

A Trash Free Forest

1. What is a Trash Free Forest?

It is a solid waste management strategy of removing trash receptacles from all or sections of a Forest. Visitors are expected to carry out the refuse they generate and dispose of it properly at home or at another appropriate destination. Integral to the concept is fostering a partnership between visitors and the Forests by encouraging all visitors to help maintain clean Forests, reduce solid waste within the Forest, and embrace the ideas of reduce, reuse, and recycle.

2. What do we (visitors) do with our trash in the Forest?

Visitors are responsible for removing all refuse they generate in the Forest when they leave the Forest. Trash must be picked up and the area left in a clean condition before departure. Visitors are encouraged to come prepared when visiting the Forest. If they plan to picnic, barbecue, or in any way generate waste, they should plan ahead to provide the means to organize materials needed, and correctly package items and refuse, in order to efficiently remove it with them by the means in which they came - by walking, bicycle, car, etc..

The Forest encourages visitors to consider how they package items. Using materials that can be recycled or composted when they return home is a positive way to help the environment.

3. What are the benefits of a Trash Free Forest?

- Fosters a partnership between visitors and the Forests by encouraging all visitors to help maintain clean Forests.
- Encourages an outdoor ethic that places emphasis on recycling and reusing materials in order to reduce our impact on the environment.
- Improve the appearance of the Forests by removing trash cans that detract from the beauty of the Forest environment.
- Encourages visitors to bring reusable containers and to recycle as much as possible.
- Increases visitor safety by reducing the number of bees, wasps and other pests in the picnic areas and eliminates odors associated with trash cans.
- Eliminating the need for trash receptacles and disposal services will allow the Forest an opportunity to make more productive use of its available resources and redirect staff to other important forest projects and operational needs (i.e., educational programs, facility maintenance, grounds care, safety patrols, and trail work).

4. What am I supposed to do with my pet waste?

Forest visitors will be expected to remove pet waste and dispose of it properly outside the Forest. (Unbagged pet waste may be deposited in Rom-tec toilets)

5. What do I do with my baby's diaper?

Forest visitors will be expected to remove and dispose of diapers properly outside the Forest. There are a variety of handy products in the market for the travelling care of a baby or small children.

6. What do I do with my large picnic group?

Larger groups consume and require larger resources. More planning will be involved to provide the materials necessary to pack out refuse. Plan well ahead of time. Bring enough supplies to remove your trash when you leave.

7. What are you going to do about the litter? People won't listen and will throw or leave their trash on the ground.

The forest maintenance staff has been and will remain actively engaged in litter pick up in the forest. This fact does not mean it is okay for people to package their refuse and leave it for the Forest to clean up. The forest is introducing a program by which Forest visitors can make a personal commitment and have a stake in reducing solid waste in the Forest – they remove and dispose of their refuse outside of the Forest. If done properly, they will leave no trace.

Well established forest programs have shown average ranges of success between 80-95%. This statistic means 80-95% of the people who visit *Trash Free Forests* are responsibly removing their refuse. The Forest must deal with the rest who will leave trash behind. Forest staff will continue to remove litter in the Forest. In addition, visitors who leave trash behind are littering. This illegal activity is enforced by the SC Forestry Commission Law Enforcement and subject to penalty.

8. What does *Carry In, Carry Out* Mean?

Carry in, Carry out is an outdoor ethic that coincides with familiar *Leave No Trace* (LNT) principles. The LNT message for front country Forests (those places close to urban centers) on the matter of trash is similar to back country and wilderness areas. *Pack it in, Pack it out*. Put litter—even crumbs, peels and cores—in garbage bags and carry it home. Be sure to properly dispose of materials. Many items that are carried out should end up in the recycling bin. Food scraps can be composted.

9. Who can I talk to about this program? I have a complaint.

First, you may start with any Forest employee who can assist in answering questions about the program or connect you with someone in the forest with more information. You may also contact the Forest at (803) 896-8890 or visit the Forest web page for additional information.

10. Why did the Forest decide to go to a *Trash Free Forest Program*?

- It reduces the amount of money we have to spend on disposal.
- It reduces fuel consumption associated with trash pick-ups and disposal.
- It also reduces staff hours spent on trash removal and allows the Forest to allocate work hours to other important Forest functions and projects.