

Toy Bin & Bucket Tree History

Compiled by Susan Hill Smith/ IOP Cleanup Crew Cofounder

No Toys Left Behind Bin at Front Beach

- Created in summer 2022 by Isle of Palms Cleanup Crew leaders in partnership with the City.
- Located in a nook between the City restroom building and the outdoor showers, across from Coconut Joe's, at the beach access in the 1100 block of Ocean Boulevard.
- Inspired by a similar bin in Wild Dunes - part of a coastal trend to answer the issue of forgotten toys that turn into litter and trash.
- Maintained by IOP Cleanup Crew with some support from employees who watch over the City facilities in that location.
- Allows countless toys to be re-used.
- Draws attention to the issue of left-behind toys and reminds young visitors and parents to keep track of things they bring to the beach.
- Provides those who clean up the beach a place with purpose to put toys, potentially boosting the # of toys removed from the ecosystem.
- Encourages families to rely on the bin rather than buying more toys that could wind up in the ecosystem or landfill.
- In 2021, before the toy bin was put in place, 1,197 toys were documented on IOP in the SC Aquarium's Litter Journal (3% of all beach litter items that year). In 2024, 955 toys were recorded in the IOP beach litter data (2% of all beach litter items). The toy counts have been a little up & down in the years before and in between, but seem to be trending downward overall, which is a positive sign.



Fill A Bag Station at Front Beach

- Added in summer 2022 by realtor Natasha Viswanathan, around the same time as the toy bin in the same location with the City's approval.
- Part of a branded non-profit effort that began in Florida and has expanded to other states. <https://fillabag.co/fill-a-bag/>
- Is actually a post with hooks that can hold up to 4-5 white branded buckets (not bags) that are available for anyone who wants to help clean.
- Fill A Bag guidelines say bucket trees must be installed 5 to 10 feet from trash receptacles.
- The branding points users to a QR code for more info and provides simple illustrated directions on the bucket.
- Messaging that the buckets should be emptied in trash may not be strong enough.
- It's not uncommon for us to find trash in them, but we don't know if that's from users or passersby.

Expansion

- From the start, IOP Cleanup Crew leaders hoped to spread the toy bin concept to other busy beach access paths if it was successful.
- The City's IOPThrives! Community Enrichment Task Force suggested that the City "explore" adding cleanup bucket trees, toy bins, and benches (to help visitors collect their things) at more "high traffic" beach access points "with placement closer to the road than the dunes."



- Once the City transitions to a new beach trash collection system with changes in the placement of trash receptacles, it will be easier to map out a plan for where to place bins and buckets.
- Good spots for adding bins, buckets & benches could be:
 - Breach Inlet or somewhere on the SE end once renourishment is finished
 - 21st Avenue
 - 25th Avenue
 - 34A? or another beach access in the 30s
- Placement will need to be worked out - each path is a little different - as will maintenance responsibilities.
- Mujeres Latinas' proposal could be helpful as they are not only offering to construct toy bins and bucket shelves (different than trees), they may be able to help us maintain them.
- Isle of Palms Cleanup Crew could potentially help clean and organize the bins, removing items that don't belong.
- The Task Force also recommended that the City "recruit volunteer neighborhood captains for regular cleanups of non-commercial sections of beach and island's interior." These captains could help maintain toy bins, buckets and benches.