

Littering Affects Water Quality and Wildlife

Besides unsightliness, litter can be a safety issue for water users (beach goers, recreational boaters, kayakers, and fishermen) and causes damage – and often death -- to the marine wildlife. Studies have shown that litter in the marine environment can destroy habitats and disrupt biological production.

Additionally, animals that eat debris are unable to digest it properly and may die of starvation or suffocation. Other times, animals get entangled in these discards and can suffer from hampered mobility, marring, dismemberment and death.

While no one intentionally chooses to litter, there are inadvertent actions that have resulted in an excessive build-up of trash in Little Bay and our neighboring waterways. The most common culprits are the winds that are inherent to our locale.

These tropical southeastern breezes and “northers” can gust up to 50 mph, which can displace existing trash receptacles and dismember trees and structures. While these are not controllable factors, there are things we can do to diminish the littering caused they cause:

1. If you see a piece of trash, pick it up and put it in a secure trash receptacle.
2. Always bag your trash. If you live in an area with lots of sea gulls, black bags (instead of white) have proven to be more durable.
3. Make sure your lids fit snugly on your trash can to minimize blow-off. You’d be amazed at the number of lids alone that enter our storm water drains and the Bay.
4. If you see an overflowing trash receptacle contact the owner or organization responsible for its maintenance.
5. Join the clean-up effort. The “Adopt-a-Spot” program administered by the Keep Rockport Beautiful Committee is always looking for sponsors and volunteers. Sign up for one of the many city-wide clean-up events.

