

# Media Release



**bluffton**  
HEART OF THE LOWCOUNTRY

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(Facebook): Town of Bluffton Government

(Facebook): Neighbors for Clean Water

Call to Action: Town of Bluffton, Neighbors for Clean Water, S.C. Sea Grant Consortium and S.C. Department of Natural Resources Invite You to Help Clean Bluffton's May River

The 28th Annual Beach Sweep/River Sweep Will Be Held Saturday, September 17<sup>th</sup>

The Town of Bluffton invites all greater Bluffton residents and business owners to participate in the 28th Annual Beach Sweep/River Sweep on Saturday, September 17th from 9 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. at the Oyster Factory Park on the May River located at 63 Wharf Street. Thousands of volunteers across the state will participate in the 28th Annual Sweep, which is South Carolina's largest one-day, volunteer, litter clean-up of beaches, marshes and waterways.

"This is an opportunity to take care of Bluffton's May River and be a part of the solution to preserve the town's most cherished natural resource," Mayor Lisa Sulka said. "This annual event, along with the clean-up event held every April is a wonderful way to contribute to our community, meet your neighbors and have fun as we protect our environment."

Coffee/Lunch/Supplies/(Limited) Kayaks Provided for Volunteers

The Town of Bluffton encourages all individuals, families, friends, schools, youth groups, civic groups, conservation groups and businesses to volunteer for a few hours to clean the river and road sides which drain to the river.

Coffee will be provided by the Bluffton Starbucks before the event and the Hardeeville Wal-Mart will provide free lunches to volunteers. Be Green Packaging, an event partner, is also supplying compostable dishware.

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Necessary supplies including gloves, bags, sunscreen, and water will be provided by event partners. Just bring yourself and wear comfortable clothes and appropriate shoes.

If volunteers are interested in reserving a kayak please call Marshgrass Adventures at 843-684-3296. In conjunction with this event, the Outside Foundation and Outside Hilton Head will host a kayak cleanup effort. Volunteers paddling with these event partners will launch from Palmetto Bluff and kayak to Oyster Factory Park with their collected materials.

Each local volunteer becomes a “scientist” and records data as he or she writes down information about the type of debris they collect. This data is tabulated and added to South Carolina’s data and also is incorporated into the Ocean Conservancy’s worldwide data. This annual data provides crucial information on the sources of litter so communities can identify and prevent pollution.

If you need more information about the event, please contact Beth Lewis, stormwater technician within the Town’s Watershed Management Division at (office): 706-4559 or (email): [blewis@townofbluffton.com](mailto:blewis@townofbluffton.com). Registration is not necessary however, please notify Beth Lewis if you are bringing a community group or organization so the event can plan for special projects and an adequate quantity of supplies.

## Event Partners

The Town of Bluffton and its environmental education arm, Neighbors for Clean Water, thank all local and regional partners which make this event an annual success. Partners include: Hardeeville Wal-Mart (Store #2832), Bluffton Starbucks, i2 Recycle, Marshgrass Adventures, Outside Hilton Head, the Outside Foundation, Port Royal Sound Foundation, Be Green Packaging, Keep Beaufort County Beautiful, the Beaufort County Solid Waste & Recycling Division, Keep Beaufort County Beautiful, Palmetto Pride, Savannah Riverkeeper, South Carolina Department of Natural Resources (SCDNR), Experience Green, South Carolina Sea Grant Consortium and Adams Outdoor Advertising. In an effort to make the Town’s cleanups as sustainable as possible, i2 Recycle will be recycling the suitable debris collected.

Since 1988, the South Carolina Sea Grant Consortium and the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources have organized this annual event. The Beach Sweep/River Sweep takes place in conjunction with the International Coastal Cleanup, coordinated by the Ocean Conservancy. The Ocean Conservancy tallies all the debris data from each location worldwide. The data helps those in charge of environmental protection to learn the sources of litter so those people are able to prevent and reduce the amount of those sources in each area.

## About Neighbors for Clean Water:

The Neighbors for Clean Water initiative began in 2011 as a project of the Town of Bluffton with the goal of educating and motivating residents to be responsible and do their part to clean up the May River and other waterways in greater Bluffton. The initiative began with the support from the United States Environmental Protection Agency and the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control.

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In 2015, the Town of Bluffton, Beaufort County, the Town of Hilton Head, the City of Beaufort, and the Town of Port Royal joined together through a Memorandum of Agreement to share the use of Neighbors for Clean Water as each government body recognizes the importance of having an education program sharing common goals and programs.

The objective is to reach and educate all of our citizens in Beaufort County and to continue joint efforts to protect our precious waterways. The waterways of Beaufort County are unique, dynamic environments, rich in marine life and their livelihood depends on shared common public education and outreach measures.

Learn more about Neighbors for Clean Water at its website ([www.neighborsforcleanwater.org](http://www.neighborsforcleanwater.org)) and/or Facebook page (Neighbors for Clean Water).