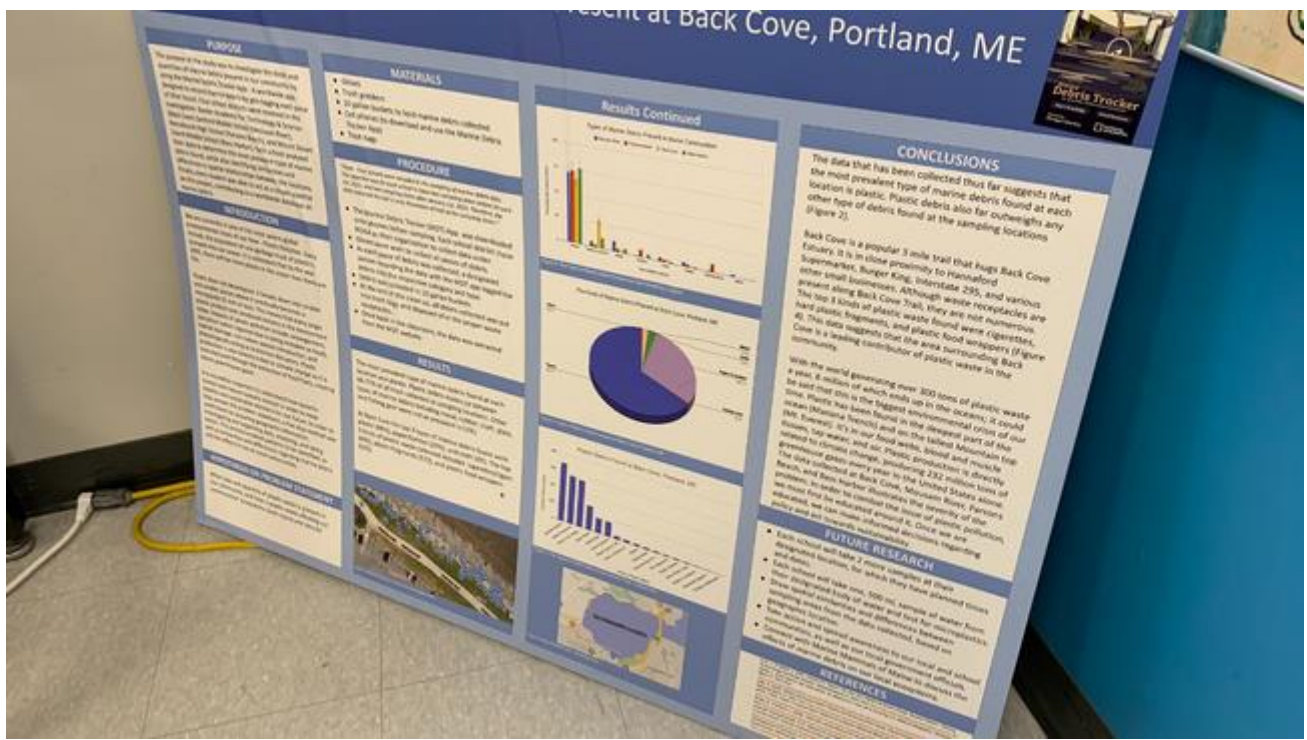


# Portland students collect trash after storm, hope to inspire and educate others

by [Mal Meyer](#), WGME

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*Saturday's storm is turning into a valuable lesson for some students in Portland. (WGME)*

PORTLAND (WGME) -- Saturday's storm is turning into a valuable lesson for some students in Portland.

A group went out to Higgins Beach and collected marine debris, which are still rolling in now days later.

A plastic bottle, lots of rope and part of a trap are just some of the things swept up in Scarborough by a historic high tide.

"I'm very fortunate to have grown up in Maine, and I'm very fortunate to live near beaches that I know and I love. Knowing for a fact that just not even very far out, there's this and so much more in those oceans is heartbreaking," Baxter Academy for Technology and Science senior Jack Forsyth said.

Some students at Baxter Academy for Technology and Science have learned this firsthand.

"This project has definitely been a big part of my life the past couple years," Baxter Academy for Technology and Science junior Julez Vazquez said.

They've been collecting and analyzing a certain kind of litter around Back Cove.

"Last year in four cleanups, we collected over 7,000 pieces of marine debris," Baxter Academy for Technology and Science Teacher Kate Strait said.

"We've found that about 70 percent of all trash in our community has been plastic," Baxter Academy for Technology and Science junior Eliot Verry-Gardella said.

That breaks down in the environment and creates tiny pieces called "microplastics."

"Humans eat about a credit card worth of microplastics every week," Vazquez said.

The group has uploaded information about what they've collected on a phone app, which they, or other citizen scientists, can then use.

"If you wanted to do your own individual study just within the United States, or say, on the East Coast, you could see everybody that's using the app on the East Coast and what they're finding as well," Strait said.

But what they've gathered isn't going back in the trash.

"All of this will be used to create some art," Baxter Academy for Technology and Science senior Martessa Vine said.

They haven't decided what it will look like exactly. Last year, they created big jellyfish out of some of the pieces.