



Kim Albins, NOAA Marine Debris Program

Marine debris is any persistent solid material that is manufactured or processed and directly or indirectly, intentionally or unintentionally, disposed of or abandoned into the marine environment or the Great Lakes. Marine debris can be small, like a cigarette butt tossed on the beach, or large, like an abandoned vessel. While marine debris is a global problem requiring international cooperation, the Gulf of Mexico Alliance can help address a broad range of issues and coordinate on the local, state, and regional scale to help alleviate negative impacts of marine debris.

Cross-Team Goal

The goal of this initiative is to assess, reduce, prevent, and eliminate marine debris and aquatic trash in the Gulf of Mexico and its watershed for the benefit of habitats, wildlife and fisheries, humans, and the Gulf economy.

Actions

- Assess and reduce the impacts of marine debris and aquatic trash through research, monitoring, and innovative solutions
- Support the removal of marine debris and aquatic trash to reduce impacts to habitats, wildlife and fisheries, navigational safety, humans, and the economy
- Prevent the introduction of marine debris and aquatic trash through raising awareness and improving individual stewardship through promoting local, regional and national coastal and river cleanups
- Work across Gulf of Mexico Alliance Priority Issue Teams to ensure maximum collaboration and holistic approaches to marine debris and aquatic trash projects and programs

Why Do This?

Marine debris is harmful to the Gulf of Mexico's ecosystems and economy, and affects fishing, navigation and even human health. Because marine debris is often the result of deliberate or accidental actions by people on land or at sea, it is a problem that each individual citizen can help prevent.

Expected Results

Marine debris is significantly reduced as a result of greater public education and outreach; partnerships with local governments, communities, and industry; and enhanced research, monitoring, and source identification.