



# The Flow of... Trash Free Waters

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## Recent TFW Strategy/Project Related Meetings

Puerto Rico TFW/  
Recycling Partnership  
Planning Meeting  
March 26, 2015

Final Meeting:  
Port of New Orleans TFW  
Port Policy  
March 30, 2015

Final Meeting: Louisiana  
Aquatic Litter Alliance  
April 1, 2015

## Upcoming Events

Earth Day  
April 22, 2015

Mobile Bay Trash Boat  
Competition and  
Community  
Empowerment  
May 2, 2015

## HOW IS IT FLOWING?

This newsletter, intended for our Trash Free Waters (TFW) partners and friends, provides the latest information regarding our TFW progress across the US.

We have made tremendous strides over the last several months as we expand our national TFW program. *The Flow of... Trash Free Waters* is our opportunity to highlight that progress, as well as shine a spotlight on some award winners in our midst. It's wonderful to see our TFW friends receive recognition as they bring TFW Strategies and Projects to fruition, as well as help their communities, and our national efforts, move towards trash free waters.

There's still much more to be done. Lessons learned from



our recent successes will lend itself to even more successes elsewhere.

We thank you and your colleagues for the work you do to reduce, and ultimately prevent, trash from entering our watersheds, rivers, estuaries, and coastal waters. Additionally, please join me in thanking Matt Colombo for his past efforts on the National TFW Program Team and wishing him well in his future

endeavors at EPA's Underground Injection Control Program. Lastly, we welcome Rahul Madhusudanan as our new ORISE participant who will take on a role similar to Matt's.

Please share/send your successes of reducing trash from entering our waters to the National Program Team Lead, Laura S. Johnson, at: [Johnson.Laura-S@epa.gov](mailto:Johnson.Laura-S@epa.gov).

## Trash Free Waters Noted at Conference on Marine Plastic Waste and the Circular Economy

Speaking at an international conference co-sponsored by the International Sustainability Unit of the Prince of Wales's Charities and the Global Ocean Commission, Undersecretary Secretary of State, Catherine Novelli, highlighted the important US Federal Government role as an "enabler . . . of innovation and solutions" to the problem of keeping plastic trash out of the ocean.

Undersecretary Novelli mentioned the EPA Trash Free

Waters (TFW) program as part of the US commitment to address this critical challenge. She noted the contributions of TFW and other Federal programs to the cause of global waste reduction, and urged a strong focus on creating more effective waste management infrastructure and developing innovative approaches to greatly increase recycling, waste-to-energy, and packaging redesign.

Her remarks set up a day of discussions among the 100 attendees, including EPA participants from the Office of Water, the Office of International and Tribal Affairs, and our Region 2 office. The day was capped off with keystone remarks by the Prince of Wales, in which he also called for innovative, systemic approaches to lay the foundation for productive reuse of plastic waste.

### **What is EPA's National Trash Free Waters Program?**

*A strategic approach to support aquatic trash prevention and reduction initiatives by many public, private, and nonprofit stakeholders.*

*Our Economic White Paper looks at the direct and indirect costs to society to manage aquatic trash. We anticipate the release of this document in Spring 2015!*

### **EPA's Role in Achieving Trash Free Waters**

EPA is developing unique and tailored regional strategies with projects to enhance federal, state and local programs that reduce or prevent aquatic trash from entering our watersheds and ultimately our coastal ecosystems. Generally speaking, our Headquarters Team, our Regional Offices and our consultants:

- Serve as a catalyst/convener of strategic and tactical planning processes;
- Identify "champions" to

serve as project leads on the ground where these projects are evolving;

- Consult with and to local governments, businesses, non-governmental organizations, and citizen stakeholders;
- Identify collective actions that enhance trash prevention "drivers" and remove "barriers;"
- Facilitate project implementation; and
- Measure results.

Through these and other activities, EPA hopes to achieve marked

reductions in the flow of trash in our nation's waters and along our shores.

To date, we have been successfully implementing our regional strategy with projects in the Gulf of Mexico, and we are well on our way to publishing and implementing our regional strategy with projects in the Middle Atlantic States, New York and New Jersey, as well as Puerto Rico. Plans are in process to expand beyond these areas as we move into 2016.

### **Summary of Expert Discussion Forum on Possible Human Health Risks from Microplastics in the Marine Environment (Contact Johnson.Laura-S@epa.gov; (202) 566-1273)**

Trash and litter entering inland waterways, coastal waters, and oceans has become a pervasive problem, causing aesthetic blight, economic impacts, and possible bioaccumulation by aquatic organisms. The majority of trash entering these waters comes from land-based sources, including commonly found, single-use, plastic items such as bags, bottles, food containers and wrappers, and food service ware.

In April 2014, EPA's National Trash Free Waters Program asked the National Research Council to convene subject matter experts in a discussion forum to examine the potential for the bioaccumulation in the marine food web of toxic chemicals from small, plastic particles (microplastics), and the likelihood of risk to human health from consumption of seafood contaminated via the microplastic pathway.

This meeting summary highlights overarching themes for priority research to better understand the toxicity and exposure to toxic chemicals in in microplastics. To access this meeting summary, go to <http://water.epa.gov/type/oceb/marinedebris/>.

**TFW in the Lower Mid-Atlantic**  
**(Contact Madhusudanan.Rahul@epa.gov; (202) 566-0821)**

TFW in the Lower Mid-Atlantic is moving aggressively into the implementation stages of the Mid-Atlantic Regional Strategy. The cornerstone of the strategy involves the publication of our "Great Practices" Compendium – due out in the Spring of 2015.

The remainder of our mid-Atlantic regional strategy is seeking to put projects on the ground in each of five major cities: Philadelphia, Baltimore, Washington DC, Hampton Roads, and Richmond. Progress has

continued in recent months, with meetings in each city (except Philadelphia, where conference calls were employed more regularly).

The most significant progress in in Richmond, VA with stakeholders looking to make a tangible difference in advance of the "Union Cycliste Internationale" races September 19 to 27. These "Road World Championships" are a nine-day event, featuring 12 Championship races for Elite Men and Women. It is a rare opportunity for the athletes to compete for their

country, just as they do during the Olympic Games. Hundreds of thousands of visitors are expected in what is truly an international event of global proportion.

In advance of "The Worlds" Local leaders are looking to install litter management technologies so as to protect the James River and Reedy Creek – "Bandalong" systems and Big Belly trash cans are being considered. Of interest to TFW is a model for optimizing the distribution of these technologies.

*Our "Great Practices" compendium for the Lower Middle Atlantic States will be published in the Spring of 2015!*



**WHAT IS AN MS4?**

*An MS4, Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System, is a conveyance or system of conveyances that is:*

- *Owned by a state, city, town, village, or other public entity that discharges to waters of the US;*
- *Designed or used to collect or convey stormwater (including storm drains, pipes, ditches, etc.);*
- *Not a combined sewer; and*
- *Not part of a Publicly Owned Treatment Works (sewage treatment plant).*

**Guam Marine Debris Action Plan Workshop, Guam**  
**(Contact Cook.Anna-Marie@epa.gov; (415) 972-3029)**

In January, 2015, EPA's Region 9 office hosted a Marine Debris Action Plan Workshop together with Guam EPA and a number of other Guam and federal agencies. The workshop utilized a geographically driven, priority based approach to develop the action plan, representing a departure from previous methods such as that used in Hawaii. In attendance were Guam EPA, Bureau of Statistics, Department of Agriculture, Guam Power

Authority (GPA), the Harbor Master, industry representatives, the US Coast Guard, US Navy, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Guam's priorities and strategies for marine debris prevention (both land- and ocean-based) and response were presented and discussed. Discussions and action items focused on Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) permitting and emerging zero trash to waterways

provisions (stakeholders included the US Navy, GPA, and Department of Public Works), outreach and education strategies and initiatives (including beach cleanup programs and straw-free initiatives), and response to abandoned and derelict vessels -- of which there are approximately 30 around Guam. Future workshops are planned for Saipan, and potentially American Samoa.



### Earth Day April 22, 2015

*... the perfect day to reflect on how our efforts can further encourage reduction of trash and litter in our neighborhoods and waterways. Thinking locally can help reduce land-based sources of trash that can ultimately make it to our coastal waters and oceans.*

## TFW in the Gulf of Mexico

(Contact [Johnson.Laura-S@epa.gov](mailto:Johnson.Laura-S@epa.gov); (202) 566-1273)

The Gulf of Mexico Regional Strategy and Projects document was released in December, 2014 -- a short six months after initial stakeholder engagement. The Strategy contains five goals and describes the seven projects undertaken during the first round of activity. TFW is now engaged in five of those seven projects:

- Tampa, FL: In partnership with NestleWaters, efforts are underway to collect and map litter and aquatic trash data; implement public outreach strategies, and undertake tactical

planning for Phase II efforts in the Hillsborough River Watershed.

- Mobile, AL: Efforts include the removal of litter and aquatic trash from highly vegetated riparian zones and waterways in partnership with other federal entities; and the staging of a competition among trash boat technology innovators.
- New Orleans, LA: Stakeholder process to develop a Model Port Policy for consideration and implementation at nation's ports; and working with a diverse stakeholder group to reduce and eliminate litter and aquatic trash from Port of New Orleans property.

• State of Louisiana:

Stakeholders State-wide are working together to develop a Template Local Ordinance that could be adapted and adopted by local governments. This ordinance includes definitions, penalties and fines, as well as a suggested system for enforcement and adjudication.

- Region-wide: Our consultant team is developing an "Atlas" of state and local government (for populations greater than 100,000) policies and programs that seek to reduce or eliminate aquatic trash in the environment.

## TFW in Puerto Rico

(Contact [mercado.noemi@epa.gov](mailto:mercado.noemi@epa.gov); (202) 566-1251)

The Puerto Rico (PR) Trash Free Waters (TFW) Team continues moving forward with the planning stage to develop a strategy with projects to reduce and prevent aquatic trash in PR. On November 13, 2014 the San Juan Bay Estuary Program and the Puerto Rico Recycling Partnership hosted a meeting with key stakeholders from the public and private sector to discuss a set of actions that can help

to reduce, or even eliminate, the volume of trash entering the aquatic ecosystem. The actions will respond to Puerto Rico's needs and priorities but also will attempt to be aligned with EPA's Region 2 TFW strategy and projects for New York/New Jersey, which is centered primarily on "PB5" materials (see p.5, TFW in New York/New Jersey). Since the November meeting, the PR group identified seven

draft core projects that are achievable, measureable, and likely to be successful in litter and aquatic trash reduction and prevention over a period of time (12-16 months). On March 26<sup>th</sup>, EPA Region 2 hosted another stakeholder discussion. It is anticipated that the PR TFW Strategy and Projects may be finalized by late spring/early summer.



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### Navy / EPA Region 9 Beach Cleanup Partnership (Contact [Weiler.Katherine@epa.gov](mailto:Weiler.Katherine@epa.gov); (202) 566-1280

On February 17-19, 2015, EPA's Region 9 Marine Debris Program (along with staff from the San Diego Border Office) partnered with the US Navy to remove trash and debris from three military beaches in Coronado, CA. This annual event, which has been taken place for the last three years, is memorialized in the Memorandum of Understanding between the US Navy and EPA Region 9. At the event, EPA provided guidance to the volunteers regarding the trash data collection process, educated the volunteers about the environmental threats associated with marine debris, and highlighted the prevention and source

reduction efforts of the Regional program. EPA will use the trash data from the cleanup to assist with the source reduction efforts in California and the Pacific Islands Region. With 417 volunteers participating in this year's effort, it was possible to remove 4.15 tons of trash and debris. Volunteers picked up and disposed of items from the

tinest, visible pieces of plastic to larger items such as plastic chairs, tires, lobster traps, and pieces of boats. Two of the beaches are not normally accessible to the public or the military, indicating that the trash and debris found and removed from these beaches arrived via the watershed, wind, or ocean/bay currents.



*Calling all...*

#### **CHAMPIONS!**

*We've found that a critical component for progress is having an impassioned leader to drive TFW projects from development through implementation.*

*If someone you know has a great concept for reducing and preventing the amount of litter and aquatic trash entering large aquatic ecosystems, have them contact a member of the EPA National TFW team!*

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### TFW in New York and New Jersey (Contact [johnson.laura-s@epa.gov](mailto:johnson.laura-s@epa.gov); (202) 566-1273)

EPA headquarters is working closely with our Region 2 office to continue the development of a TFW New Jersey and New York (NJ/NY) Strategy with Projects. An initial partnership planning meeting, held on October 30, 2014, sought to gain a better understanding of the current state of aquatic trash issues in NJ/NY, develop strategies to reduce trash entering NJ/NY waterways, and to create working groups centered on

targeted themes and strategies. These Working Groups are composed of local government, non-profit and private members and are focused on creating and implementing tangible projects to reduce aquatic trash consisting of **P**lastic: **B**ags, micro**B**eads/microplastics, beverage **B**ottles, food service **B**oxes (including styrofoam), and cigarette **B**utts. Collectively, the waste streams are referred to as "**PBS**." A

second planning meeting, held on February 12, served to build on the initial meeting and subsequent working group calls, and to narrow down the extensive list of project actions that came out of the October meeting. Continued working group calls will further narrow down the NJ/NY Core TFW projects that have the potential to form the NJ/NY Strategy and Projects Document moving forward.

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## The Rapids: News Drops

### FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

The 2015 Keep America Beautiful/Lowe's Community Improvement Grants: The program will award **\$675,000 in grants** to Keep America Beautiful Affiliates and State Recycling Organizations for community improvement projects to be completed in 2015.  
[http://www.kab.org/site/PageServer?pagename=grants\\_Grant\\_applications](http://www.kab.org/site/PageServer?pagename=grants_Grant_applications)

### CDC SYMPOSIUM

On March 26-27, the Welch Foundation at Georgia State University (GSU), David J. Sencer Museum of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and Plastic Pollution Coalition (PPC) jointly hosted the 2015 Welch Symposium, *The Plastic GYRE: Artists, Scientists and Activists Respond*. The two-day symposium was part of the Atlanta Science Festival. It featured a wide array of experts discussing current research, creative response, activism mobilization, and industry best practices in a quest to address global plastic pollution. In conjunction with the conference, several events were scheduled, including a partnership with a major international art exhibition *Gyre: The Plastic Ocean* at The David J. Sencer CDC Museum, film screenings, and a pop-up exhibition at the CDC Museum.

### LEADERS AGAINST LITTER

On March 13, Leaders Against Litter held a statewide Keep Louisiana Beautiful (an affiliate of Keep America Beautiful) event that recruits business and community leaders and elected officials to "lead the way" against litter, and calls to action volunteers in local communities to work for a cleaner, more beautiful Louisiana. This event provided a platform for state and local leaders to actively "Speak Up, Pick Up, and Stand Up against litter."

### AWARDS

Several of our TFW champions were recently recognized for their efforts. Among them:

- The Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality presented an Environmental Leadership Award to the Board of Commissioners of the Port of New Orleans. The award recognizes environmental achievement for voluntary pollution prevention efforts, community environmental outreach initiatives and environmental management systems that are above and beyond regulatory compliance. The Port received its award March 25 for its Stormwater Management Program, which included educational outreach and employee involvement to mark storm drains throughout the Port's property. Cathy Dunn, the Port's Director of Development and Amelia Pellegrin, Environmental Services Director, received the award.
- The Barateria Terrabonne NEP was recognized by the EPA Gulf of Mexico Program and was presented with the Gulf Guardian Award. Alma Robichaux and her team demonstrated extraordinary leadership in coordinating the Bayou Lafourche Cleanup with over 1000 volunteers and removing 25 tons of trash from the area's drinking water supply.