

Adopt-a-Beach Volunteers work to improve the health of Great Lakes beaches



Ways to Reduce Plastic Pollution in Erie County Waters

Plastic Waters: from the Great Lakes to the Oceans opens at the Erie Maritime Museum on **Wednesday, April 1, 2015**, and visitors to the exhibit are encouraged to get involved locally. In addition to artifacts that show in graphic form the harmful effects of plastics on waters and wildlife, the exhibit highlights the positive work of the **Alliance for the Great Lake's: Adopt-a-Beach™ Program**, through which nearly 13,000 volunteers each year are helping to reduce plastic pollution locally by clearing litter and collecting data at Great Lakes shorelines.

In Erie County, Adopt-a-Beach™ had the following impact in 2014:

- Total volunteers: 217
- Total volunteer hours: 991 ½
- Number of sites: 19
- Total pounds of debris removed: 1,998 lbs.

Visitors interested in volunteering can register to join a cleanup at www.greatlakesadopt.org.

Plastic Waters also highlights current efforts to reduce plastic pollution in the Great Lakes through phase-outs of a particular form of plastic pollution that is preventable. Microbeads — tiny plastic beads commonly used as abrasives in hundreds of personal-care products such as soaps and facial scrubs — are so small that they escape treatment by sewage plants and are washed into rivers, streams and the Great Lakes. Like other plastics, microbeads absorb toxic contaminants in the water and are ingested by fish and other wildlife, raising serious concerns about the impact of microbeads on the food chain.

Pennsylvania residents are encouraged to contact their legislators and urge them to support legislation phasing out microbeads.