

QUICK REFERENCE SHEET

WHAT IS BIG SWEEP?

- North Carolina Big Sweep is an award-winning 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that was originally founded by state employees in 1987 as Beach Sweep, an initiative to remove unsightly and harmful litter from the state's coastline. It expanded inland in 1989, and was renamed Big Sweep, becoming the nation's first statewide waterway cleanup. Its mission expanded in 2002 to include not only making our waters litter free but striving to make our whole environment litter free.



- Big Sweep EDUCATION PROJECTS include “*Splish Splash*,” “*Ripples*,” “*Undercurrents*,” “Don’t Leave Your Butt On The Beach,” the Pier Litter project, and monofilament line recycling at 55 coastal and 50 inland marinas.

- Every year, all 100 counties in North Carolina are committed to Big Sweep.

- STEWARDSHIP: Big Sweep has received national recognition for its flagship event—the statewide Big Sweep cleanups. Since Big Sweep was founded in 1987, almost 320,000 Big Sweep volunteers have retrieved over 10.7 million pounds of debris from our environment in North Carolina. The debris retrieved is the equivalent of more than 26,000 football fields five feet deep in litter.



A FEW REASONS WHY LITTER IS HARMFUL

Litter hurts our economy.

- Businesses don't want to locate in trashy areas.
- Tourists avoid areas where debris is an issue, resulting in a loss of tourism revenue.

Litter is a human health hazard.

- Litter attracts disease-carrying mosquitoes and rodents.
- As litter decomposes, it leaches chemicals into our groundwater.
- Many people have been injured by accidentally stepping on broken glass or other litter.

Litter harms wildlife.

- When wildlife mistake litter for food, it can suffocate them or clog their digestive tracts. Many will slowly starve to death because real food can't get past the debris they ate.
- Wildlife often become entangled in litter. Once entangled, they are rarely able to free themselves, and they often attract other wildlife to the same hazard.