

Why Litter Hurts:

- 535 miles of country roadways in Cowlitz County.
- In 2008 **194,484 pounds** of litter were removed from Cowlitz County roadways.
- Studies indicate that this is only 25%, or one quarter, of all litter on the roads.
- **Litter doesn't just stay put—it floats away, plugs our stormwater systems, harms fish and wildlife and can end up in the ocean.**
- Over \$4 million is spent annually statewide on litter reduction.



Contact Us!

Cowlitz County
Department of Public Works
1600 - 13th Ave South
Kelso, WA 98626
publicworks@cowlitzwa.gov

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1600 - 13th Ave South
Kelso, WA 98626



Cowlitz County
Department of Public Works

Adopt-A-Road Program



Litter Removal Program

(360) 577-3030

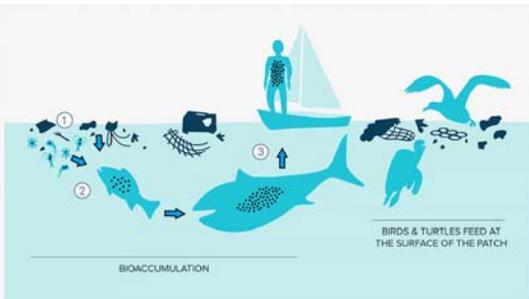
www.co.cowlitz.wa.us/publicworks

Adopt-A-Road

In 2011, the Cowlitz County Commissioners asked the Department of Public Works to develop an Adopt-A-Road Program at the request of citizens. This program provides citizens with safety equipment, training, and disposal services for roadside litter pickup.

Adopt-A-Road programs have been very successful. Citizen groups have removed tons of garbage from roadways and improved their communities. Consider the following benefits to individuals, communities, and businesses:

- Community beautification
- Civic pride
- Good exercise
- Friendlier community space
- Increased health of fish and wildlife
- Free advertising
- Fun teambuilding activity



Impact of Litter

What is the cost of litter?

- Litter attracts more littering. 15% of littering is attracted by existing visible litter.
- Property values decrease in areas with high litter.
- People avoid areas of high litter for outdoor recreation.
- Clean up costs to public agencies are high, detracting from the development of other public services.
- Litter Facilitates the spread of disease improperly discarded trash is a breeding ground for bacteria and diseases.
- Litter causes pollution as it degrades and releases chemicals and micro particles. These poisons can make their way into the soil and freshwater sources, impacting both humans and animals. In fact, 60% of water pollution is attributed to litter.
- Litter kills wildlife. Researchers estimate that over one million animals die each year after ingesting, or becoming entrapped in, improperly discarded trash.
- At least 8 million tons of plastic end up in our oceans every year, and make up 80% of all marine debris. A total of 1.8 trillion plastic pieces were estimated to be floating in the Pacific Garbage Patch – a plastic count that is equivalent to 250 pieces of debris for every human in the world.
- Litter decreases oxygen levels in water when it decays and can kill aquatic life.

How Do I Adopt-A-Road?

If you would like to adopt a Cowlitz County Road, the process is simple.

- Set up a group—an individual, family, group of coworkers or other.
- Apply to Department of Public Works. You'll need a group name and an idea of what road you want to patrol.
- You'll be asked to clean at least one mile of road two times per year for two years.
- Department of Public Works will provide safety training and supplies as well as trash pickup and disposal.
- Two signs with your group's name will be placed on the road you have adopted.

Decomposition Time

The lifespan of some commonly littered items:

CIGARETTE BUTT: 1-5 years

PLASTIC BAG: 10-20 years

ALUMINUM CAN: 200-500 years

GLASS BOTTLE: 1 million years

PLEASE PUT TRASH IN ITS PLACE!

