



10 Years of the NOAA Marine Debris Program

This year marks the 10-year anniversary of the NOAA Marine Debris Program! Although marine debris efforts in NOAA began further back, the NOAA Marine Debris Program (MDP) was officially authorized after the Marine Debris Research, Prevention, and Reduction Act was passed in 2006 (renamed "The Marine Debris Act" in 2012). We have accomplished a lot in ten years and are proud of what we've been able to do. This includes activities ranging from supporting many research, prevention, and removal projects through our competitive grants, creating powerful education and outreach tools and engaging displays, and expanding our program nationwide to include ten regions and eighteen staff.

2006

Congress signs the Marine Debris Research, Prevention, and Reduction Act of 2006 into law, authorizing the NOAA Marine Debris Program (MDP) to work on marine debris research, removal, and education efforts. The Act also establishes an Interagency Marine Debris Committee and development of a clearinghouse.

The MDP responds to Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, leading coordination of the surveying and mapping of debris that poses a hazard to navigation and marine resources. The response leads to the creation of the Gulf of Mexico Project, which concludes in 2009.

An on-going partnership with the Ocean Conservancy to support the International Coastal Cleanup begins.



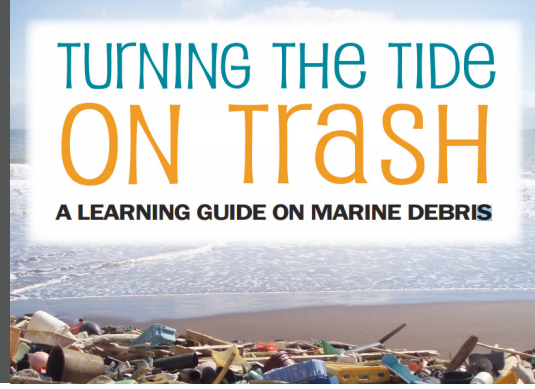
The MDP begins funding the Northwest Straits Initiative to remove legacy fishing nets from the Puget Sound, WA.



The Community-based Marine Debris Removal annual grant competition officially begins. 12 projects are funded.

2007

Turning the Tide on Trash, the program's first education curriculum, is published.



Efforts continue toward NOAA's annual mission to remove derelict nets and other debris from sensitive coral reefs and shorelines in the Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument in Hawaii, which began in 2001. Each year, the MDP participates in removing up to 50 tons of debris.



The MDP funds impact assessment, recovery, and prevention efforts by targeting Derelict Fishing Gear in the Chesapeake Bay. This results in the report, "Quantifying the Effects of Derelict Fishing Gear in the Maryland Portion of the Chesapeake Bay from 2006 - 2009."



2008

The MDP officially becomes a division under NOAA's Office of Response and Restoration in the National Ocean Service.

The MDP hosts the first international marine debris research workshop on the Occurrence, Effects, and Fate of Microplastic Marine Debris at the University of Washington, Tacoma, where the official definition of microplastics (less than or equal to 5mm in size) is adopted.

The Fishing for Energy public-private partnership is established between the MDP, Covanta, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, and Schnitzer Steel, to provide the fishing community with no cost options for disposing of old or unwanted gear. Discarded gear is converted into energy and the steel is recycled.

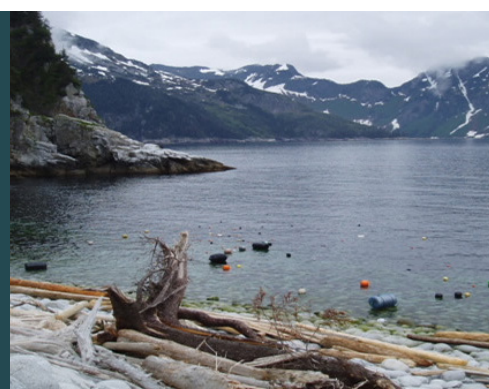


The Little Mermaid PSA campaign encourages the public to help clean up debris from our oceans.

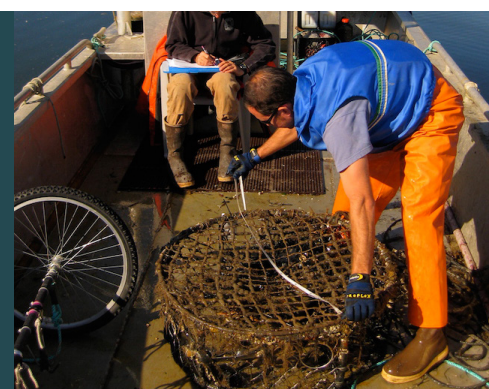


2009

The MDP expands its regional presence to include Alaska.



The Florida Crab Trap Assessment and Alaska Dungeness Crab Pot Assessment are initiated.



The MDP responds to marine debris generated by the September 29 tsunami in American Samoa by assisting in debris survey and outreach.



2010

The program launches its annual "Keep the Sea Free of Debris!" student art contest. Art contest winners are featured in the MDP Calendar.



Led by the MDP, the Hawaii Marine Debris Action Plan becomes the first state-level action plan to address marine debris.

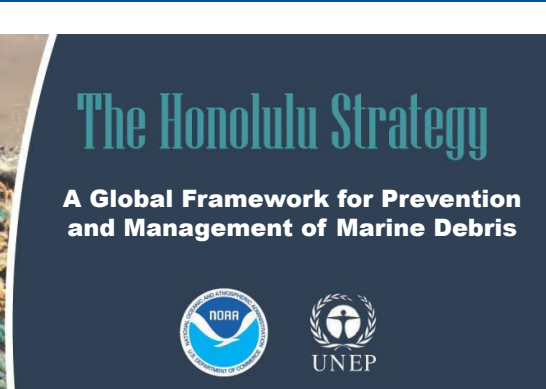
The Marine Debris Tracker App is created by a joint partnership between the MDP and Southeast Atlantic Marine Debris Initiative through the University of Georgia.



The MDP continues to expand its regional presence. The Great Lakes join the already established regions within the program (East Coast, Gulf, West Coast, Pacific Islands, Alaska).

2011

The MDP co-hosts the 5th International Marine Debris Conference in Honolulu, Hawaii and develops the Honolulu Strategy.



On March 11, a 9.0 earthquake and tsunami strikes Japan. The disaster claims nearly 16,000 lives, injures 6,000, and destroys or damages countless buildings. As a result of the tsunami, debris washes into the ocean and over the next several years reaches U.S. and Canadian shores.



2012

The Marine Debris Act is amended, expanding to include emergency response and regional coordination.

The Marine Debris Monitoring and Assessment Project, an initiative to collect information on types and amounts of debris in the environment, begins.



The MDP coordinates response efforts to address Japan tsunami marine debris (JTMD) along the West coast, Alaska, and Hawaii after the first sightings of JTMD are made.

Hurricane Sandy strikes the east coast of the U.S., leaving behind debris scattered across its shorelines.

The MDP grows its regional reach to include a total of 9 coastal regions: the Pacific Islands, Alaska, the Pacific Northwest, California, the Great Lakes, the Gulf of Mexico, the Northeast, the Mid-Atlantic, and the Southeast and Caribbean.

2013

With the Disaster Relief Appropriations Act of 2013, Congress provides the MDP with \$4.75 million to locate and remove the marine debris generated by Hurricane Sandy.



The MDP starts a new, annual grant competition to fund Marine Debris Prevention through Education and Outreach efforts and funds 8 projects.

"Marine Debris Monitoring and Assessment: Recommendations for Monitoring Debris Trends in the Marine Environment" is published as a NOAA Technical Memorandum.

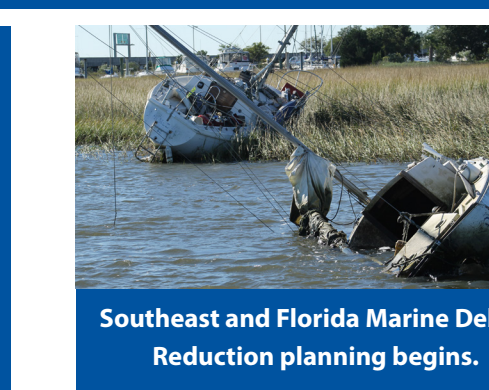
The program launches the Marine Debris Clearinghouse.



The MDP funds 3 projects through a research grant competition focusing on the chemical impacts of marine debris.

2014

With coordination from the program, the Great Lakes marine debris community becomes the second region to have a marine debris action plan, *The Great Lakes Land-based Marine Debris Action Plan*.



Southeast and Florida Marine Debris Reduction planning begins.

The MDP releases the Southern California Economics study showing the impacts of debris on tourism.

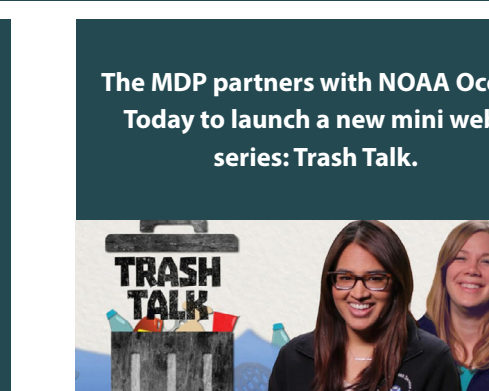


The MDP funds 3 research projects focusing on microplastics in the Gulf of Alaska, debris accumulation in the Gulf of Mexico, and microplastic occurrence in Sargassum-associated fish in the Gulf of Mexico.

A derelict trap study is published in the scientific journal *Marine Pollution Bulletin*.

2015

The MDP contributes to international marine debris prevention, reduction, and research efforts at the G7 summit and becomes the Chair of the United Nations Environment Programme's Global Partnership on Marine Litter.



The MDP partners with NOAA Ocean Today to launch a new mini web series: Trash Talk.



The MDP releases the Alabama Incident Waterway Debris Response Plan and Field Guide.



The MDP funds 13 marine debris prevention and 13 removal grants.

The "Laboratory Methods for the Analysis of Microplastics in the Marine Environment" manual is released.



2016



NOAA Marine Debris Program Strategic Plan 2016-2020

The MDP implements actions from its new Strategic Plan for 2016-2020 and continues its efforts to combat marine debris.



Celebrating 10 years of the NOAA Marine Debris Program!

