



NEWS RELEASE

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Volunteers Remove More than Six Tons of Trash from Wake County Waterways

Resident and business partner honored for dedication to clean waterways

Despite setbacks from Hurricane Matthew, volunteers removed 12,253 pounds of trash from creeks, lakes, streams and wetlands during the Fall 2016 Wake County Big Sweep, coordinated by the Wake Soil and Water Conservation District.

The Big Sweep began Sept. 10, with clean-up events originally scheduled around the county through Nov. 5. Most events planned for the weekend of Oct. 8 had to be rescheduled due to the weather, extending the Big Sweep to Nov. 19.

“We are so proud of our volunteers’ dedication to keeping our waterways litter-free,” said Sheila Jones, Wake Soil and Water Conservation District environmental educator. “Their hard work each year is essential to keeping our water clean and safe for future generations to enjoy.”

During 21 events, more than 450 volunteers spent 1,052 hours picking up litter at 18 sites in the county. Of the trash removed, 1,540 pounds of recyclables were diverted from potentially ending up in the landfill.

Volunteers Honored

Following the Big Sweep, Art Ross was presented with the “2016 Big Sweep Excellence Award,” and Hanson Aggregates Crabtree Quarry was given the “2016 Big Sweep Partnership Award” at the Wake Soil and Water Conservation District Board of Supervisors’ 51st Annual Conservation Awards.

As a volunteer zone captain for Wake County Big Sweep, Ross has led volunteers in canoes and kayaks to remove 6,380 pounds of debris from Upper Crabtree Creek over the last five years. Always keeping the volunteers’ safety in mind, Ross surveys the entire length of the creek before each cleanup, keeping a close eye on weather and water levels.

James Hilton accepted the award on behalf of Hanson Aggregates Crabtree Quarry, where he serves as plant manager. The company partners with Ross in efforts to clean the Upper Crabtree Creek by providing volunteers breakfast, lunch, heavy-duty gloves and litter grabbers, as well as a special handwashing station and bathroom facilities for participants. Hanson Aggregates also rents kayaks and canoes for the growing number of volunteers, some of whom are its employees and their families.

The Spring and Fall Wake County Big Sweeps play an important role in watershed protection by keeping local waterways litter-free, ecologically viable and safe for drinking or other designated water uses. The Spring 2017 Wake County Big Sweep is currently anticipated to begin in April.

For more information, visit the [Wake County Big Sweep website](#), call 919-250-1065 or email Wake County Environmental Educator Sheila Jones at sbjones@wakegov.com.

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