

OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the results from the **Focus Area Survey** and **Litter Index**, following Observations and Recommendations have been made:

Observations

(A) Accumulation of litter?

The results from the Litter Index show that most randomly chosen sites (80 in total) in Horry County, SC turned out less soiled than expected. Yet, the involved Certification Committee of Keep Horry County Beautiful agreed that the overall score of **2: Slightly littered** was not representative of the real litter problem in our area. The worst areas and/or sources for litter in Horry County are the following:

1. Drivers and/or passengers throwing out wrappers, packing items or cigarette butts from the windows of their vehicles. This is especially prevalent along the major thoroughfares from and to the beaches of the Grand Strand.
2. Recreational littering that is conducted due to the lack of easily locatable bins nearby or disrespectful behavior. This issue is common along the beaches, rivers and recreational trails throughout the area.
3. Illegal burning or disposing of household and construction debris in inappropriate open space areas, either on private or public properties. This is common in rural areas of the county, where no organized trash collection exists. Although the Horry County Solid Waste Authority (SWA) has over twenty Recycling and Convenience Centers located throughout the county, many residents choose to illegally dump their waste into the woods or other inappropriate areas. This has been observed in proximity to such convenience centers, and relates to operating hours that appear not conveniently enough by some customers. Instead of hauling their garbage back, some choose to just simply throw it in the woods. Another common phenomenon is the illegal burning of household garbage. This causes not only dangerous fire hazards, but is also bad for the local air quality.
4. Garbage or waste items falling off garbage hauling trucks. This problem is unfortunately quite common, especially on main hauling routes to and from the main county landfill. Although addressed in the *Horry County Code of Ordinances in Chapter 10 Garbage, Trash and Refuse, Article II Solid Waste Handling and Disposal, Section 10-15 Accumulation, collection or transportation, Paragraph (b) (4)*: “Failure of any driver or operator of any motor vehicle to cover and secure any loose material, which is being transported or hauled upon the streets or other public rights-of-way in the county so as to cause such material to blow, fall, spill or drop and thereby litter any street or other property within the county shall constitute a violation of this article.”, the main problem here is a lack of consistent enforcement.
5. General lack of law enforcement of local anti-litter ordinances. As mentioned above under 4), the biggest problem we face in Horry County, SC is the lack of consequential enforcement of the law. This not only undermines the effectiveness of existing ordinances, it also sends out a reinforcing message to litter-bugs that their illegal actions are not being punished.

(B) Ordinances related to litter, beautification, and waste reduction and recycling?

The following section defines “litter”: *Horry County Code of Ordinances in Chapter 10 Garbage, Trash and Refuse, Article II Solid Waste Handling and Disposal, Section 10-14 Definitions: Litter: “All waste material, including but not limited to, disposable packaging or containers, trash, garbage or refuse, generated as a*

result of logging, forest product production or farming, which are improperly disposed of and exposed to public view."

The following section addresses "illegal dumping": Horry County Code of Ordinances in Chapter 10 Garbage, Trash and Refuse, Article II Solid Waste Handling and Disposal, Section 10-15 Accumulation, collection or transportation, Paragraph (c) Dumping garbage and rubbish, etc., on open lots prohibited. "No garbage, refuse, abandoned junk, solid waste or other offensive material shall be dumped, thrown onto or allowed to remain on any lot or space within the unincorporated portions of Horry County. This includes those defined materials which were in place before enactment of this article."

The following section pertains to property maintenance regarding litter: Horry County Code of Ordinances in Chapter 10 Garbage, Trash and Refuse, Article II Solid Waste Handling and Disposal, Section 10-15 Accumulation, collection or transportation, Paragraph (e) Responsibility of owners and agents. "It shall be the duty of the owner, agent, occupant or lessee to keep exterior private and public property free of litter and unsightly growth, as defined herein. This requirement applies not only to removal of loose litter, but to materials that already are or become trapped at locations such as fences and wall bases, grassy and planted areas, borders, embankments, ditches and other lodging points. All developed and residential property and all property within one hundred (100) feet of any developed or residential property shall be trimmed to within fifty (50) feet of street rights-of-way and adjacent property lines where possible."

The following section addresses "Unlawful Dumping": Horry County Code of Ordinances in Chapter 10 Garbage, Trash and Refuse, Article II Solid Waste Handling and Disposal, Section 10-16 Disposal generally, Paragraph (a) Unlawful dumping. "It shall be unlawful for any person, firm, business entity, or corporation to throw, dump or cause to be dumped, whether from a vehicle or otherwise any garbage, refuse, rubbish, litter, junk, appliances, equipment, cans, bottles, paper, lumber, trees, tree limbs, brush or any other form of solid waste anywhere in the unincorporated area of the county except as may be permitted by county regulations at a permitted sanitary landfill without the express approval by action of the county council under such terms and conditions as may be invoked from time to time by the council."

The following section addresses "The responsibility for litter from vehicles": Horry County Code of Ordinances in Chapter 10 Garbage, Trash and Refuse, Article II Solid Waste Handling and Disposal, Section 10-16 Disposal generally, Paragraph (d): "When litter is thrown from a vehicle or allowed to escape therein, the driver will be held responsible for the improper disposal of the litter, regardless of who throws the litter."

The following paragraph pertains to "Boat ramps, public boat landings, public campsites, public recreation centers, etc.: Horry County Code of Ordinances in Chapter 10 Garbage, Trash and Refuse, Article II Solid Waste Handling and Disposal, Section 10-16 Disposal generally, Paragraph (e): " It shall be unlawful for any person or persons to violate subsection (a) of this chapter as it relates specifically to those areas such as, but not limited to, boat ramps, public boat landings, public campsites and public recreation areas which are located within the unincorporated areas of Horry County or the adjacent waters of the same."

Following sections of the Horry County Code or Ordinances determine that the "Horry County Solid Waste Authority shall operate the county's solid waste management collection system": Horry County Code of Ordinances in Chapter 10 Garbage, Trash and Refuse, Article II Solid Waste Handling and Disposal, Section 10-17 Solid Waste Collection System. Along with general provisions regarding acceptable household and other garbage items, above section of the HC Code of Ordinances further addresses "Recycling" in Paragraph (a) (16): "Horry County encourages, but does not mandate, the participation in the recycling program of all of its residents and visitors to reduce the waste disposal stream of solid waste, subject to any applicable regulations regarding segregation of recycled materials. Residents and visitors are strongly encouraged to recycle all items that are recyclable and use ultimate landfill disposal methods only for those items that cannot be recycled. Special containers are provided at numerous, manned solid waste authority convenience centers for the collection and storage of:

- a. *Newspapers;*
- b. *Green glass;*
- c. *Brown glass;*
- d. *Clear glass;*
- e. *Aluminum and bi-metal beverage containers;*
- f. *PET plastic beverage containers;*
- g. *HDPE plastic beverage containers;*
- h. *Used motor oil;*
- i. *Lead-acid batteries;*
- j. *Scrap metals and appliances, including refrigerators, stoves, water heaters, etc.; and*
- k. *Yard waste, including leaves, tree limbs, and brush.”*

(C) Resources and tools related to litter, beautification, and waste reduction and recycling?

The main resource for identifying litter, beautification, waste reduction and recycling is the collaborative effort and knowledge that was shared from members of the **Horry County Solid Waste Authority (SWA), Horry County Environmental Services Department (now under Animal Control), Waccamaw Riverkeeper, Keep North Myrtle Beach Beautiful Committee, Stormwater Advisory Committees of the City of Conway, and Horry County, SCDOT “Adopt-a-Highway” Coordinator, PalmettoPride, et al.**

The Keep Horry County Beautiful Certification Committee comprised of a healthy cross-section of business people, local volunteers, decision-makers and employees of local governments and agencies. Their combined knowledge went into the Focus Area Survey.

(D) Enforcement of related laws?

The enforcement of related laws is sporadic. Due to the nature of Horry County being a popular beach holiday destination, other areas of law enforcement are prioritized to the enforcement of litter ordinances.

Proper law enforcement presents a problem for changing local behaviors, but the proposed Keep Horry County Beautiful Committee would like to focus on changing behavior through education and outreach.

(E) Existing litter, beautification, and waste reduction and recycling educations?

The Horry County School Board conducts Environmental Education classes throughout their K-12 program, including special environmental clubs and special classes in preparation for Earth Day. Litter, waste reduction and recycling project and programs are also regularly conducted in collaboration with the Horry County Solid Waste Authority. Furthermore, the Horry County School Board permanently maintains the “Playcard Environmental Education Center” which is used for instructing students in the natural sciences on site, enabling them to experience first-hand the interrelationship of living things.

The Horry County Solid Waste Authority (SWA) addresses litter, beautification, waste reduction and recycling when presenting to any group (Schools, Civic Groups, Girl / Boy Scouts, Churches, Garden Clubs, etc). They also host tours of the landfill and recycling facility to any of these groups.

Recommendations

Most importantly the new Keep Horry County Beautiful (KHCB) Committee will start coordinating regular litter cleanup events in all communities of Horry County, together with existing organizations such as the Waccamaw Riverkeeper, Coastal Waccamaw Stormwater Education Consortium, Coastal Carolina University, Horry-Georgetown Technical College, Horry County School Board, and others. Furthermore, it will be also important to build up our name in the community by participating in popular events and festivities. Thirdly, since the KHCB Committee will not be subsidized through County Council or any other local governmental entity, it will be very important to raise funds and to acquire financial or other support through the community. This will also include applying for corporate sponsorships and grants that may be available. Once the apparent litter problem has been addressed sufficiently through both regular community cleanup and education/outreach events, the Committee may choose to increase public and private beautification efforts throughout the community.