



Environmental Crimes Task Force of Central Ohio
2016 Community Impact Report

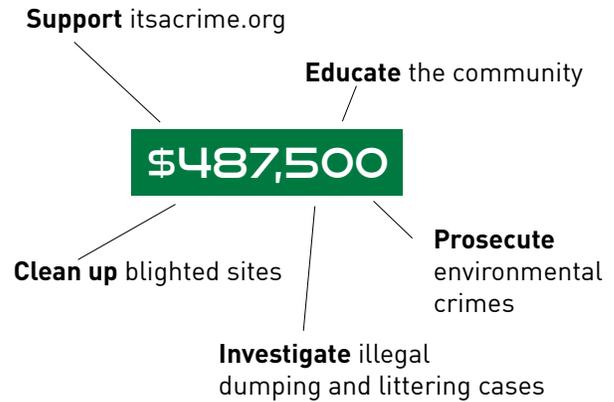
About the Environmental Crimes Task Force

Established in 1992, the Environmental Crimes Task Force of Central Ohio (ECTF) is Franklin County's multi-governmental, anti-littering and illegal dumping collaborative.

Comprised of representatives from SWACO, the city of Columbus, the Franklin County Sheriff's Office, Prosecutor's Office and Public Health, the ECTF works to protect the environmental health and safety of central Ohio residents and communities. Members of the Task Force collaborate daily to investigate and prosecute environmental crimes, schedule outreach events and respond to inquiries.

Educating Franklin County residents about how to properly and safely dispose of their unwanted materials – such as hazardous materials, yard waste and construction debris – is a high priority for the ECTF.

2016 ECTF Approved Budget



In 2016, SWACO budgeted \$487,500 for the ECTF, which represents a 5-percent reduction from the 2015 approved budget.

What to Do if You See Illegal Dumping or Littering?



Call the 24/7 hotline
614.871.5322



Submit a report and photos online
itsacrime.org

Report the Right Information

Collect the following information before you make a report and be ready to share it with the ECTF:

- Incident date and time
- Location
- Description of the offender(s)
- Type of material littered or dumped
- Pictures/videos
- Vehicle make and license plate number (if applicable)

The ECTF employs several methods to reach the community, including attending community meetings and events. The task force regularly participates in the city of Columbus' Neighborhood Pride events, the Franklin County Environmental Court's open house and the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission's (MORPC) annual Summit on Sustainability.

The ECTF also provides trainings to other law enforcement and environmental partners about:

- Open burning and air pollution
- Illegal disposal of construction and demolition debris
- Littering and open dumping

As part of these outreach efforts, the ECTF educates residents and businesses about how to identify and report illegal dumping and littering. In 2016, the ECTF received 2,110 reports – a 67-percent increase over reports made in 2015.

ECTF Improves Public Health and Safety

KEEPING NEIGHBORHOODS SAFE

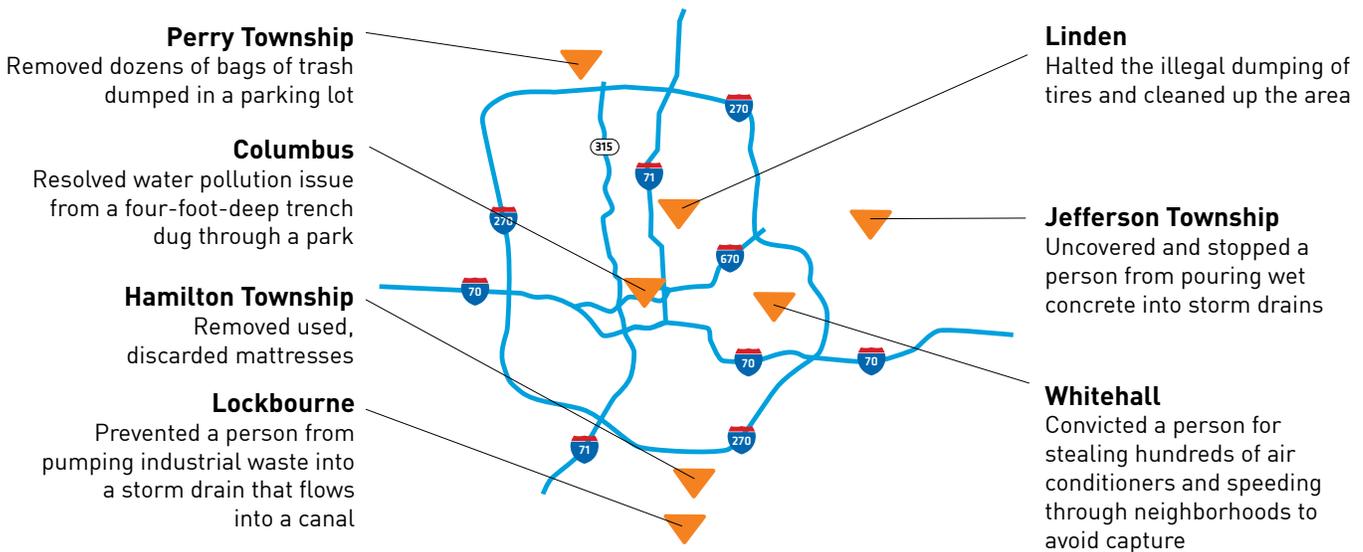
Many illegally dumped materials contain toxic or hazardous substances that can threaten the surface or groundwater supply. Burning tires pollutes the air, which can be harmful to the health of residents and damage the environment. Decaying garbage and yard waste in residential areas can attract rodents and mosquitos, create unpleasant odors and give the appearance of a neighborhood in decline, which can promote crime and lower property values.

When necessary, prosecution can be a powerful tool in protecting a neighborhood's safety.

In 2016, 22 defendants were convicted of 31 environmental crimes obtained by ECTF partners and were collectively sentenced to:

- Serve more than 13 years in jail
- Pay more than \$50,000 in fines and restitution
- Provide hundreds of hours of community service removing trash from roadways, waterways and parks

Snapshot of Neighborhoods Impacted by ECTF



KEEPING NEIGHBORHOODS CLEAN

In addition to cases of open polluting and illegal dumping, Franklin County's Environmental Court, presided over by Judge Daniel R. Hawkins, rules on cases involving housing code violations and zoning issues referred directly from the ECTF.

Recently, Franklin County, the Environmental Court, the Alcohol, Drug and

Mental Health (ADAMH) Agency and Southeast Mental Health developed the Central Ohio Hoarding Collaborative. The collaborative works to remove hoarded materials and waste from properties and provide support services to the affected individuals and their families.

As part of this collaborative, SWACO provides containers to ensure the safe removal of debris from an individual's property. SWACO and the Environmental Court continue to collaborate on additional partnerships to improve the health and safety of central Ohio residents and communities.



ECTF Saves Taxpayer Money

COMMUNITY REINVESTMENT

In partnership with the Franklin County Municipal Court, individuals convicted of illegal dumping or littering may be sentenced to community service hours. Community service is a sentencing alternative that holds individuals accountable for their actions and provides an opportunity for them to repay their debt and make our communities a better place to live and work.

Additionally, convicted individuals are also ordered to pay restitution for their crimes. In 2016, \$5,300 paid by defendants and collected by the Franklin County Municipal Court was reinvested into ECTF programs. The revenue covered costs associated with community service expenses (safety vests, gloves and bags), training for ECTF members, proper tire disposal reimbursement and other expenses to keep Franklin County communities safe and clean.

MITIGATING CLEAN-UP COSTS

Whenever possible, the ECTF attempts to work with property owners to clean up a dumping site instead of pursuing prosecution, which can be a costly process. In 2016, the ECTF finalized a years-long effort to remediate a site in northeast Columbus.

In 2012, the ECTF was informed of an illegal dumping site that involved 42,000 cubic yards of waste material on a leased property, of which the property owner was unaware. When the site was ordered closed in 2014, a 2.6-acre pile of trash more than 45 feet high was left behind.

The ECTF worked collaboratively with the property owner to develop a clean-up plan for the site. Instead of filing criminal charges on the property owner, everyone worked together to remediate the property over a period of 24 months. The site has been cleared of waste and is no longer harmful to the neighborhood.

Due to the efforts of the ECTF in 2016, there are no significant illegal dump sites located in Franklin County.

Collaborative Clean-Up

Through extensive outreach and engagement, the ECTF was able to avoid costly prosecution by working with the owner to clean up the property.

2.6 ACRE

pile of trash

24 MONTHS

to clean up

1,497 TONS

of waste removed

\$560,000

of Franklin County taxpayer money saved

A SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR STRATEGIC PARTNERS:



columbus.gov



environmentalcourt.us



prosecutor.franklincountyohio.gov



sheriff.franklincountyohio.gov



myfcph.org