

Clean Waterways Makes Cents

Litter is all around us and, according to the USEPA, 80 percent of it will make its way to a waterway if not picked up. Much of that stream litter was carried there by way of stormdrains, which collect rainfall and direct it, untreated, to the nearest waterway. As water travels across hard surfaces like driveways, roads, roof tops, and even lawns, it collects litter and other pollutants such as oil, pesticides, sediment, fertilizer, and pet waste.

Though chemical and bacterial pollutants can harm aquatic life and make swimming unsafe to humans, litter poses its own threats. Wildlife can become entangled in litter or ingest smaller pieces causing death. Litter can clog stormdrains leading to localized street flooding and property damage. Litter can also decrease property values and impact local tourism, which provides \$204 million annually to Haywood County (NC Department of Commerce, 2019 data).

Litter is a human problem that only humans can solve for the benefit of the local economy, recreation, wildlife, and our well-being. Be part of the solution by following these simple actions:

- Throw litter where it belongs, in a secure trash receptacle.
- Cover garbage when hauling it to the dump.
- Join local cleanup events, Adopt-A-Stream or the Bucket Brigade.

For more information about upcoming stream cleanup events, joining Adopt-A-Stream or getting involved with the bucket brigade contact Christine O'Brien at chirstine.haywoodwaterways@gmail.com or call 828-476-4667, ext. 11.