



Earth911[®]

More Ideas, Less Waste

[How to Recycle](#)

[Where to Recycle](#)

Inspire & Motivate

Reading time: 3 mins

Earth Action: Clean a Beach



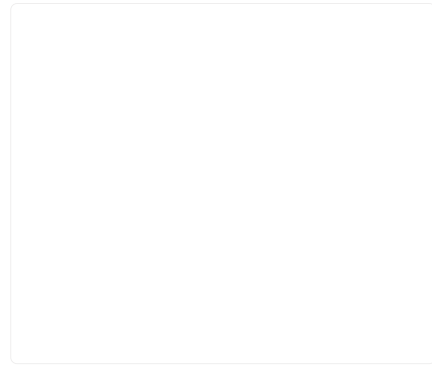
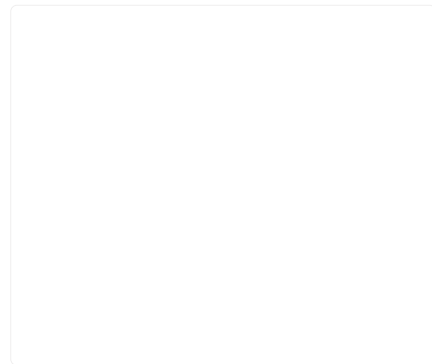
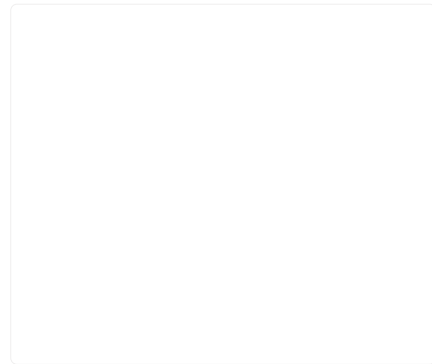
By [Gemma Alexander](#)

© JUL 22, 2022 [beach cleanup, earth action, plastic pollution](#)

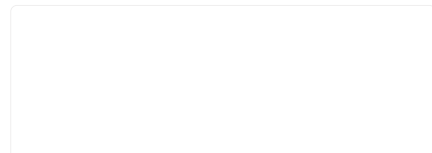


When we think about garbage at all, we think of throwing it away. But as the saying goes, "There is no away." And in the case of plastic, there isn't a lot of **recycling** happening either. Plastic or otherwise, a lot of garbage makes its way into our oceans, forming massive garbage gyres and sometimes even **washing back up** on beaches. Beaches are sensitive liminal ecosystems in their own right. Beach cleanups protect both the beach itself and inaccessible ocean areas, and make visiting the beach more enjoyable, too.

To honor 52 years of action inspired by Earth Day, Earth911 is presenting 52 Actions for the Earth. Each week f CLOSE Earth Day



[Westlake Home - Luxury Organic Bedding](#)



2022 to Earth Day 2023, we will share an action you can take to [invest in the Earth](#) and make your own life more sustainable.

This week, you can invest in the Earth by cleaning a beach – even if you don't live anywhere near water.

Action: Clean a Beach

Ocean Pollution

Even the most [remote mountaintops](#) and deepest [undersea trenches](#) have a litter problem. Past generations sailed the seven seas; today it's the [five great garbage gyres](#). The Great Pacific Garbage Patch [pollution zone](#) is roughly the size of the western United States. By mass, nearly half of the waste is lost fishing nets. [Microplastics](#) make up only about 8% of the mass, but more than 90% of the plastic pieces floating in the [ocean](#). Most of the plastics traveled through [watersheds](#) on land to reach the sea. Items like [plastic straws](#), shopping bags, [cigarette butts](#) with plastic filters, and increasingly, [PPE](#) like gloves and masks, all contribute to beach and ocean pollution.

Beach Cleanups

It is important to work towards a [post-plastic world](#) and take steps upstream to help [protect the oceans](#). But this week, help clean up the pollution that is already there. Many coastal environmental organizations host organized beach cleanups. The [International Coastal Cleanup](#), an initiative of the Ocean Conservatory, has one of the biggest beach cleanup programs. EarthDay.org's [Great Global Cleanup](#) campaign removes trash from beaches as well as neighborhoods, rivers, lakes, trails, and parks – all places from which plastic can work its way towards the sea. If you can't [find an existing beach cleanup](#) near you, EarthDay.org has [resources](#) to help you plan and [register your own](#) event.

Beach Vacations

If your travel plans include a beach vacation, dedicate one morning – or even one hour – of your beach time to picking up trash. Joining a [beach cleanup on vacation](#) is a great way to connect with locals. Many coastal communities, like [Kauai](#), and even some resorts have programs to support visitors who want to give back to their host community. Even if you go solo, you can be mindful of your own garbage and pick up any litter you run across while you're on the beach.

Inland Living

CLOSE

About a third of the U.S. population [lives in coastline counties](#), and many more live within driving distance of a beach. But even if you are not among them, you probably live near some body of water. Litter is just as harmful to these inland lakes and riverfronts, and can eventually make its way to the sea from them. Even in the desert, you can protect waterways by picking up litter (especially along roadways) – plastic and cigarette butts can travel great distances to reach the sea.

advertising



Reading time: 3 mins

[Earth911 Podcast: Environmental Attorney Kenneth Foard McCallion on the Supreme Court's EPA Ruling](#)

Reading time: 3 mins

[Earth911 Podcast: Author Peter Fiekowsky on Climate Restoration](#)



By [Gemma Alexander](#)

Gemma Alexander has an M.S. in urban horticulture and a backyard filled with native plants. After working in a genetics laboratory and at a landfill, she now writes about the environment, the arts and family. See more of her writing [here](#).

Related Post

[Business & Policy](#) [EcoTech](#) [Inspire & Motivate](#) [Podcasts](#)

[Earth911 Podcast: Author Peter Fiekowsky on Climate Restoration](#)

🕒 Jul 25, 2022 📍 [Earth911](#)

[Business & Policy](#) [Inspire & Motivate](#) [Podcasts](#)

[Earth911 Podcast: Environmental Attorney Kenneth Foard McCallion on the Supreme Court's EPA Ruling](#)

🕒 Jul 22, 2022 📍 [Earth911](#)

[Inspire & Motivate](#)

[Earth911 Inspiration: A Thousand Forests in One Acorn](#)

🕒 Jul 22, 2022 📍 [Earth911](#)

CLOSE