



Dear Friends of Salem Sound Coastwatch,

Welcome to 2008 and a Happy New Year!

Each month Salem Sound Coastwatch sends out a newsletter to our supporters who have e-mail. This is the printed version we mail out to our many friends and supporters who aren't on-line.

Salem Sound Monitor

January 2008

Adopt Four New Years Resolutions to help protect the Sound

One of the most encouraging trends of last year is a growing awareness of both the fragility of our environment and the impact that a single individual can make - both positively and negatively.

As lucky as we are to have Salem Sound in our backyard, with this good fortune comes an equally high responsibility to reduce our impact on the rivers, streams and ocean around us.

Eighty percent of marine litter comes from land, swept by wind or rain from highways and city streets down streams, rivers or onto beaches and out to sea. **This debris lasts for decades and can be carried by tides and wind to every continent.** It has even caused huge "landfills" of ever-accumulating trash in the middle of the ocean that are estimated to be two times bigger than the state of Texas.

So, at this time we would like to suggest some additional resolutions for you to add to your New Year's resolutions list. These are easy to do, and they will help preserve and protect our ocean environment, both locally and globally.

- 1. Consciously work to reduce your use of plastics.** The amount of plastic Americans use is expected to increase by 46% by 2010. Plastic is a petroleum product and it is not biodegradable--instead it breaks into progressively smaller pieces of toxic polymers that are easily ingested by all marine life.

Each day in the US more than 60 million plastic water bottles are thrown away! It is estimated that 100,000 marine mammals die each year because of plastic litter in our ocean in the North Pacific alone. **So, make this the year that you and your family work to reduce, reuse or recycle the plastic you will inevitably use.**

Here are some ideas:

- Take your stash of plastic grocery bags back to the store, and join the growing number of people who bring their own canvas bags.
 - Save or reuse that sandwich bag you put the cookies in that you ate two hours later anyway.
 - And, if you haven't already, start using a reusable water or drink container versus that expensive and environmentally-damaging bottled water.
 - Make sure you recycle all the plastic packaging and containers you do use.
- 2. Think twice about what you're sending down the drain or shipping off to the landfill.**
 - When pills and medicines get flushed down the toilet, they wind up in waterways where they can disrupt the reproductive systems of aquatic organisms. Last year "intersex" fish

were found in the Potomac River. **So, seal your drugs securely and put them in the land trash instead.**

- Do the same with fish and other small pets that die. If they are allowed to be flushed, they can bring diseases to wild fish. Either bury them in the yard or wrap them up and put them in the trash.
- And make sure you properly dispose of toxic waste in your home - from paints and cleaners to mercury batteries, thermometers and switches. Most communities have hazard waste collection days, and several of our local communities have mercury recovery drop-off locations.
- That cell phone you no longer use can be reused if it is donated to HWAC (Help for Abused Women and their Children), which refurbishes cell phones for distribution for emergency use to its clients or to Essex County senior citizens (through the TRIAD program).

3. Pick up after yourself and your pooch.

You've heard it for years -- don't litter - but disposing of wastes properly does make a difference. For example:

- Cigarette butts are the most littered items in the world, with more than 176 million pounds collected each year! Cigarette filters are not biodegradable. They are made of acetate, which is a plastic. Discarded filters can leach more than 60 toxins that harm marine life and are often mistaken for food by birds, sea turtles and fish.
- And did you think pet wastes will just bio-degrade or wash away with no harm done? Think again. Pet waste from all over the Salem Sound watershed is a major contributor to high fecal coliform levels and high bacterial counts in our streams and ocean. So, do your part by not letting people throw their cigarette butts on the ground, pick up your pet's wastes (which we know you already do), and encourage others to do so-- whether it's on the beach or in their own back yards!

4. Get involved.

Becoming more aware of your impact on the environment often leads to thinking about other ways you can help. We suggest you get involved in your neighborhood, your school or your community to make an even bigger difference.

SSCW has a variety of volunteer programs. For more information, contact us at: 978-741-7900, email us at info@salemsound.org, or visit our website at www.salemsound.org.

Finally, if some of these ideas were useful to you, start leveraging your impact right now by giving this newsletter to others.

Here's to a happy and healthy new year for you, your family, and the world around us!

PS—If you have access to email and would like to receive our newsletters electronically, please let us know at info@salemsound.org.

Also, we would love to hear your thoughts and comments about our new newsletter. Please feel free to contact Susan Yochelson at the SSCW office, 978-741-7518 or susany@salemsound.org.
Thanks!