) | # Found |
|--------------------------------|---------|
| Cigarettes/Cigarette | |
| Filters | 24,231 |
| Food | |
| Wrapper/Containers | 9,108 |
| Caps, Lids | 8,129 |
| Bags (plastic) | 5,684 |
| Rope | 5,372 |
| Beverage Bottles (plastic) | 4,712 |
| Straws, Stirrers | 3,885 |
| Cups, Plates, Plastic Utensils | 3,367 |
| Beverage Cans | 2,896 |
| Beverage Bottles (glass) | 2,585 |

In cleanups held from 2006-2011, COASTSWEEP volunteers collected more than 190,700 cigarette butts.

Approaches and Methods

COASTSWEEP partners with community volunteers who offer to serve as Coordinators for specific cleanup events. Coordinators work with COASTSWEEP to:

- Identify the cleanup site(s);
- Recruit volunteers;
- Secure permissions from beach managers;
- Notify the press; and
- Collect data from volunteers

In return, COASTSWEEP provides Coordinators with:

- Cleanup supplies (bags, gloves, safety instructions, data cards, pencils)
- Educational information about marine debris
- Event publicity on the COASTSWEEP website and Facebook Page

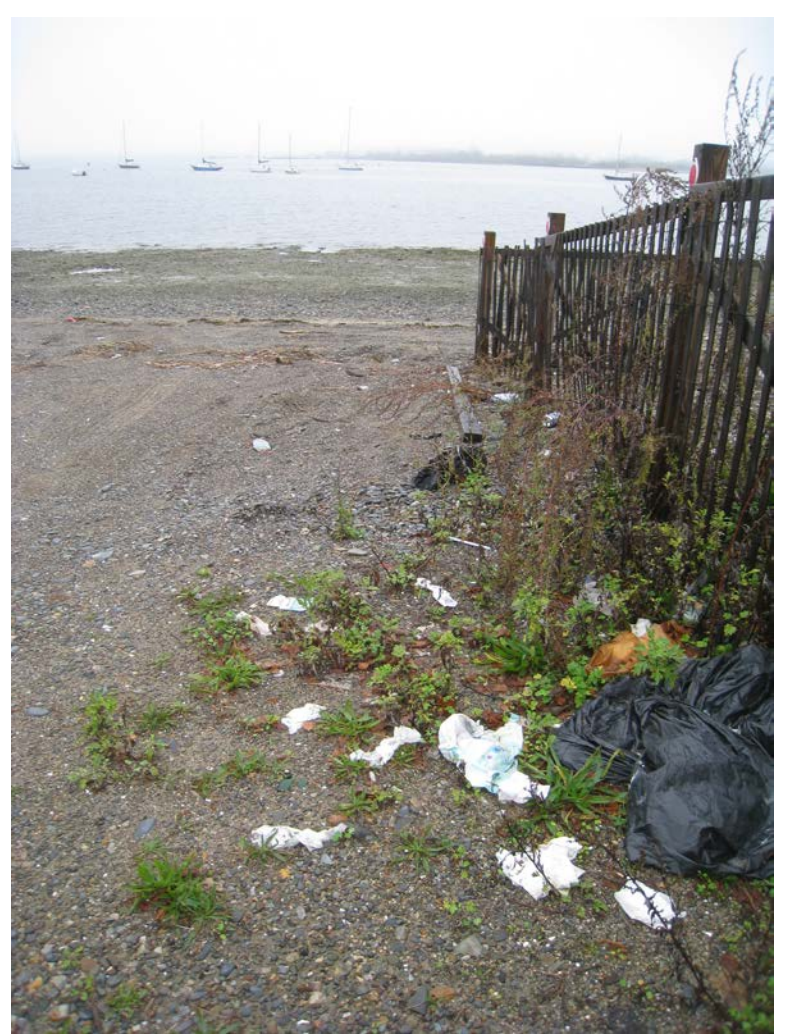
Results/Impacts

Each year, between 2,000-3,000 volunteers participate in COASTSWEEP events around the Commonwealth. Together, they clean more than 100 miles of shoreline and collect an average of 24,000 pounds of debris annually. Since 2003, nearly 22,000 COASTSWEEP volunteers have participated in cleanup events, collecting and recording information about more than 220,000 pounds of marine debris!

This information is used to:

- Deepen the understanding of marine debris sources and impacts;
- Build a social movement to demand Trash Free Seas;
- Engage industry to develop solutions; and
- Promote policy reform

COASTSWEEP continues to advance the University's commitment to volunteerism and the environment throughout Massachusetts.



Before and After pictures of the shoreline near the Morrissey Blvd. Boat Ramp in Dorchester, MA

For More Information about COASTSWEEP

Visit www.coastswEEP.umb.edu to learn more about marine debris and COASTSWEEP, including how to participate in/organize your own COASTSWEEP event. Also check out COASTSWEEP on our Facebook page: www.facebook.com/COASTSWEEP