

GEORGIAN BAY
FOREVER



PROTECTING WATER



2025 Shoreline Cleanup Report

About Us

For decades Georgian Bay Forever has worked to understand, protect, and restore the Bay so many of us call home. Our projects are numerous, from research, to public education, to public advocacy, but our shoreline cleanups remain one of the most visible and tangible ways our community can connect with the health of Georgian Bay. All data collected is publicly available upon request to ensure transparency and is presented here to demonstrate the impact made to our local community and environment.

What We Do

The success of our shoreline cleanup program is in large part due to our dedicated summer students who lead cleanups, engage volunteers, and ensure each event runs smoothly. Their work is central to the impact and consistency of the Critical Catch program across each season.

Over the spring and summer, we host as many cleanups as our small team can manage. In addition to beautifying our shoreline and removing harmful material from these areas, what makes these cleanups especially valuable is the data collected along the way. Each item is sorted, counted, characterized and recorded, down to even the smallest fragments. This data can then be used to inform our own long-term monitoring, helping us understand patterns in shoreline litter and track changes over time. All data is also shared with the International Trash Trap Network, which connects organizations across the world and supports ongoing research.



GBF summer students diligently counting all collected trash at a Shoreline Cleanup.

A Step in the Right Direction

This past year marked an important step forward in Canada's efforts to address plastic waste. The final phase of the federal single-use plastics ban came into effect in December 2025, prohibiting the manufacture, sale, import, and export of single-use plastic products nationwide. Additionally, Ontario has begun to overhaul and standardize our province's recycling system. Black plastic, foam packaging, plastic bags and paper laminates are among the newly accepted items in your blue box that were previously sent to landfills. These changes are supported by holding producers responsible for their packaging, shifting the cost and management of recycling programs from our municipalities to the companies that create the products and their packaging. Together, these changes represent a meaningful shift in how plastic waste is managed across both our country and province.

For organizations like ours, these policy changes are cause for optimism. Plastic has consistently made up the majority of the litter we collect along the shores of Georgian Bay, this year accounting

for **71%** of all litter. While it will take time for new regulations to translate into visible changes in the products we buy and recycling behaviour, we are hopeful that the years ahead will begin to reflect these efforts. Our shoreline cleanups are positioned to continue to monitor these areas and quantify any changes to plastic and other anthropogenic waste entering the Bay.



Litter comes in all shapes and sizes. This piece of foam weighed over 10kg!

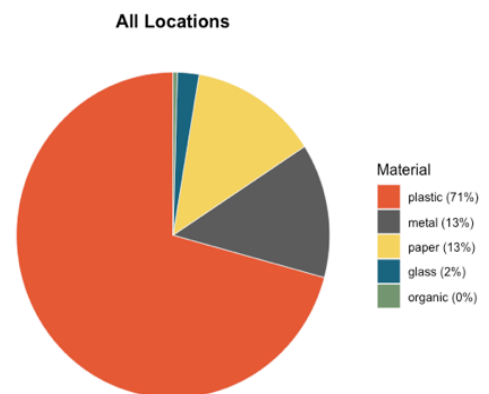
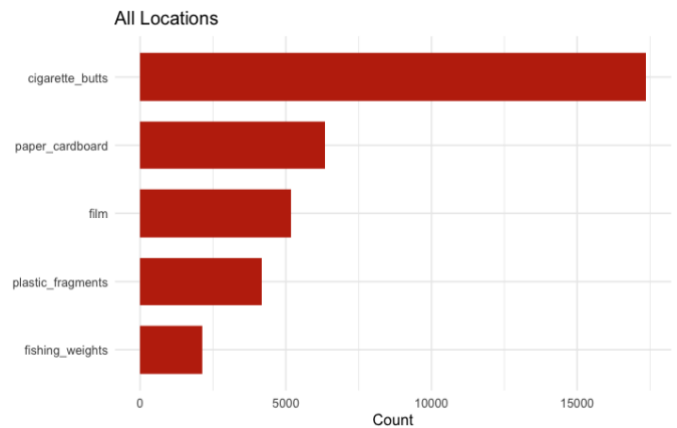
The Results

This year, we completed **80 cleanups** around Georgian Bay, the most we've ever accomplished in a single season! With the help of **561 volunteers**, nearly **457kg of trash** was diverted from our environment. The breakdown of each location is shown below.

Year	Cleanup Events	Volunteers	Kg of Trash
2022	48	212	409
2023	66	460	552
2024	67	595	429
2025	80	561	457



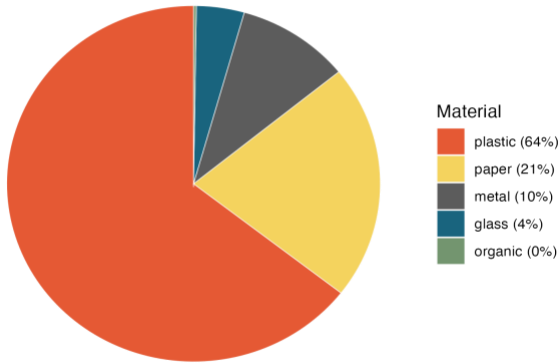
Typical amount of trash collected from a 2-hour cleanup.



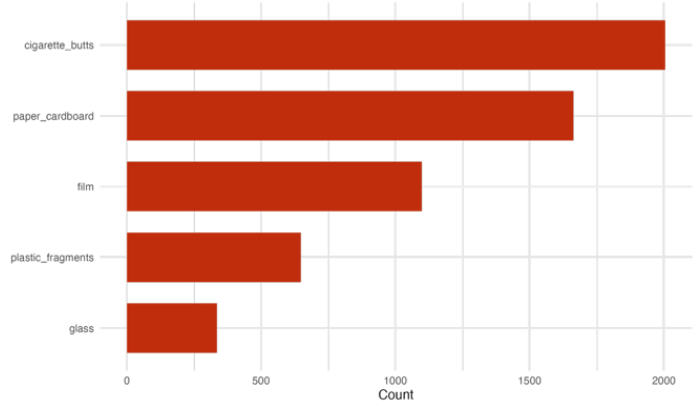
Collingwood

Year	Cleanup Events	Volunteers	Kg of Trash
2022	15	75	102
2023	14	147	64
2024	14	83	20
2025	15	110	60

Sunset Point Park



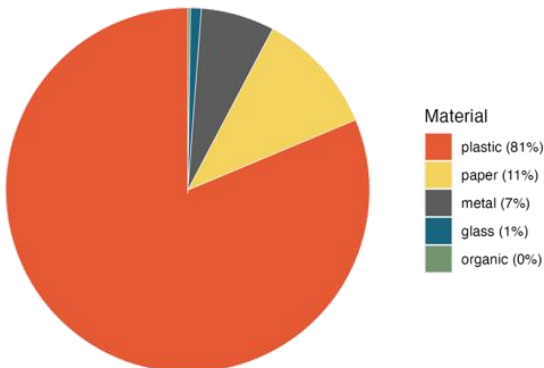
Sunset Point Park



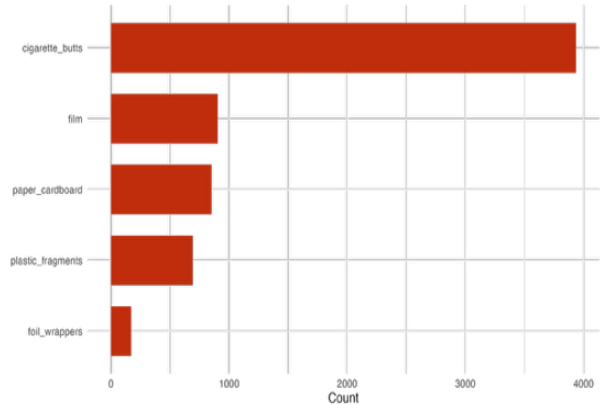
Town Of the Blue Mountains- Little River Park

Year	Cleanup Events	Volunteers	Kg of Trash
2022	9	40	52
2023	13	47	45
2024	16	71	83
2025	13	79	22

Little River Park



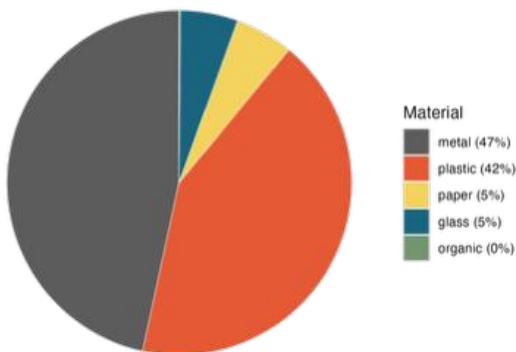
Little River Park



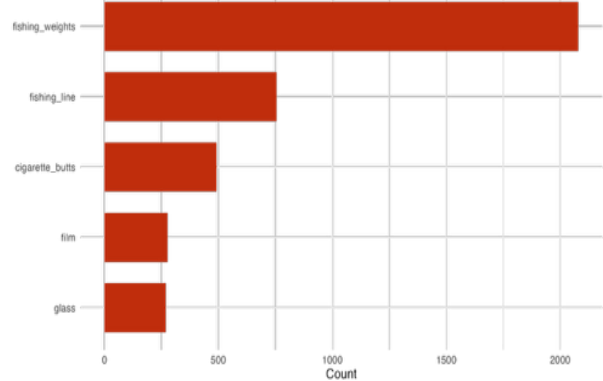
Town Of the Blue Mountains- The Fishway

Year	Cleanup Events	Volunteers	Kg of Trash
2023	7	9	13
2024	6	28	13
2025	10	47	16

Thornbury Fishway



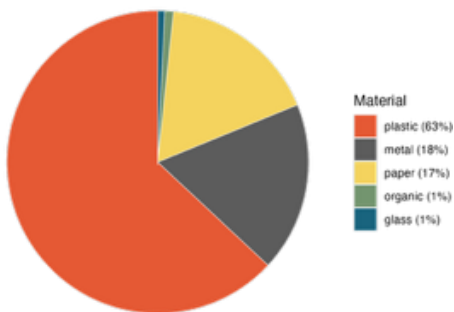
Thornbury Fishway



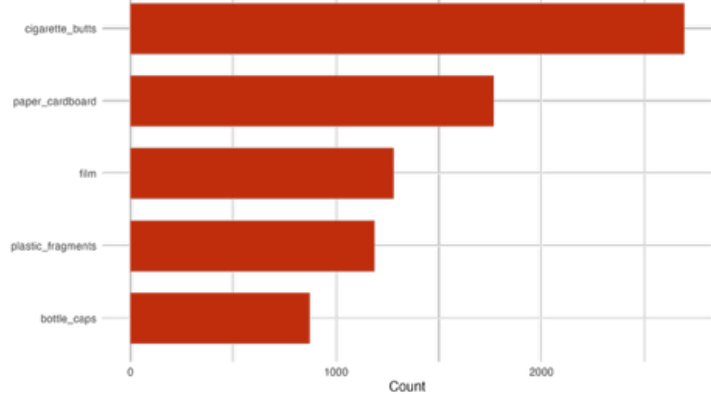
Wasaga Beach

Year	Cleanup Events	Volunteers	Kg of Trash
2022	6	29	54
2023	12	64	132
2024	13	248	273
2025	13	203	166

Wasaga Beach, Area 2

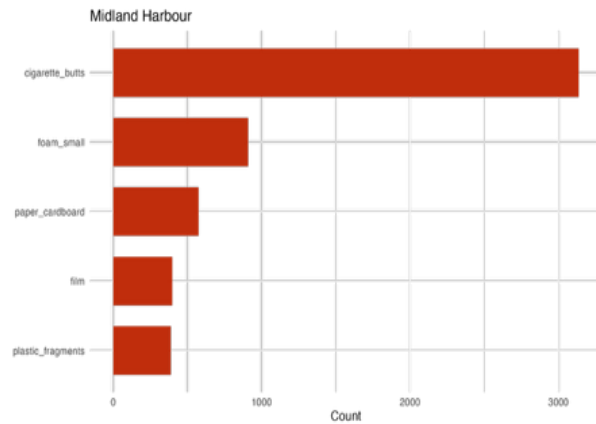
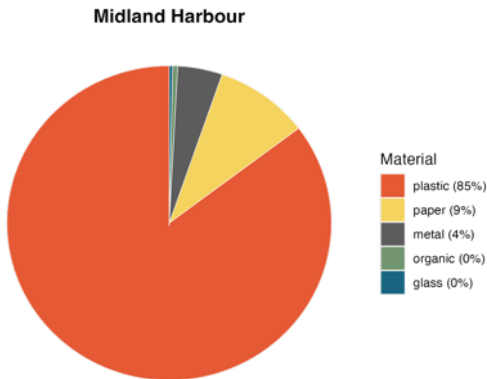


Wasaga Beach, Area 2



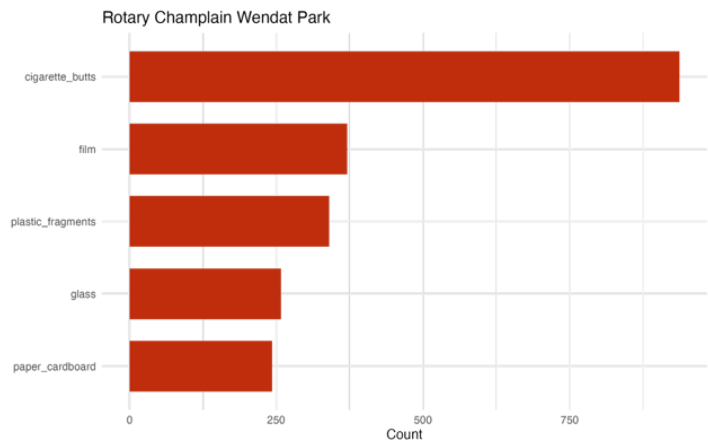
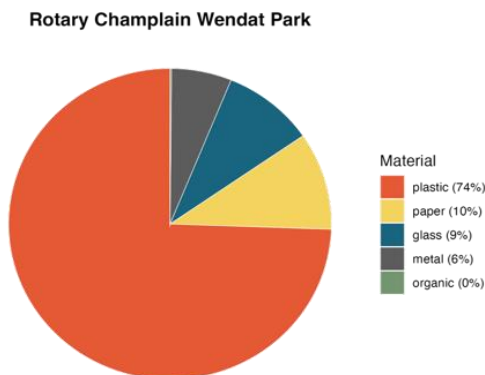
Midland

Year	Cleanup Events	Volunteers	Kg of Trash
2023	7	15	14
2024	13	49	16
2025	7	31	31



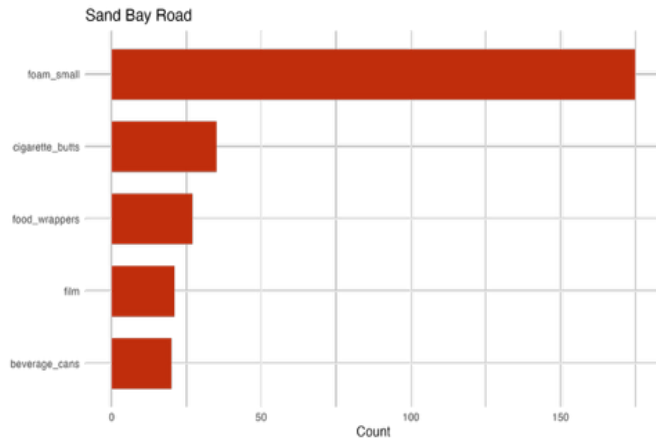
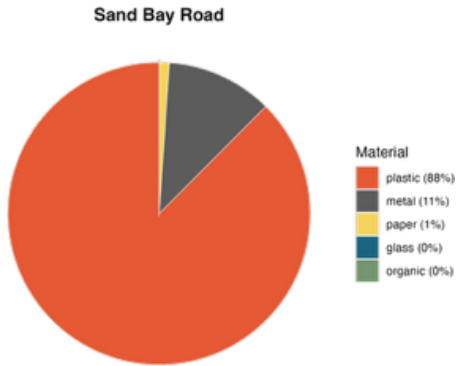
Penetanguishene

Year	Cleanup Events	Volunteers	Kg of Trash
2022	2	31	26
2025	5	24	50



Sand Bay

Year	Cleanup Events	Volunteers	Kg of Trash
2025	6	6	68



Volunteer Profile

While every volunteer plays an essential role in our shoreline cleanups, we would like to recognize one individual in particular this year: **Will Milne**. Over the course of several outings, Will independently collected **68 kg of litter** simply by walking a few kilometres of shoreline and roadside near his home along Georgian Bay—debris that might otherwise have washed into nearby waterways.

His effort highlights two important realities: litter accumulates quickly, even in areas that appear quiet or unused, and one committed individual can make a measurable difference. These small,



Local Georgian Bay resident Will Milne, who took it upon themselves to cleanup their local shoreline. Truly an inspiration to us all!

consistent efforts at the local level can scale to broader environmental improvements that extend well beyond a single stretch of shoreline.

This is exactly the kind of community-led action we hope to expand in the coming years. Locals understand their beaches, trails, and access points better than anyone. When individuals take ownership of these spaces, the result is more frequent cleanups, wider geographic reach, and stronger long-term stewardship of the Bay.

Hosting a cleanup does not require specialized training. It can be as simple as a walk with gloves and a data sheet — a meaningful way for families and neighbours to spend time outdoors while contributing directly to the health of their community. We invite others to consider organizing a cleanup in their own neighbourhood this summer. Georgian Bay Forever will provide guidance, materials, and standardized data sheets to support any community-led effort.

One person can make a difference, and together, those efforts build cleaner shorelines and a healthier Georgian Bay for all of us.

How To Get Involved

Already out for a walk along the shoreline, a local park or even your own neighbourhood? Consider bringing a bag or bucket and some gloves to collect what you can. It can be a fun activity for kids and a friendly competition amongst friends and neighbours. Even collecting a few pieces can make a real difference for your community.



SITE INFORMATION

Date		Location	
Distance Cleaned (km)		# of Volunteers	
# of Garbage Bags		Total Weight Collected	



TRASH TALLY

COMMON ITEMS	
Beverage Cans	Metal
Bottle Caps (plastic)	Lids

If you're inspired to contribute to our dataset, you can even weigh your trash and download our trash tally sheet to record your findings. Community submission helps us expand our reach to all communities around the Bay. Please contact our Plastic Coordinator if you have any questions or interest in participating: Nicolaas Love-
nic.love@gbf.org