

Environmental cost of cigarettes

Goals of "Holding on to your Cigarette Butt" are:

- Eliminate cigarette litter throughout our watershed (beaches, streets, parks, mountains, etc.
- Educate the public that cigarette butts are not biodegradable; they harm our ecosystems, and contain over 165 chemicals
- Educate the public that secondhand smoke is one of the leading causes of cancer and contains over 4000 carcinogens.



No butts about it. The environmental costs of tobacco products are more than just smoke. They include the following:

- Filters and plastic wrap from cigarette packages remain in the environment for long periods of time. Cigarette butts are composed of cellulose acetate, a form of plastic, which can take many years to decompose. Cigarette butts may seem small, but with several trillion butts littered every year, the toxic chemicals add up!
- Cigarettes contain over 165 chemicals - Some of the chemicals smokers inhale:
 1. Benzo[a]pyrene: found in coal tar and cigarette smoke and it is one of the most potent cancer causing chemical in the world.
 2. Arsenic: deadly poison that causes diarrhea, cramps, anemia, paralysis and malignant skin tumors. It is used in pesticides.
 3. Acetone: It's one of the active ingredients in nail polish remover.
 4. Lead: Lead poisoning stunts growth, causes vomiting, and causes brain damage.
 5. Formaldehyde: causes cancer, can damage lungs, skin, and digestive systems. Embalmers use it to preserve dead bodies.
 6. Toluene: highly toxic, commonly use as an ingredient in paint thinner.
 7. Butane: highly flammable butane is one of the key components in gasoline.
 8. Cadmium: cause damage to the liver, kidneys and brain, and stays in the body for years.
 9. Ammonia: causes individuals to absorb more nicotine, keeping them hooked on smoking.
 10. Benzene: found in pesticides and gasoline.
- Plastic pieces have been found in the stomachs of fish, birds, whales, and other marine creatures that mistake them as food, swallowing harmful plastic and toxic chemicals. Ingestion of plastic cigarette filters is a threat to wildlife.
- Wind and rain often carry cigarette butts into waterways, where the toxic chemicals in the cigarette filters leak out, threatening the quality of the water and the creatures that live in it.

The Solution & what you can do to help?

- Join our "Hold on to your Cigarette Butt" Campaign – put your butt in the can.

- Educate community members to be responsible with their cigarette litter.
- Provide smokers with an easily accessible, reusable means to dispose of their cigarette butts responsibly and safely.
- Set examples for others by not littering.
- Volunteer to help organize a cleanup.
- Write letters to your Mayor and City Council to ask for a smoke-free environment.
- Set a meeting with your local legislature to discuss the problems of litter and air pollution, which come from cigarettes.