

Trash Free NYC Waters

A PLAN TO REDUCE MARINE DEBRIS THROUGH A MEDIA CAMPAIGN

NYC

**Environmental
Protection**

Bill de Blasio, Mayor
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Introduction

The City of New York (City) works hard to keep its waters clean. Since 2002, the City has invested over 10 billion dollars in improving harbor water quality, and key indicators show that the harbor is the cleanest and healthiest it's been in more than a century. As part of this effort to improve harbor water quality, the New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has a well-established program to capture and remove marine debris. Floating barriers at 24 locations capture marine debris discharged from combined sewers, and a skimmer vessel removes floatable marine debris found in open waters like New York Harbor. In 2012, DEP removed 1,393 cubic yards of floatable marine debris from the city's waterways.

Since land-based trash and debris can impact harbor water quality, programs run by the New York City Department of Sanitation (DSNY) to keep the streets clean also keep the waterways clean. DSNY sweeps more than 6,000 miles of roadway each day and maintains approximately 25,000 litter baskets to help keep trash and debris off the streets and sidewalks. According to the Mayor's Office of Operations Scorecard Inspection Program, which rates and tracks the degree of surface litter on streets and sidewalks throughout New York City, the city is cleaner today than it was when the program began in the late 1970s. Approximately 93 percent of streets were rated as acceptably clean in recent years, compared to just 72 percent in 1976.



Currently, the City has several existing programs relevant to the reduction of marine debris:



B.Y.O. Campaign

Shorthand for bring your own, the B.Y.O. Campaign encourages New Yorkers to live a less disposable lifestyle by using reusable bags, mugs, and bottles. Launched in May 2015, this campaign aims to help reduce waste before it becomes marine debris.

Clean Streets=Clean Beaches

An annual cooperative initiative between the City and the Environmental Protection Agency, this campaign aims to improve the cleanliness of urban beaches and waterways by reducing litter. This campaign highlights the connection between litter and marine debris and includes beach clean-up events, which actively remove litter and marine debris.

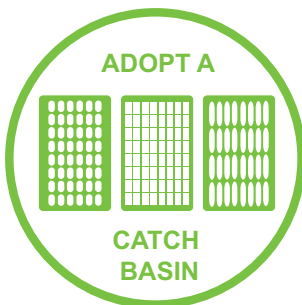


Adopt-a-Basket

In busy areas, corner litter baskets can fill faster than DSNY can empty them. Through this program, local businesses or community groups, known as adopters, monitor their baskets. When baskets are three-quarters full, adopters remove the used plastic liners, tie them, leave them next to the basket and then insert a new liner. This helps prevent trash from spilling onto sidewalks and eventually becoming marine debris.

Water-on-the-Go

First started in the summer of 2010, this initiative places water bottle refilling stations in prominent public places during the hot summer months. The goal is to encourage New Yorkers to stay hydrated in a healthy and environmentally friendly way. By promoting the use of reusable bottles, the initiative will continue to reduce waste from disposable bottles before it has the chance to become litter or marine debris.



Adopt-a-Catch Basin

In some areas, catch basins can accumulate debris between regularly scheduled DEP inspections. In partnership with the Brooklyn Borough President's Office, this pilot program will empower community-based organizations in specific neighborhoods to maintain their catch basins. This will help reduce localized flooding and keep debris from reaching the harbor.

Water Fountain Installation and Repair

To support people who carry their own water bottle, the City will install or repair 500 public water fountains and water bottle refilling stations across the five boroughs. DEP has committed 5 million dollars over the next ten years to this initiative.





Adopt-a-Highway/Greenway

Run by the New York City Department of Transportation (DOT), these programs enable volunteers or private sponsors to adopt a segment of highway, roadway, or greenway. Adopters not only take over beautification of the segment, but conduct frequent litter removal, which helps keep trash off streets and out of waterways.

In addition to the programs listed above, there are many other ways the City engages citizens on the issue of litter and debris. For example, DOT reminds Staten Island Ferry riders of the importance of properly disposing of trash each trip and Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) organizes events for volunteers to remove litter from local parks. While the City's efforts have reduced the prevalence of marine debris, several local waterways remain classified by the State as impaired by floatables. The City simply cannot eliminate this problem without the help of all New Yorkers. Therefore, the City is initiating a Marine Debris Reduction Media Campaign (Media Campaign) to educate New Yorkers on the small, but important steps they can take to reduce the trash that can become marine debris.

In an already saturated media market, the City will work not only to develop a Media Campaign with a meaningful message, but also to amplify existing relevant programs. The Media Campaign will seek to maximize the reach of the recent B.Y.O. Campaign and partner with other campaigns in the short term, while planning for an expanded or modified campaign in the long term.

In compliance with the City's recently issued Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) permit, this campaign will further educate the public on marine debris control issues. This campaign will help the City reduce floatable and settleable trash and debris that are discharged through the MS4, and thus serve as an interim measure while the City studies floatable sources, control methods, and develops a Stormwater Management Program (SWMP) to reduce pollution from stormwater. The information generated in the multiple phases of the campaign will inform and be incorporated into the SWMP as warranted.

The campaign will also help the City meet several goals outlined in OneNYC, the City's plan for a strong, sustainable, resilient, and equitable city. By tackling the issue of marine debris, the Media Campaign will contribute to OneNYC's initiative to reduce pollution from stormwater runoff. By amplifying the B.Y.O. Campaign and encouraging New Yorkers to move away from single-use items and towards more sustainable choices, the Media Campaign will also help the City fulfill the commitment of sending zero waste to landfills by the year 2030. Meeting this goal will require the reduction of single-use items, which are some of the most common marine debris. For example, single-use plastic bags are a major component of street litter that can clog storm drains and end up in New York Harbor. They make up 2.3 percent of the City's waste and cost the City nearly 10 million dollars per year to dispose of in landfills.

Campaign Strategy: Strong Brand + Data-Driven Messaging & Media

For more than seven years, New Yorkers have received guidance on ways to live more sustainable lifestyles from the City's public education program, GreeNYC. GreeNYC is a sophisticated marketing and data-driven program that aims to change the behaviors and thought processes of New Yorkers over time through strategic, multi-media education campaigns and events. With a strong brand supported by the recognizable and accessible "Birdie" mascot, initiatives have included encouraging residents to stop car engine idling, use air conditioners more efficiently in summer months, drink tap water, bike to work and reduce paper consumption.

GreeNYC uses a multi-disciplinary approach, combining marketing, research, climate psychology, and behavioral economics to engage residents to change their behavior across multiple sustainability sectors. This data-driven approach creates public education campaigns that are compelling and easily undertaken by the average New Yorker; the effort has enabled GreeNYC to connect with the public to achieve meaningful results and to arm New Yorkers with the right tools to make a difference.

In addition to the more traditional measures of media impressions and engagement, GreeNYC measures the environmental impacts of campaigns. Despite limited resources and intense competition for consumer attention in a highly saturated market, GreeNYC campaigns have had measurable impacts. For example, the "Stop Junk Mail Campaign," which encouraged and helped New Yorkers to opt out of unwanted mail has reduced paper waste by 3.5 million pounds so far.

The GreeNYC brand was conceived with the intention to shift away from the shame-, guilt-, and fear-based approaches that have been commonly used to drive environmental behavior change. By avoiding these approaches, GreeNYC aims to increase engagement and appeal to a broader audience than just those New Yorkers already inclined toward green behaviors. To further increase the accessibility of the brand, the mascot Birdie was designed to be a New Yorker engaging in the behaviors he is encouraging, rather than an authority on all things environmental. In addition to being featured graphically in GreeNYC materials, Birdie also represents GreeNYC at events held in the city to build awareness and participation. A recent survey of New Yorkers found that 45 percent were familiar with the mascot's image, demonstrating Birdie's success as representative of GreeNYC.

B.Y.O. Campaign

GreenNYC designed the B.Y.O. Campaign to promote living a less disposable life by encouraging the use of reusable bags, mugs, and bottles rather than their disposable counterparts. Annually, New Yorkers consume over 10 billion disposable bags, 2.5 million tons of paper and over 800,000 bottles of water. In addition to depleting natural resources and generating carbon emissions, these disposable items often end up as litter which can clog storm drains and ultimately become marine debris. With the idea that one major way to reduce waste, and therefore marine debris, is by not generating it, the B.Y.O. Campaign introduced a mindset of reusability through highlighting simple and actionable steps.

GreenNYC researched the barriers and motivators related to using reusable items. Forgetting to pack reusable items was identified as a primary barrier, while pressure from peers and education on waste impacts of disposable items were identified as key motivators. Based on this research, GreenNYC paired an easy to grasp call-to-action, bring your own, with a message targeting the motivators of peer pressure and environmental education. Artwork featured GreenNYC's mascot Birdie adopting each of the actions.

The multi-media campaign was designed to strategically reach New Yorkers using paid, owned and earned media while they are both at home and out-and-about. Starting May 11, 2015, bus, subway, digital ads, radio public service announcements, billboards, and New York City Department of Sanitation (DSNY) trucks reminded New Yorkers to bring reusable mugs, bottles, and bags when they are on-the-go. Media impressions, online engagement, pre- and post-campaign consumer surveys and an environmental impact analysis are being used to evaluate the success of the campaign. While data are still being parsed, initial results show that New Yorkers have an increased sense of responsibility for reducing waste. Even more impressively, the campaign is estimated to have resulted in the reduction of 150 million disposable plastic bags so far.



More and more New Yorkers are carrying reusable bottles. Join in! Bring Your Own bottle and fill it with top quality NYC tap water.



More and more New Yorkers are carrying reusable bags. Join in! Remember to Bring Your Own bag when shopping.



More and more New Yorkers are carrying reusable mugs. Join in! Bring Your Own mug to work and on-the-go.

 **SMALL STEPS, BIG STRIDES.**   Birdie_NYC, #BYONYC
nyc.gov/greenyc

Campaign Overview

The Media Campaign will follow GreenNYC's proven strategy. An accessible and compelling call-to-action aimed at reducing marine debris will be promoted by Birdie with data-driven messaging and media strategies. Given the applicability of the B.Y.O. Campaign to the issue of marine debris, the Media Campaign will utilize that call-to-action while developing additional phases that build upon the findings from analysis of the initial campaign. The Media Campaign is currently planned to be rolled out in three phases.

Phase I

Phase I will begin in February 2016, as required by the City's MS4 permit. As the winter months can be a difficult time to focus public attention on harbor water quality, Phase I will be a soft launch utilizing owned media, such as agency webpages, and social media, such as digital ads on Facebook, to extend the B.Y.O. Campaign. The B.Y.O. Campaign, crafted to have maximum impact after careful study of the barriers and motivators associated with using reusable items, already targets several prevalent types of marine debris by encouraging New Yorkers to switch to reusable bags, mugs, and bottles. Birdie will continue promoting the call-to-action adapted to the winter season of 2016. Given GreenNYC's research that forgetting to carry reusable items is a significant barrier to people's participation in the target action, in addition to the prompts via social and owned media, the City will partner with retailers to provide additional prompts at time of use.

Concurrent with the extension of the B.Y.O. Campaign, the City will evaluate lessons learned from the initial rollout of the B.Y.O. Campaign and research ways to best convey the problem of marine debris in the New York harbor and beyond to the general public. If appropriate, based on the evaluation and research, a new or modified call-to-action and supporting messaging will be designed for Phase II of the campaign.

Phase I will also include preparation for the Trash Challenge, which will ask retailers to join the effort to reduce the prevalence of single-use items. Grocery stores, coffee shops, fast food restaurants, drug stores, and other appropriate retailers will be identified and encouraged to take a variety of actions such as displaying signs reminding patrons to use reusable items, offering to refill water bottles or offering discounts to patrons who bring their own reusable mugs.

Phase II

Phase II will consist of an enhanced citywide campaign beginning in summer 2016, a season when New Yorkers are most active and likely to be engaged on environmental issues. Based on lessons learned from earlier GreenNYC campaigns, paid media featuring Birdie and an appropriate call-to-action will be strategically placed to reach New Yorkers citywide while they are both at home and on-the-go. Events featuring Birdie and potentially other prominent New Yorkers will be used to highlight the campaign.

The City will also begin implementation of the Trash Challenge during Phase II. Retailers in pilot communities located in separate storm sewer areas will be encouraged to promote the use of reusable products, thereby addressing a source of marine debris. As the Trash Challenge expands, it will focus outreach on retailers in these communities where marine debris is a particular concern.

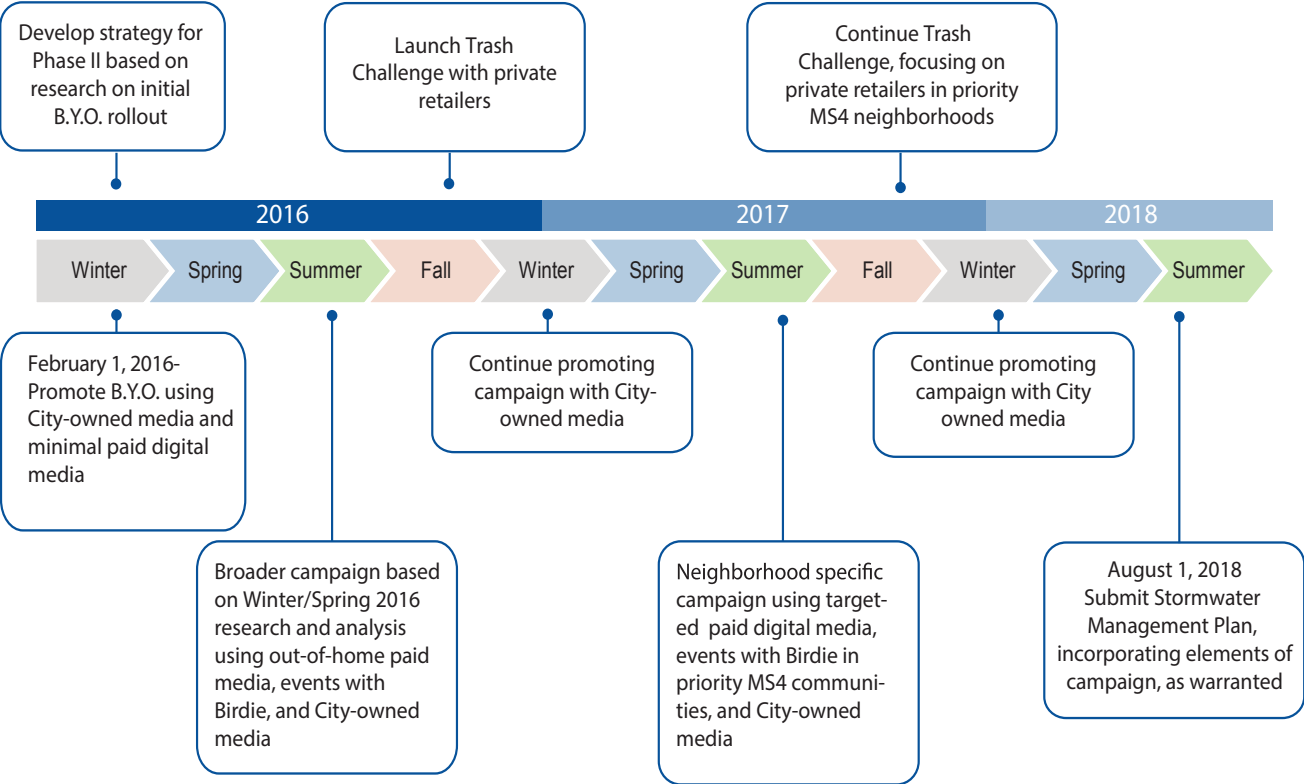
Phase III

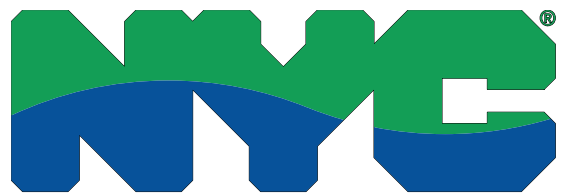
Phase III of the campaign will begin in summer 2017 and focus on specific neighborhoods where street litter is a persistent challenge and a likely source of marine debris in separate storm sewer areas. These neighborhoods will be identified using data from DSNY and the Mayor's Office of Operations Scorecard Inspection Program. Additionally, in partnership with the Harbor Estuary Program, Passaic Valley Sewerage Commission and local universities, a street litter survey data collection protocol will be developed and tested to obtain information on trash origin and composition in pilot New York City and New Jersey neighborhoods. Survey data collected in New York City will provide valuable information and be used to develop effective source reduction strategies for Phase III of the Media Campaign. Messaging and calls-to-action specific to identified neighborhoods' demographics and street litter sources will be evaluated, designed and implemented.

Campaign Partnerships

The campaign is an interagency initiative. DEP is leading the effort, with the Mayor's Office of Sustainability (MOS) and DSNY also committing resources, including the GreenNYC brand and marketing expertise of its Director within MOS. DEP is exploring additional partnerships with the DPR and DOT. DEP will seek private partners for funding and promotion of reusable items. DEP will also engage Business Improvement Districts, which have played an important role in keeping the City clean. Finally, DEP will engage non-for-profit organizations, local universities and community groups.

Campaign Schedule





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