

environment 8/29/06 DTC 3B

Shoreline cleanup coming

Volunteers sought to scour water's edge Sept. 16

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When Jamie Romeo was 8 years old, she coaxed a few friends to join her in cleaning up trash at Durand-Eastman beach, a few minutes' walk from her Irondequoit home.

"We didn't understand why we couldn't go swimming," she said, explaining how she sparked Rochester's involvement with an international effort to clean up the Lake Ontario shoreline back in 1993.

Now, at 21, Romeo is still

organizing local participation with the International Coastal Cleanup, a program that is expected to bring nearly 600 people together to clean up lake and river shores in Monroe County on Sept. 16.

"It really is more than

just going down and picking up garbage on the beach ... it's about taking ownership of the environment," she said.

New York had been coordinating an annual coastal cleanup for 15 years before the ICC started, an effort

that has grown from a handful of volunteers to tens of thousands statewide, said state coordinator Barbara Cohen of the American Littoral Society, a group concerned with the ecology of coastal areas.

"(The cleanup) involves

To learn more

■ The Ocean Conservancy, www.coastalcleanup.org.

■ The American Littoral Society, www.alsnyc.org.

oceans, lakes, bays, streams ... anything that touches water," Cohen said.

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Cleanup

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Worldwide, more than 109 million pounds of cigarette butts, soda bottles, food wrappers and foam cups have been removed from the world's waterways since the cleanup began 21 years ago — a mass of trash that weighs as much as 400 blue whales, according to event organizer The Ocean Conservancy.

This year, 300,000 people in 100 countries are expected to participate, each collecting trash and keeping a record of the debris they find.

Earlier this summer, The Ocean Conservancy reported 20 years of data and found that it's not just litter left on beaches or tossed from boats that sullies shorelines and puts the lives of marine and other animals at risk.

Rather, small items like straws, soda cans and cigarette butts are carried along stormwater streams from parking lots and roadsides to become some of the most abundant types of shore debris.

"There are no definite boundaries with the environment," Romeo said. "Eventually, it does get to the lake."

Picking up trash is always worthwhile, but teaching people what it means to live within a watershed — thinking about the health of Lake Ontario day-to-day, whether you're a quick bike ride from the beach or amid the fields and pastures of Livingston

By the numbers

6.2 million

Number of volunteers worldwide since the cleanup began in 1986.

10,047

Volunteers in New York last year.

595

Volunteers in Monroe County last year.

8.2 million

Pounds of trash removed worldwide last year.

989

Miles of New York coastline cleaned up last year.

171,592

Pounds of trash removed from New York's coasts last year.

4,627

Pounds of trash removed in Monroe County last year.

SOURCES: The Ocean Conservancy, American Littoral Society

County — is a critical aspect of the cleanup, organizers said.

"It's about making people understand that they are the cause of the pollution. If we can prevent it in the first place, we've got it licked," Cohen said. □

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If you go

■ The International Coastal Cleanup will begin at 9 a.m. Saturday, Sept. 16 — rain or shine. Individuals, families, Scout troops and school groups can show up at any of the following locations: Braddock Bay State Park in Greece, Hamlin Beach State Park in Hamlin, Durand-Eastman Beach in Rochester, Bay Marine Park in Irondequoit, Ontario Beach Park in Charlotte, Seth Green fishing access site in Rochester, Turning Point Park in Rochester or Webster Park in Webster.

■ Dress for the weather and insects, and bring dry pants and shoes for the ride home.

■ Garbage bags and gloves are provided, but participants are welcome to bring a clipboard, waders, nets, poles, carts and kayaks or inflatable boats.

Coastal trash

More than 250,000 items were removed from New York shorelines during the 2005 International Coastal Cleanup:

Cigarettes: 70,103.
Caps and lids: 45,314.
Food wrappers: 36,049.
Plastic beverage bottles: 20,636.
Cups, plates and utensils: 19,287.
Bags: 15,431.
Glass beverage bottles: 14,178.
Straws and stirrers: 14,055.
Beverage cans: 13,612.
Cigar tips: 5,334.

SOURCE: The Ocean Conservancy