

River, Lakes, Bays 'N Bayous Trash Bash

TEEA 2018 Winner: Civic/Community

Texas Conservation Fund; Houston-Galveston Area Council; Gulf Coast Authority



Clean It Like You Mean It

This year, event coordinators and volunteers will celebrate the 25th consecutive River, Lakes, Bays 'N Bayous Trash Bash. The longevity of this annual cleanup event shows a strong community that is committed to protecting the environment.

Trash Bash is the largest, single-day cleanup of waterways in Texas. Every year thousands of people from the community come together to clean up waterways in the greater Houston area. The event promotes environmental stewardship of the Galveston Bay Watershed by having volunteers remove litter and debris, providing hands-on educational displays, and developing collaborative partnerships among environmental groups, governmental bodies, and private organizations.

The program's long-term success is thanks in large part to a solid foundation of trust that they build with their partners. Trash Bash has partnerships with community groups and nonprofit organizations, including the Bayou Preservation Association, Galveston Bay Foundation, city and county governments, private citizens, and businesses dedicated to reducing litter.

A unique aspect of Trash Bash's project is its ability to change behavior and bring environmental awareness about clean water to the community. For example, this year each Trash Bash site has a series of interactive exhibits for volunteers to explore the changes they can make in their own lives to improve the environment. Additionally, the program provides educational materials that teach the community about the importance of keeping trash out of the waterways in their region, and it teaches them other ways to help protect water quality.

Since the first cleanup in 1994, Trash Bash has grown from seven to fourteen sites. Annually the event attracts about 4,400 volunteers. During its 25-year history, volunteers have collected: 2,274 tons of trash; 11,065 tires; and 17.3 tons of recyclable material. These results show that Trash Bash succeeds at being an influential force for environmental protection and community involvement.

Through ongoing contributions and support from sponsors and volunteers, the restoration of the Galveston Bay Watershed will continue. Trash Bash is a perfect example of a community working together to make a difference!