



KEEPING CURRENT

With the Clinton River Watershed Council



Every Little Bit Helps

Chris Bobryk

A wind gust carried the wrapper like a desert tumbleweed across a patch of woods. I chased it, hunched over, weaving through brush that tugged at my shirt, trash bag and face. This moment reminded me of a scene from Rocky II where Mickey explained why Rocky had to chase chickens, "If you can catch this thing, you can catch greased lighting!" Luckily, the wrapper tucked itself under the umbrella of a mayapple and I grabbed it, proudly stuffing it into my bag.

I was on a solo [Weekly Clean](#) mission at Whispering Woods Kiwanis Park in Shelby Township and decided to focus on a small section of timber adjacent to the entrance next to a parking lot; a great place to find some trash. A few folks enjoying the blustery day stopped to tell me their trash stories, which always ended with something like, "The trash keeps coming and I keep picking it up. Every little bit helps, ya know."

The presence of litter in our environment is an immense and complex problem that touches every corner on Earth. From our backyards to the [Mariana Trench](#) in the Pacific Ocean, the deepest spot on Earth, we find human-created garbage. Our [mismanagement of trash](#) can have far reaching effects on the health and well-being of our oceans, lakes, rivers, and lives. Plastics, especially, are a growing problem. It's estimated that between [1.15 and 2.41 metric tons](#) of floating plastics enter our oceans from rivers every year. That's about six Empire State buildings floating into our oceans on a yearly basis.

As you can imagine, this is a big problem and there is no simple solution. But every little bit of action helps. Charles "Chuck" Lumpkin - a Clinton Township resident and avid Weekly Clean volunteer - recently explained to us why he picks up trash,

"Two things: first of all it cleans up all the pollution, and second, it gives a chance for interesting people to get together and do some worthwhile work to keep our environment as clean as possible."

The selfless dedication of our volunteers like Chuck, who participate in Weekly Clean and other CRWC cleanup events, is one of the most effective and easy ways to protect our rivers and lakes. CRWC supports communities, groups, and individuals interested in cleaning up their neighborhoods by providing equipment (grabbers, bags, gloves) and coordinating locations along the Clinton River or Lake St. Clair that need a little bit of love and attention. This truly is a wonderful way to reconnect to your community or favorite green space, make some memories, and have a positive impact on our environment.

"My most memorable Weekly Clean experience was probably the time on the Clinton River when several of us pulled a refrigerator out of the River." Chuck reminisced.



Cleaning up our environment is by no means a solo act. It requires awareness, responsiveness, and tenacity from volunteers, local decision makers, and state leaders. We need to work together to move forward in our cleanup efforts, and sometimes, we just need a few extra hands to move a refrigerator. Anyone can participate and every little bit helps; we are here to [help you get started](#).

"Any trash that gets into the Clinton River ends up going to Lake St. Clair, eventually, and polluting the environment."

~ Charles Lumpkin

