



Dylan Yates
2017/11/25

CAPE BRETON ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION

Cleanup Season 2017

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the following people for their time and willingness to help in this year's cleanup season. Corinna yates, Natalie Lewis, Paul Goldring, Bill Devoe, Tanya Pushie, Colleen Lynk, Joey pushie, Rosanne Winstanley, Hillary Wellsford, Sam Jackson, Jeremy Benoit, Brittany McLeod, Robert Troke, Shawn Broderick, Karen Broderick, Shawn Lesnick, Ricky Wright, Jennifer spinney, Sabrina Gauvin, Stephen Macneil, Brian Curtis, Margie Curtis, Sherry Yates, Justin Yates, Travis Yates, Kyle Morrison, Ryan Dixon, Rebecca Dupuis, Judy Clarke,. Waste management for providing the supplies needed and arranging garbage pickup. Special thanks to Shane Parsons and his ongoing committed to the illegal dumping issue, as well as Constable Morrison for working tirelessly to hold those responsible accountable for their actions. Members of city council who are pushing for new bylaws and repercussions for those responsible. Tower Road volunteer fire department, for offering up their hall for a meeting and as well as helping with the Tower Road Community Cleanup.

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Table 1

CBEC, Cleanup 2017 Compiled Data6

Introduction

It is apparent that we have a major issue here in Cape Breton with Illegal dumping and littering in general. **See page 9 for illegal dumpsite.** These dumpsites are often hidden away from the public eye, left stagnant for years. In the last five months we have come across a Staggering number of individual dumpsites and those are the sites we are able to find. We don't always report these dumpsites as we are usually in the process of cleaning them and no names are ever found. These people often have no receipts and cannot produce the first and last name of those they hired. The fine for illegal dumping currently is \$150.00 but a new bylaw is being implemented in the New Year which will bring a minimum of \$500.00 with administration fees, the total fine amounts to \$697.00. Most dumpsites occur in rural areas; however, we are seeing an increase in dumpsites in heavier populated areas throughout local communities, which is raising concern with residents. We met up with Leo Burns who is scared to take his dog for a walk in his neighbourhood due to recent dumpsites at the bottom of his road. "It's nasty he explained, in all my years living here I've never seen anything like this". We also met up with another family out on thanksgiving weekend walking a rural road in memory of their farther that had passed away. Their father Adie McIntyre used to frequent Sand Lake Road and was a stern advocate on illegal dumping and would clean areas as he walked along the road. In recent years the road has been getting worse and local resident like Tanya Pushie are fed up. Luckily, we completed two cleanups this year on Sand Lake Road, however people continue to dump in that area with recent dumpsites every week.

We are seeing an increase of trash along our highways; people are throwing their trash out the windows as they drive along. This is attributed to the loss of garbage cans throughout our community and outside of fast food chains such as Macdonald's and Tim Horton's, however after the New Year establishments that have a drive thru service will be required to have garbage disposal. We are also facing a major cigarette butt issue in front of businesses such as Tim Horton's and as well as bars and other establishments. There are no longer areas to dispose of cigarette butts and people are just throwing them on the ground. I believe the city needs to address this problem and come up with a plan to combat this issue; it is not only unsightly but poses various environmental risks. **See page 8 for cigarette butt littering site.**

Black bags seem to be the biggest item we are coming across, my guess is that people are not following rules put in place by waste management and their bags are being tagged. What happens when a person's bag gets tagged at curbside pickup? Well it is simple; these bags are ending up in our forests, watersheds and in the back alleys of our communities. People are not willing to go through their garbage and dispose of these items properly, it is much easier for them to just put the garbage in the back of their vehicle and drop it off at their nearest convenience. Then we ask ourselves the question, why not just take these bags to the local landfill, and well although they do accept black bags, there is a sign at the front gate which states they do not. So, then we can ask ourselves, well why are they allowing black bags while their sign tells us they do not? Most if not all the items we find on cleanups are household items, and it's not hard to tell that these people are not recycling properly. Most black bags we rip open contain recyclable materials, food waste, diapers, and clothing. This is the reason why CBRM waste management has made the switch to clear bags, it's all about reduce, recycle, reuse. The main goal here is to prevent materials that can be recycled out of our landfills. Our first cleanup season has been an enormous success and I'm proud to say we have removed 345 bags of garbage from our local communities. We have also removed a substantial amount of heavier garbage such as tires, televisions, Industrial materials, motor oils, mattresses, car parts, electronics and other various household items. We are as also seeing an increase of tires on our shorelines, and forested areas, almost every dumpsite we clean we usually come across several tires.

Negative Impacts

- Many birds and small animals die after ingesting or becoming entangled in debris.
- Fish and other aquatic species are often killed when decomposing litter and food wastes in streams deplete oxygen supplies in water.
- Debris in streams can also clog fish spawning areas.
- Toxic run off from improper disposal of toxic substances such as household cleaners and motor oil can contaminate lakes, streams, and our drinking water supplies.
- When plastic and other waste materials reach the ocean, they have lasting effects on marine life. turtles often mistake plastic bags for jelly fish and ingest the plastic and die.
- Plastic bags and plastic wrap can asphyxiate marine animals and fish, and birds can easily entangle themselves in plastic six-pack rings and strings.
- Plastic creates health problems for animals including depleting their nutrients and blocking their stomachs and intestines.
- Litter that is tossed into the ocean can travel long distances with the currents and winds.
- Jars and bottles do not biodegrade naturally, crabs, birds and small animals often crawl into these bottles looking for food and water and become stuck in the process and slowly die from starvation and illness.
- Runoff from litter, polluted water, gasoline and consumer waste can infiltrate our soil. The soil then absorbs the toxins the litter creates and affects plants and crops.
- Brings property value down.
- has economic effects when tourists visit our island and are exposed to these areas.
- Items such as broken glass and syringes can be a health hazard.
- Breeding grounds for bacteria.
- Cigarette butts are in fact toxic waste. Not only are these small stubs an eyesore, but they can also leach toxic chemicals and carcinogens into the environment, poisoning wildlife and contaminating waterways.
- Ropes and lobster traps left on beaches can have lasting effects on marine life, ropes can wash back out and whales and other aquatic mammals become entangled in them. shorebirds and small animals can become trapped inside lobster traps.



Figure 1
CBEC, Ariel photo showing cleanup sites throughout Sydney, Glace Bay Area. 2017

Table 1
CBEC, Cleanup 2017 Compiled Data

Location	Bags collect	Other items	Date
1. Tower Road, Glace bay	29	2x tires, Diapers, Steel work table, car parts, Black bags.	2017-05-13
2. Sand Lake Road, Glace Bay	26	Diapers, black bags, recyclables,	2017-06-25
3. One B road, Glace Bay	25	Shingles, lobster traps, ropes, buckets of driveway sealant, large plastic sheets, medical supplies, motor oil, and recyclables.	2017-09-23
4. Sand Lake Road, Glace Bay	88	1km stretch, Paint cans, car battery, Television, Motor oil, car parts, antifreeze. Multiple deer carcasses wrapped in plastic. Household black bags.	2017-10-15
5. Bayplex, Glace Bay	18	Household black bags, Tim's cups, high amount of plastics, grocery bags etc.	2017-11-4
6. Fisherman's Park	12	High amount of Tim Horton's cups, Hospital supplies.	2017-11-4
7. Old Airport Road, Sydney	90	10x tires kitchen sink, television, needles, carpet, gyprock, other house hold appliances, Recyclables	2017-11-18
8. Bottom of ling street, Glace Bay	24	1x tire, computer monitor. Polar pop cups, plastic drinking cups.	2017-11-22
9. Downtown Sydney	11	1x tire, High amount of cigarette butts and packaging.	2017-11-25
10. Commercial Street, Glace Bay	8	High amount of cigarette butts, Tim Horton's cups.	2017-11-28
11. Morrison Lake, Birch Grove	14	Household dumping site, mainly full black bags, plastic children's picnic table, plastic buckets. Several large black bags obstructing natural flow of waterway, possible stream contamination.	2017-12-18
Total	345 bags		

Highest Concentration of Items

- Diapers.
- Cigarette packaging, cigarette butts.
- Styrofoam pizza plates, Styrofoam drinking containers (Polar Pop).
- Plastics (shopping bags, drink and food containers, Recyclables).
- Tim Horton's Coffee cups.
- Industrial supplies, Shingles, gyprock, demolition material, large sheets of plastic, Paint cans.
- Motor oil, tires.
- Electronics, Clothing, Cardboard, **used needles.**
- Fast food packaging, McDonalds, burger king, Wendy's etc.
- **Black garbage bags filled with household waste.**

Areas of Concern

- Areas behind Number 11, Glace Bay (old number 11 dump) bottom of forest street, various access points. Heavily impacted by illegal dumping.
- Sand Lake Road, Glace Bay (rural road high amount of illegal dumping activity). 2 cleanups done in this area, still several dumpsites remaining. Illegal dumping still taking place in this area, heavily impacted by illegal dumping.
- The old strip mine located in Reserve mines, Glace Bay (various access points all being used for illegal dumping, high number of burned out vehicles).
- Fisherman's park Glace bay, high amount of litter building up in this area (no garbage cans).
- One B Road Glace bay, one cleanup done in this area, area continues to be used as an illegal dumpsite. (the cliffs along this area are home to migratory birds).
- High amount of litter along highway from Sydney to Sydney mines.
- Georges river (Old Quarry).
- Morrison's Lake Birch Grove.
- Port Morien Highway from Port Morien to black brook cemetery (11 bags of garbage recently collected along this stretch of highway).
- Donkin Highway.
- Number 2 shore Glace Bay, North street shore, Glace Bay.
- Table Head ball field, Glace bay.
- The Gardiner between Warbuton road and Strang road high amount of litter.
- Cossit Heights, top of upper prince street, Sydney (heavy garbage, cars, TVs, couches, litter) this area is high priority and needs to be addressed in spring 2018. Site is known to contain high number of used needles.
- Bottom of Lake Road Glace bay.
- Old airport Sydney, dirt road access into old strip mine located in reserve mines glace bay.

Recommendations

- Up to date signage, and new signage in areas of concern.
- **Block vehicle access to areas which are heavily impacted by illegal dumping.**
- Hold public meetings regarding the issue; educate the public as much as possible on the impact of illegal dumping.
- **More than one police officer investigating illegal dumpsites.**
- Have areas where people can dispose of their cigarette butts. (Butt stations throughout towns) in areas people frequent.
- Pressure pizza shop owners to switch to biodegradable plates.
- Remove sign at the dump which states they do not accept black bags.
- Come up with new innovative ways to tackle the black bag issue.
- Community watch groups.
- Perform a community survey and try to get to the root cause of illegal dumping.
- More cameras to catch people illegally dumping.



Figure 2
CBEC, Cigarette butt site located next to Tim Horton's, Commercial Street Glace Bay



Figure 3
CBEC, Illegal dumpsite, containing motor oil and other toxic chemicals, Number 11, Glace Bay



Figure 4

CBEC, Accumulation of Tim Horton's cups during a 1 hour clean up. Fisherman's Park Glace Bay



Figure 5
CBEC, Toxic chemicals in various dumpsites throughout the CBRM 2017



Figure 6
CBEC, Various needles found during cleanups 2017 CBRM



Figure 7
CBEC, Stream Obstruction due to Illegal Dumping, Morrison Lake, Birch Grove NS

Conclusion

It has been a great cleanup year with a total of 345 bags collected in various locations, not counting the many heavier items and needles we collected, removed waterway blockages and plastics from streams and along lakes and ocean shoreline. I believe we are headed in the right direction regarding illegal dumping in our community. The word is getting out there and I believe people are beginning to realise that this issue is real, and that it has profound consequences on our community and our environment. Illegal dumping comes with an economic impact, social impact and an environmental impact, we as a community must continue to strive for a cleaner safer environment. I'm happy with the new bylaws which are taking effect after the New Year, it's long overdue. Establishments which have a drive thru service must have proper garbage disposal this will drastically cut back on the mountains of Tim Hortons cups and fast food items we find throughout the community. I'm quite satisfied with the new fine which will carry a minimum of \$500.00; I'll be even more satisfied when the city hires more than one police officer to enforce this new bylaw. We also need to hold business and property owners accountable for litter behind and around their buildings. I believe the cigarette butt litter needs to be addressed in the coming months I hope to have some conversations regarding this issue. This year has been a wake-up call to many and I believe things are finally headed in the right direction, although there are areas to improve on.