

## The "All One Ocean" campaign

Written by EarthTalk®, E - The Environmental Magazine  
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Dear EarthTalk: What is the "All One Ocean" campaign? --*Bill O'Neill, Los Angeles, CA*

All One Ocean is a non-profit campaign launched in 2010 by long-time author, activist and organizer Hallie Austen Iglehart with the goal of reducing the amount of plastic and other trash that ends up in the ocean where it compromises the health of marine wildlife and ecosystems. Iglehart was incensed to learn that a million seabirds and 100,000 marine mammals and turtles die each year from ingesting plastic in the water column—and created All One Ocean to do something about it.

Contrary to popular myth that most ocean pollution is oil spilled from ships, most of it is land-based litter. "The most dangerous litter is our throw-away plastic because of its longevity and capacity to increase in toxicity, eventually returning to the human food chain in a more lethal form," reports Iglehart.

"Much of our plastic ends up in the ocean in giant collections of trash called gyres, created by circular ocean currents," she adds. "They trap debris for decades where it continues to break into ever smaller, more toxic pieces, never fully biodegrading." Of particular concern to Iglehart is the fact that much of this carelessly discarded plastic winds up in the bellies of marine life, contaminating not just ocean ecosystems but in some cases the very seafood on our dinner plates.

The main project of All One Ocean is the creation and maintenance of permanent, community supported Beach Clean Up Stations, which are essentially boxes containing reusable bags for beach visitors to use in picking up trash during their time on the sand and in the surf. The idea is to empty any garbage into a trash can somewhere (so it can find its way to a landfill instead of out into the ocean) and then ideally return the bag empty to the box. Each clean-up station also provides a sign with information on the extent of the problem and other ways individuals can help. The idea, according to Iglehart, is to provide "a simple, doable way for people to have fun cleaning up trash as they enjoy their beach activities."

"The Beach Clean Up Station is a practical way to insure that clean up is happening everyday on all our beaches," says Iglehart. "Like 'adopt a highway' campaigns, Beach Clean Up Stations create community around care for and education about these clean up hubs."

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She would like to see Beach Clean Up Stations in place at coastal and even freshwater beaches all around the world, but for now the group is starting out in Northern California. The first one was put in place at Limantour Beach at the Point Reyes National Seashore in Marin County there, with several following at other San Francisco Bay area beaches. Iglehart hopes the campaign will encourage people to reconsider their consumption of single use plastics, since the production and distribution of such items contributes not just to the demise of the oceans but also to increased global warming.

Unlike many environmental issues that seem beyond our control, cleaning up beaches is something anyone can do and indeed every little bit helps. "Every tiny piece of human trash picked up," Iglehart reminds us, "is one less toxin in someone's stomach."

**CONTACT:** All One Ocean, [www.alloneocean.org](http://www.alloneocean.org) .

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