



Communication & Outreach: Raising Awareness about Marine Debris Before Legislative Solutions are Pursued

Alison Hammer Weingast. Deputy Director, NOAA Marine Debris Program
March 7, 2016: Virginia Marine Debris Summit



NOAA Marine Debris Program

2006: NOAA Marine Debris Program was established as the federal lead for marine debris

Mission: to investigate and prevent the adverse impacts of marine debris

Core Pillars:

- Research
- Removal
- Prevention
- Regional Coordination
- Emergency Response

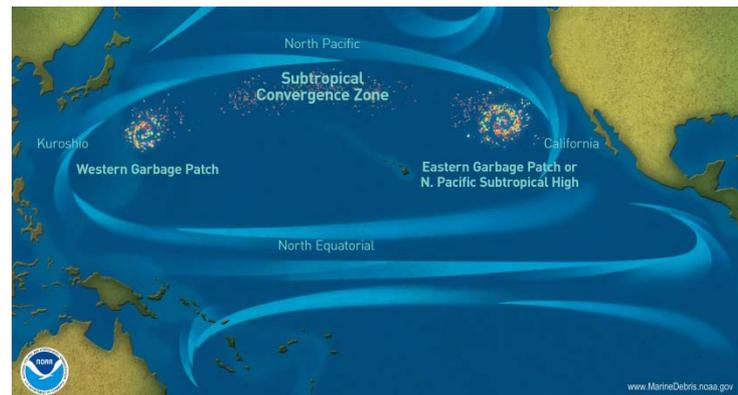


Marine Debris Act - Legislative Mandates

- Identify, determine sources of, assess, prevent, reduce, and remove marine debris
- Provide national and regional coordination
- Reduce adverse impacts of lost and discarded fishing gear
- **Conduct outreach and education**
- Address “severe marine debris events”

Messaging is Important

- Marine debris is an understandable problem
- Sometimes difficult for people to understand their connection
- Misinformation exists
- Much visibility during high profile events, less so for everyday marine debris issues
- Ultimate solution is prevention through behavior change



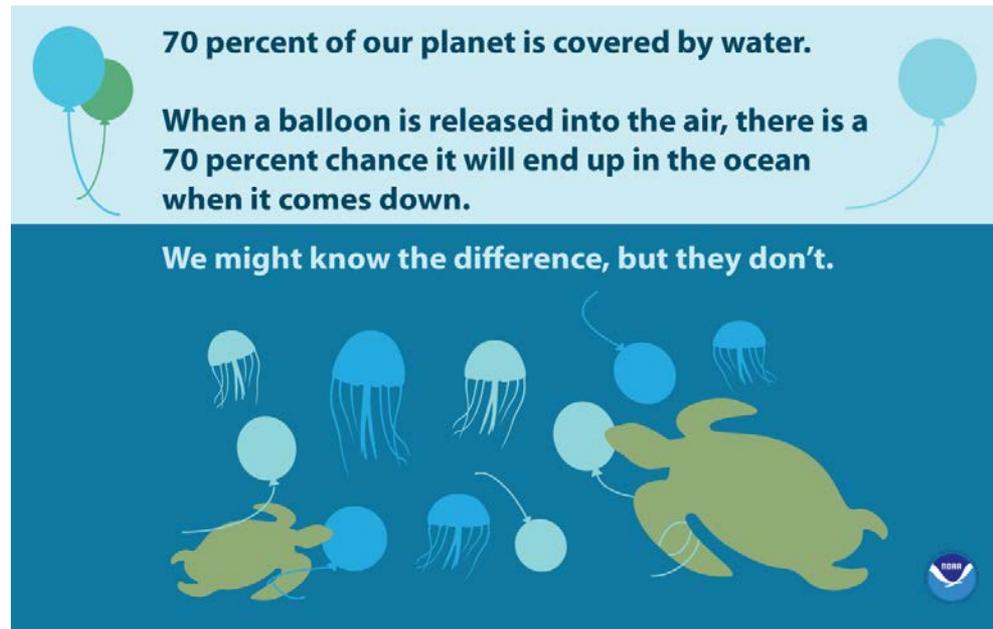
Many Audiences

- General public
- Marine debris stakeholders
- Partners – NGOs, state and local governments, zoos and aquariums, etc.
- Students and teachers
- Researchers and citizen scientists
- NOAA and other federal agencies
- Congress
- Media
- Others...



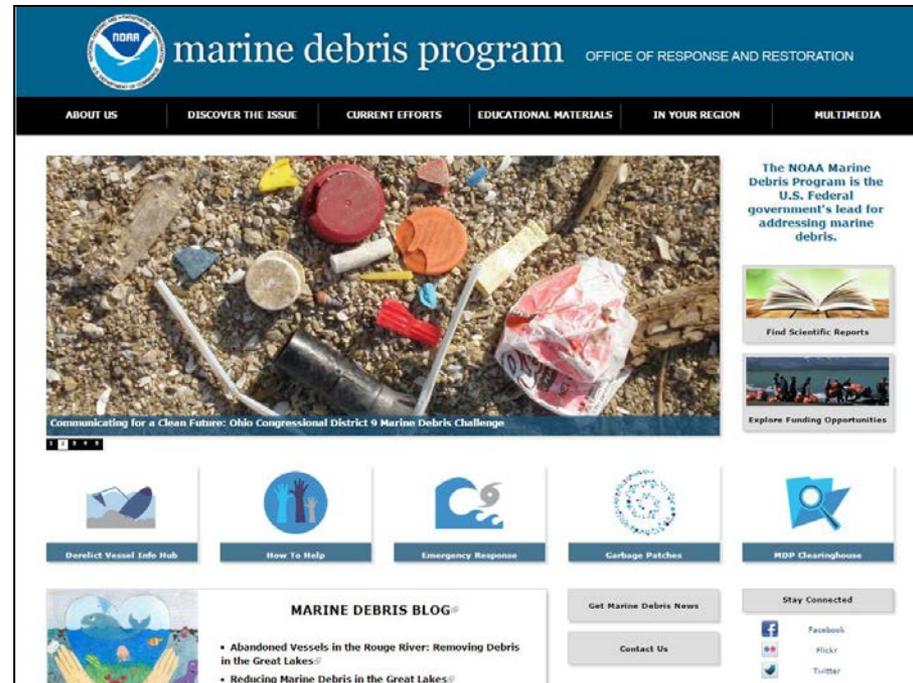
Communication Methods

- Website
- Blog
- Social Media: Facebook, Twitter,
- Outreach Products & Media Efforts
- Innovative Methods: Infographics, E-news Letters, Podcasts, Videos
- Events and Presentations
- Prevention Grant Competition
- Education Activities
- Exhibits & Displays
- Partnerships



Marine Debris Program Website

- Updated in 2015, uses Drupal/Amazon cloud and has responsive design
- Total of 339,371 page views
 - Garbage Patch page is the most popular = 63,354 page views
 - *VA balloon project profile*: 1,364 page views since published Jan 2015
- Recent Features:
 - Regional focus
 - Project Profiles
 - ADV Info Hub
 - Monitoring Toolbox (coming soon)



<http://marinedebris.noaa.gov/>



NOAA Marine Debris Blog

- In Word Press
- 2 posts/week (minimum)
- Compliments website
- Total: 485 posts published since 2008; 216,524 views; 102,190 visitors; 526 followers
- Increasingly more views and visitors each year
- *VA balloon blog: A Rising Concern: Balloon Debris.*
 - Total 5,286 views since posting January 2015
 - Average of 272 views/day that month

NOAA'S MARINE DEBRIS BLOG *Keepin' the Sea Free of Debris!*



Addressing A Rising Concern: Balloon Debris
January 13, 2015 by NOAA Marine Debris Program | 3 Comments
By: Leah Henry

People intentionally release balloons into the environment to celebrate events and commemorate special occasions. Balloon debris often ends up in streams, rivers, and the ocean, where marine animals can ingest the balloons or become entangled by their attachments, causing injury and even death.

Although many people make the connection that when balloons go up they eventually come back down to Earth, others—even those who would never consider throwing a newspaper or candy wrapper on the ground—will release balloons accidentally or participate in a mass release of balloons without considering the end results.

To address this problem, the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality partners with the NOAA Marine Debris Program on, A Rising Concern: Reducing Balloon Debris through Social Marketing, a Prevention through Education and Outreach project to reduce balloon litter in Virginia.

[Learn more about this effort on the MDP website.](#)



Get access to current marine debris information and learn more about the program by visiting <http://marinedebris.noaa.gov>

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NOAA Marine Debris @NOAADebris 26 Feb
Local fishermen in and around New Jersey have removed 160+ derelict crab pots. #marinedebris marinedebris.noaa.gov/removal/derelict...

<https://marinedebrisblog.wordpress.com/>



Social Media

Facebook

- Launched in 2011
- 2012: ~600 likes
- 2016: ~21,000 Likes
 - VA Balloon project post on Facebook had a reach of 1.3 million people – 12,000 “shares”

Twitter

- Launched in 2011
- 8,428 Followers currently

Instagram

- Launched 2015
- 281 Followers currently



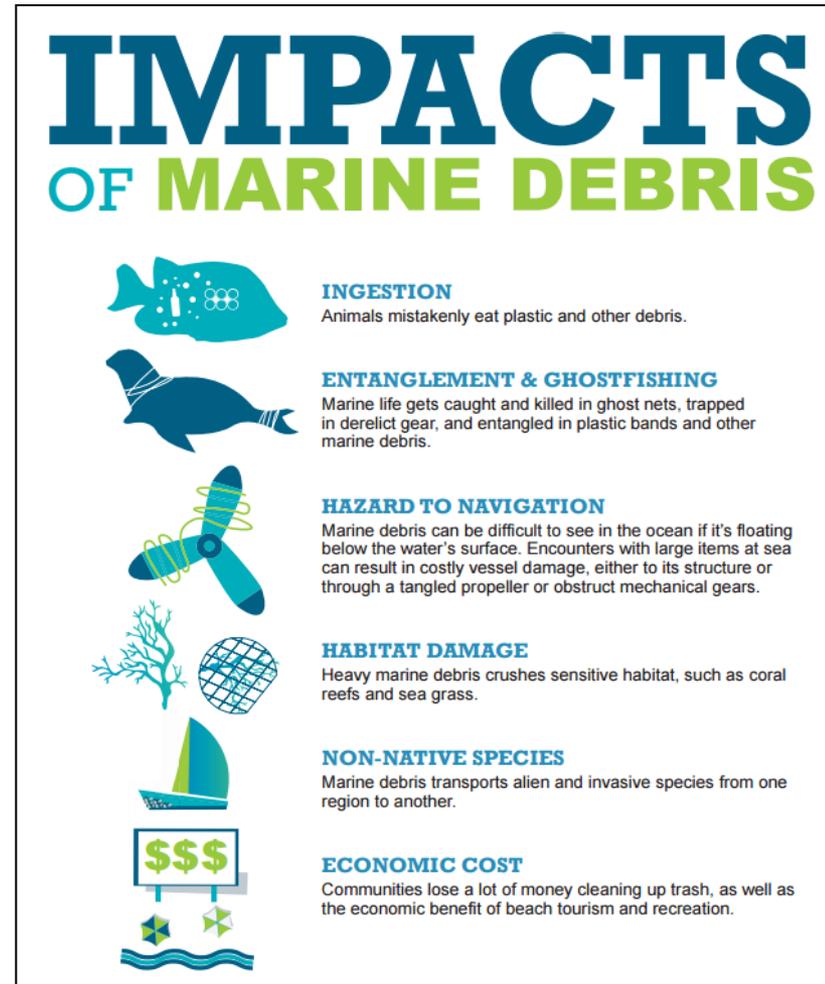
Outreach and Media Efforts

Other Outreach Products:

- E-Newsletters
- Posters, Brochures, Handouts, Reports
- Infographics

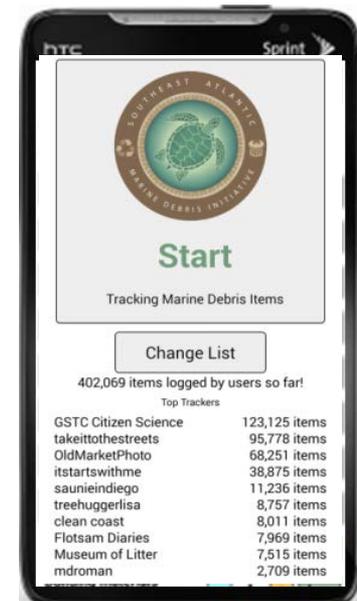
Media Interviews:

- 3-4 interviews/month
- 2015: Media interviews with AP, NY Times, National Geographic, NPR
- Most requested topics:
 - Microplastics
 - Great Pacific Garbage Patch
 - Plastics
 - Japan tsunami marine debris



Innovative Methods

- Videos – Trash Talk Series
- Podcasts
- Webinars
- New platforms – *Reddit Ask Me Anything, Media blog*
- Campaigns – *MDP 10 year Anniversary*
- Science on the Sphere
- Marine Debris Tracker App (with U. Georgia)



Events and Presentations

Visits

- Schools
- Museums, aquariums, learning centers
- Congress
- Partners



Conferences & Festivals

- Speaking Engagements
- Presentations
- Activities



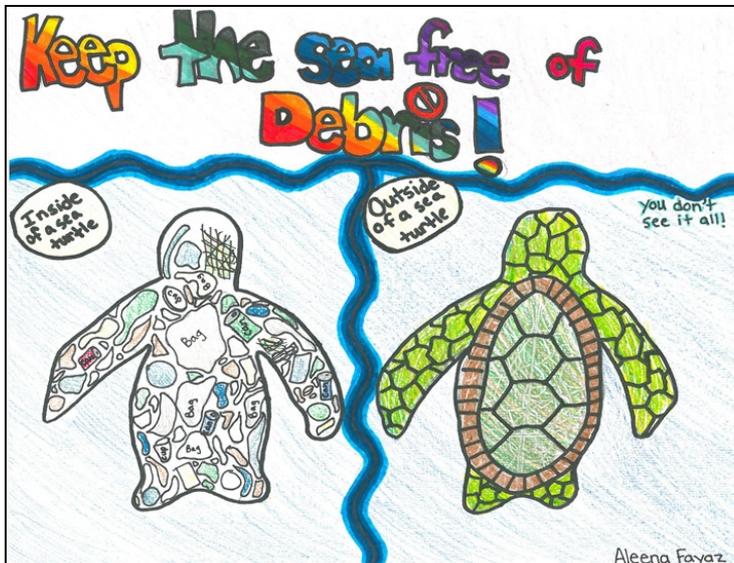
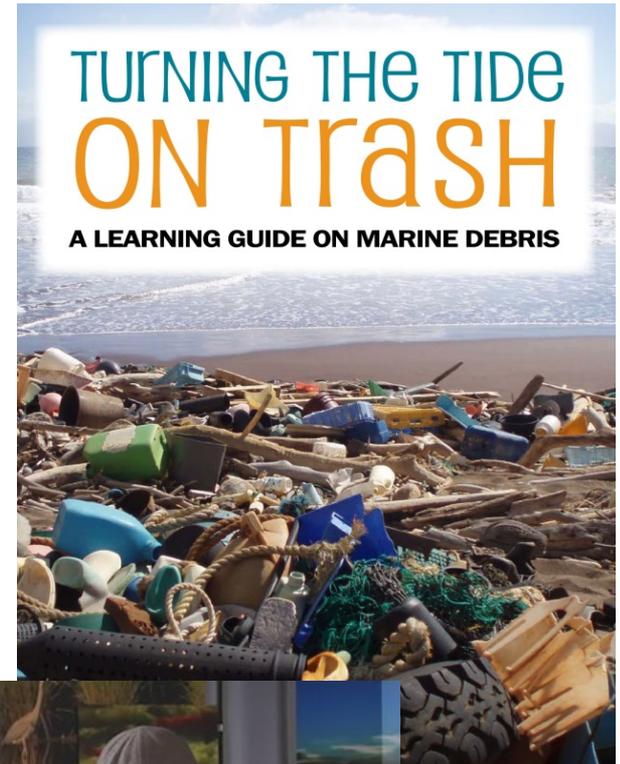
Marine Debris Prevention Grants

- Annual grant competition
- Behavior change focus
- 31 total projects funded, about 10 - 14 per year
- Eligible: state/local governments, NGOs, academia, private sector (not federal)
- Example past projects:
 - student activities with shoreline cleanups
 - museum exhibits
 - social marketing
 - outreach to teens
 - teacher workshops
 - art campaigns
 - marine debris curriculum



Education Activities

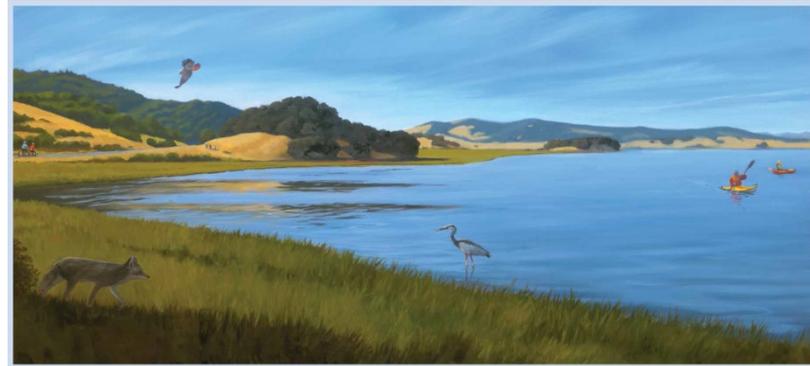
- Curriculum, activities
- Teacher trainings & summits
- Annual art contest for K-8th grades & calendar
- Activities webinar
- School visits
- Prevention grants



Marine Debris Exhibits & Displays

At NOAA Facilities

1. Lake Superior National Estuarine Research Reserve (NERR)
2. Great Bay NERR
3. SF Bay NERR
4. Tijuana NERR
5. Weeks Bay NERR
6. Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary, MA
7. Mokupapapa Discovery Center, HI National Marine Sanctuary
8. Ohio Sea Grant



Zoo & Aquarium Partnerships

- National Zoo
- Smithsonian Ocean Hall
- Anchorage Museum
- National Building Museum



Partnerships & Collaborations

- We are a small program working on a global problem!
- Strong partnerships are critical for success
- Utilize existing networks



Non-profits



State, local, and federal agencies



Fishermen and other industry



Academia:
researchers and teachers

Stay Connected!

Website:

marinedebris.noaa.gov

Blog:

marinedebrisblog.wordpress.com



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NOAA marine debris program OFFICE OF RESPONSE AND RESTORATION

ABOUT US DISCOVER THE ISSUE CURRENT EFFORTS EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS IN YOUR REGION MULTIMEDIA

Learn about the Marine Debris Program, including mission and mandates.

The NOAA Marine Debris Program is the U.S. Federal government's lead for addressing marine debris.

Innovative research aims to prevent derelict fishing trap impacts

Find Scientific Reports

Explore Funding Opportunities

Plastics Emergency Response How To Help MDP Clearinghouse Garbage Patches

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NOAA'S MARINE DEBRIS BLOG *Keepin' the Sea Free of Debris!*

Save the OCEAN Save the WORLD

NOAA

June 5, 2015
By NOAA Marine Debris Program
Leave a comment

Spotlight: How Our Partners Turn Net Loss into a Win for Wildlife

A few days ago, we highlighted derelict crab and lobster trap projects we're supporting across the United States, in an effort to reduce "ghostfishing" and other impacts from derelict fishing gear.

Get access to current marine debris information and learn more about the program by visiting <http://marinedebris.noaa.gov>

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NOAA NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

Questions?



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Thank you!

