

# THIS WEEK IN "LITTERLAND"

www.litterpreventionprogram.com

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## Litter trap in Zimbabwe's uMngeni River

[Litter booms](#) like the one below on the Umhlangane tributary of the uMngeni River trap enormous amounts of rubbish and stop it from flowing into the main river. Volunteers in canoes scoop out the caged debris to keep the three traps maintained.

## [New York scraps bin reduction scheme](#)

Six years after removing trash cans from 39 subway stations as a way to reduce littering, New York City has scrapped the plan. It didn't work. Instead of taking waste home, people littered more and there were more track fires, the city comptroller reported.



## UK's national litter strategy comes out

[A Litter Strategy for England](#), released by Environment Secretary Andrea Leadsom last Monday and now making the rounds for public comment, already has backing from Coca-Cola and INCPEN, the nation's packaging industry group. Proposals range from imposing £150 fines on obtuse litterers to holding owners responsible if litter is seen exiting their vehicles and requiring people engaged in "serious" littering to pick up strewn trash as part of their penalty. The report recommends eliminating municipal fees at public dumps for DIY household waste. It provides "binrastructure" guidelines for municipalities and calls for new school programs to foster the emergence of a green generation and an anti-littering culture. An expert panel is a recommended part of the whole package. It would study and suggest specific actions targeting prolifically littered cigarette butts, fast food packaging and beverage containers.



**\*\* Read Paul Cusack's Page 2 column about tapping one's sphere of influence. \*\***

## DID YOU KNOW?

Coming just ahead of next Saturday's Earth Day a committee in the City of Toronto will be considering a litter report on Tuesday morning, which proposes a few housekeeping measures and closes an enforcement loophole.

## HEADLINE LITTER GRABBERS (APR 9 - 16)

Some of what made our News Reel this week

### **Add decomposition date to coffee cups (4/12)**

Expiry dates on milk and bread, yes, but on coffee cups? UK's litter strategy suggests that to discourage littering a message printed on take-away cups should tell consumers it takes about 30 years for a littered cup to decompose. A Dutch study showed that such messages cut littering by five percent.

### **"Litter-free days out" is promoted for Easter (4/13)**

Tidy types at Litter Free Coast and Sea in Dorset get in front of holidays like Easter with a special occasion reminder about minding the party trash. The group has asked for social media postings of photos showing people enjoying litter free days out. #LitterFreeDaysOut

### **Trash Tracker in Horry makes reporting easy (4/14)**

April is Zero Tolerance Month for Littering in Horry County, South Carolina. Officials unveiled Trash Tracker, a GPS app for facilitating public reports of littering. There's also a daily Roadside Litter Patrol clean up crew paid for with accommodation taxes.

### **Staten Island sweepers on patrol (4/14)**

Staten Island has assigned a \$120,000 budget for two full-time employees devoted to manually sweeping gutters, streets and public places 32 weeks a year as a special, additional service, New York's mayor said.



## YOUR SPACE

*Experts share their insights and tricks of the trade*

### “Sphere of influence”

by Paul Cusack

Applying your sphere of influence is how to make the most out of the actions and activities that you, your organisation, businesses and community are willing to do that will help manage, reduce or prevent litter. We've discussed 'Leverage and momentum' and 'Understanding your organisation' previously. Using your sphere of influence and knowledge you will see the opportunities to align or connect the different litter prevention activities. And most importantly, you will be driving these efforts to areas where they are needed and in a way by which you can gain further leverage or momentum.

Understanding your sphere of influence will have you making the Big Picture, intelligent choices more often. You will be identifying the achievable, engaging the right groups or individuals and undertaking actions and activities that will be sustainable long term.

The long-term sustainability and cost implications of what you plan on doing are significant factors when deciding on any course of action. Faced with a decision or opportunity to do something that has the potential to improve your litter management, apply these questions;

What's the immediate impact of this action/activity? (20% weighting)

What impact will this work or activity be having in five years? (40% weighting)

What is the ongoing human and financial commitment required to sustain it? (40% weighting)

**Example:** A local community group has approached you and volunteered to clean up a large public park regularly. They want to erect a sign that recognises and acknowledges their efforts. They will need assistance taking away the collected materials, and they would like your organisation to provide them with some of the safety equipment and tools to do the work.

The immediate impact is equipment, signs, installation and expenses. The positive is you end up with a large, clean public park.

The five-year implication is a little uncertain; however, your role is to interpret the available information and align similar situations. Your knowledge would tell you not many community groups are still doing the same thing as they were five years ago. The ongoing commitment of a community group in one location is potentially unreliable.

Although you have the offer of free labour with a volunteer group, you are committing ongoing resources to litter removal and materials. And all of that is still only getting one park cleaned. Are you prepared to rely on one volunteer group per location?

On the surface the offer is attractive, but if you break it down it has some potential hazards over the longer term. Applying your sphere of influence to this proposal, you would look to decentralise the clean-up event, make it flexible so more parks could be included. That in turn creates a wider scope for improvements and expands access to more volunteers who may live near the new parks proposed. You would also maintain ownership of the equipment, meaning you would not have to supply it full time to one group, with more opportunities for your litter collection tools to be working, you can manage the maintenance on them to ensure longevity.

So with just a couple of adjustments, you have the potential for a much larger scale, better-managed program that your organisation can now steer to areas in need. Immediate improvements in litter outcomes can appear very attractive. Politically they may seem to be the easiest answer, but quite often they are not the best long-term solution. These articles here in *Litterland* are to help you think about each action or activity as connected.

By applying your sphere of influence across your community and organisation, you will be well positioned to capitalise on every action or activity, ensuring long-term success when dealing with litter now and into the future.