



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## **1.55 Metric Tonnes of Marine Debris Removed from Vargas Island**

**Clayoquot Sound, Vancouver Island** – Despite postponing original plans due to gale warnings, BC Marine Trails (BCMT) completed its annual Vargas Island marine debris cleanup from May 31–June 3.

A crew of ten volunteers collected and sorted marine debris from nine beaches across Vargas Island, including 595 plastic water bottles. The team circumnavigated Vargas by sea kayak, camping on the island's beaches for the duration of the event. On June 2nd, the team encountered a school group from TREK Outdoor Education Program, who joined the effort, making a marked difference in the debris collected on Ahous Bay.

Vargas Island residents also joined the effort on June 7, organizing 24 volunteers from neighbouring communities for a dedicated day of debris collection. Separately, Island residents collected and staged debris at two additional locations. Together, these community-led efforts expanded the cleanup to a total of 12 beaches across Vargas.

Western Canada Marine Response Corporation (WCMRC) transported the debris off-island from June 16–18. All materials are being processed through the Ocean Legacy Foundation's depot in Ucluelet, where recyclable materials will be recovered and remaining waste responsibly managed.

BCMT extends its thanks to [Athletic Brewing](#) for funding this important work, and for the support of both the Ahousaht Nation and BC Parks. The event took place in the territory (hahuulthi) of the Ahousaht Nation.

Find photos of the cleanup event [here](#). All photos attributed to Sam Cutcliffe.

2026 project extent (Download .png [here](#)).



## Quotes

*"We often assume the busiest beaches have the most garbage, but remote coastlines like Vargas Island tell a different story. Much of what we remove isn't litter left behind by people visiting, but rather fishing gear, aquaculture infrastructure, and plastics carried across the Pacific. Removing 1.55 metric tonnes from one island shows the scale of the challenge facing BC's 26,000 kilometres of coastline."*

— Sam Cutcliffe, Communications & Stewardship Coordinator, BC Marine Trails