

# Be in the Know: The Earth is not an Ashtray

## THE IMPACT OF CIGARETTE BUTTS ON THE ENVIRONMENT:

While most people are aware of the risks involved in smoking, few seem to realize that cigarettes are also bad for the environment. Cigarette butts accumulate outside of buildings, on parking lots and streets where they can be transported through storm drains to streams, rivers and beaches.

- Cigarettes are the most littered item in America. According to the Center for Marine Conservation, cigarette butts are the most prevalent littered item found during the Center's International Coastal Cleanup (ICC) Project, accounting for nearly one of every four items collected.<sup>1</sup>
- In North Carolina smoking-related products (cigarette filters, cigar tips, and tobacco packaging) accounted for 32.1% of the debris found during the 2007 ICC Project. Of the six million pounds of debris collected worldwide, 33.6% is made up of these tobacco-related products.<sup>2</sup>



- Although the paper and tobacco used in cigarettes are themselves biodegradable, the cellulose acetate filter (the "butt") is not. Cigarette filters are made of cellulose acetate, not cotton.<sup>3</sup>
- Cellulose acetate filters may persist under normal environmental conditions for 18 months or even years.<sup>4</sup>
- Cigarette butts can leach harmful chemicals into the ground and water, and be ingested accidentally by wildlife or even small children.<sup>5</sup>
- Cigarette butts thrown from moving cars may cause grassfires.<sup>6</sup>

### References:

1. & 2. [www.oceanconservancy.org](http://www.oceanconservancy.org) International Coastal Cleanup - 2007 Reports
3. & 4. "Consumption and production waste: another externality of tobacco use" Thomas E Novotny and Feng Zhao Tob. Control 1999;8:75-80
5. [www.longwood.edu/CLEANVA/cigarettelitterhome.html](http://www.longwood.edu/CLEANVA/cigarettelitterhome.html) — Clean Virginia Waterways, Longwood University, Farmville, VA
6. [www.nfpa.org](http://www.nfpa.org) — National Fire Protection Association

**IF YOU OR SOMEONE YOU KNOW WANTS TO QUIT SMOKING OR DIPPING PLEASE CALL:**

1-800-QUIT-NOW  
QuitlineNC.com



## About the Tobacco Prevention and Control Branch (TPC)

*The North Carolina Tobacco Prevention and Control Branch works to improve the health of North Carolina residents by promoting smoke-free environments and tobacco-free lifestyles. Our goal is to build capacity of diverse organizations and communities to implement and carry out effective, culturally appropriate strategies to reduce deaths and health problems due to tobacco use and secondhand smoke.*



## About TRU:

TRU is North Carolina's youth-led grassroots movement that has helped bring our state's teen smoking rates to the lowest on record. TRU stands for Tobacco. Reality. Unfiltered. And our name says a lot about us — we bring home the reality of tobacco use and are on our way to creating the state's first tobacco-free generation. The TRU movement rallies teens to take a stand against tobacco and get the message out there in any way possible, whether it's by working with the media, encouraging local businesses to go tobacco-free or holding a "cigarette butts pick-up" event.

To find out more about TRU, please visit:



TOBACCO REALITY UNFILTERED  
[REALITYUNFILTERED.COM](http://REALITYUNFILTERED.COM)

**TRU IS MAKING A DIFFERENCE.** For more information about **TRU** in your community and how you can get involved, contact me to learn more:



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State of North Carolina | Department of Health and Human Services  
 Division of Public Health | Tobacco Prevention and Control Branch  
[www.ncdhhs.gov](http://www.ncdhhs.gov) | [www.publichealth.nc.gov](http://www.publichealth.nc.gov)  
 N.C. DHHS is an equal opportunity employer and provider. 10/12

Join the movement

**WE ARE A  
 FORCE OF  
 TOBACCO-FREE  
 GOODNESS**

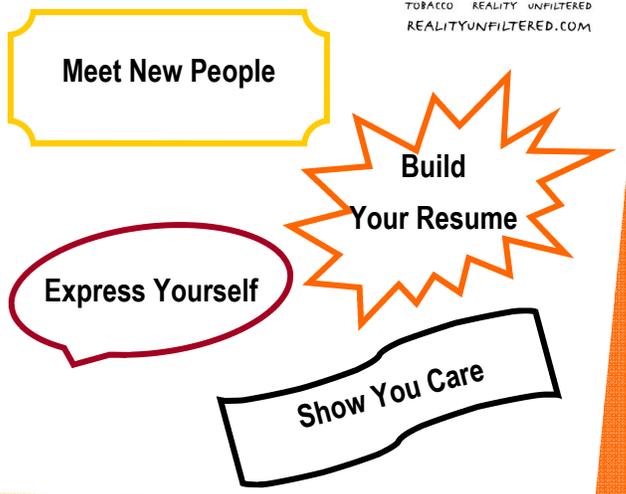


### WHAT WILL YOU DO AS A TRU TEEN?



It's official: teen smoking is now at an all-time low. Across the state, teens are making sweeping changes. And you can help. As a TRU teen you will:

- Encourage others to become tobacco-free,
- Educate your peers,
- Speak to community leaders and decision makers,
- Meet with other teens in your region and across the state, and
- Develop fun, creative activities.



TRU is making a difference. Contact me to learn more:  
 CONTACT INFORMATION:  
 INSERT COORDINATOR NAME   
 INSERT AGENCY NAME and ADDRESS   
 INSERT PHONE NUMBER   
 INSERT EMAIL ADDRESS

