



GREAT LAKES AND ST. LAWRENCE
CITIES INITIATIVE

L'ALLIANCE DES VILLES
DES GRANDS LACS ET DU SAINT-LAURENT

Great Lakes Coastal Cleanup: Volunteer Toolkit

Thank you for taking action to protect the Great Lakes! This quick guide will help you stay safe and informed during your shoreline cleanup.

WHAT WILL BE SUPPLIED

- Water (to fill refillable bottles)
- Garbage bags/buckets
- Data sheets and pencils
- Reusable gloves (work or gardening gloves)
- Hand sanitizer
- Litter containers



WHAT TO BRING



- Refillable water bottle (water stations will be available)
- Closed-toe shoes
- Hat, sunscreen, and weather-appropriate clothing

Let's keep our lakes swimmable, fishable, and drinkable—for today and future generations.
Learn more: glslcities.org/great-lakes-coastal-cleanup

SAFETY FIRST!

- **Watch your step!** Be mindful of sharp objects, uneven ground, and slippery rocks.
 - **Don't touch hazardous items** – Leave needles, broken glass, or dead animals in place and notify a designated Coastal Cleanup lead.
 - **Please respect wildlife** – Don't disturb nests or animals. Keep your distance.
 - **Stay hydrated and take breaks** – Use sunscreen, drink water, and know your limits.
 - **Be aware of your surroundings** – Stay in the designated cleanup zone. Work in pairs or groups, if possible.
 - **If you don't feel safe, stop!** Don't put yourself in a situation that will make you feel uncomfortable or put yourself in harm's way.
-

WHAT TO PICK UP (AND WHAT NOT TO)



Collect: Plastic bottles, bags, caps, food wrappers, straws, cigarette butts, cans, foam, fishing line.



Do NOT collect: Hazardous waste (needles, chemicals), large/heavy items, sharp glass, animal carcasses. Notify your designated Coastal Cleanup lead.



TRACKING YOUR IMPACT

- Please make sure to follow instructions from your site coordinator!
- You will record litter data in groups using paper data sheets. Please return those sheets to your site coordinator before leaving.
- The data collected from our Coastal Cleanup will be entered into a public data system managed by the Ocean Conservancy (TIDES-<https://www.coastalcleanupdata.org/>). Data will also be reported back to the Ontario Government as the project funder.

Let's keep our lakes swimmable, fishable, and drinkable—for today and future generations.
Learn more: glslcities.org/great-lakes-coastal-cleanup

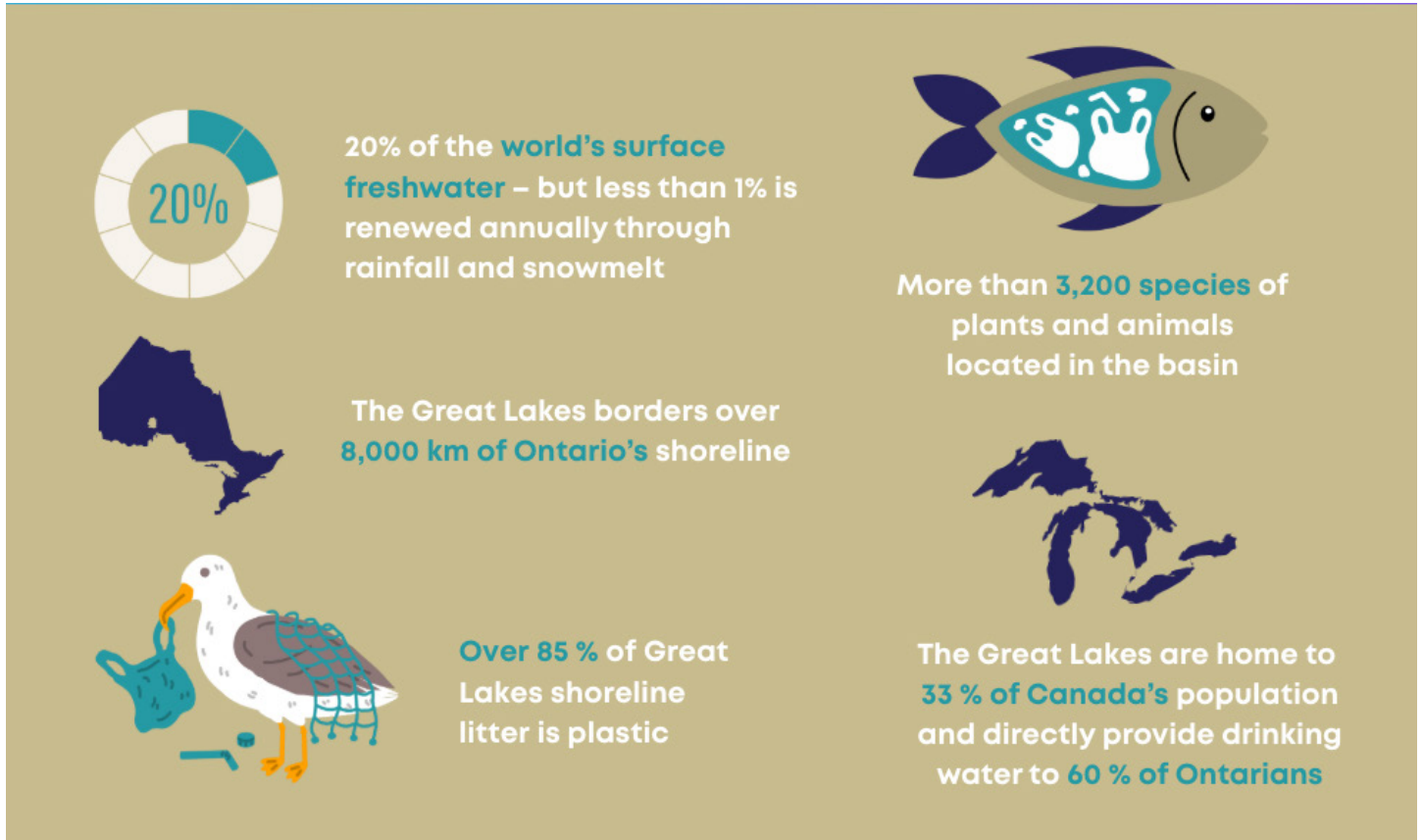
AFTER THE CLEANUP

- Return all supplies provided by your cleanup crew and any data sheets.
- Wash your hands or use sanitizer.
- Celebrate what you accomplished—you helped protect one of the world's largest freshwater ecosystems!

WHY THE COASTAL CLEANUP MATTERS

- **Plastic is everywhere:** Over 10 million kg of plastic enter the Great Lakes each year. Most of it is single-use—bottles, wrappers, cigarette butts—that breaks down into microplastics which can impact the health of wildlife – and humans!
- **Wildlife is at risk:** Fish, birds, and turtles can ingest or get tangled in litter.
- **We drink this water:** The Great Lakes supply drinking water to over 40 million Canadians and Americans – let's keep this vital resource clean!
- **Your contribution drives change:** What you collect and record helps reduce waste in our lakes and rivers and provides data to support better decision-making. Every piece of litter you collect makes a big difference!

FAST FACTS ABOUT THE GREAT LAKES



Let's keep our lakes swimmable, fishable, and drinkable—for today and future generations.
Learn more: glslcities.org/great-lakes-coastal-cleanup