

LAKE HURON COASTAL CENTRE **BEACH CLEAN-UP REPORT 2025**



LAKE HURON
COASTAL CENTRE

THE LAKE HURON PLASTIC POLLUTION PROBLEM

Lake Huron's natural beauty draws countless vacationers each year, significantly boosting local coastal economies. However, the influx of visitors during peak seasons leads to increased plastic debris on our beaches and in the lake itself. This plastic pollution poses serious threats to water quality and wildlife, causing entanglement, asphyxiation, and ingestion, while also contributing to human health risks from persistent organic toxins like DDT, which adhere to plastic in the water. To combat this issue, the Lake Huron Coastal Centre hosts shoreline clean-up events, installs passive plastic pollution prevention tools (i.e., beach clean-up stations, Litta Traps), and provides education on microplastic and plastic pollution.

In 2025, we...

- Held **12 beach clean-up events** across the Lake Huron shoreline, spanning from Sarnia to the Bruce Peninsula.
- Removed **1200 lbs** of garbage from the shoreline with the help of **630 volunteers**.
- Operated **6 beach clean-up stations** from Grand Bend to Southampton with the help of community volunteers to provide tools and encourage individuals to take action on their beaches.
- Gave **10 educational presentations** on plastic and microplastic pollution in Lake Huron to **220 individuals** in community groups, school classrooms, and environmental professionals
- Provided **4 Litta Traps** to municipal partners for installation in public stormwater drains.
- Developed and/or strengthened **44 partnerships** with community groups, local businesses, governments, and NGOs.
- Engaged with **330 children and youth** through beach clean-ups, workshops, and presentations.



BEACH CLEAN-UP EVENTS

Beach clean-up events were held from late April to early November, in 9 different locations along the shoreline. This included Sarnia, Kettle Point, Grand Bend, Bayfield (Howard St. Beach & Pier Beach), Goderich, Kincardine, Inverhuron Provincial Park, Port Elgin (Main Beach & Gobles Grove), and Oliphant.

The beach clean-up with the highest number of volunteers was our Port Elgin clean-up in the Spring. This event was partnered with the elementary school, and had nearly 200 grade 4, 5, and 6 students come out to participate in coastal stewardship and learn about plastic pollution. This was followed by Goderich, which had 147 volunteers attend on a cold April day, and Sarnia, with 91 volunteers, many of which were Lambton College students. This was unsurprising for Goderich and Sarnia, as these two events have occurred annually for several years. Our smallest event was a collaboration with the Great Lakes Plastic Cleanup and Pollution Probe at Inverhuron Provincial Park to clean up the beach with assistance of the BeBot beach cleaning robot. This collaborative event was mid-week, which affected volunteer availability.

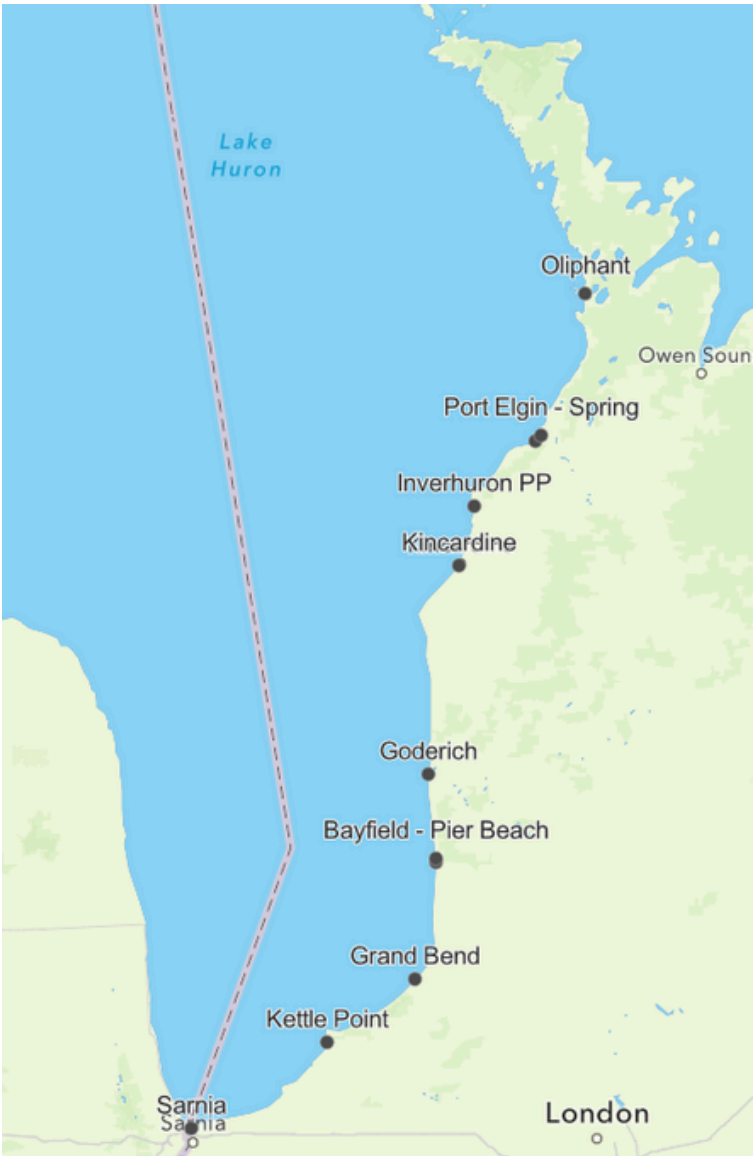


Figure 1. Beach clean-up sites.

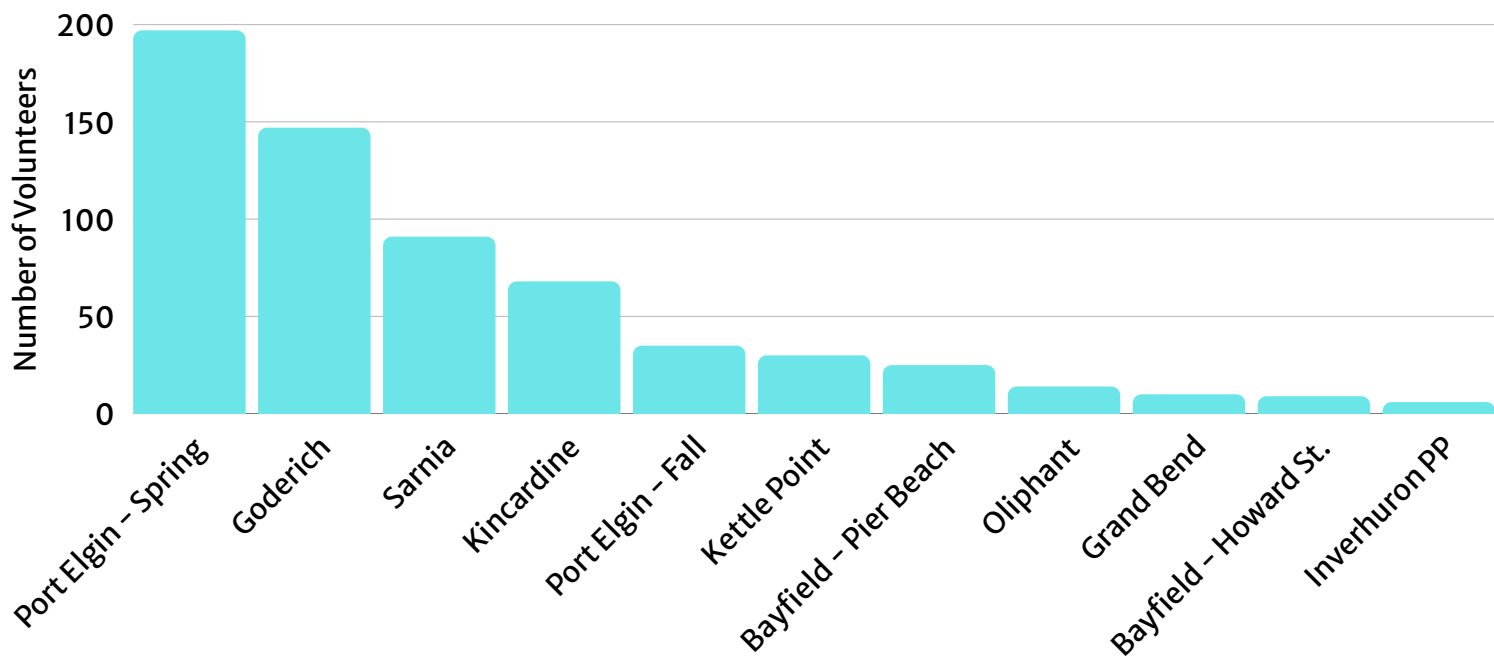


Figure 2. Number of volunteers at each beach clean-up.

WHO WAS THERE?

30% of our volunteers heard of beach clean-ups through Facebook. 18% heard of our beach clean-ups through “Other” sources, which included through project partners, online searches, and direct emails from LHCC staff. 17% of registered volunteers were Lambton College students, and 13% heard of our events through word of mouth. The remaining volunteers found our beach clean-ups through our newsletter, Instagram, and news outlets.

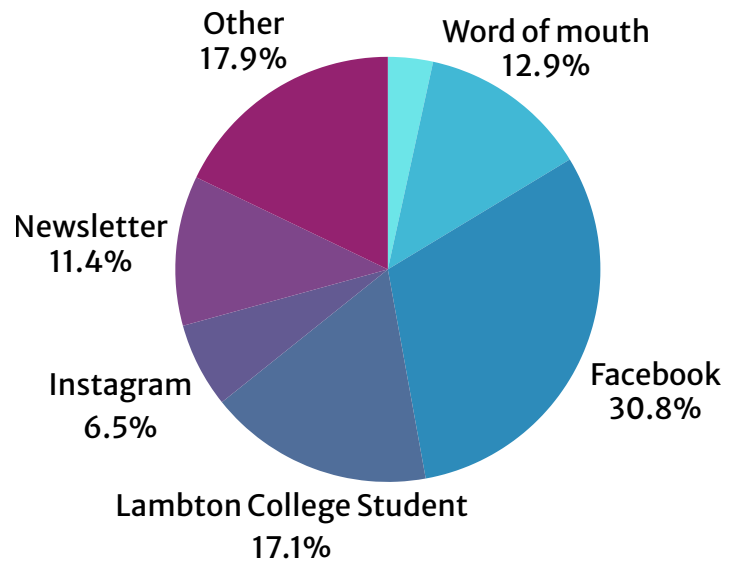


Figure 3. Volunteer recruitment.

HOW MUCH GARBAGE DID WE REMOVE?

The most garbage was found at Kettle Point and the Goderich shoreline, with over 250 lbs collected at each site. The least amount of garbage was removed from Inverhuron Provincial Park and Grand Bend Main Beach, with less than 10 lbs collected at each site.

Differences in the amount of litter found at each beach can be affected by the amount of volunteers, effort of volunteers, size of the beach, time of year, and how busy the beach is.

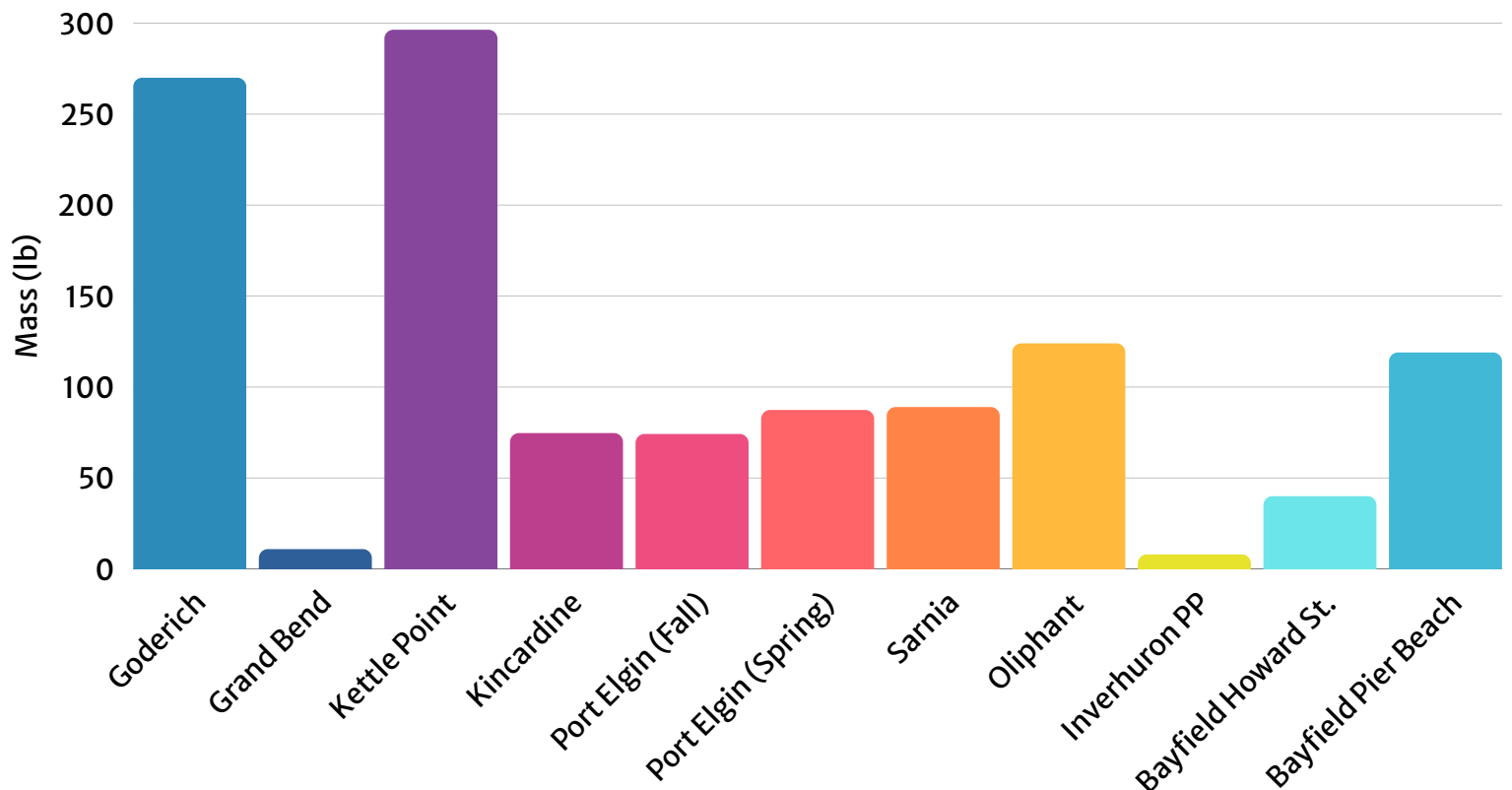
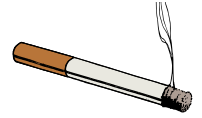


Figure 4. Total mass of garbage collected at each clean-up.

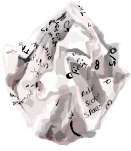
TOP 10 ITEMS FOUND IN 2025

All garbage collected from an LHCC clean-up will contribute to the world's largest international coastal cleanup initiative through the Ocean Wise database. Using Ocean Wise data cards, volunteers record the count and type of litter they remove from the beach. This data is submitted to Ocean Wise and allows us to understand what type of garbage is most prevalent along the Lake Huron shoreline.

#1) Cigarette Butts -----> 5743



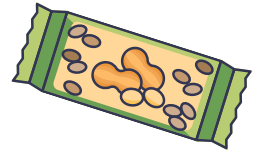
#2) Plastic Pieces -----> 1294



#3) Paper -----> 779



#4) Food Wrappers -----> 760



#5) Bottle Caps -----> 403



#6) Styrofoam -----> 287

#7) Cans -----> 280



#8) Soft Packaging -----> 216



#9) Straws -----> 149

#10) Plastic Bags -----> 122



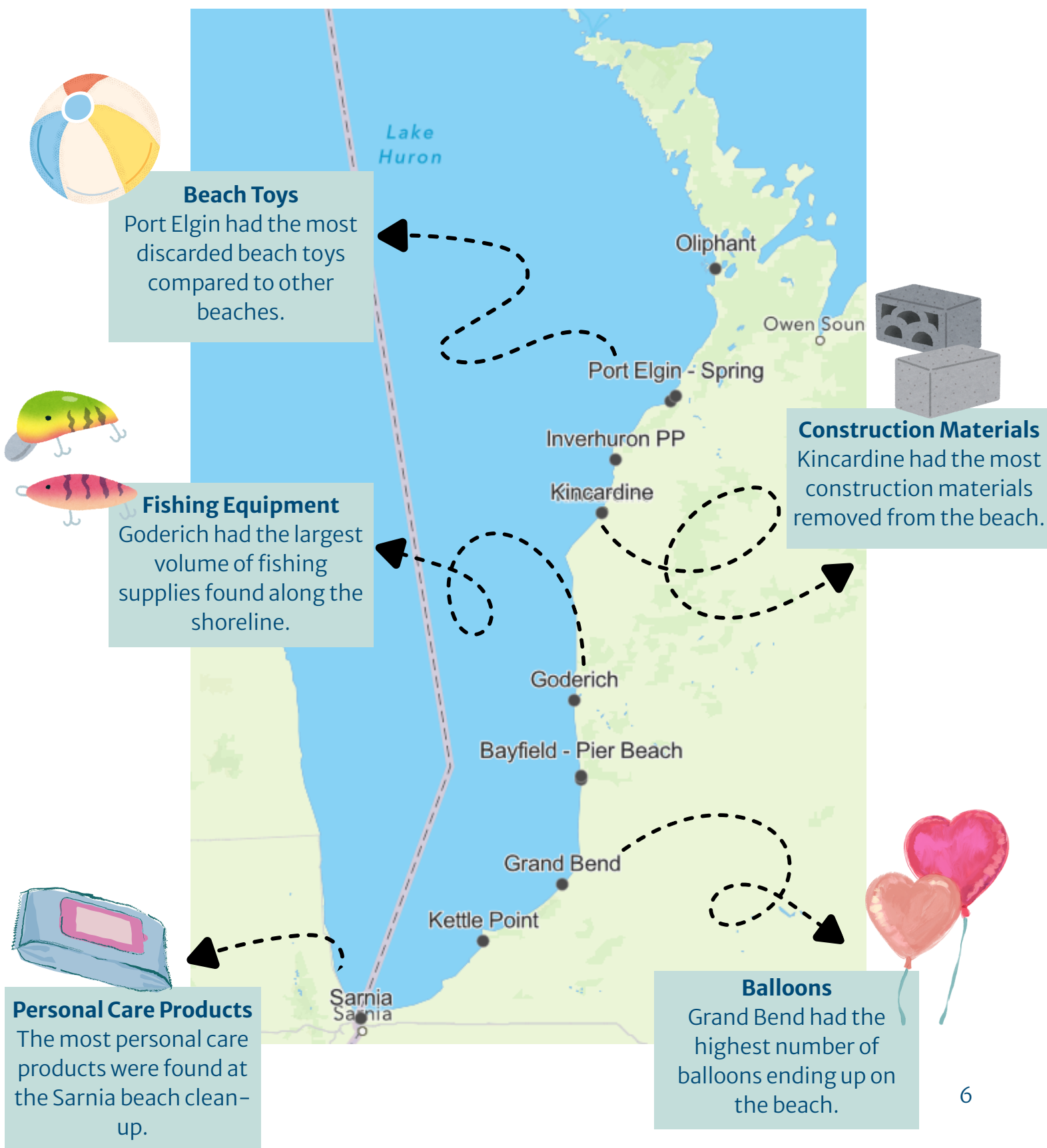
The top items found on Lake Huron are very similar to the “Dirty Dozen” (top 12 littered items) that Ocean Wise shares on their website yearly—in fact, our top 3, are the exact same. Plastic pollution is a problem all across Canada!

Head to ocean.org to learn more about Ocean Wise.



HOW DOES IT DIFFER ACROSS THE COAST?

Most types of garbage were collected at every beach we visited, however, a couple items stood out at certain beaches. By standardizing beach clean-up data to the area of beach cleaned and number of data cards filled out, we can see if certain items are disproportionately represented at certain locations.



WHAT ARE WE DOING ABOUT THE LAKE HURON PLASTIC POLLUTION PROBLEM?

- More **beach clean-ups** in 2026! Stay tuned to join us on a beach near you.
- Installing more **Litta Traps** in stormwater drains within the Lake Huron watershed to divert microplastics from Lake Huron.
- More **educational opportunities** for the public to learn about plastic and microplastic pollution in Lake Huron.
- Continuing to maintain our **beach clean-up stations** installed on public beaches in Grand Bend, Point Clark, Kincardine, Port Elgin, and Southampton.



BUT WE NEED YOUR HELP!

- **Volunteer with the LHCC at a beach clean-up.** Follow us on social media (@coastalcentre) to stay up to date on our upcoming events, or head to lakehuron.ca/beachcleanup.
- **Donate to the LHCC to support the work we do.** You can do this through our website lakehuron.ca/donate. As a small charitable organization, every dollar impacts the amount of coastal conservation work we can do.
- **Become a sponsor for our beach clean-up events!** With over 100 volunteers consistently at our larger events, and dedicated support online, our events provide a great opportunity for visibility for your company while helping your community. Check out page 12 of this report to learn more.
- **Subscribe to our newsletter or follow us on social media.** Head to lakehuron.ca/newsletter or @coastalcentre on Instagram and Facebook. See you there!

THANK YOU VOLUNTEERS!!!!





THANK YOU TO OUR BEACH CLEAN-UP SPONSORS, PARTNERS, AND FUNDERS.



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If you're interested in becoming a sponsor, please contact us at coastalcentre@lakehuron.ca or 226-421-3029.



LAKE HURON COASTAL CENTRE

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