



INDUSTRY & ENVIRONMENTAL PARTNERS JOIN FORCES TO DIVERT PLASTIC POLLUTION FROM HAMILTON HARBOUR

*Harbour West Marina concludes second season of trapping trash for the **Great Lakes Plastic Cleanup***

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Hamilton, ON – A group of industrial and environmental partners have banded together to collect, analyze and divert waste captured in Seabins stationed around Harbour West Marina along Hamilton’s waterfront. The end of boating season officially marks the second year of waste capture at Harbour West, and this effort is part of a larger initiative called the [Great Lakes Plastic Cleanup \(GLPC\)](#): the single largest initiative of its kind in the world, using waste capture technology to remove plastics found in and around marinas in the Great Lakes region.

Harbour West installed its first Seabin in 2019, after seeing some of the efforts taking place in ocean marinas, and a second last year through the GLPC program. It is estimated that a staggering 10 million kilograms of plastic enters the largest freshwater system in the world each year, from Canada and the United States; and plastic debris accounts for around 80% of the litter found on Great Lakes shorelines.

“To really address plastic pollution, we need to focus on two things at once: getting plastic that’s already in the water out, and putting systems in place to stop plastic from continuing to flow in every year,” says Christopher Hilken, CEO of [Pollution Probe](#), the environmental not-for-profit that, along with the [Council of the Great Lakes Region](#) (CGLR), is spearheading the GLPC. “The data we collect from the plastic capture devices helps us get a better picture of the problem, which is necessary to come up with effective solutions.”

Ultimately, through the data collected and research generated, the team hopes to encourage residents and businesses to rethink our habits on land, and keep plastic out of the lake. “We always get questions from boaters about what we’re finding in the bins,” said Emily Paivalainen, Communications & Community Relations Coordinator at [HOPA Ports](#). “In addition to small plastic pieces and food wrappers, cigarette butts are one of the most consistent finds.” Seabins at Harbour West collect about 2 or 3kg in a 24 or 48 hr period, a fraction of which is trash or microplastics.

For the first time this season, staff and volunteers at the [Bay Area Restoration Council](#) came on board the GLPC to lead the waste characterization and analysis process locally in Hamilton. “This is an ideal partnership to help the community to better understand and tackle the growing challenge of plastic pollution. Cigarette butts and other small pieces of plastic are a really concerning local problem. But committed community volunteers have always been a vital part of the recovery of Hamilton Harbour, and that strong tradition continues with this project,” said Program and Outreach Coordinator, Christine Bowen. “Seeing is believing, and the time we’ve spent sorting what the Seabins collect is helping to tell

an important story about the impact people have on our environment.” The data collected by BARC will feed directly into the program’s future advocacy for policy change around plastics and creating a circular economy around the Great Lakes.

Graciously, Burlington steel provider, Laurel Steel provided the funding for a third Seabin this year through GLPC as part of their sustainability mandate. “We are excited to be a part of this effort. We rely on the Great Lakes as the passage through which we receive a large portion of our raw material, and we feel it is only right that we help keep them clean and healthy in return,” said Laurel Steel Inside Sales Representative, Malin Schouten.

Plastics in our rivers and lakes threaten marine ecosystems, the freshwater fish species in Lake Ontario, residential waterfront communities, and the industries that rely on these waterways. The partners look forward to continuing the program locally and contributing data collected in Hamilton to help improve our small corner of the Lake Ontario for future generations.

What is a Seabin?

A Seabin is a “trash skimmer” designed to be installed in the water of marinas, yacht clubs, ports. The clean tech unit acts as a floating garbage bin, skimming the surface of the water by pumping water into the device. The Seabin can intercept floating debris, macro and micro plastics 2mm and over.

The ‘Why’ behind the Great Lakes Plastic Cleanup

Researchers estimate that roughly 10 million kilograms of plastics enter the Great Lakes every year, polluting the lakes and their surrounding watersheds—something that could cost up to \$400 million annually to combat. Research on plastic pollution pathways and long-term environmental impacts is evolving rapidly, and microplastics pose a great danger.

What to expect and how to get involved...

Watch for the GLPC results which will be tallied at the end of this year from waste characterizations being carried out at marinas and yacht clubs across the Great Lakes. In future, join a waterfront clean up in Hamilton through BARC or have a bin installed at your local marina to participate! Help divert waste by making choices on land that lessen litter and waste.

For more information, be sure to follow the conversation @GLPCleanup and visit www.greatlakesplasticcleanup.org.

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About HOPA Ports

As a growing integrated port network, the Hamilton Oshawa Port Authority offers innovative port and marine assets on the Great Lakes. We’re developing multimodal spaces to support Ontario’s industries

and facilitate trade. By investing in high-quality infrastructure and prioritizing sustainability, we're building prosperous working waterfronts in Ontario communities.

To learn more, visit: www.hopaports.ca

About **Bay Area Restoration Council**

The Bay Area Restoration Council is a registered charitable non-profit organization. Formed in 1991, BARC represents the public interest in the restoration of Hamilton Harbour and its watershed. BARC is responsible for community engagement and educational activities in the implementation of the Hamilton Harbour Remedial Action Plan. BARC encourages public understanding and citizen action through school programs, volunteer participation, public workshops, evaluative reporting on current issues and opportunities for digital communications.

To learn more, visit hamiltonharbour.ca/

About **Laurel Steel/Nucor**

Established in 1967, [Laurel Steel](#) has earned its reputation as North America's premier supplier of cold-finish bar, cold-drawn wire and mesh products. Headquartered in a state-of-the-art, 350,000-square-foot facility in Burlington, Ontario, we have earned our industry standing through a continuous pursuit of quality. For more than five decades, our focus has been refining our standards to exceed industry and environmental requirements and customer satisfaction.

Laurel Steel is an affiliate brand of Harris Steel Group, a wholly-owned subsidiary of [Nucor Corporation](#). Nucor is North America's largest steel recycler, and the most diversified producer of steel and steel products. As a member of Nucor's Family of Brands, Laurel Steel is proud to be a part of company that consistently works to lower emissions, save energy, and reduce pollution.

About the **Great Lakes Plastic Cleanup**

The Great Lakes Plastic Cleanup, spearheaded by [Pollution Probe](#) and the [Council of the Great Lakes Region](#) with support from a wide network of collaborators, is the largest initiative of its kind in the world, using innovative Seabin and LittaTrap™ technology to quickly capture and remove plastics and other litter at marinas from Lake Ontario to Lake Superior and everywhere in between. Through research, outreach and education, the Great Lakes Plastic Cleanup is gathering data on litter entering our waterways and identifying how government, industry, and consumers can work together to reduce, reuse and recycle material waste. The initiative is made possible thanks to funding from Environment and Climate Change Canada and the Government of Ontario, with sustaining funding from lead corporate sponsor, NOVA Chemicals.

To learn more, visit www.greatlakesplasticcleanup.org