

# National Grid volunteers discover what lies beneath is a cleaner tomorrow

**Author:** jbray

National Grid volunteers take part in Save The Bay's clean-up efforts off Kettle Point in East Providence.

A black woolen hat. A surgical mask. And a pair of tattered blue shorts entwined around a log.

This is what Kathryn Cox-Arslan, Director of Commercial Services for National Grid, has unearthed in just a few minutes time on the shores of Watchemocket Cove in East Providence.

Cox-Arslan is one of seven National Grid volunteers who are taking part in clean-up efforts for Save The Bay off Kettle Point Avenue.

"I'm neurotic about trash, it's my pet-peeve, I hate it," said Cox-Arslan. Her white bag is already brimming with garbage.

She and the other volunteers fanned out across two sites at Watchemocket Cove. Armed with gloves, plastic trash bags, tick spray, bug repellent and sunscreen, they got right to work.

There are pockets of tranquility to be discovered and preserved. With the sound of waves lapping onto shore, birdsong in the distance, the smell of salt in the breeze and the glint of the sun off the water, the area was bustling with joggers, bikers and fishermen.

"Save the Bay acts as watchdogs for the water," said National Grid's Jane Rutana. She's a coordinator for Community and Customer Management for Commercial Services. Rutana has been to this site several times.

"Someone once found a rolled-up rug in the water," Rutana noted. She said that it took two volunteers to carry the sodden rug to shore. When the National Grid volunteers are done scouring their areas of trash, it will be bagged and weighed.

Rutana keeps copious notes for Save The Bay.

There is a worksheet that asks volunteers to pick up and record all the trash they find. Even tiny pieces, 2.5 cm, roughly the size of a bottle cap, get logged. Candy wrappers, rope, fireworks will all live on in the recordings of Save The Bay.

Cassie Osterhault has been volunteering for clean-ups with Save The Bay for three years. For her, this kind of work is gratifying. “You very clearly know what you are doing to an area and can see the results immediately,” she said. Osterhault works for National Grid’s Commercial Services. The most exotic trash she’s ever discovered is a large buoy, along with a fishing pole and line.

Being able to combine career and environmental consciousness is what brought Kendra McAuliffe, who works for National Grid’s Stakeholder Management group, to Watchemocket Cove.

“This is a good way to give back to the community especially in our role,” McAuliffe said. “We work within our communities and it’s a good way to bring what we do to bring volunteering to life.”

**Date:** 27-09-2019

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