TOFINO TIME
HALF THE PACE—TWICE THE PLEASURE!

Tofino Time Magazine
Box 731
Tofino, BC
Canada V0R 2Z0

1.55 METRIC TONNES OF MARINE DEBRIS REMOVED FROM VARGAS ISLAND

by Sam Cutcliffe

"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."

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

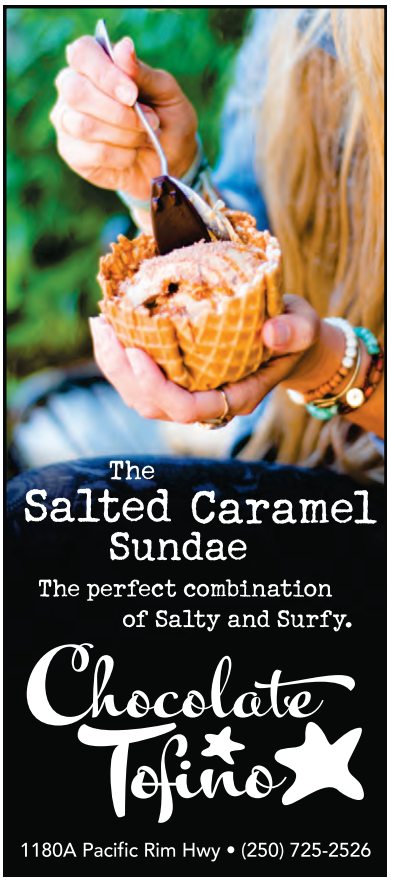
A crew of ten volunteers collected and sorted marine debris from nine beaches across Vargas Island, including 595 plastic water bottles. The team circumnavigated Vargas by sea kayak, camping on the island's beaches for the duration of the event.

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







BC MARINE TRAILS

What is the BC Marine Trails Network?

The BC Marine Trails Network (BCMT) is a non-profit and charitable organization working together to help secure long term public access to the BC coast.

Our mission is to work with First Nations and stakeholders to build, protect and promote a public network of marine trails allowing recreational navigation of the BC coastline with minimal impact on the environment.

For more information please visit bcmarinetrails.org

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debris off-island from June 16 to 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 of BC Parks. The event took place in the territory (hahuulthi) of the Ahousaht Nation.

Sam Cutcliffe is Communications & Stewardship Coordinator at BC Marine Trails. For more information please visit bcmarinetrails.org

