



Educating high school students through an anti-litter video competition.

NPDES Permit – Public Education and Public Involvement on Stormwater Impacts

- Inform individuals and groups on how to become involved in the stormwater program (with activities such as local stream and lake restoration activities). The target audiences and subject areas for the education program that are likely to have significant stormwater impacts should include, but is not limited to, the following:
 - General public
 - General impacts litter has on water bodies, how trash is delivered to streams via the MS4 and ways to reduce litter.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the public education and public involvement program; and
- Participate in activities that target the removal of litter, floatables, and debris from MS4 area as described in the SWMPP



- 2010—Valley Creek Cleanup began as an annual watershed based project focused on public awareness and trash removal.
- Volunteer litter cleanups held in the creek and along roadways; 55 linear miles
- 9 jurisdictions involved in the working committee
- In 2018 479 volunteers removed 15.165 tons of trash and debris and 1.1 tons of tires.
- 80 tons of trash and debris has been removed since 2010.
- Some committee members wanted to expand education efforts in the watershed as this project entered its 10th year.





2018 Litter Quitters Subcommittee

- The idea for Litter Quitters developed during an “after hours discussion” among colleagues.
- A group of original Valley Creek Cleanup Committee members formed the Litter Quitters Subcommittee which was led by the Jefferson County Conservation District:

City of Birmingham

City of Bessemer

Creative Directions, Inc.

Freshwater Land Trust

Jefferson County Commission

Jefferson County Department of Health

Jefferson County Soil and Water
Conservation District

Keep Birmingham Beautiful

Stormwater Management Authority, Inc.



Developed Litter Quitters Goals

- 1. Educate high school students**
Involve high schools, inform driving age students about the negative effects that litter has on the environment, and deter these students from becoming litterers.
- 2. Provide a platform for students to become social media influencers**
Students create a short anti-litter video illustrating why the students' think littering is detrimental to the community, and the video is posted on social media.
- 3. Educate the general public via commercial television message**
Partner with a local television station to create a professionally produced anti-littering message featuring students and air the message throughout the local market.



Developed Litter Quitters Guidelines

- Litter Quitters is an anti-litter, stormwater-protection, video competition offered to public high schools located in Jefferson County, Alabama
- Each participating school submits one video to the Committee which reviews and approves the video contents
- The Committee uploads the submitted videos to the Litter Quitters YouTube channel
- Students push out a social media campaign to encourage family, friends, and the public to watch their video on the YouTube channel, and most importantly— “like” their video
- The social media campaign runs for 12 days
- The videos with the most “likes” at the end of the competition win cash prizes (1st, 2nd, 3rd, and Best Overall).
- Each participating school selects 1 student to participate in a professionally produced TV message

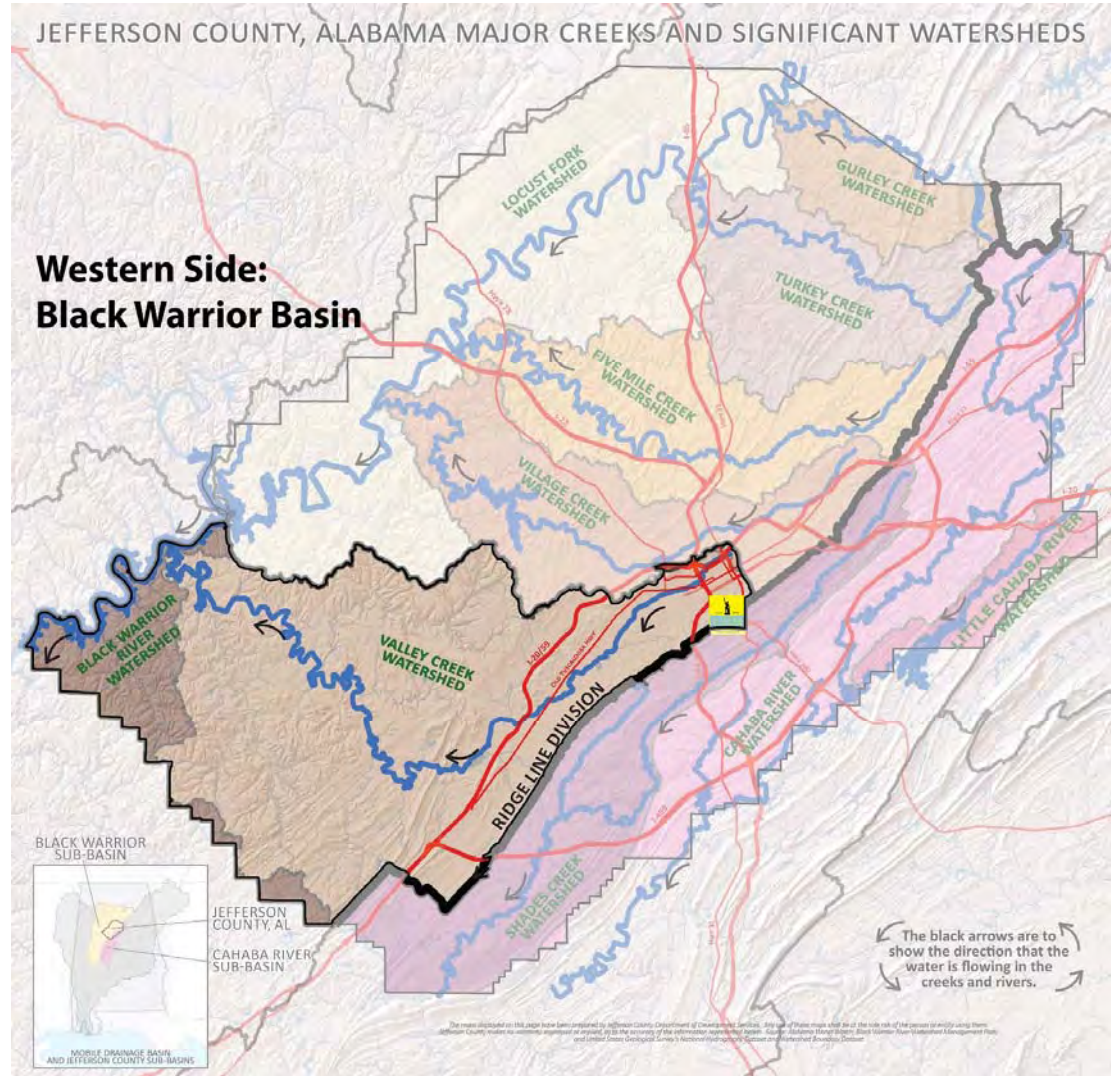


2018 Litter Quitters Summary

- 10 public high schools invited to participate; 8 videos submitted
- Competition held between April 12 and 11:59 pm, April 22 (Earth Day)
- ABC 33/40 publicized the competition and invited the winner to appear on its morning show
- Raised \$12,000 for competition from grants, donations, and stormwater programs
- ABC 33/30 edited the winning video into a 30-second paid television message and aired it on its 3 local television stations



2018 Valley Creek & Black Warrior River Watersheds





2018 Highlights



**1st Place Wenonah High School
\$1,000**



**2nd Place Fairfield High School
\$500**



**3rd Place Fairfield High School
\$250**





2018 Litter Quitters Results

- Participating high schools and subcommittee members found Litter Quitters to be a valuable tool in educating driving age students about the negative effects of litter.
- City officials, schools, stormwater programs in other watersheds within Jefferson County requested that Litter Quitters be expanded throughout the county.
- In 2019, Litter Quitters became an independent, working committee.
- LitterQuitters.org website and a logo were created for 2019.



2019 Litter Quitters Committee

- Again spearheaded by the Jefferson County Conservation District
- Working committee made up of Stormwater Programs, NGO, and local businesses
- Included all watersheds and public high schools in the county



• Jefferson County Commission



• Jefferson County Conservation District



• City of Birmingham



• City of Bessemer



• City of Hoover



• City of Leeds



• Jefferson County Department of Health



• Stormwater Management Authority, Inc.



• Creative Directions, Inc.



• Freshwater Land Trust

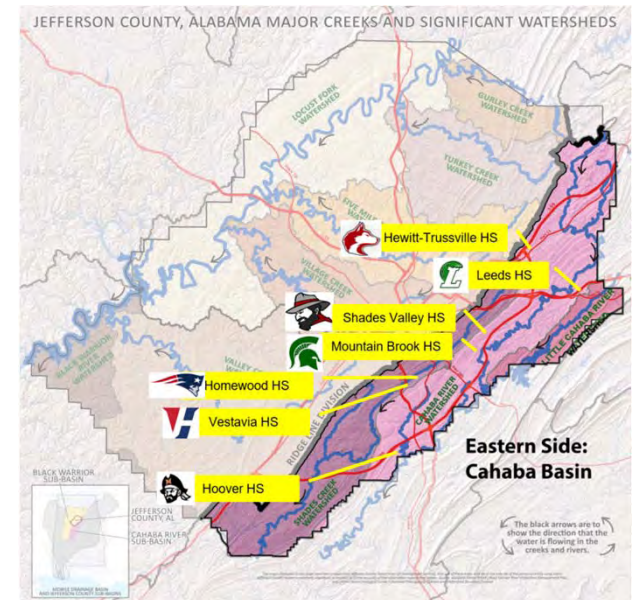
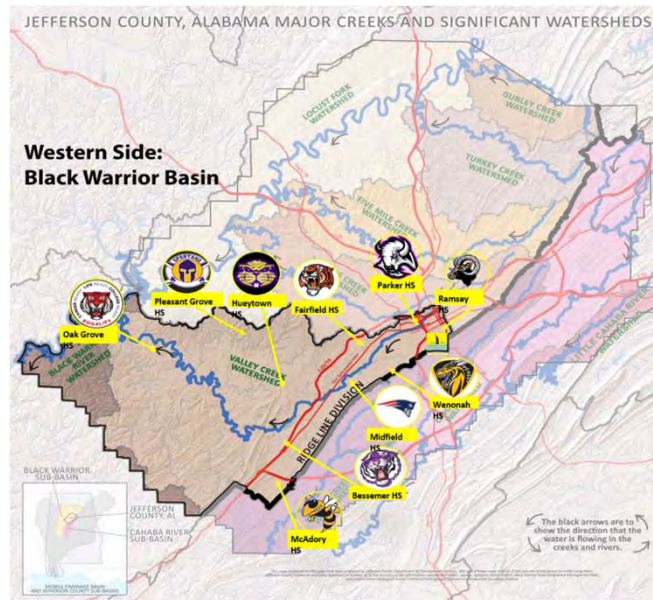
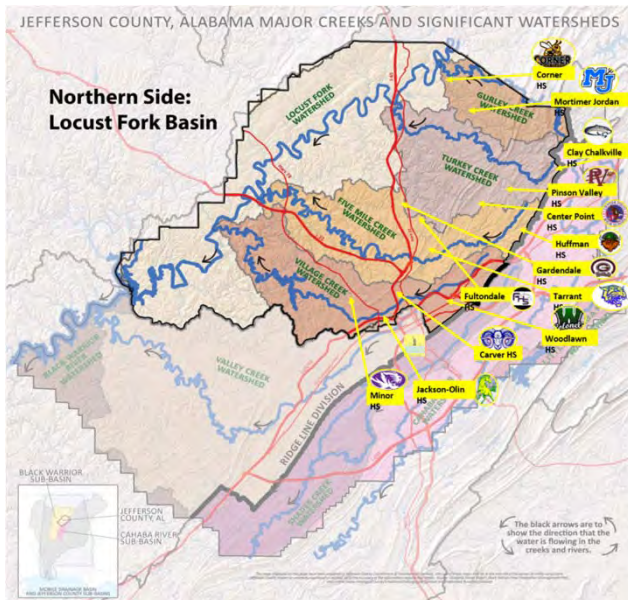


• Keep Birmingham Beautiful



A Watershed Approach

A deliberate effort was made to keep the schools engaged and focused on their local watersheds. The schools were divided into 3 major watershed basins. Each school competed for cash prizes against only the other schools in their watershed basin, thereby keeping the competition on a local level.





2019 Litter Quitters Summary

- 30 public high schools were invited to participate in the competition. 22 schools submitted videos into the competition.
- A Power Point presentation which included information about Jefferson County's local waterways, litter and its negative impact on the environment along with competition details, was given to 764 students from 23 schools.
- During the 12 day competition the YouTube Litter Quitters channel received 35,377 views.
- Winners in each of the 3 basins received \$1,000 for 1st place; \$500 for 2nd place and \$250 for 3rd. An overall winner for the "best message" was also awarded \$250.
- Jefferson County Commission awarded each winning school a resolution for their efforts.



Media Strategy--Talk of Alabama Show

- In-kind service from Sinclair Broadcasting Group
- 3 segments of 33/40 Talk of Alabama morning show.
 - The day before the project launched, committee members discussed the 2018 project and encouraged public to go an watch student videos.
 - Following the competition, one Talk of Alabama segment highlighted the results of the 2019 project; the second segment announced the winners on a live broadcasting.





Media Strategy—Facebook

- ABC 33/40 created Facebook sponsored posts showing the winners being announced on the local morning show.
- The sponsored ad also included a link to an article which read:

Littering is stupid. That simple act of tossing your water bottle, food wrapper, or cigarette butt out of the car window is hurting you. Mostly in the wallet, but also in quality of life, safety, crime rate, and health. Bottom line, if you litter, stop doing it. If we all would take a few minutes to properly dispose of trash, this one action multiplied by millions of people every day would create an enormous economic benefit for everyone. Just think how an extra \$11.5 billion could be used for things that actually improve our lives.



Media Strategy—Commercial Television

A paid message was created by the local broadcasting company as an in-kind donation. This message was shown 221 times delivering 3,774,300 impressions. We were given bonus spots as well as PSA showings.

The aired message was delivered by a series of diverse Jefferson County high school students. The tone of the message was purposefully edgy. It was a series of statements:

Litter is...Dirty!

Litter is...full of germs!

Litter is...Ugly!

Litter can cause car wrecks!

Litter gets washed by rain into rivers & creeks.

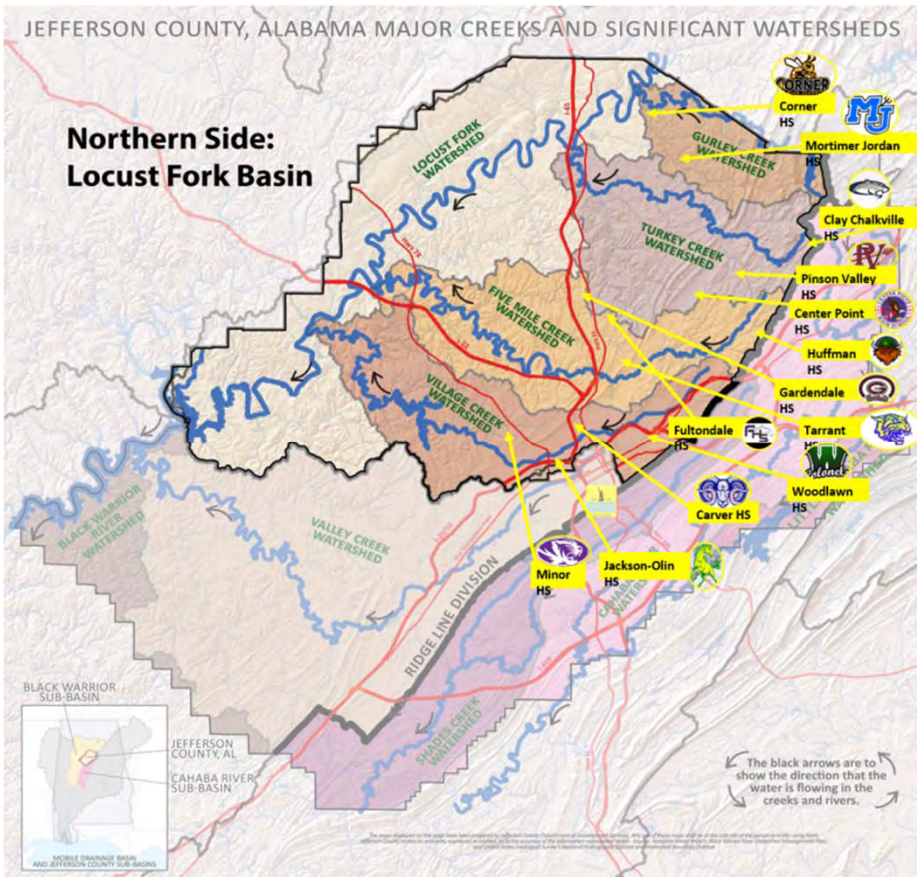
Litter hurts fish, water and animals!

Litter costs a lot to clean up!

Littering is stupid!



2019 Northern Area Winners (Locust Fork Watershed Basin)



1st place: Pinson Valley High School with 1,553 likes



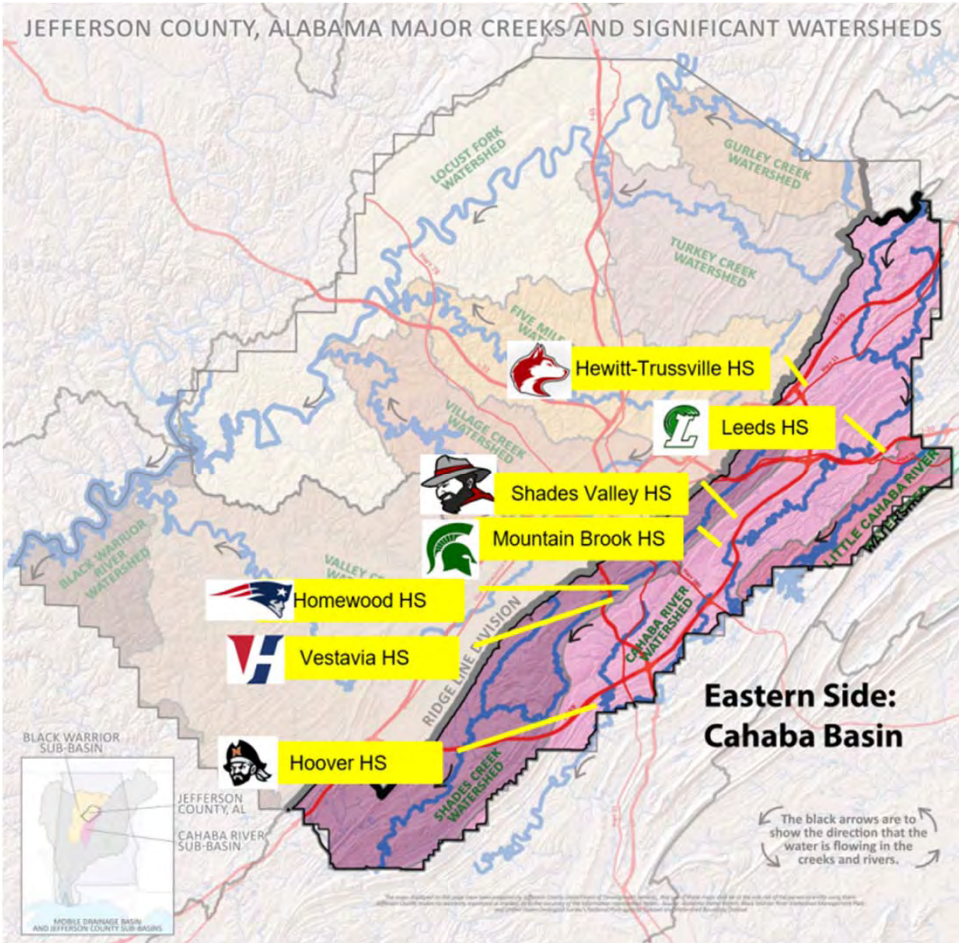
2nd place: Mortimer Jordan High School with 1,462 likes



3rd place & “Best Message” winner: Tarrant High School with 808 likes



2019 Eastern Area Winners (Cahaba Watershed Basin)



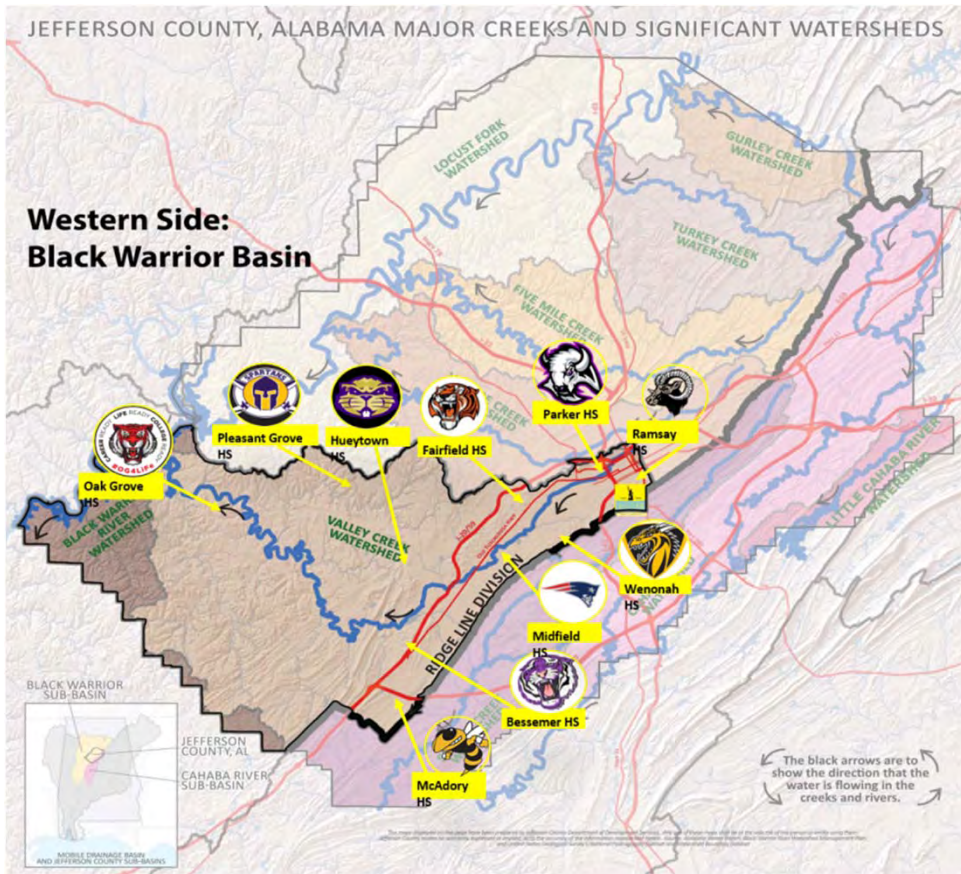
1st place: Shades Valley High School with 282 likes



2nd place: Leeds High School with 19 likes



2019 Western Area Winners (Valley Watershed Basin)



1st place: Oak Grove High School with 265 likes



2nd place: Wenonah High School with 226 likes



3rd place: Parker High School with 218 likes



2019 Best Overall Video



- Video with the best environmental and stormwater message
- Chosen from 2 independent judges:
 - Black Warrior River Keeper
 - Local videographer



2019 Litter Quitters Funding

- Government and non-governments involved, agencies and businesses involved
- Roadblocks included: limited budgets, constraints in asking for funds and accepting donations, red tape
- The Committee asked the local Conservation District to become involved to assist in seeking and leveraging funding through its Foundation
- Sponsors Included:
 - Litter Quitters Committee along with ABC 33/40 and affiliates, Birmingham Zoo, Black Warrior Riverkeeper, Cawaco RC&D, and Santek Waste Services.
 - Their grants and donations helped pay for the cash prizes, creation and airing of the paid message.



JEFFERSON
COUNTY
CONSERVATION
DISTRICT

Partnering with a Conservation District

- Politically neutral
- Serves all jurisdictions within the county
- Relationship with schools
- Relationships with charitable companies and organizations
- Some districts have foundations which provide greater funding flexibility
 - Tax deductible donations, 501(c)3 designation
 - Non governmental agency with fewer spending restraints
 - Can solicit financial support from the business community
 - Can apply for and accept grants and donations
 - Can give money directly to schools
 - Uniquely positioned to serve as a facilitator for funding and engagement
- Continuity with consistent anti-littering message
 - One uniform message goes beyond municipal boundaries



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COUNTY
CONSERVATION
DISTRICT

Overview of Conservation Districts

- The Dust Bowl—1930s. About 80% of land was damaged due to soil erosion, bad farming practices, and an extended drought.
 - Instilling conservation practices vastly improved soil health.
- Hugh Hammond Bennett— “Father of Soil Conservation.”
- By 1939, Alabama adopted soil conservation legislature and established the state committee.
- Relationship with USDA-NRCS
- Goals of JCCD
 - Educate, promote, and assist
 - Partnership with the 3 main Stormwater agencies, plus the Health Dept.
 - Our education programs help meet the requirements of ADEM’s MS4 permit





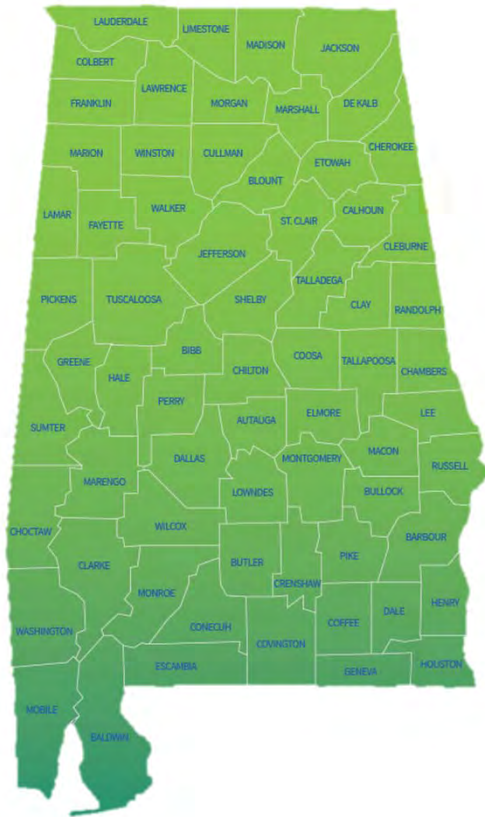
The Role of the District within Litter Quitters

- Facilitator—grant monies & coordination
 - Coordinate meetings, follow ups, task manager, and final reports for grants
 - Act as the POC for the project
 - Disperse grant funds and other monies
 - Maintain the website
 - Obtain prize money for schools
 - Create graphics for social media and vendor booth promotion
 - Bring in sponsors
- Neutral party within the county and committee



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CONSERVATION
DISTRICT

How the District benefits from Litter Quitters



- Improved relationship with high schools
- More visibility and awareness
- Strengthen the relationship with stormwater partners
- Strengthen relationships with neighboring Conservation Districts
 - Watersheds don't have boundaries which allows further partnership and awareness
- **CAN BE REPLICATED IN ANY COUNTY OR STATE**
 - Alabama has 67 counties with a CD in each one
 - Ask us how to get started!



Lessons Learned: Schools Benefit too!

- Get educational presentation from stormwater professionals
 - Teachable moments about watersheds
 - Local environmental issues/solutions
 - Concepts cross over and reinforce concepts in the classroom (media, science, drivers ed)
 - Students receive an educational presentation from stormwater professionals
 - They learned that their actions have a direct consequence
 - Students didn't realize the actual amounts of litter in their own communities or the connection between littering to roadways to waterways
- Prize money came without strings, incentive
- Show diversity of students on local television
- Students got to integrate social media with their curriculum



Lessons Learned

- **Start EARLY!**

- Reach out to principals and schools as soon as the school year begins
- Sometimes you have to be overly persistent
- Split up schools among the committee, assign liaisons

- **Utilize any teacher at the school**

- Not every school has a Drivers ED program during normal school hours
- Multiple teachers may work together or be assigned to

Drivers ED

- Some schools may opt to use a club instead
- **Use prepaid cash gift cards**
 - Schools have to be able to accept the funds
 - Don't micromanage the use of the prize money
- **YouTube algorithm**
 - Using the likes versus the views numbers
- **Media waivers**



Lessons Learned, cont'd

- **Time frames with the media vs schools**
 - Have a media “liaison” with relationships with the news channels
 - Schools need several months to plan ahead and coordinate for out of school “field trips”
- **Go after any grants that have an environmental goal**
 - Start early!
 - Know the funding cycles of grants and local businesses
- Have one person manage the website
- **Keep in constant contact with the teachers and keep them motivated**
 - Do your school presentation early
- **Need an award for the best enviro message –to stay on concept**
- **For the facilitator—spreadsheets are your friends!**

Q & A ?



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Watch some videos!