



United States Department of State

Office of Foreign Missions
799 UN Plaza, 8th floor
New York, New York 10017

August 15, 2016

Dear Consul General:

I would like to invite your Consulate to join colleagues from the Office of Foreign Missions – New York (OFM/NY) in an exciting and rewarding project celebrating the 31st International Coastal Cleanup Day and in support of the goals of the upcoming 2016 Our Ocean Conference in September –which will be hosted by Secretary John F. Kerry.

With the assistance of the *Ocean Conservancy*, the Office of Foreign Missions in New York (OFM/NY) is organizing a team from the consulates in New York City to clean the shoreline at Spring Creek, near the Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge, the morning of September 9, 2016. OFM/NY will provide transportation for participants to and from the Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge from midtown Manhattan. We hope you and members of your staff will join us.

A goal of the upcoming Our Ocean conference is to draw attention to these types of marine pollution issues while highlighting best practices and innovative efforts to address them. As Secretary Kerry said in observance of World Ocean Day 2016, *“The fact is that the rich marine environment many of us have enjoyed throughout our lives is under extreme stress from human activity. Without a shift in our approach, our children and grandchildren will inherit an ocean that is less healthy, less resilient and less able to provide for the world’s population.”*

With an estimated 8 million metric tons of plastic entering our ocean every year, concerns are growing about the impacts of marine pollution on our ocean ecosystems. Research is proving that the ingestion of plastics in both seabirds and sea turtles – which can cause illness and death – is becoming a major problem. As a diplomatic corps, we aim to raise awareness and help stem the tide of pollution through the coastal clean-up event on September 9th.

Around the world, many people are diving into the hard work of combating marine pollution. In 2015, for example, nearly 800,000 volunteers participated in such events, exemplifying their commitment to clean and healthy oceans. These volunteers collected over 2 million cigarette butts, 1 million plastic beverage bottles, 850,000 plastic bottle caps, and 400,000 straws. Our clean-up efforts can help: *Ocean Conservancy* reports that over the past three decades, 11 million International Coastal Cleanup volunteers have collected over 210 million pounds of trash.



OFM/NY Coastal Clean-Up Event

Event Schedule

Site: **Spring Creek at Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge**

7:30 a.m. Board buses in midtown to travel to the Refuge (exact boarding point near the United Nations to be announced pre-event)

8:30 a.m. Brief introduction and talk about the site.

9:00 a.m. Clean up for 3 hours

Noon Board buses to travel the short distance to the Refuge's Visitor Center.
The Center has restrooms and outdoor tables for lunch (supplied by OFM/NY).
After lunch, Don Riepe will lead a short nature walk on the trails.

1:00 p.m. Board buses for transport back to midtown Manhattan.



OFM/NY Coastal Clean-Up Event Participation Form

If your Consulate wishes to participate in the OFM Coastal Clean-Up event, please complete this form and return it to **ofmnyrsvp@state.gov** (subject: Coastal Clean-up) or by fax to 646-282-2823.

Consulate Name: _____

Designated Point of Contact:

Name: _____ Phone Number: _____

Participant Information:

1. Name: _____ PID Number: _____

2. Name: _____ PID Number: _____

3. Name: _____ PID Number: _____