

What's Happening! AROUND THE BEND

UPDATES FROM THE COASTAL BEND BAYS & ESTUARIES PROGRAM



July 2024

Annual Packery Flats Cleanup Removes 1,500 pounds of Litter and Debris from Sensitive Habitat.

Padre Island, TX- Like birds on an annual migration, volunteers return to the tidal flats and marsh that make up the Packery Flats habitat to remove litter and debris twice a year. This piece of habit is special in more ways than one, both to those who call it home and the visitors passing through. Situated just north of Packery Channel, the proximity to the open Gulf of Mexico creates valuable habitat for a variety of underwater species that in turn supports migrating birds and other terrestrial species through the sometimes-brutal lifestyle that accompanies residing on a barrier island.



Though its geographic location offers bountiful natural resources, it also brings anthropogenic threats to the habitat. The bustling Highway 361 corridor from Padre Island to Port Aransas sees thousands of travelers on their way during an average summer season weekend, many coming to the area to spend time on the beach or in the bays with their family. An unfortunate result of the increased traffic is an increase and litter and debris along the highway and out into the tidal flats. Each cleanup has produced a pile of debris that volunteers are proud to have removed but also makes you scratch your head and wonder “How did this get here?”.



This year's summer cleanup marked the 10th year of Citgo's Caring for Our Coast initiative that has funded this clean up, along with other projects within the Packery Flats Habitat. Keeping a close eye on the summer showers in the forecast, volunteers braved the potential precipitation and worked their way through the marsh removing pieces of small litter and large debris. With over 50 volunteers on site, the pile of debris removed from the marsh grew quickly.

In less than three hours, 61 volunteers were able to fill 120 Up2U litter prevention bags, removing nearly 1,500 pounds of litter and debris from the Packery Channel Bridge to the Packery Point Park. While this cleanup leaves a positive impact twice yearly for the habitat along Packery Flats, the need for continued stewardship is in clear view and ever present. Despite the time and effort poured into the area, litter and debris constantly collect along the roadside of this busy roadway year-round. Though we'll be back with an organized cleanup again in the winter, you can grab your own Up2U litter prevention bag whenever you'd like at either Packery Flats parking area, and get to it!



The Coastal Bend Bays & Estuaries Program is a non-profit organization dedicated to protecting and restoring bays and estuaries in the 12-county region of Texas Coastal Bend. CBBEP is partially funded by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. For more information about the Coastal Bend Bays & Estuaries Program, contact Quinn Hendrick, 361-336-0305 or qhendrick@cbbep.org. Published in May 2023.

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