

NOAA Marine Debris Program

# Strategic Plan

2016 - 2020



[www.MarineDebris.noaa.gov](http://www.MarineDebris.noaa.gov)

October 2015

U.S. Department of Commerce  
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration  
National Ocean Service  
Office of Response and Restoration  
Marine Debris Division



***Marine debris*** is defined by the Marine Debris Act as any persistent solid material that is manufactured or processed and directly or indirectly, intentionally or unintentionally, disposed of or abandoned into the marine environment or the Great Lakes.



# From the Director

*Marine debris is one of the greatest man-made threats our oceans face today. There is growing concern about how much debris is in our oceans and how environmental impacts from natural disasters and climate change will add to this already pervasive global problem. Since the inception of the NOAA Marine Debris Program in 2006, we have strived to help find solutions through research, removal, and working with partners to move toward the ultimate solution: prevention.*

*Our oceans and coasts are resilient, but we need to take action now to help protect our living resources and habitats. In the coming years, I look forward to seeing the program grow as we tackle this problem head-on by leading innovative projects that invest in new technologies, collaborating with key partners to remove and prevent marine debris, and working to understand its impacts while finding new solutions through research.*

*The NOAA Marine Debris Act establishes the program as the federal lead to coordinate and implement marine debris efforts in the United States; we do this by working with partners at the federal, state, local, and international levels. Moving into the tenth year as a program, we have refined our vision and set out a strategic plan that will target our efforts to solve this immense problem. I'm excited to present the NOAA Marine Debris Program's FY 2016 – 2020 Strategic Plan.*

Nancy Wallace  
Director, NOAA Marine Debris Program  
Office of Response and Restoration  
National Ocean Service



## Vision

The NOAA Marine Debris Program envisions the global ocean and its coasts free from the impacts of marine debris.

## Mission

The mission of the NOAA Marine Debris Program is to investigate and prevent the adverse impacts of marine debris.

## Marine Debris Act

The NOAA Marine Debris Program (MDP), mandated by the Marine Debris Act, signed into law in 2006 and amended in 2012, leads national and international efforts to research, prevent, and reduce the impacts of marine debris by addressing the affects it has on the coastal environment, navigation, human health, safety and the economy. The program spearheads national research efforts, works to minimize the impacts of severe marine debris events, and uses outreach and education initiatives to reduce the amount of marine debris that is generated. Program staff are positioned across the country to support these marine debris projects in partnership with state and local agencies, tribes, non-governmental organizations, academia and industry.



# Goals

## *Coordination*

Coordinate marine debris actions through communication, planning, and information sharing at a local, regional, national and international level.

### **Objectives**

- Create and implement at least one effective action plan in each region.
- Increase engagement in digital communications by 25%.
- Increase coordination at the federal level with an efficient and engaged Interagency Marine Debris Coordinating Committee (IMDCC) by collaborating on at least three projects with other federal agencies.
- Brief and/or invite members of Congress, the Administration, DOC or NOAA leadership to at least ten engagements or briefings per year.
- Build or strengthen region-specific communications networks through at least two engagements per region per year.
- Initiate four international marine debris projects through MDP involvement.

## *Emergency Response & Preparedness*

Provide scientific support and coordination to plan for and respond to the impacts of significant, acute marine debris events.

### **Objectives**

- Develop eight new, state-level Marine Debris Emergency Response Plans.
- Define five best practices for responding to marine debris in preparation for, during or after an acute event.
- Create and meet staff training standards that prepare the MDP team to be fully capable to deploy to a marine debris incident.
- Integrate Marine Debris Response Plans into four existing regional response documents, such as Area Contingency Plans or FEMA Debris Management Plans.
- Participate in five external response drills relevant to marine debris.



# Goals

## *Removal*

Support the removal of marine debris to reduce its impact on natural resources, navigational safety and the economy.

### **Objectives**

- Increase removal of debris by area, units, or weight by 15%.
- Increase the number of projects that dispose of some portion of the debris they remove in a sustainable way by 10%.
- Establish, in each region, at least two best management practices for the removal of marine debris in the next 5 years.

## *Prevention*

Prevent the introduction of marine debris through raising awareness and changing behavior.

### **Objectives**

- Develop two marine debris prevention programs that are sustainable, promote behavior change, and promote effective and measurable outcomes.
- Reduce or eliminate one region-specific debris issue or type in two regions as a result of increased awareness.
- Increase by 10% the number of K-12 students engaged in marine debris activities, including education, outreach, or cleanups.
- Raise awareness of marine debris through public-facing products to reach wider audiences.



# Goals

## *Research & Assessment*

Identify, assess and reduce the impacts of marine debris through detection, monitoring, source identification and innovative solutions.

### **Objectives**

- Quantitatively assemble and analyze the status and trends of marine debris in two regions.
- Identify, analyze, and increase understanding of the environmental and societal impacts of marine debris by assessing impacts and risks to targeted species and sectors.
- Assess and promote management and restoration options to reduce the impacts of marine debris.



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