

Trashing Our Environment

When rain washes the landscape clean, it picks up trash and debris as well as other pollutants. **Since stormwater is not treated**, these pollutants get washed to the nearest ditch, creek, pond, estuary and beach. The result: **TONS of trash pollutes our nation's rivers each year**, degrading aquatic habitat, harming wildlife, clogging pipes and infrastructure and leading to unsightly messes in the environment. In just one week in 2008, volunteers removed 12.5 tons of trash from South Carolina's shoreline alone (data supplied by the S.C. Sea Grant Consortium).

In 2009, South Carolina's Department of Natural Resources placed a value on a healthy environment of *\$30 billion dollars brought to the state's economy annually*. Litter and debris can decrease this value when beaches become littered and rivers become clogged with garbage.



What can you do to better protect South Carolina's environment from being overrun with litter?

1. **Never throw, pour or sweep anything into storm drains. Only rain down the drain!** Even leaves and yard debris can clog pipes, leading to costly fixes for your town and adding unnecessary nutrients to local waterways that could lead to algae problems, poor water quality and fish kills.
2. **Bag your trash.** Oftentimes, when the garbage truck picks up your trash can, loose debris may miss the truck and be left behind on the ground and roadway. If this is happening to you, bag your trash.
3. **Report littering!** Your town will want to know if people are illegally dumping large amounts of trash, stuffing trash down a storm drain or leaving it behind at parks and public areas. Additionally, Palmetto Pride has a hotline where you can report littering in action; the phone number is 1-877-7LITTER or report online at www.palmettopride.org.
4. **Get involved with a watershed or community group that is interested in educating people about litter and organizing stream clean ups.** Clean ups are immediate "feel good" activities. Also, look for National River and Beach Sweep events happening in your community in September of each year.



Don't pollute! Even cigarette butts can add up in the environment. Let others know too that what goes down the storm drain ends up in the rivers, lakes and ocean that we all enjoy! For additional information, please visit us online at www.clemson.edu/carolinaclear.



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