

**September 15, 2007 was a wet and wonderful Day at the
4 Mile Beach Clean Up
sponsored by Hilo Bay Watershed Advisory Group**

18 volunteers enjoyed a wet Hilo Saturday while picking up and recording over 2,700 pieces of recreational debris left in James Kealoha Beach Park (4 Mile Beach). The clean up teams included our youngest volunteers, Mina and Benjamin Poppas, along with visitors to Hilo, area residents, students from UH-Hilo, and a dive team from Nautilus Dive Center. All together these volunteers worked 50 hours on cleaning up the beach park.

This park is a part of a string of parks stretching along Hilo Bay's eastern shore. Recreational activities at James Kealoha beach include swimming diving, fishing and surfing. Residents of Hawaii, and visitors from around the world enjoy this park area.

Most of the items recorded and collected (2,720 items) were plastic cigarette filters and beer bottle caps. Although little pieces of litter, these items have plastic components that can be hazardous to marine animals. The endangered Laysan albatross have been observed feeding these items to their chicks. The plastic fibers in cigarette filters have toxic residue and have been found in sea bird remains. The round plastic liners of beer bottles can create choking hazards for small marine mammals.

The recorded debris items did not include almost 40 gallon buckets of broken glass that was removed from underwater in the park bay by divers with Nautilus Dive Center in Hilo, and 2 gallon buckets of broken glass removed from around the park roadways and parklands. All totaled, over 12 waste bags were filled with park litter.

The data collected will be added to the International Coastal Cleanup Database that is used to track worldwide marine debris. This database was used to help develop the Marine Debris Research and Reduction Act introduced in February 2005 by Senator Daniel Inouye.

Hilo Bay Watershed Advisory schedules projects through the year to understand and protect the ecology of Hilo Bay. All community members are encouraged to join us. Contact Susan O'Neil email: susandan@aloha.net. The October meeting is Thursday, October 11, 2007 at Mokupapapa, on Kamehameha Ave. at Hilo Bayfront from 6:00 – 8:00 pm.

If you have any questions, or if we can be of any assistance, feel free to contact: Carey Yost, Hilo Bay Watershed Advisory Group Clean Up Coordinator - email: kidsdivein@usa.com