

2020
North Carolina Interagency Report

**Litter Cleanup, Education/Prevention
and Enforcement**

This report provides information for reporting year 2020

February 1, 2021

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Litter Report 2020

This report is prepared pursuant to Session Law 2006-79, Section 15 G.S. 147-12 (b) and provides information describing North Carolina's 2020 litter prevention initiatives.

The state's 2020 litter prevention campaign had three components:

- Litter cleanup
- Education - prevention
- Enforcement

Information contained in this report is for calendar year 2020 unless otherwise noted. This interagency report was prepared by NCDOT with multiple agencies providing reporting year information. A list of these agencies and litter report contacts is provided in Appendix A of this report.

Executive Summary

The North Carolina Department of Transportation's (NCDOT) total state highway system was comprised of approximately 80,000 road miles in 2020.

In 2020, NCDOT spent \$11,180,318 removing litter from state routes. Expenditures and work accomplished fell across many areas of the litter programs from 2019. This is jointly due in part to the scaling back of the Department's operation's to decrease expenditures and remain above the legislatively mandated cash floor and the decision of DPS to stop providing inmates to prevent spreading of COVID-19 to and from correctional institutions.

Per the Appropriations Act of 2017 (SB 257) the Department of Transportation is no longer required to provide funding for Department of Public Safety (DPS) Litter Crews and Road Squads as of Fiscal Year 2018.

NCDOT covers much of roadside litter removal through Contract Litter Management. Many contracts are mowing/litter combined.

The Adopt-A-Highway (AAH) program continued to make a difference as the volunteers reported picking up 661,590 pounds of litter during 2020. There were 848,835 pounds of litter recovered under the Sponsor-A-Highway (SAH) program and NCDOT Forces picked up 1,454,985 pounds of litter. Other volunteers who picked up litter on NC roadways also had the option to report their cleanings online and reported picking up 32,670 pounds in 2020. Due to the current Covid-19 pandemic, litter pickups for AAH groups and Other Volunteers decreased for 2020.

Statewide litter prevention continued to be collectively supported by NCDOT, its Litter Management Programs, DPS, North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), and the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission. NCDOT promoted litter prevention by supplying information through North Carolina Welcome Centers and social media sites, as well as providing litter prevention promotional items to numerous local organizations and schools.

The North Carolina Administrative Office of the Courts provides a detailed 2020 recap of statewide littering charges by offense code and by law enforcement agency in this report. There were 2,726 charges and 807 convictions in 2020. As in previous years, the Conference of Chief District Court Judges continued to provide an alternative to first time offenders charged with littering of less than 15 pounds. On execution of written waiver of appearance and trial, and plea of guilty/responsible, an offender may have the court appearance waived. The fine for intentional littering is \$250 plus costs and \$50 plus costs for unintentional littering. This was adopted by the Conference of Chief District Court Judges on November 12, 2020, pursuant to N.C.G.S. 7A-148, and applies to any new offenses on or after December 1, 2020.

1.0 Statewide Roadside Litter Cleanup

1.1 North Carolina Department of Transportation

North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) is responsible for litter management along State roadways. In 2020, NCDOT maintained its various litter cleanup programs including: Adopt-A-Highway (AAH), Sponsor-A-Highway (SAH), Contract Litter Removal (CLR) contracts, NCDOT Forces litter and bag removal. The bi-annual Litter Sweeps were canceled due to the pandemic.

NCDOT Roadside Environmental has designated Litter Managers in each of the fourteen (14) divisions to coordinate efforts for litter abatement programs.

The Litter Management database, which launched in February 2018, has continued to make reporting litter pickups easier and accessible for all groups.

NCDOT canceled Spring and Fall Litter Sweeps in 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Litter Sweeps are normally held the last two weeks of April and September, during which the department provides volunteers with gloves, safety vests, and bags for use in roadside litter removal. The department also provides additional manpower during Litter Sweeps for litter cleanup, removal, and immediate disposal of bags filled with trash from NCDOT roadsides.

NCDOT continues to build its relationships with statewide nonprofit organizations to promote litter prevention for safe, environmentally sound, and aesthetic roadways. The nonprofit organizations involved include Keep North Carolina Beautiful, Inc. (KNCB) and the North Carolina Solid Waste Enforcement Officers Association. The department also worked with the volunteers in the AAH program and other citizen volunteers and industries as well as Community Service Work Program (CSWP); State Highway Patrol; and local governments. In addition, the department's private, public, partnership initiative, the SAH Program continued to expand. This program provides a means for businesses, individuals and other organizations to sponsor roadside litter removal.

1.2 NCDOT Adopt-A-Highway Program

NCDOT's Litter Management office administers the department's AAH program. This statewide program is a mutually beneficial partnership between the department and community volunteers. The volunteers participating in the AAH program include businesses, individuals, schools, civic organizations, and professional, religious, and social groups. Participants agree to support local roadside litter removal by adopting a two-mile stretch of roadway and volunteering their time to pick up the litter at least four times a year. The AAH agreement is for a four-year period. In return, the department provides gloves, safety vests, and bags for cleanups and recognizes each group by installing a sign with the group's name at each end of its adopted roadway. Upon reaching 10, 15, 20, 25- and 30-year milestones, recognition awards along with anniversary stars to be placed on their signs, are given to the volunteer groups.

In 2020, the AAH Program cost \$312,098. Program costs include statewide program administration as well as the costs to the highway divisions for their local AAH program administration, sign installation, bag removal, and provision of safety vests, bags, and gloves. There were 5,125 man-hours charged to this program in 2020.

The State Litter Management Program Outreach Coordinator utilized the assistance of Division Litter Managers and various program coordinators and co-coordinators throughout all 14 divisions. The coordinators manage the adoption and signage approval processes and other program administrative responsibilities within their assigned counties.

At the close of 2020, there were 9,016 road miles adopted by 4,647 AAH groups. The volunteer cleanup efforts of the AAH program saved the state's taxpayers millions of dollars. Volunteers reported working 57,504 hours and picked up 661,590 pounds of litter.

1.3 NCDOT Sponsor-A-Highway Program

NCDOT's Sponsor-A-Highway (SAH) Program was initiated in 2011 as a public-private partnership. Beginning as a pilot, it covered 22 counties. In 2015, the program expanded statewide covering all NC interstate highways. In 2017, the program stretched beyond interstates. The SAH Program provides a means for businesses, individuals and other organizations to participate in beautifying and environmentally enhancing North Carolina Interstate highways while having the advantage of advertising their company name at the same time.

This public private partnership is pursuant to North Carolina Section 3. General Statute 136-28.1 (l). Per the terms of the program, a service provider's responsibilities include marketing, securing sponsors, sign installation and maintenance, and litter removal and disposal using their own crews. The sponsors, who hire the department's approved service providers for highway litter removal, receive a logo acknowledgement panel that's attached to the SAH program sign. The signs are installed at the beginning of each sponsored one-mile segment.

There are two service providers who have contracted with NCDOT. They are Adopt A Highway Maintenance Corporation of Costa Mesa, California, and Adopt-A-Highway Litter Removal Service of America, Inc., of Encinitas, California. Both companies have a long history in the roadside litter removal industry, and use their own staff, cleaning supplies, and vehicles. Their employees are trained to work on interstates and other high traffic volume roadways.

The cost for sponsors participating in the program is negotiated solely between sponsor and service provider. There is no money exchanged between NCDOT and the service providers. At the close of 2020, SAH service providers maintained 608 sponsored one-mile segments, which was an increase from the 590 segments maintained in 2019. Some sponsors have multiple segments. Each segment is cleaned monthly.

1.4 NCDOT Contract Litter Management

At the close of 2020, a total of 3,081,120 pounds of litter was collected by litter and mowing/litter combined contracts. Due to budget restrictions, Contract Litter Removal contracts were reduced or canceled statewide during 2020.

1.5 NCDPS Road Squads/ Litter Crews

Per the Appropriations Act of 2017 (SB 257) the Department of Transportation was no longer required to provide funding for the North Carolina Department of Public Safety (DPS) Litter Crews and Road Squads as of Fiscal Year 2018. In previous years, NCDOT was mandated to transfer funds to the Department of Corrections (DOC) for costs associated with the Minimum Custody Highway Work Crews and Medium Custody Road Squads. The Minimum Custody Road Squads are still utilized within DOT crews at the discretion of County Maintenance Engineers; funding to DOC is \$1 per man-day worked.

In 2020, NCDOT used Minimum Custody Road Squads for a total of 16,367 man-days at a cost of \$1/day. The use of these inmates for litter pickup on 737 road miles accounted for 0.73% of work performed. The total cost for Minimum Custody Road Squads for man-days was \$139.00.

1.6 Community Service Work Program – Litter Control Efforts

The Community Service Work Program (CSWP) was established as a grant funded initiative in the early 1980's. During 1983, it was established as a program through the Safe Roads Act. Effective January 2002, CSWP was transferred from the Department of Crime Control and Public Safety to the Department of Correction, Division of Community Corrections through legislative action.

As of January 1, 2012, CSWP is now a part of the N.C. Department of Public Safety. CSWP is a separate program from the inmate work crews. Offenders in CSWP are not incarcerated, but are ordered to perform community service work hours, as a condition of either supervised or unsupervised probation, depending upon the criminal offense committed and the offender's history.

Community Corrections judicial services coordinators place offenders at government or non-profit agencies, within the local community, to perform work needed by the agency. During 2020, there were more than 1,590 agencies statewide which participated in the CSWP by contracting as worksites for placement of community service offenders.

Offenders perform a variety of work, including general labor, skilled labor, clerical labor, professional labor and litter removal. The value of the various types of labor is calculated upon the North Carolina Department of Labor categories and relative market value minimum payment rates. Many of these agencies focus on litter control regularly and also participate in the NCDOT Litter Sweeps. Table 1-1 below summarizes CSWP litter pickup results by year.

Table 1-1 CSWP Litter Pickup Results by Year

Year	Pounds Collected	Number of Hours Worked
2020	666,530	37,029
2019	1,153,782	64,099
2018	1,236,516	68,695
2017	1,399,988	77,777
2016	1,534,330	85,241

1.7 NCDOT Litter Removal Disbursements Summary

Table 1-2 below summarizes NCDOT disbursements for litter removal by year.

Table 1-2. NCDOT Disbursements for Litter Removal by Year

NCDOT Disbursement by Year					
Program	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016
NCDOT Employees	\$7,048,064	\$9,310,918	\$3,551,357	\$1,322,487	\$4,065,556
AAH	\$312,098	\$504,882	\$456,815	\$504,011	\$405,736
DPS (Minimum Custody Road Squads)	\$139	\$942	\$1,024	\$4,496,778	\$9,046,871
CLR	\$3,820,017	\$11,848,712	\$14,161,507	\$12,378,721	\$6,033,687
Total Disbursement by Year:	\$11,180,318	\$21,665,454	\$18,170,703	\$18,701,997	\$19,551,850

1.8 North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality

1.8.1 Division of Parks and Recreation

The Division of Parks and Recreation hosts litter cleanup events and educational programs to demonstrate the importance of litter abatement and recycling. While in-person programs and volunteer projects were fewer in 2020 due to the Covid-19 Pandemic, the Division still coordinated litter abatement and volunteer efforts.

- Lake Norman State Park facilitated four volunteer cleanups by youth groups while adhering to mask and social distancing guidelines. Thirty-six volunteers removed 37 bags of trash.
- Haw River State Park coordinates cleanups on a section of road adjacent to their park through the Adopt-A-Highway program.

The Division of Parks and Recreation reported 63 participants that collected 572 pounds associated with these events in 2020.

1.9 Other Statewide Litter Cleanups

1.9.1 Keep NC Beautiful

Keep NC Beautiful, Inc. (KNCB) was established in 1984 within NCDOT. Following reassignment to other state agencies, it became a 501(c)(3) non-profit in 1986 and earned certification as a state affiliate of Keep America Beautiful in 1990. Visit www.kab.org for additional information regarding KAB.

The purpose of KNCB is to serve as a liaison between KAB and the local affiliates to ensure they are meeting “good standing” requirements necessary to maintain certification. This is accomplished through workshops, meetings and general communications addressing the concerns of executive directors. KNCB’s long term goal is to have a KAB presence in all 100 counties. This goal serves to ensure state-wide efforts creating a greater awareness of the need and results of those efforts.

KNCB is currently comprised of a network of certified KAB affiliates located in 35 NC counties benefiting greater than 229 communities. Each affiliate is uniquely operated in accordance with the means of their governing body. While most affiliates are housed in a county or city government department (such as solid waste, planning, parks and recreation, community improvement and public health), others are volunteer organizations that may or may not have a paid executive director, but they do maintain an affiliate in good standing status as required by KAB.

Some counties have more than one affiliate within their boundaries, such as Gaston County with three, Guilford County with two and Mecklenburg County with two. The preferred scenario is affiliation at the county level as it encompasses the entire boundaries whereas a city affiliation may be restricted to their jurisdiction.

Adhering to the national KAB proven model of success, KNCB supports the four core focus areas of:

1. Litter prevention and cleanups;
2. Beautification and community gardens and greening projects;
3. Waste reduction, recycling, and reuse; and
4. Education.

The strength of KNCB is its ability to organize “boots-on-the-ground” volunteers that provide valuable services that ultimately improve community aesthetics, create safer environments, and positively impacts economic development without relying on tax dollars. This is accomplished by the KAB behavioral change system:

1. Get the facts,
2. Prioritize the behaviors,
3. Develop and implement action plan,

4. Evaluate impacts, and
5. Provide feedback.

The system is comprised of four behaviors strategies:

1. Written expectations (ordinances/policies),
2. Infrastructure,
3. Persuasion, and
4. Rewards and penalties.

1.9.2 KAB Programs Utilized by KNCB Affiliates

The KAB menu of programs is extensive and allows affiliates the opportunity to pick and choose as appropriate for their staffing and funding allocations. Although there are many programs available, their signature programs are:

The Great American Cleanup™ (GAC): 2020 marked the 22nd year anniversary of the nation's largest community improvement program, engaging millions of volunteers and participants every year to create positive change and lasting impact in local communities by creating cleaner parks, streetscapes and public spaces through litter removal and elimination. KNCB affiliates 2020 GAC results are listed in Table 1-3.

I Want to be Recycled: a national advertising campaign promoting recycling from the voice of a recyclable item such as a plastic bottle that wants to become a park bench. Affiliates can customize the advertisement to include their logo.

Cigarette Litter Prevention Program: created by KAB in 2002, is the nation's largest program aimed at eliminating cigarette litter.

America Recycles Day: it is the only nationally-recognized day dedicated to promoting and celebrating recycling in the United States. Each year, on and in the weeks leading into November 15, thousands of communities across the country participate by promoting environmental citizenship and taking action to increase and improve recycling in America.

1.9.3 Other Programs

Other KAB programs include:

Gameday Challenge: a friendly competition for colleges and universities to promote waste reduction at home football games.

National Planting Day: a fall initiative for affiliates and other partners to create beautiful spaces in public places and at home by planting pollinator gardens and native species.

Recycle Mania: a friendly two-month competition and benchmarking tool for college and university recycling programs that promotes waste reduction activities with their campus communities.

Education and Behavior Change: the cornerstones of KAB striving to educate and empower generations of community and environmental stewards with curricula and real-world experiences that teach the essentials of proactive community citizenship, including the preservation of our natural resources.

Recycling at Work: a voluntary national effort to increase recycling in the workplace. The program offers businesses a 10-step action plan, discounts on recycling bins, and other valuable tools to start and expand a workplace recycling program.

Recycle-Bowl: a four-week contest held in the fall for in-school recycling competition for K-12 students, teachers, school administrators, school facility managers, parent teacher associations/ organizations and other parent groups, and local recycling advocates.

All KAB programs have been developed, tested, and made available to affiliates in a turnkey format that allows them to customize and market in their local areas. The initial certification and annual maintenance fees (based upon affiliate population) entitles use of these programs.

KNCB Community Improvement Grants: When funds are available via sponsorship, cash grants are awarded in three focus areas: 1) Beautification 2) Litter Prevention 3) Recycling. The grant program was established to support our local affiliates and to fulfill our mission to engage and support these organizations in order to Keep North Carolina Beautiful. We work with these organizations to offer hands-on community projects that promote the cleanliness and sustainability of their community environments.

Priority considerations for grants will be provided to active KAB affiliates within North Carolina. Funding may also be considered for entities in the active process of obtaining certification as a Keep America Beautiful Affiliate.

1.9.4 Affiliate Growth and Support

KNCB actively pursues all leads for potential candidates for KAB affiliation. A majority of the candidates are housed in city or county government and have exhausted their resources for handling litter on an ongoing basis and will contact KNCB for information on how to develop a comprehensive litter prevention program. Others are grass-roots driven and are successful in getting local community support to achieve affiliation. Often leads are found by disgruntled citizens who want to see something done to eradicate the problem.

During the certification process, KNCB provides direct support to ensure that the candidates meet milestones in order to reach the completion of the requirements by the certification target date. KNCB reaches out to assist affiliate members that are in danger of being de-certified from failure to meet KAB requirements to remain in good standing. KNCB serves as a liaison between KAB

and the local affiliates to provide information or guidance on program implementation or reporting requirements.

KAB State Leaders Council

The council is comprised of executive directors of state KAB affiliates. The council meets semi-annually and participates in monthly conference calls. The purpose is to provide information and introduce changes in new or established programs that will have an impact on local affiliates. This prepares the executive directors in developing strategies to facilitate and help implement those changes in local communities.

The council also provides a forum for bringing forth issues local affiliates experience in program implementation and allows for reasonable modifications to ensure desired results. This “buffer” stream-lines the process of identifying common shared problems requiring attention.

Carolina Recycling Association (CRA) KAB Council

KNCB is a founding member of the CRA KAB Council and is comprised of both North and South Carolina affiliates and is open to the CRA membership. The council hosts a workshop at the CRA’s annual conference to provide training of which six hours is required to be in good standing by KAB. This is an invaluable benefit as some affiliates lack the funds to attend the national KAB conference.

The workshop is allocated two hours and offers topics relevant to current trends and issues effecting affiliate growth and ability to move programs forward. This includes legislative and enforcement updates pertaining to litter related issues.

1.9.5 KNCB Tarp Awareness Program

The Tarp Awareness Program began in 2009, when NCDOT had an innovative idea to educate drivers of small pickup trucks and trailers of the danger associated with litter being blown from uncovered or unsecured vehicles.

KNCB entered into a partnership whereas local KAB affiliates received and distributed tarps to individuals using recycling drop-off centers or landfills. Included with the tarps was an educational brochure outlining the importance of properly covering or securing loads which included language addressing litter laws and associated penalties as defined by G.S. 14-399.

Funding for the tarps was provided through NCDOT’s Litter Prevention Fund, which helps support statewide anti-litter efforts. The revenue source for this fund was generated by a portion of the sale of “Litter Prevention” specialty license plates. Upon depletion of those funds, KNCB received grants from United Parcel Service, the Wal-Mart Foundation, The Duke Foundation and PepsiCo to administer campaigns.

The program is now grant and/or sponsorship dependent. NCDOT remains a valuable partner for the tarp program by providing use of their tarp contract to ensure lowest price per unit and offers shipping to designated affiliates in conjunction with scheduled deliveries to local NCDOT maintenance yards. This allows for the greatest number of tarps per campaign.

1.9.6 KNCB Community Clean-up Efforts

KNCB affiliate members and their volunteers worked in partnership with local businesses, nonprofit and civic groups, government agencies, schools, colleges, and members of the faith communities and others to accomplish a variety of tasks during the 2020 KAB GAC™, resulting in thousands of saved tax dollars in improved community environments.

Table 1-3. KNCB Summary Measure

Events/Volunteers/Communities:	
Cleanup, beautification, waste reduction and recycling events	264
Number of volunteers	5,317
Number of participants	4,872
Number of volunteer hours	19,489
Clean-Up:	
Pounds of litter and debris removed	68,643
Number public spaces cleaned and improved	215
Acres parks, public lands, playgrounds and trails cleaned and improved	165
Miles of rivers, lakes, shores, wetlands and underwater cleanups	55
Miles of streets, roads, and highways cleaned and beautified	2,018
Beautification and Greening:	
Number new or maintained gardens, greenspaces and gateways	211
Number of trees planted	918
Number of plants, shrubs, flowers and bulbs planted	294
Waste Reduction and Recycling:	
Pounds of litter and debris recycled	1,928
Pounds of single stream/comingled recycled collected	2,200
Pounds of beverage containers collected and recycled	1,600
Pounds of mixed paper collected and recycled	55,195
Pounds of electronics recycled	8,710
Pounds of Other Recyclables	134
Education:	
Number of educator workshops held	2
Number in attendance at educator workshops	29
Number community workshops held	11
Number attendees at community workshops	8,952
Number of public and private schools reached	16
Number youth reached	4,426
Number of youth educated	2,129
Monetary Benefits:	
Total Benefit to Local Communities	\$513,494

2.0 Anti-Litter Education/Prevention

2.1 North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality

2.1.1 Division of Environmental Assistance and Customer Service

The Division of Environmental Assistance and Customer Service (DEACS) conducts three separate campaigns to reinforce recycling behavior and to encourage North Carolinians to properly manage their discarded materials at home, work, school, and on-the-go. These programs are described briefly below:



Recycle Guys

The Recycle Guys campaign is intended to reach elementary and middle school children with videos, activity books, stickers, pencils, temporary tattoos and other promotional materials to encourage recycling behavior. Of the most commonly used Recycle Guys videos, one specifically addressing litter (developed through a partnership with NCDOT) is consistently among the highest accessed links on the www.recycleguys.org website



Recycle More NC

Recycle More NC is a campaign designed to increase curbside, drop-off and away-from-home recycling participation and create a hub for recycling information.



Recycle Right NC

In 2020, DEACS continued the promotion and use of Recycle Right NC, a statewide anti-contamination campaign to clean up recycling. The campaign makes available free outreach toolkits for local governments to customize and distribute to their residents. Since its launch in the fall of 2019, likes on the Recycle Right NC Facebook page have increased from 665 to 3,983. The direct mail materials, press releases, and social media posts have been used by more than 260 local governments and colleges across North Carolina. The campaign's social media posts have been very popular, reaching more than 333,000 people within the first two weeks of the campaign and more than 2.1 million people to date. Technical support regarding recycling via the comment threads on social media is ongoing as a result.

Recycle More NC and Recycle Right NC campaign materials can both be accessed through the <https://www.recyclemorenc.org> website.

The following provides a general description of the activities of DEACS's three outreach programs in 2020:

- Continued usage of social media outlets such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram for the campaigns.
- Coordination with Department of Environmental Quality communications team to promote messaging about proper recycling and litter reduction on NCDEQ Facebook and Twitter accounts.
- Promotion around national events such as Earth Day and America Recycles Day.
- Production of promotion materials distributed directly to the public or through local government recycling programs. DEACS also distributes NCDOT anti-litter stickers and posters.
- Training of recycling and solid waste staff, teachers, and environmental educators on recycling and outreach methods.
- Encouragement of Away-From-Home recycling best practices that include proper trash and recycling bin selection and siting to reduce contamination and litter issues.

Continued Focus on Recycling Education in 2020

During 2020 the NC DEACS Recycling Office provided graphic support and technical assistance to promote proper recycling with a specific focus on materials that do not belong in the recycling bin. This was accomplished through the following efforts:

- DEACS developed new "[Do Your Part](#)" anti-litter and anti-contamination outreach materials related to the proper disposal of COVID-19 related personal protective equipment, such as masks and gloves.
- DEACS provides graphic design support for local governments seeking to educate their citizens about proper management of plastic bags, which incorporate the "no plastic bags in recycling" and "return to retail" message. Nearly 40 local governments received graphic design support from DEACS in 2020.
- DEACS developed outreach materials about other items that are considered contaminants in the recycling process and should not be placed in recycling bins. Outreach focuses on plastic bags and other common problematic materials: scrap metal; textiles; cords, hoses and strings that could tangle equipment; food waste; and hazardous or medical waste. Messaging includes instruction on proper disposal methods to discourage releases into the environment. DEACS offers posters, signs and social media toolkits which are all available for any North Carolina government, agency, business or resident to use.

Other Participation from DEACS on Littering Issues in 2020:

- DEACS presented at the national fall meeting of the Environmental Council of States on how to reduce plastics marine debris and other litter through recycling education, enforcement, recycling infrastructure improvements, and domestic market development.
- DEACS collaborates with the NC Solid Waste Enforcement Officers Association (NC SWEOA) to encourage proper materials management and expand recycling programs and community efforts to reduce illegal dumping.
- DEACS collaborates with the NC Marine Debris Symposium to support and present the organization's annual conference to educate, inform, and provide action on ways to eliminate and reduce marine litter in our environment.
- DEACS functions as the Department of Environmental Quality's customer service center and handled numerous inquiries in 2020 on littering and illegal dumping issues.
- DEACS also oversees the state of North Carolina's recycling efforts, which includes technical assistance to local government recycling programs across the state. Through regular communication in email newsletters, workshops, conference sessions, and other settings, DEACS staff provided information to communities about littering issues, opportunities for anti-litter initiatives (such as the tarp program) and the management of illegal dumping.

2.2 North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission

North Carolina Wildlife Law Enforcement Officers often come across numerous littering violations while out on patrols in the performance of their duties. They often set up patrol details targeting littering along waterways, boating and fishing access areas and game lands. Officers address littering violations on NC Wildlife Resources Commission (NCWRC) managed property, state highways, state waterways, private property, and public property.

2.3 NCDOT – Litter Management Programs

In 2020, NCDOT's Litter Management Programs promoted litter prevention awareness through its website. Each year, Keep Gastonia Beautiful Inc., of Gastonia provides access to their Beautification and Environmental Education Programs. Their entire curriculum is posted on a website which allows an easy download for classroom usage. The link is carried on NCDOT's Litter Management website.

Other items available through NCDOT's Litter Management website include previous Litter Reports, the litter law, Swat-A-Litterbug, AAH and SAH Program information, and Litter Sweep details including related forms. In addition, the cleanup safety videos are provided. A *Litter Activity Book* with litter prevention lessons and activities for students through third grade is available to print. There are also a variety of links to other sites supporting litter prevention.

Anti-litter characters Ava and Oliver, encourage actions to create a healthy, clean environment. Linnie, the Litter Bug, is not such a good role model. These characters are displayed on bookmarks, stickers and activity/color sheets. Wooden rulers are available with the message “Measure Up! Don’t Litter” or “Clean Water Rules” along with NCDOT’s Highway Stormwater Program logo.

NCDOT’s Litter Management programs also distributed thousands of car litter bags and other litter prevention handouts, fliers and brochures through Visitor and Welcome Centers, Earth Day events, and upon request, to numerous groups. The car litter bag’s graphics promote the message that littering is illegal. NCDOT Litter Management’s website offers an option to order teacher kits online.

Adopt-A-Highway Program: The AAH program began its 32nd year of operation in 2020. Each year the AAH groups are recognized for their consecutive years of service beginning with 10-years and at years 15, 20, 25 and 30. In 2020, more than 300 AAH groups received awards for their years of volunteer service to the program.

Other Litter Prevention Initiatives, Meetings, and Presentations: The Litter Management office continued to promote the use of NCDOT trash bags. The bags are orange on the outside and reversible to blue on the inside for items to be recycled. The bag also has a draw string for safe and easy closure. The bags display the NCDOT logo and a Do Not Litter message. These bags are available at NCDOT maintenance yards for volunteers and are available for AAH coordinators to order as needed.

Swat-A-Litterbug Program: This program is administered by the Litter Management office in conjunction with the State Highway Patrol and is intended to educate motorists that littering is illegal. Motorists observed littering can be reported through the mail, by calling toll free 1-800-331-5864 or using the Swat-A-Litterbug online reporting mechanism on the Litter Management website. Reports include information regarding the offender’s vehicle license plate number, time of observance, date, street, city, county and a description of the littering offense observed. There were more than 12,000 Swat-A-Litterbug report cards printed for distribution in 2020. These cards include the SWAT-A-Litterbug logo.

When reports are received, a letter, signed by the Colonel of the State Highway Patrol, is mailed to the registered owner of the vehicle reported. The recipient is informed of the littering offense observed, that littering is illegal and that it’s a fineable offense upon conviction. There are no citations or warnings issued from these reports. The program is totally anonymous, and no record is kept regarding who submits a report or receives a letter. There were 3,239 Swat-A-Litterbug letters mailed in 2020. Due to budget restrictions, letters were not created and mailed for part of 2020.

NCDOT receives many complaints via online and by phone stating trash collection trucks are not secured and litter is flying out all over the roadsides. Litter Management office personnel calls

the trash collection companies directly to discuss the situation and ask that they ensure their loads are secured.

Litter License Plate: The NC General Assembly approved the “Litter Prevention” specialty license plate in 2001. Ten dollars of each plate renewed is diverted to the "Litter Prevention Fund" on a quarterly basis. The money is used to help support statewide anti-litter efforts.

2.4 NCDOT – Litter Related Signage

NCDOT has “Keep NC Clean & Green” litter prevention signs posted along state roadways and at various Rest Areas and Welcome Centers. In addition to the "Keep NC Clean & Green" signs, there are "Littering Is Illegal" signs posted across the state.

3.0 Litter Law Enforcement

3.1 North Carolina Department of Public Safety

In 2020, the State Highway Patrol had no data to report due to COVID-19 cancellations. In previous years, the State Highway Patrol partnered with NCDOT by participating in the NCDOT Spring and Fall Litter Sweeps and focused on citing motorists that either littered or failed to properly secure and/or cover their loads. State Highway Patrol citations for past years are shown in the tables below.

Table 3-1. State Highway Patrol Recap of Litter Charges

Year	Number of Litter Charges
2019	481
2018	662
2017	541
2016	740
2015	790

Table 3-2. State Highway Patrol Recap of Improper Loading/Covering of Vehicle

Year	Number of Charges
2019	743
2018	611
2017	673
2016	735
2015	710

3.2 NCDEQ, Division of Parks and Recreation

NCDEQ, Division of Parks and Recreation sponsored educational programs and community events that serve as a proactive approach to litter prevention and law enforcement. In addition to these educational measures, state park rangers issued 8 littering citations in 2020.

3.3 NCDEQ, Division of Marine Fisheries – Marine Patrol

In 2020, Marine Patrol officers issued 6 citations and 2 warnings for littering violations. Marine Patrol officers attributed 334 hours to this effort.

The NC Marine Patrol concentrated its litter enforcement on the coastal waters and had a decrease in littering violations this past year. The Marine Patrol's efforts have been concentrated on the gill net fishery and protecting endangered sea turtles.

Table 3-3. Marine Patrol Citation Recap

Year	Littering Citations	Littering Warnings	Time Spent (hours)
2020	6	2	334
2019	5	5	300
2018	3	0	240
2017	7	6	176
2016	11	3	208.5

3.4 North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission

3.4.1 2020 Littering Report for NC Wildlife Resources Commission

North Carolina Wildlife Enforcement Officers are always on the lookout for littering violations and often set up special details to target littering violations in problem areas along waterways, boating access areas and game lands. In 2020, under NCGS 14-399, 257 citations were issued. Possible fines for all citations issued is a total of \$64,250. Possible court cost for all citations issued is a total of \$46,260. There were 13 littering citations given on NCWRC Boating or Fishing Areas under NCGS 113-264 15ANCAC 10E.0104(d). Possible fines for all citations issued is \$1,300 and court cost for citations issued is \$2,340. There were 23 citations issued for littering on Game Lands under NCGS 113-264 15A NCAC 10D.0102(c). Possible fines for all citations issued is \$2,300. Possible court cost for all citations issued is a total of \$4,140.

NOTE: Fines and cost are either paid prior to the court date or are assigned by the District Court Judge.

The Land and Water Access Division combined efforts in litter cleanup. The Land and Water Access Division spends countless hours maintaining boating and fishing access areas along with game lands. Within their time maintaining these areas they are picking up litter and emptying trash receptacles that are located on these areas. With 252 boating access areas, 222 public fishing access areas and over 2 million acres of managed game land areas, the NCWRC has installed signage for these areas that deal with littering and how it impacts the environment.

3.5 North Carolina Administrative Office of the Courts

The North Carolina Administrative Office of the Courts (NCAOC) provides a 2020 recap of statewide littering charges by offense code and by law enforcement agency. There were 2,726 charges and 807 convictions in 2020. Littering charges and convictions are also shown by offense code and by each county in a detailed table at the end of this section.

As in previous years, the Conference of Chief District Court Judges continued to provide an alternative to first time offenders charged with littering of less than 15 pounds. On execution of written waiver of appearance and trial, and plea of guilty/responsible, an offender may have the court appearance waived. The fine for intentional littering is \$250 plus costs and \$50 plus costs

for unintentional littering. This was adopted by the Conference of Chief District Court Judges on November 12, 2020, pursuant to NC G.S. 7A-148, and applies to any new offenses on or after December 1, 2020.

Calendar year 2020 data on charges and convictions, including the number of charges disposed and the manner of disposition are tracked for the eleven offenses listed in Table 3-4. Table 3-5 shows the following data provided from the NCAOC's Automated Criminal/Infraction System for 2020. The number of charges, convictions, and dispositions represents totals from district and superior court. Some of the defendants have other charges in addition to a littering offense. It is possible for a defendant to be charged in one calendar year and convicted in the next. Thus, for any given calendar year, the defendants convicted are not necessarily the same defendants charged in that year.

Table 3-4. List of Offenses

Offense Code	Description	Reference
4425	Improper Loading/Covering of Vehicle	§ 20-116(g)
5370	Commercial Littering	§ 14-399(e)
5371	Littering Hazardous Waste	§ 14-399(e)
5372	Littering not more than 15 pounds	§ 14-399(c)
5373	Littering more than 15 but less than 500 pounds	§ 14-399(d)
5374	Littering more than 500 pounds	§ 14-399(e)
5375	Unintentional Littering not more than 15 Pounds	§ 14-399(c1)
5376	Unintentional Littering more than 15 but less than 500 Pounds	§ 14-399(d1)
5377	Unintentional Littering more than 500 Pounds	§ 14-399(e1)
5378	Second or subsequent offense of littering not more than 15 lbs	§ 14-399(c)
5379	Second or subsequent offense of unintentional littering not more than 15 pounds	§ 14-399(c1)
6248	Litter Gameland/Access Area	§ 113-264(a)
8514	Littering Beer/Wine Container	local ordinance

**Table 3-5. Statewide Littering Charges and Convictions
Calendar Year 2020**

The following data are from the NCAOC's Automated Criminal/Infraction System for calendar year 2020. The number of charges, convictions, and dispositions represents totals from district and superior court. Some of the defendants have other charges in addition to a littering offense. It is possible for a defendant to be charged in one calendar year and convicted in the next. Thus, for any given calendar year, the defendants convicted are not necessarily the same defendants charged in that year.

Offense Code	Charges	Convictions	CHARGES BY CHARGING AGENCY								Charges Disposed	METHOD OF DISPOSITION				
			ABC	ALE	DMV	Police	Sheriff	SHP	WRC	Other		Guilty Plea	Trial: Guilty	Trial: Not Guilty	Dismiss	Other
4425	833	268	0	0	0	194	24	614	0	1	837	35	0	0	546	256
5370	17	1	0	0	0	5	12	0	0	0	15	5	0	0	3	7
5371	26	1	0	0	0	19	7	0	0	0	15	1	0	0	9	5
5372	1451	404	1	28	0	516	220	285	329	72	1511	167	5	4	1027	308
5373	143	42	0	0	0	58	33	5	15	32	132	31	2	4	82	13
5374	35	4	0	0	0	8	21	0	5	1	34	9	0	0	15	10
5375	64	38	0	1	0	12	8	26	14	3	78	6	0	1	43	28
5376	2	2	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	2	0
5377	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	2	0
5378	13	3	0	0	0	8	2	2	0	1	12	3	0	0	9	0
5379	13	3	0	0	0	6	2	3	1	1	11	0	0	0	10	1
6248	69	34	0	0	0	1	0	0	68	0	75	8	0	1	39	27
8514	60	7	0	0	0	31	7	19	1	2	64	6	0	1	54	3
TOTAL	2726	807	1	29	0	859	337	954	433	113	2788	271	7	11	1841	658

Appendix A: Contacts

Department	Contact	Email	Phone
NC Department of Transportation Roadside Environmental	David Harris, PE State Roadside Environmental Engineer	davidharris@ncdot.gov	919-707-2970
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NC Department of Public Safety, Communications	Pamela Walker, Communications Director	Pamela.walker@ncdps.gov	919-733-5027
NC Department of Public Safety, Community Supervision (CSWP)	Bill Mould, Jr. Technology Support Analyst	bill.mould@ncdps.gov	919-324-1153
NC Department of Environmental Quality, Division of Environmental Assistance & Customer Service (DEACS)	Wendy Worley, Recycling & Materials Management Section Chief	wendy.worley@ncdenr.gov	919-707-8136
Division of Parks and Recreation	Adrian O'Neal, Chief of Operations	adrian.oneal@ncparks.gov	919-707-9339
NC Department of Public Safety, NC State Highway Patrol	Terry E. Robinson, Captain	terry.robinson@ncdps.gov	919-436-3046
NC Department of Environmental Quality, Division of Marine Fisheries	Lara K. J. Klibansky, Marine Fisheries Commission Liason	Lara.Klibansky@ncdenr.gov	252-726-7021
NC Administrative Office of the Courts, Research, Policy & Planning Division	Emily E. Mehta, Senior Research & Policy Associate	Emily.E.Mehta@nccourts.org	919-890-1082
N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission, Law Enforcement Division	Branden Jones, Captain of Support Services	Branden.jones@ncwildlife.org	919-707-0035
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