

# ANNUAL BEACH CLEAN-UPS

From time to time, SWMCOL partners with both public and private sector organizations to address beach and river clean-ups. However, the main clean-up event on SWMCOL's calendar is the annual International Coastal Clean-up (ICC), an initiative started in 1986 by the US-based non-profit environmental advocacy group, Ocean Conservancy.

Dubbed the world's largest one-day volunteer clean-up event, the chief aim of the ICC is to bring awareness to the causes and impacts of marine debris, and the need for environmental preservation and sustainability of marine life and coastal habitats.

SWMCOL has been a member of the ICC-T&T National Planning Committee (NPC) since its first staging in Trinidad & Tobago. NPC members comprise stakeholders from both the public and private sectors. Members host volunteer clean-ups at designated beaches across both islands during which every item of trash, whether large or small, is recorded on the ICC data cards. This is an important part of the exercise as the data from all the clean-ups worldwide are collated into an international report that highlights the types and quantities of waste found, as well as their sources, so that countries can develop programmes to control the proliferation of marine debris.

In recent times the event has been coordinated by the Caribbean Network for Integrated Rural Development (CNIRD) where the ICC-T&T Country Coordinator is based. The annual event, which is held in September, brings in volunteers of every age who find the experience life-changing in that they become more sensitive to the negative impacts that humans have on the environment through indiscriminate dumping of garbage.

The annual ICC is advertised in the weeks leading up to the event so that interested persons can register to volunteer.