

Canadians Clean Up Their Environment

Participants remove more than 80,000 kg of garbage from shorelines across the country

February 1, 2007: A canoe made entirely of duct tape, a stolen car, eight toilet seats and fourteen barbecues were just some of the items found during last year's TD Canada Trust Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup.

Organizers have tallied the findings from 966 cleanup sites across the country, and participants removed 84,708 kg of shoreline litter that would have otherwise dirtied our beaches and park waterways for local plants, animals and us! 40,781 registered participants scoured 2,080 km of shoreline across the country. Cleanups of varying sizes took place in every province and territory, including in all major Canadian cities, as well as smaller cities, towns and villages.

"The Vancouver Aquarium is thrilled to see more people than ever before taking part in this cleanup initiative," said Dr. John Nightingale, President, Vancouver Aquarium. "For many people, this program is the first step toward actively participating in conserving the environment and critical animal habitat for future generations."

The biggest cleanup took place at Willows Beach in Victoria, BC with 670 participants removing 106.5 kg of garbage from 2 km of shoreline. The next largest cleanups took place in Richmond Hill, ON (450 participants, 386 kg removed from 3.2 km of shoreline) and Portage La Prairie, MB (430 participants, 433 kg removed from 3.2 km of shoreline).

For 12 years, the number one item found has been cigarette butts and this year was no exception. Cigarette butts or filters are particularly harmful because of the toxins they release as they break down over a five-year period. This year, participants removed 214,229 cigarette butts from Canada's shorelines. Food wrappers, glass and plastic bottles, eating utensils, straws and building materials round out the list of most common items found every year.

The largest single item recovered was a stolen car retrieved by the RCMP dive team in Surrey's Nicomekl River. The Nicomekl is an important salmon stream for BC's struggling salmon stocks and removing the car ended the ongoing leaching of toxins that the submerged vehicle was emitting. Not to be outdone, the Toronto Police Marine Unit divers removed a rickshaw, a reel-to-reel tape player and a street lamp from the Toronto Harbour. In Aklavik, ON cleanup crews found a 6 ft boat made entirely of duct tape.

"TD Canada Trust and our Friends of the Environment Foundation are thrilled to be able to take an active role in helping to preserve our environment," said Fred Tomczyk, Vice Chair, Corporate Operations, TD Bank Financial Group. "We strongly believe that the future of our environment starts with education and community involvement. We're thrilled that more and more Canadians are taking action to help keep our shorelines clean."

Launched 12 years ago by the Vancouver Aquarium, this conservation initiative first started in British Columbia then grew into Alberta. With the support of title sponsor, TD Canada Trust, the Vancouver Aquarium then expanded the program nationally. The TD Canada Trust Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup now allows citizens from all walks of life to help create a cleaner Canada. Registered participants receive 'cleanup packages' from the Vancouver Aquarium that includes all the supplies they need as well as a data card to be filled out and returned to the Aquarium for tallying. National totals are then sent to the International Coastal Cleanup, where Canada now sits as the second largest cleanup of over 90 participating countries (U.S. is first).

Registration is now open for 2007. To get involved, go to www.vanaqua.org/cleanup or call toll free 1-877-427-2422.

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