

2023 | COMMUNITY IS KEY

# Beach Cleanup Year in Review



**SURFRIDER**  
FOUNDATION.  
VENTURA COUNTY

# Overview

**Through steady outreach, consistent programming, and a diverse range of cleanup locations, we were able to make a bigger difference than ever before.**

Beach cleanups are the most direct way we can bring awareness to our local Ventura County (VC) community about trash pollution that impacts the health of our local beaches and marine ecosystems. It is truly inspiring to see how passionate the VC community is about this issue, and the difference that is made at each of our cleanups.

With 12 atmospheric rivers hitting Ventura County in early 2023, gathering our community was integral in recovering from the enormous volume of debris left on our beaches – including large items like appliances, car bumpers, and mattresses. The need for water quality monitoring and ongoing debris cleanup persisted throughout the year, and healing was a slow and steady process.

Coming into an El Niño Event for the latter half of the year, another major storm hit to mark the end of 2023. Surfrider VC had to yet again rely on our dedicated community of volunteers in the wake of the storm.

Chipping away at the amount of trash brought to our beaches, our strong band of core and community volunteers were able to make bigger impacts through our cleanup programs than ever before.

Through steady outreach, consistent programming, and a diverse range of cleanup locations, we were able to have more cleanups and pickup more trash than the year prior. Most importantly, we were able to build upon our strong community, engaging the most volunteers in our cleanup programs since the birth of the chapter.

The Surfrider Ventura County Chapter has three public cleanup programs that run monthly: Ormond Beach and Wetlands, C-Street, and Respect the Rincon Parkway. We also worked to expand our Corporate Sponsored Cleanups, having hosted 14 private cleanups at various beaches with corporate groups in 2023. As always, Surfrider supports and encourages solo cleanups as a way to get involved for the days we aren't on the sand.

## SURFRIDER VC'S CLEANUP PROGRAMS



**Ormond Beach & Wetlands**



**C St./Ventura Promenade**



**Respect the Rincon Parkway**

**By collecting data, we are able to visualize the impact beach cleanups have. Check out our results from the past 5 years.**

**206**

Total Cleanups

**259,238**

Total Items Collected

**8,186**

Volunteers Engaged

**59,855**

Pounds of Trash Collected



# Program Results

In 2023, our 2,185 volunteers were able to remove 22,570 pounds of trash from beaches across Ventura County. On average, that's about ten pounds of trash per volunteer. We reached over 160 cleanup hours across 76 cleanups. We had ten different cleanup locations, with Rincon Parkway having the most cleanups for the year. Our data was collected from a variety of solo, public, and private cleanups.

Astoundingly, our cleanup programs saw a 54% increase in volunteer engagement when compared to 2022. In 2023, we brought in 770 more volunteers than the year prior. With all the new faces, it's no wonder that Surfrider VC was able to make big impacts.

## OUR 2023 IMPACT

76

Total Cleanups

85,732

Total Items Collected

2,185

Volunteers Engaged

22,570

Pounds of Trash Collected

In 2023, we raised volunteer engagement by 54% from last year.

**This year, we were able to have more cleanups, engage more volunteers, and pick up more trash than last year.**

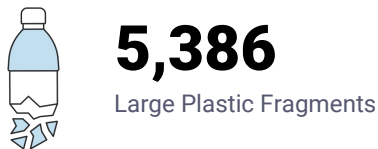
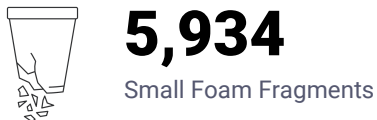
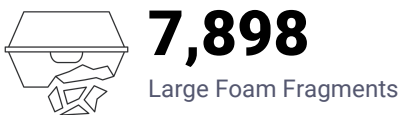


# Data Deep Dive

Our data is collected by a strong team of citizen scientists, core and community volunteers alike. This year, we continue to find that plastic pollution is the biggest threat to our beaches – 86% of all of our items collected this year were plastic. Further, our top 5 items collected throughout the year fall under the plastic category.

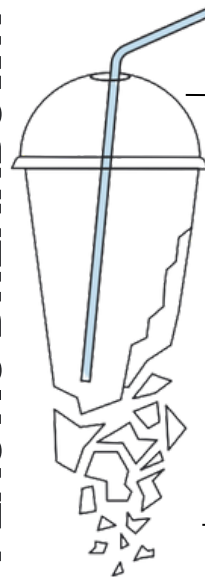
We found that over a quarter (28%) of all of our items collected this year were plastic fragments. Plastic has infiltrated nearly every corner of our world, from the air we breathe to the water we drink. That’s why it’s important for us to continue collecting data to push for legislative change and put an end to plastic pollution at the source.

## TOP 5 ITEMS COLLECTED:



Cigarette butts have been our #1 found item for the past four years.

## PLASTIC BREAKDOWN



**86%**  
of all items collected were plastic

**28%**  
of all items collected were plastic fragments

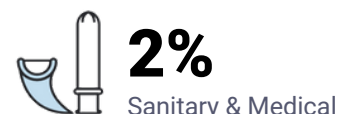
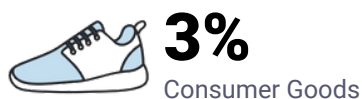
**15%**  
of all items collected were large plastic fragments

**12%**  
of all items collected were small plastic fragments

**Small Fragments**  
Smaller than a dime

**Large Fragments**  
Larger than a dime

## BROAD USAGE CATEGORIES





# What's Next?

The work doesn't stop here. As we step into 2024, here are some program-specific cleanup reflections and hopes for the future.



## Ormond Beach, Oxnard

As our southern-most cleanup location, Ormond Beach got some much needed TLC this year. Across 12 cleanups, our 356 volunteers picked up 15,799 pounds of trash. That's about 70% of the amount of trash picked up from all of our cleanups for the entire year. This helps visualize the severe and multi-dimensional trash pollution problem Ormond is facing.

Moving into the new year, we are excited to continue with our monthly cleanups at Ormond. We also are looking into ways to streamline and more accurately collect data on where the trash is accumulating and coming from. We hope to use this data to urge decision-makers to create solutions towards a cleaner and healthier Ormond.

— Ally Alejo, VC Beach Cleanup Coordinator

## C-Street, Ventura

The Ventura Promenade Beach Cleanup program rallied over 1,500 volunteers to pick up more than 1,570 pounds of trash and 260 pounds of recycling. This well-attended program, averaging over 100 community volunteers each month, has also promoted solo cleanups throughout our local watersheds and has had many individual community members submit trash data to add to our national database.

In 2024 we're looking forward to welcoming returning volunteers and introducing new volunteers to our chapter activities and events. Because of our high visibility, we have the opportunity to inspire many members of the community to get involved and make a difference for our ocean and beaches.

— Marie Martin, C Street Beach Cleanup Lead



## Rincon Parkway, Ventura

Respect the Rincon Parkway (RRP) faced continued challenges with the erosion of coastline, sea level rise, and multiple jurisdictions that impact our coastline at this section of Hwy 1. In 2023, we picked up about 1,000 cigarette butts per month and 65 pounds of trash per solo/group cleanup. RRP partnered with State Parks for an Emma Wood State Beach cleanup, collecting over 75 pounds of trash despite a challenging high tide. We were able to develop a strategy for further remediation of a July 4th fireworks problem which produced 450 pounds of fireworks debris. Finally, RRP was able to organize a unique and rare cleanup at the closed McGrath State Beach, picking up 1,000 pounds of trash!

Moving forward, we are anticipating major access and construction changes to the Rincon Parkway in 2025. We are seeking creative strategies to keep volunteers coming for beach clean ups given the lack of access to the Parkway during the 2025 construction.

— Joy Downing Riley, VC RRP and Blue Water Task Force Lead



# Chapter Updates

**Our beach cleanups may often be the first way that people get involved in our chapter, but there's a lot more that Surfrider VC is up to. Here are some general chapter updates!**

In 2023, Surfrider VC had eight chapter meetings, with speakers ranging from local, environmentally-conscience business owners to Surfrider's Ventura Campaign Coordinator Paul Jenkin on Phase 2 of Surfer's Point. We continued working on our Ocean Friendly Gardens Program, having monthly OFG

workdays at Loma Vista Elementary School in Ventura. In 2023, our Ocean Friendly Restaurants Program (OFR) re-certified and welcomed eight new OFRs to the program. Finally, we had four major campaign wins – two of which were local Plastic Pollution victories.

## CAMPAIGN VICTORIES

### **Oxnard EPS Foam Ban**

January 2023

### **Massive New Development at the Ventura County Fairgrounds Prevented**

March 2023

### **Port Hueneme Plastics Reduction**

April 2023

### **Stop Ventura County's Agricultural Pollution from Entering Our Ocean**

September 2023

## ACTIVE CAMPAIGNS

### **Water Testing & Notification at Ormond Lagoon**

Start water testing at Ormond Lagoon and publicly identifying high-risk sites

### **Support Phase 2 of Surfers Point in Ventura**

Relocating the rest of the threatened bike path and parking at the Ventura Fairgrounds

### **Bring Down Matilija Dam**

Remove Matilija Dam to protect water quality and restore natural sediment flows.



## Want to get involved?

Join a chapter meeting or swing by a beach cleanup. See what Surfrider Ventura County has going on.



[ventura.surfrider.org/events](https://ventura.surfrider.org/events)



# All About Volunteers!

From participating in beach cleanups to leading our programs, take a look at some of the awe-inspiring moments from our volunteers this year.



# Credits

Unless otherwise stated, all photos were provided by volunteer and photographer, Michaela Rabinov. You can find Michaela at @michaelarabinov on Instagram.

This report was a collaborative production of the Surfrider Foundation Ventura County Chapter. Please email [aalejo@ventura.surfrider.org](mailto:aalejo@ventura.surfrider.org) for more information on this report.

