

## U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

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## News Release

Article by Coastland Times reporter Mary Helen Goodloe-Murphy:

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### Volunteers - Keeping Pea Island Clean

THESE INTREPID volunteers joined by others braved cold temperatures to clean the southern portion of Pea Island National Wildlife Refuge on a cold Thursday afternoon. Organized by Pea Island National Refuge staffer Abbey Reibel, the volunteers picked up about 70 bags full of plastic bags, beer bottles, plastic soda and water bottles, drink cans, a floatation cushion, hubcaps, shredded tires, a barbecue grill, and assorted other litter marring the refuge lands along N.C. 12. (MHG-M photo.)

On a cold Thursday afternoon, 14 volunteers wearing layers and layers of clothing performed a simple public service. Braced for cold temperatures, the volunteers attacked litter marring the southern end of Pea Island National Wildlife Refuge. Moving along both sides of N.C. 12, up dunes and into the flats, the volunteers picked up almost 70 bags of litter in over two hours of work. The litter picker-uppers swiped plastic bags off bushes and scooped up beer bottles, drink cans and plastic water and soda bottles from drainage ditches and from under vegetation. A barbecue grill, a shredded tire tread, little bitty foam packing pieces, a floatation cushion, a ball of wire and assorted food wrappers went into those 70 bags. Over 1,000 recyclable items were collected. Tied up bags placed alongside hubcaps, metal pieces, wood studded with nails were hoisted into the Hatteras Recyclers flat bed truck and whisked away.

For a little while, the southern end of Pea Island National Wildlife Refuge looked great. Pea Island refuge staffer Abbey Reibel organized the litter attack, much like she does monthly for the northern end of the refuge. While the temperatures were cold, the morning's high winds had fallen away when these volunteers set about their task. The volunteers worked along a portion of the highway that has a posted 45-mph speed limit and uneven shoulders. To caution and slow down motorists, the Hatteras Recyclers truck and a refuge brush fire truck flashed rotating beacons.

Volunteers across Dare County routinely pick up litter, a never-ending task. Some 23 organizations have adopted 48.8 miles of Dare roadway in the Adopt-A Highway program sponsored by the state's Department of Transportation. In Dare, most Adopt-A-Highway groups work on two miles of roadway, the state's standard. North Carolina Beach Buggy Association is responsible for three

miles between Coquina Beach and Oregon Inlet Bridge and the Rodanthe-Waves-Salvo Civic Association picks up litter in the 5.5 miles within the villages. In Kitty Hawk, all of Woods Road and Kitty Hawk Road are adopted along with portions of N.C. 12 and the Bypass. Other highway adoptions are widely and sparsely spread throughout the county. The Adopt-A-Highway program is 20 years old this year. Statewide, nearly 6,000 groups pick up trash. In 2006, NCDOT staff, volunteers like the group on Feb. 28, adopting groups and inmates cleared 10.1 million pounds of trash from roadsides. Adopt-A-Highway groups picked up nearly a third of it. Say thanks to some of the volunteers who braved the cold and picked up litter in Pea Island refuge: Stanley Oliver, Pat Haltigan, Carol Bauer, Todd Phillips, Kathy Connor, Steve Sweet, John Griffin, Francis McGuire, Joanne Mason and Larry Mason.



Volunteers picking up litter along NC 12.  
Photo Credit: Mary Helen Goodloe-Murphy