

# Media Release



**bluffton**  
HEART OF THE LOWCOUNTRY

August 29, 2017

For More Information:

Debbie Szpanka

Public Information Officer

Town of Bluffton

20 Bridge Street

Bluffton, SC 29910

(Office): 843.706.4534

(Cell): 843.540.2274

(Email): [dszpanka@townofbluffton.com](mailto:dszpanka@townofbluffton.com)

Additional Event Resources:

(Website): <http://www.townofbluffton.sc.gov> (Town of Bluffton)

(Website): <http://www.clemson.edu/extension/carolinaclear/regional-consortiums/lsp/index.html> (Lowcountry Stormwater Partners)

(Facebook): Town of Bluffton Government

(Facebook): Lowcountry Stormwater Partners – We are Neighbors for Clean Water

29th Annual Beach Sweep/River Sweep Saturday, September 16<sup>th</sup>

The Town of Bluffton, Neighbors for Clean Water, South Carolina Sea Grant Consortium and the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources invite all greater Bluffton residents and business owners to participate in the 29th Annual Beach Sweep/River Sweep on Saturday, September 16th from 9 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. The event will be held at the Oyster Factory Park on the May River (63 Wharf Street). This is the 29<sup>th</sup> year this statewide event has been held and the 10<sup>th</sup> year in which Bluffton has participated. Thousands of volunteers across the state participate annually in this event, which is South Carolina's largest one-day, volunteer, litter clean-up of beaches, marshes and waterways.

"This is a wonderful opportunity to take care of Bluffton's May River and be part of a community effort to protect the town's most cherished natural resource," Mayor Lisa Sulka said. "The Town hosts two annual community-wide environmental events. The May River Cleanup is held in April which is the beginning of boating season and the May River Sweep, which is held in September, is after the summer season. These events greatly contribute to the health of our river, our town and our community as hundreds come together to ensure our waterways and nearby areas are free of debris as fall begins."

The Town's Director of Engineering Bryan McIlwee said the semi-annual events help create a sense of community as they educate residents about town and regional resources. "The waterways of Bluffton and Beaufort County are unique, diverse environments. The species which live in our regional waterways depend on public education to thrive." McIlwee said. "Together, we work with local residents and business owners to prevent stormwater pollution, stress the importance of individual action and continue to educate our residents regarding water quality. The Town is very thankful for such an involved community."

# Media Release



**bluffton**  
HEART OF THE LOWCOUNTRY

## Coffee/Biscuits/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 & biscuits will be donated by the Bluffton Starbucks & Bluffton Bojangles 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.

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, added to South Carolina’s data and is incorporated into the Ocean Conservancy’s worldwide data. This cumulative data provides crucial information on the sources of litter so communities can better identify and prevent pollution. If you need more information about the event, please contact Beth Lewis, stormwater technician with the Town’s Watershed Management Division at (843) 706-4559 or via email at [blewis@townofbluffton.com](mailto:blewis@townofbluffton.com). Registration is not necessary however, please notify 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 the County-wide environmental education arm, Lowcountry Stormwater Partners, thank all local and regional partners who make this event an annual success. Partners include: Hardeeville Wal-Mart (Store #2832), Bluffton Starbucks, Bluffton Bojangles, 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), 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.

# Media Release



**bluffton**  
HEART OF THE LOWCOUNTRY

The Ocean Conservancy tallies all the debris data from each location worldwide. The data helps those in charge of environmental protection to identify the sources of litter so they can make recommendations which may help prevent and reduce the amount of litter polluting our waterways.

About Lowcountry Stormwater Partners: Striving for healthy, fishable, swimmable waterways.

A Neighbors for Clean Water initiative began 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 surrounding watersheds in greater Bluffton. The initiative began with support from the United States Environmental Protection Agency and the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control.

Recognizing the importance of having an education program that would share common goals and messages, Carolina Clear, The Town of Bluffton, Beaufort County, the Town of Hilton Head Island, the City of Beaufort, and the Town of Port Royal came together to form the Lowcountry Stormwater Partners – We are Neighbors for Clean Water. The objective is to reach and educate all of our citizens in Beaufort County and to continue our joint efforts to protect our precious waterways. If you are Interested in keeping up to date on the latest Lowcountry Stormwater Partners news, please follow our work on Facebook and sign-up for the Changing Tides, our monthly e-newsletter. Visit <http://www.clemson.edu/extension/carolinaclear/regional-consortiums/lsp/index.html> to learn more.