

COASTSWEEP

20+ YEARS OF CLEANER BEACHES *By Robin Lacey, CZM*

Barcaloungers, toilet bowls, rubber boots, pieces of fishing net, **truck tires**, industrial tubing, milk crates, vinyl siding, and **cigarette butts**—these are but some of the items found each year during the Massachusetts COASTSWEEP clean up.

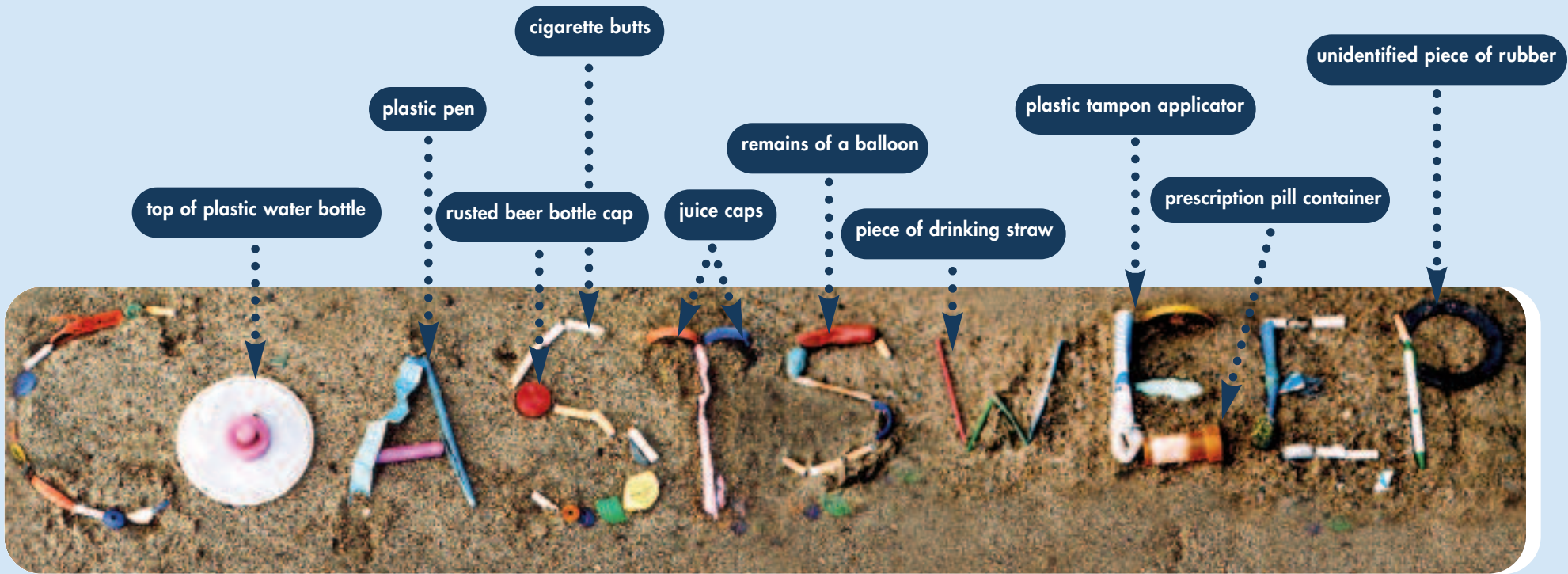
COASTSWEEP is part of an annual event to raise awareness of marine debris and clean beaches from Boston to Bimini. The International Coastal Cleanup (ICC) is sponsored by the Ocean Conservancy and from September-October, hundreds of thousands of volunteers head out to beaches, lakes, and streams worldwide to remove marine debris. Volunteers collect data on the specific types of debris being found. These data allow the Ocean Conservancy to make discoveries about the behaviors that cause the debris. For more information about the ICC, see www.coastalcleanup.org.

volunteers collecting almost two tons of debris along 40 miles of coast. The annual event has grown each year and in 2007, 1,800 volunteers cleaned more than 100 miles of coastline and seafloor—collecting nearly 18,000 pounds of marine debris. The 20th year was commemorated with a kick-off at Carson Beach in South Boston where CZM Director Leslie-Ann McGee and Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs Undersecretary for Environment Philip Griffiths joined local officials, legislators, nonprofit organizations, and 80 dedicated volunteers undaunted by the wet weather and temperatures in the 50s.

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In Massachusetts, volunteers have been pitching in to clean up stretches of beaches, marshes, and riverbanks since 1987. September 2007 marked the 20th anniversary of COASTSWEEP, the Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management (CZM) event that began with 391

So, what do these volunteers find at a typical cleanup? In 2006, more than 80 percent of the debris collected came from land-based activities—where litter blown from the streets, parking lots, and ball fields ends up in the water. By contrast, only about 9 percent of the marine



debris is from ocean-based activities, such as boating and fishing. The end result is thousands of tons of various plastic and paper debris littering the world's oceans and beaches. To the right is a list of the top 10 items collected along the Massachusetts coast in 2006.

Whether it is urban trash or abandoned fishing gear, marine debris is a major marine pollution issue. Every year it injures and kills thousands of marine animals that swallow it or become entangled in it. For more information about marine debris and how you can help, see the Coastal Cleanup website at www.coastalcleanup.org.

To get involved in the cleanup efforts here in Massachusetts, see the COASTSWEEP website at www.coastswEEP.umb.edu.

| Top Ten Debris Items for 2006 | | | |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------|--------|------|
| Rank | Debris Item | Amount | % |
| 1. | Cigarettes/Cigarette Filters | 68,066 | 46.5 |
| 2. | Food Wrappers and Containers | 11,740 | 8.0 |
| 3. | Caps/Lids | 10,650 | 7.3 |
| 4. | Bags | 6,406 | 4.4 |
| 5. | Beverage Bottles (Plastic) | 5,512 | 3.8 |
| 6. | Rope | 5,161 | 3.5 |
| 7. | Cups, Plates, and Utensils | 5,032 | 3.4 |
| 8. | Straws/Stirrers | 4,881 | 3.3 |
| 9. | Beverage Cans | 4,192 | 2.9 |
| 10. | Beverage Bottles (Glass) | 3,061 | 2.1 |
| Totals | | 146,2 | 85.2 |

Trash found on a section of beach in the Boston Harbor spells out COASTSWEEP with a variety of marine debris. And all of the trash was collected from a 25 yard section of beach in less than 10 minutes.