

Wake County Big Sweep

What is Wake County Big Sweep?

Wake County Big Sweep is an integral part of the International Coastal Cleanup—the largest litter cleanup of its kind on the planet. Over half a million volunteers in 112 countries remove unsightly and dangerous trash from rivers, lakes and streams that flow into the ocean. As partners with the Ocean Conservancy, we can affect significant change both locally and globally.



How is Wake County Big Sweep different than other litter programs?

Wake County coordinates cleanups across the county in partnership with city & county parks, civic organizations, youth groups, schools, churches, and businesses. Events are planned throughout spring & fall each year. Volunteers track the amount and different types of trash collected on data cards. This data is entered into an international database by the Ocean Conservancy and used to raise awareness, identify critical areas for prevention education, and inform policy solutions. Big Sweep volunteers also collect clean aluminum cans, plastic drink bottles, glass, wooden pallets, scrap metal, and tires for recycling. This has helped to divert tons of recyclables from the landfill. Zone Captains also serve as the “eyes and ears” of local waterways to assist their towns and cities in protecting drinking water supplies and tributaries to the larger Neuse and Cape Fear Rivers.

Why is picking up litter important?

Litter:

- Can harm people and pose a health hazard, impacting our drinking water and recreational waterways
- Can harm or kill wildlife that mistake litter for food or get entangled in it
- Can encourage more litter, more crime and vandalism, degrading entire communities
- Can discourage tourism and new business, lowering a community’s economic vitality
- Is Ugly! Untidy! Unsightly! Unnecessary!

Important Note: Litter is 100% preventable! Recycle, dispose of trash responsibly, and cover truck loads!

How can I volunteer?

Big Sweep welcomes willing & enthusiastic volunteers! Please visit one of these web sites for a current Wake County Site List.

www.WakeGov.com (type “Big Sweep” in search box)

Cleanups are listed by date chronologically, then by town and watershed alphabetically. In Wake County, we offer more than one cleanup date so more people can participate. Dates are offered throughout Wake County in fall and spring of each year.

Choose the location closest to your home or where volunteers are needed the most! Contact the site’s Zone Captain to pre-register or to receive more information.

To serve as a Zone Captain & lead volunteers at a cleanup, contact Wake Soil and Water Conservation District at (919) 250-1065 or sbjones@wakegov.com. Wake County’s Coordinator provides supplies and assistance with logistics.

