

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Board of County Commissioners

August 19, 2022



DESTIN  
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WALTON  
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FLORIDA

### Local Volunteers Needed for International Coastal Cleanup

**Okaloosa County, Fla.** – Saltwater Restaurants and Destin-Fort Walton Beach Tourism is excited to host the International Coastal Cleanup on Saturday, September 17, 2022 from 8-10AM. For over 35 years, [Ocean Conservancy](#) has held the International Coastal Cleanup® which is a global event that prides itself in, “harnessing the power of people to fight ocean trash.” The goal of the cleanup is to remove as much trash and debris from local beaches and there are multiple locations where volunteers of all ages can participate. Join our local effort at any of the below cleanup locations by [registering here](#).

- The Boardwalk on Okaloosa Island (1450 Miracle Strip Pkwy, Fort Walton Beach, FL)
- The Crab Trap/James Lee Park (3500 Scenic HWY 98, Destin, FL)
- The Surf Hut (551 Scenic Gulf Dr, Miramar Beach, FL)
- Norriego Point (1 Gulf Shore Dr, Destin, FL)
- Mattie Kelly Park & Joe’s Bayou (825 Beach Dr, Destin, FL)
- Henderson Beach State Park (17000 Emerald Coast Pkwy, Destin, FL)

Participants will receive an event t-shirt (limited quantities, first come, first served) and a post cleanup breakfast will be available free of charge at The Boardwalk, The Crab Trap, and The Surf Hut locations. Volunteers are asked to bring their own bucket, mesh bag, gloves, and grabbers to collect trash. Please dress appropriately for the weather and bring water and sunscreen.

“When we come together as a community, we help keep our beaches pristine and allow for native wildlife to thrive,” said Okaloosa Board of County Commissioners Chairman Mel Ponder. “We are fortunate to have a Coastal Resource division in our Tourist Development Department dedicated to this cause.”

In its 5th year, volunteers have removed over 2,000 pounds of garbage and over 1,000 cigarette butts during the most recent event. Marine debris a detriment to our local ecosystem and causes problems for seabirds and coastal marine life.

“Beach cleanups not only keep our beaches beautiful for visitors, but they create a safe environment for our wildlife. Certain animals, like sea turtles and shorebirds, rely on our beaches to lay their eggs and protect their young. The International Coastal Cleanup is a great way to bring the community together and do good for the environment,” said Jessica Valek, Coastal Resource Coordinator, Destin-Fort Walton Beach Tourism.

After the cleanup, the conservation fun continues with the *Choctawhatchee Bay Family FUN-FEST* held at The Boardwalk on Okaloosa Island from 10AM-1PM. Hosted by the Choctawhatchee Estuary Program, the event celebrates National Estuaries week and guests will enjoy food vendors, activities for kids, local vendors, and door prizes.

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*Thank you to our event sponsors:* The Boardwalk, The Crab Trap, Okaloosa County, Visit South Walton, City of Destin, Ocean Conservancy, Florida State Parks, Florida Sea Grant Choctawhatchee Basin Alliance, The Surf Hut, The Emerald Coast Wildlife Refuge, Emerald Coast Science Center, Step One Automotive, The Gulfarium, Divers Down Pollution Project, Destin Brewery, Waste Management, Saneka's Legacy, Keep Florida Beautiful

For more information on Destin-Fort Walton Beach, Florida, please visit [www.destinfwb.com](http://www.destinfwb.com)

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