



LAKE HURON
COASTAL CENTRE

ANNUAL NEWSLETTER

2023



CELEBRATING 25 YEARS OF COASTAL CONSERVATION!

SHORELINE CLEAN-UPS MADE A COME BACK

This was a HUGE year for beach clean-ups at Lake Huron Coastal Centre!

We worked with 740 amazing volunteers to remove over 1,700 pounds of garbage from the Lake Huron shoreline throughout 14 events.

Now read that again. WOW!

This impressive feat enacted real change for Lake Huron. Shoreline clean-ups are essential when we consider that the equivalent of 40 dump trucks of plastic pollution enters the Great Lakes every year. Volunteers and donors like you are helping improve the health of Lake Huron, as well as the lives of wildlife (& humans!) that depend on it.



740
Volunteers

Our two largest events included the Goderich Earth Day clean-up with 180 volunteers, and the *First of Fall* clean-up in Sarnia with 133 volunteers.

Community groups, sponsors, businesses, environmental organizations, families, and individuals all contributed to make this clean-up season the success that it was.

THANK YOU!



LHCC has developed 6 beach clean-up stations that will be installed on public beaches. These stations will provide everything required for someone to clean up the beach on their own. The supplies are kept in adorable boxes that have educational signage and hand painted native flowers and wildlife. We hope these stations will enact ongoing support from the community to help keep our beaches sustainability pristine. Your donation will help to upkeep and stock these stations for years to come!



1,700lbs
of garbage!



LAKE HURON'S FOUL FIVE



Cigarette Butts

8,210



2

Plastic Pieces

3,061



1,655

Food Wrappers



Paper

1,127



Bottle Caps



848



Honorable Mentions



401



382



264



244

Donate Now to Help Us Fight Against Plastic Pollution

www.lakehuron.ca/donate

Charitable Registration Number: 872138938 RR0001

The Foul Five list comes from the most common items found during the 14 beach clean-ups we held in 2023!

Your donations will be used to fight back against the Foul Five through our beach clean-up events.

TINY AND TERRIBLE: HOW LHCC IS CONFRONTING THE MICROPLASTIC CRISIS

It is estimated that humans ingest the equivalent of one credit card per week of microplastic. Although we can't see them, microplastics are all around us. They are released from clothes made from synthetic clothing such as polyester (microfibers), from our larger plastic products broken down over time (fragments), or exfoliants in our hygiene products (microbeads). Due to their small size, they can bypass water treatment systems and end up in the Great Lakes.

LHCC conducts research on microplastic in Lake Huron and in Georgian Bay. Results from this year's data was derived from 60 one-liter lake water samples that were collected and tested in collaboration with Georgian Bay Forever. We analyzed the lake water by passing the samples through a very thin filter which catches any particles contained in the water. We then look at the filter under a dissecting microscope to find microplastic.



Our findings from 2023 show that 88% of samples contained some form of microplastic, with a total of 224 microplastics observed. Microfibers were undoubtedly the most common type of microplastic found, with 164 recorded!

We can't help what we don't know about! Help LHCC continue researching this pressing issue by donating this holiday season!



Keep an eye out on our social media, newsletter, and website for future opportunities to get involved in our plastic pollution initiatives. Please give generously so this important work can continue!



@coastalcentre

www.lakehuron.ca

LAKE HURON'S PROTECTORS



Coast Watchers has been a cornerstone of LHCC's mission as its longest running program at 18 years. For 18 years we have consistently gathered valuable data on plastic pollution, algae blooms, Species at Risk, human activity, and the evolving climate.

This extensive timeline of research has contributed to our understanding of Lake Huron's present condition. This season nearly 300 community scientists submitted over 3,300 reports spanning the Canadian and American shoreline of Lake Huron. That's 800 reports more than last season resulting in thousands of unique data points being relayed to interested environmental groups and organizations. Being informed on environmental issues is more important now than ever. Climate change and plastic pollution are urgent issues, making it crucial to have long-term data available to guide decision-making at a local and national level.



"I go to the shore every morning to greet the day; it is easy for me to collect some data and I am happy to help."



Many volunteers of all ages and experience levels utilize this program as an opportunity to learn new skills and enjoy nature while helping to protect their most loved beaches. We reached out to our Coast Watchers and found that 87% felt more connected to nature, 73% learned more about Lake Huron, and 70% felt more motivated to take local environmental action by participating in this program.

Due to our amazing volunteers and generous donors, Coast Watchers is able to evolve each season. Your support drives our progress, and we're thrilled to aim for greater strides in the upcoming season. Your donation will help to enhance Coast Watchers through mobile app improvements, updated equipment and so much more! Also, keep an eye out on our website in the new year for the annual Coast Watchers report for the 2023 season.

"I now wish I was a biologist! It has been a wonderful way to get outside and connect with nature. And it has made me a better advocate for the environment because I have committed to this."

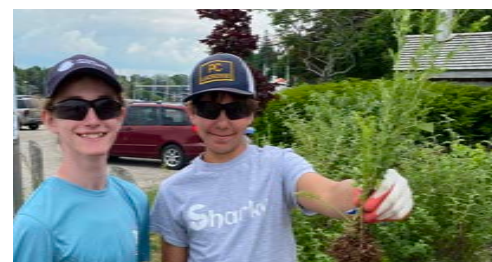
~Coast Watchers Volunteer



"I have enjoyed a greater understanding of the dynamics of our beautiful Lake Huron and how it is impacted by the environment. It is interesting to watch the interaction of our existing wildlife throughout the seasons."

~Coast Watchers Volunteer

YOUTH CORPS SHINES HOPE AND OPTIMISM ON COASTAL CONSERVATION



With the sun shining brightly and a dozen youth ready to tackle the day's project of removing shoreline invasive species, our first activity was a name game to reinforce our team connection. We went around the circle of 16, each sharing our first name plus a species we were interested in learning more about. In turn, each person tried to remember the names and species of the previous participants. Some chose the local 'classics' such as turtles and monarch butterflies, but there was also interest in exotic species like hydrangeas and ocean dwelling dolphins – the instructions hadn't specified a need to be local. Early in the activity, one participant enthusiastically added, "invasive plant species sold at garden centres!", and although it was a tongue twister, it presented an opportunity to explore the intersection of human activity and shoreline ecology.

The group's efforts identifying the aggressive behavior of non-native plant species on coastal dune systems had made an impression, including monitoring for *Phragmites australis*, a rampantly invasive grass. The irony was not lost on our participants that the very plants being removed, like Periwinkle, Scots pine or English ivy, were continuing to be sold at garden centres, potentially to be planted in yards near sensitive dunes and coastal forests.



"I learned a lot and I think that it is very important to learn about taking care of our beaches and how to increase biodiversity in our communities."



Over the past 4 years the Coastal Conservation Youth Corps (CCYC) program has evolved and forged a space in line with current research suggesting that “collective action and collaborative learning spaces can help to buffer against distress as children and young people grapple with global environmental crises”. Over several week-long summer sessions, held in Saugeen Shores and Goderich, CCYC participants were able to build hope, seeing that change is possible and most powerful when undertaken with a community approach.

Working alongside property owners of Southcott Pines to remove heaps of invading Eurasian water milfoil from the Old Ausable Channel, all generations were able to laugh and pose for photos while finding humour in getting completely mucky by dragging massive buoyant rakes over the water.

Building in emotionally light learning experiences and recognizing volunteer efforts helps to support positive youth engagement while addressing threats to the health of Lake Huron. Adolescence is a period of heightened development for the young brain. Youth leadership and the willingness of young people to innovate is a valuable community resource that will lead to positive impacts for years to come!

With generous support from corporate sponsors, community groups, and individual donors, these incredible opportunities are made possible for young people in our communities. This program is not possible without the support of people like you! Please consider donating generously this holiday season to give these inspiring youth a brighter future!

“This program gives great exposure to environmental issues for people that want to get involved locally or want to pursue a related career.”



“I feel very proud and accomplished about what we did this week!!! We made great strides forward for our beaches and lake and I feel others should get this feeling of accomplishment.”

WE NEED YOUR HELP

Lake Huron Coastal Centre is a registered charitable organization and 97% of our work is funded through donations and grants! Your gift today will help ensure we pass on a positive environmental legacy to future generations.

PO Box 477
Goderich, ON, N7A 4C7
coastalcentre@lakehuron.ca
www.lakehuron.ca

Charitable Number #872138938RR001

THANK YOU

We are so grateful for the financial support of corporate partners, local businesses, and community organizations. Your generosity makes coastal conservation possible!

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