

Coastal Cleanup



Julie Ryder of University of Florida's Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences conducted microplastics training for volunteers to collect water and sand samples on Coastal Cleanup Day. More than half of the attendees were TEAM Punta Gorda Maritime Committee members. Following the classroom training, the group relocated to Charlotte County Beach Complex for onsite training of collecting the samples.



In coordination with Charlotte Harbor National Estuary Program, TEAM's Maritime Committee has committed to monthly water and shoreline sample collection and testing.

Pictured left: Julie Ryder explaining collection and test reading while Hal Sterwerf examines a sample with organic materials and microplastics.

Small groups of volunteers met at Laishley Park and collected debris from the shoreline and bridges while other groups took the waterways by kayak.

Some of the items collected were socks, tackle box, kitty litter box, fishing line and lures, water bottles and various other plastic items.

After the cleanup, TEAM's Maritime Committee met at Ponce de Leon Park to collect three samples of shoreline sand and water to be tested later for microplastics.

One group continued on to the waterways for more debris collection along the river in the mangroves and alongside the seawalls. Another group continued to Welcome Beach at Gilchrist Park and the unofficial kayak launch area near Milus St at Trabue Harborwalk.

Pictured right: Sue Leahey, Greg Leahey, Michelle Hippchen, Bill Wood



Jim Miller rinses container in preparation of water collection



Greg Leahey, Bill Wood, Jim Miller, Nancy Morris collecting samples and logging gps location



Sue Leahey, Bob Oleary, Bill Wood, Greg Leahey, Jim Miller and Nancy Morris

Also, to learn more about the dangers of microplastics in our waterways, check out this short video from TED Talk at <https://ed.ted.com/lessons/the-nurdles-quest-for-ocean-domination-kim-preshoff>

