

Media Release



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HEART OF THE LOWCOUNTRY

April 3, 2017

For More Information:

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(Facebook): Neighbors for Clean Water

(Facebook): Town of Bluffton Government

Call to Action: 17th Annual May River Cleanup, Saturday, April 22nd

Town of Bluffton representatives are asking residents to help clean up the May River, her shores, nearby streets and parks of the Bluffton Historic District, Saturday, April 22, from 9:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

“This annual event is a wonderful way to honor our May River as we join together with our neighbors first thing on a Saturday for a cup of coffee and a fun morning of working together to clean up our environment,” Mayor Lisa Sulka said.

- Volunteers will meet at Oyster Factory Park located at the end of Wharf Street.
- Boats and kayaks are needed to assist with cleanup efforts (Please arrive at 8:30 a.m. to allow time for setup).
- Limited kayaks will be made available by Marshgrass Adventures for interested volunteers. If you would like to reserve a kayak for the cleanup, please contact Marshgrass Adventures at 843-684-3296.
- Coffee will be provided by Bluffton Starbucks.
- All supplies including gloves, bags, vests and water will be provided by the Town of Bluffton, American Rivers, Palmetto Pride, Keep Beaufort County Beautiful and Beaufort County Solid Waste & Recycling.
- Personal supplies such as sunscreen, bug spray and water will be provided.
- Snacks and lunch will be provided by the Hardeeville Wal-Mart. In addition, Be Green Packaging will be providing compostable dishware in an effort to support the event’s zero waste goal.

Bryan McIlwee, the town’s director of engineering, said each year this event grows in the number of participants and organizational partners.

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“It is very rewarding to see students, scout groups, civic organizations, businesses and nearly 20 official partners join the Town to make a positive impact on the May River and the streets and areas which surround her,” McIlwee said. “This is truly a collective community effort.”

Earth Day Celebration:

Experience Green and Outside Foundation will host the 7th Annual Earth Day Celebration, from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. on Saturday, April 22. This event will also take place at Oyster Factory Park and will host family-oriented activities with environmental exhibits.

Event Partnerships:

The Town is expanding its volunteer opportunities at this year’s cleanup and organizations have specific projects within the event.

- The Levi’s Outlet will be working to mark storm drains with a “No Dumping, Drains to Waterways” tile throughout Historic District. Storm drain marking offers an excellent opportunity to further educate the public about the link between our storm drain system and the water quality of our local rivers, including the May River. If interested in learning more about this opportunity please contact Beth Lewis via email blewis@townofbluffton.com.
- The Town of Bluffton is also partnering with M.C. Riley Elementary School to host the 4th Annual School Participation Challenge. Students and their families will have the opportunity to take part in the Cleanup and waste reduction efforts provided by i2 Recycle. The Rotary Club of Bluffton and Coastal Kingdom will be partnering to assist the Town with the School Participation Challenge and the winning grade level will be given a reward at the end of the school year.
- Continued support of the Town’s two annual Cleanups is provided by Adams Outdoor Advertising, the Port Royal Sound Foundation, Savannah Riverkeeper, and the Beaufort County Stormwater Utility.
- Town of Bluffton/Lowcountry Stormwater Partners/Educational Website: The Town of Bluffton has partnered with all jurisdictions across Beaufort County and Clemson Extension’s Carolina Clear to establish an environmental educational project called Lowcountry Stormwater Partners. This project is now providing stormwater education countywide. Its mission is to educate and motivate residents to protect and maintain our local waterways with environmentally-mindful activities and projects. For more information, please visit the Lowcountry Stormwater Partners website, <http://www.clemson.edu/extension/carolinaclear/lsp/index.html>, and its Facebook page (Neighbors for Clean Water).

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Event Has Waste Reduction Goal:

In the last 15 years, volunteers, community partners and Town staff members have removed more than 19 tons of litter, debris, discarded appliances and abandoned boats from the May River and Bluffton Historic District.

As of last year, the event added a waste reduction goal. Together with i2 Recycle, a local recycling business, and Experience Green, a local environmental non-profit, the Town again has made ongoing efforts to reduce event waste. This goal encourages the reuse and recycling of suitable materials. Volunteers are encouraged to take part in the sorting efforts during the event.