Impact Report 2025

GEORGIAN BAY FOREVER

This year's work at Georgian Bay Forever has been pivotal for the organization. After wrapping up the major undertakings of subsidiary projects like the launch of the All Too Clear film and our research with Environment and Climate Change Canada on nuisance algae in 2024, we redirected focus in 2025 on laying the foundation for growth in our scientific research, education, and field work. Thanks to the generosity of some forward-thinking donors, we have acquired an additional boat for our field work, which will be dedicated solely to water-quality monitoring. Based on our scientific work in direct response to the state of Georgian Bay's water, we are also building practical resources for the betterment of Georgian Bay communities, and additionally, we are now preparing for the expansion of our core work in pollution control, invasive species management, and environmental advocacy.

The Critical Catch

Achievements So Far

This was a strong season for The Critical Catch. With the help of our dedicated volunteers, we completed 80 cleanups, up from 67 in 2024, and collected 457 kg of trash, up from 428 kg in 2024, improving habitat for wildlife and making our communities cleaner and safer.

We also expanded our geographic range, all the way from Wiarton on the Bruce Peninsula to the eastern shore of the Bay. We've noticed a significant response as well from the community, after a push for more local engagement, the number of independently hosted Shoreline Cleanups went from one in 2024 to six this year. Building on this momentum, next year we hope to continue expanding our coverage and to recruit even more volunteers to host their own events with our support.

Community engagement has also grown this year with the expansion of our education programs. We're happy to say there has been a boon in popularity for our Microplastics Investigation Workshop and our Discovering Watersheds workshop (see Education, page 7).

And finally, our work to remove fishing line from the natural habitat of Georgian Bay has been a major success in 2025. We installed 31 large fishing line receptacles in communities in the Georgian Bay area, maintained by volunteers, and with the help of hundreds of anglers, township employees, and our volunteers, removed 62,495.74 m of fishing line, which will now be recycled instead of sitting in the water and the beaches of Georgian Bay.

Our summer students installing a fishing line receptacle

A personal fishing line receptacle for easy and safe disposal of used fishing line

Nic, our program coordinator, hosting a Microplastics Investigation Workshop in a local classroom

Volunteers at one of our Shoreline Cleanups

Program Overview

The Critical Catch is a dynamic initiative focused on the vital conservation and protection of aquatic and terrestrial habitats. This project tackles the issue of marine debris, with an emphasis on eradicating derelict fishing gear from the water.

Through a multi-faceted approach, we aim to reduce the presence of harmful debris in our waters, engage the public, and foster a sense of stewardship among the community.

The program encompasses many of our pollution-focused initiatives and activities, such as our Shoreline Cleanups and our education programs.

SHORELINE CLEANUPS

2025

2025

- 80 Shoreline Cleanups
- 456.86 kgs Garbage Collected
- 3.168 km² Shoreline Cleaned
- 475 Adult Volunteers
- 86 Youth Volunteers
- 4 Summer Students

2024

- 66 Shoreline Cleanups
- 428.76 kgs Garbage Collected
- 133,500 m Shoreline Cleaned
- 466 Adult Volunteers
- 145 Youth Volunteers
- 4 Summer Students

2023

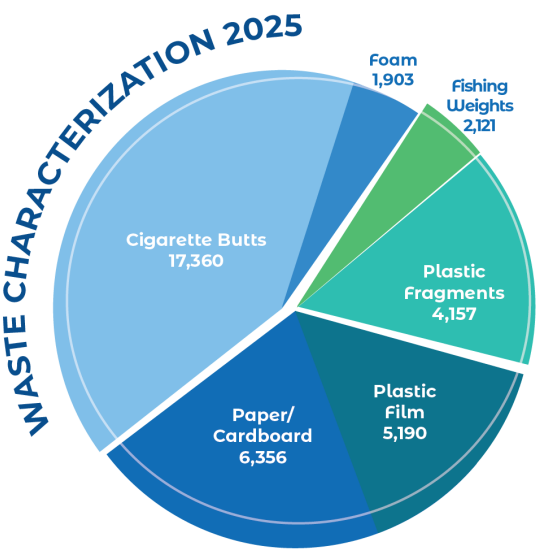
- 61 Shoreline Cleanups
- 551.94 kgs Garbage Collected
- 120,000 m Shoreline Cleaned
- 317 Adult Volunteers
- 150 Youth Volunteers
- 4 Summer Students

2022

- 35 Shoreline Cleanups
- 437.35 kgs Garbage Collected
- 71,370 m Shoreline Cleaned
- 203 Adult Volunteers
- 62 Youth Volunteers
- 2 Summer Students

456.86 kgs of Garbage Collected in 2025
Equal to the Weight of a Horse

CIGARETTE BUTTS ARE STILL THE #1 LITTERED ITEM



* *Only the top six most common items are shown*

The Critical Catch Metrics

Shoreline Cleanups

2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Goal: 10 Final: 13	Goal: 10 Final: 16	*COVID Restrictions – no organized cleanups*	Goal: 25 Final: 36	Goal: 30 Final: 61	Goal: 65 Final: 66	Goal: 70 Final: 80

Amout of Garbage Collected

2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Goal: 16kg Final: 337kg	Goal: 100kg Final: 842kg	Goal: 500kg Final: 437kg	Goal: 500kg Final: 552kg	Goal: 600kg Final: 429kg	Goal: 600kg Final: 457kg*

*All our Cleanups are carried out until no trash is left in the area. Less garbage collected or a lower weight of collection means that there was less garbage to clean.

Volunteers

2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Goal: 200 Final: 179	Goal: 200 Final: 213	Goal: 600 Final: 569	Goal: 600 Final: 647	Goal: 250 Final: 611	Goal: 655 Final: 561

Education Event Attendees

2018-2020	2021-2023	2024	2025
Goal: 1,300 Final: 2,800	Goal: 3,000 Final: 4,087	Goal: 500 Final: 1,601	Goal: 1,300 Final: 2,562

Green = Exceeded our Goals or Last Year's Totals
Red = Did Not Yet Meet Our Goals

Fishing Line Receptacles

2023	2024	2025
Installation: 15	Installation: 11	Installation Goal: 30 Final: 31
Personal Size Handouts: 225	Personal Size Handouts: 585	Personal Size Handouts Goal: 500 Final: 350*

*We are still in the process of handing out personal receptacles

Length of Monofiliment Fishing Line Collected (Meters)

2024	2025
30,778.8m	62,495.74m

Kms of Shoreline Cleaned

2023	2024	2025
122.8kms	133.5kms	3.2km²*

* In 2025 we began measuring the cleaned area in km squared instead of linear km. We believe this form of measurement more accurately reflects the range.

Diversion 2.0

Plastic Free Georgian Bay Members

2022	2023	2024	2025
Goal - 20	Goal - 20	Goal - 20	Goal - 10
New - 3	New - 5	New - 14	New - 3
Total - 3	Total - 8	Total - 22	Total - 25

Seabin Deep Dives (Waste Characterizations)

2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Goal - 20	Goal - 30	Goal - 35	Goal - 30	
Total - 41	Total - 46	Total - 76	Total - 72	Not Applicable

Pollution Captured by Seabins

2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
*23,237 pieces	*25,412 pieces	18,429 pieces	**6,243 pieces	Not Applicable

* Amount reflects debris captured through the use of Seabins and Gutterbins.
** The number this year is low due to fewer Seabin installations by our partners.

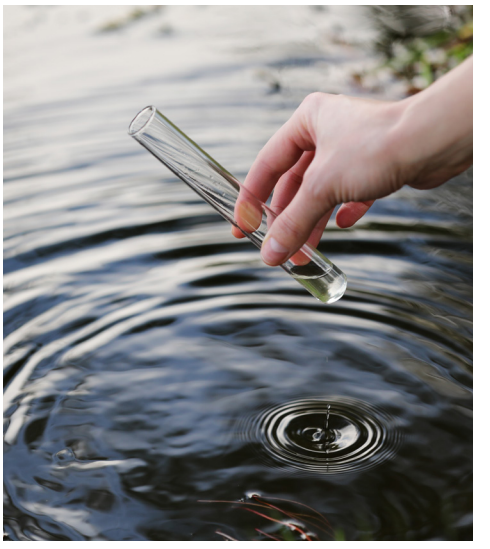
In 2025, Georgian Bay Forever decided to take a step back from our programming with Seabins, transferring ownership to the partners. This decision came after several years of witnessing a decline in effectiveness, and the withdrawal of outside funding since the initial launch of the program. With limited funding to this program, we decided that our efforts would be better spent in other areas of The Critical Catch program, namely our Shoreline Cleanups and monofilament fishing line receptacle distribution. Using the time previously allocated to the maintenance of Seabins, we were able to install an additional 16 receptacles around the Bay, and increase our number of total Shoreline Cleanups to 80. We thank everyone who has assisted with Seabins in previous years, and we hope for continued support going forwards with our other projects.

Water Usage Guide

Keeping your drinking water safe and healthy is of the utmost importance, and the team at Georgian Bay Forever is intent on demystifying the facts.

When we were called upon to help educate the public after an unexpected contamination in Minnow Bay this year, we were eager to step in. Working under the counsel of the township, the mayor, and local community members, we took water-quality tests and readings, then educated the community about the implications of these findings and informed them of best practices for water usage.

This incident also inspired us to take further, widespread action in our public education efforts, and so the Georgian Bay Forever Water Usage Guide was created. Now available for print and digital download on our website **(www.georgianbayforever.org/water-usage-guide)**, the guide serves as a handy reference for using lake water for drinking, cooking, irrigation, cleaning, and recreational purposes. The guide succinctly breaks down the potential health risks of using lake water in various circumstances, explains how to test for health hazards in the water, and outlines best practices for safe water use.



Invasive *Phragmites* Management

Since 2012, Georgian Bay Forever, along with numerous community groups and volunteers, has been the leading force behind invasive *Phragmites* removal in the Georgian Bay area. What started as a volunteer-based multi-year project with the goal of managing invasive *Phragmites* in eastern Georgian Bay has grown into an over-decade long program dedicated to active and progressive eradication of this harmful invasive species. With a major expansion in 2019, Georgian Bay Forever staff embarked on a journey to significantly alter the shoreline of Georgian Bay where invasive *Phragmites* stands are overtaking the natural habitat.

The human-made consequences of bringing European *Phragmites* to North America requires human intervention. With your help, we look forward to continuing our work to course-correct the dangerous and destructive path laid out by this persistent invasive species.

The area of invasive *Phragmites* cut this year was 11,065 square meters equal to more than 1.5 football fields.

Invasive *Phragmites* Management

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Total Sites Mapped *	711	904	968	1,020	1,117	1,265
New Sites Mapped	133	198	94	137	97	231
Sites Eradicated **	275	403	514	490	471	412
Sites Cut	170	279	270	208	184	263
Sites Controlled (Eradicated + Cut) **	445	682	784	698	655	675
Sites Untreated	266	222	184	322	462	590

* The total number of sites mapped in our data set can change over time due to variables such as multiple stands forming into one stand, or when a site is later found to be on private property, or when a public site becomes part of private property. The data set may also be reconfigured if a site was originally misidentified as an invasive *Phragmites* site and is later understood to be a native *Phragmites* site.

** The total number of sites eradicated in our data set can change over time due to variables such as spontaneous regrowth on a site, or the boundaries of a site shifting or merging.

Drone Mapping

When we acquired our DJI Matrice 300 drone in 2024, we did so with the big picture in mind, both literally and figuratively. Drones enable researchers to collect substantial amounts of data from any given environment by quickly scanning vast areas with high-resolution imagery. This efficiency allows us to spend more time working on cutting invasive *Phragmites* stands and less time mapping them.

In 2025 we mapped a total area of 3.8km² over the course of six days, and acquired 19,170 photos of *Phragmites* stands within the land and waterscape. Our research and mapping systems will become increasingly efficient as our highly accurate data set expands over the course of the next few years.

Our Stance on the Proposed Geopark

The proposed Georgian Bay Geopark, known as the Aspiring Georgian Bay Geopark, has been known to Georgian Bay Forever since 2022, and has, since the beginning, required our thorough analysis.

The Aspiring Geopark is an initiative with clear focus on attracting a massive influx of tourism, without the appropriate measures to protect the wildlife and preserve the habitat of Georgian Bay. Furthermore, the planning for the parks development has been largely if not wholly done without consultation from First Nations communities on Georgian Bay. This venture is undeniably economic-focused, and as of now remains insensitive to the inevitable harm it would cause to Georgian Bay's environment, along with its First Nations and other communities.

After careful consideration, deliberation, and consultation with several experts and members of the Georgian Bay community, we as Georgian Bay Forever—an organization dedicated solely to the protection of the environment based on scientific and sound interdisciplinary knowledge—have concluded that we cannot endorse the Aspiring Georgian Bay Geopark at this time.

Please visit our website **(https://www.georgianbayforever.org/geopark)** to read our full letter to the Executive Director of the Aspiring Georgian Bay Geopark.

AUV and ROV

It was a year of limitations for our technology use and data collection, but with the opportunity for major advancement in the work for 2026. We began data collection in mid-September, 2025, after completing our work with invasive *Phragmites*, resulting in limited good-weather days for video missions. Ideal sea conditions were needed for quality data collection, specifically a glassy sea state or light ripples. Limited ideal days were available, prompting the investigation of artificial lighting for nighttime operations. There were challenges, including wind warnings, technical issues with the AUV's YSI sonde, and an accidental ROV cable cut during deployment, however, both the AUV and ROV platforms performed reliably overall. Improvements in equipment are planned, including the installation of a GPS and enhanced sonar systems for better data accuracy. Despite some successful missions, weather conditions and technical problems hindered achieving our full data collection goals this season. Going forward, we will be able to perform these operations throughout the year, without scheduling restrictions, with the use of our newly acquired boat, the Georgian Baykeeper II.

ROV: Inspection Videos, 7, hours of on-mission deployment, 05:41:35, linear distance covered, 14,841m.

AUV: Missions, 2, linear distance covered, 19,634m.

Education (Free Workshops)

Microplastics Investigation

2022	2023	2024	2025
Goal: 7	Goal: 7	Goal: 7	Goal: 7
Final: 3	Final: 7	Final: 7	Final: 13

The Microplastics Investigation program (formally Microplastics in a Backpack) teaches students about the impacts of humans on the environment. The program focuses on Grades 1-10, and aims to bring attention to microplastics in the daily lives of the participants. Utilizing digital microscopes, students examine materials from daily life, such as dryer lint, sand, and water, for microplastics and microfibres; we then teache how to reduce this pollution. This program also encourages venturing into the environment to show how humans have shaped the nature around us.

Discovering Watersheds

2022	2023	2024	2025
Goal: 7	Goal: 7	Goal: 7	Goal: 7
Final: 10	Final: 11	Final: 7	Final: 20

The Discovering Watersheds program (formally Enviroscapes) aims to educate students from Grades 1-10 about the impacts of pollutants on watersheds, and the various ways to make positive changes to benefit overall water health. The Enviroscape itself is a tabletop landscape that simulates different daily environments such as a subdivision of homes with new building, farmland, water treatment facilities, and forests. By teaching participants about the different effects each location has on water health, the Discovering Watersheds program facilitates creating ideas on how to divert and reduce pollutants before they impact the environment.

Yellowfish Road

2022	2023	2024	2025
Goal: 7	Goal: 7	Goal: 7	Goal: 7
Final: 7	Final: 7	Final: 7	Final: 5

Yellow Fish Road teaches students about how pollu¬tion travels through storm drains and sewers in their commu¬nity, illustrating the easy of which pollution can travel into local waterways. Participants paint draw yellow fish in chalk next to the drains with the words “Rain Only”, symbolizing that only water should be going into them. The goal is to educate the stu¬dents, while also creating a symbol for members of the public to recognize, which may prompt them to ask questions about how storm drains function in their infrastructure.

A Look Ahead

It’s an exciting time for Georgian Bay Forever—we’re developing our strategic goals for the next four-year stretch, and with the help of our incredible donors and supporters, without whom our work could not exist, we are looking towards this time of growth. Growth for Georgian Bay Forever means more staff in the field, more scientific research and data collection, and a larger scope of diverse and powerful initiatives, all of which means a more prosperous and sustainable Georgian Bay. We look forward to working with you all in the years ahead to conserve the water and ecosystem of this most exceptional place.