

PROJECT LITTER GITTER

REDUCING LITTER IN CENTRAL ALABAMA'S WATERWAYS



Freshwater Land Trust is leading a coordinated effort to reduce litter in Jefferson County's waterways by installing litter collection devices known as litter gitters.

In 2020, FLT received a grant from the Environmental Protection Agency to fund six litter gitters over three years, in addition to anti-litter programming. Thanks to River Network, the City of Homewood, Jefferson County Department of Health, and Birmingham Coca-Cola United Bottling, there are ten litter gitters throughout Jefferson County as of July 2021, removing litter from both the Black Warrior and Cahaba River watersheds.

Since the first litter gitter was installed in December 2019, over **five tons** of litter has been removed from Valley, Village, Shades, Little Shades, and Pinchgut creeks. Of this, 25% has been recycled.



ALABAMA'S LITTER PROBLEM

- In 2014, Alabama was ranked as the 16th dirtiest state according to the American State Litter Scorecard.
- Trash on the ground is carried by rain into roadside ditches and storm drains where it flows and pollutes lakes, rivers, and streams.
- In 2017, Alabama's Department of Transportation (ALDOT) spent \$6.8 million to clean up trash on roadways.
- ALDOT spends \$1.9 million each year on litter pick-up across the Birmingham region.

EPA FUNDING

In 2020, FLT and partners were selected to receive a \$500,000 project grant as part of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Trash-Free Waters program. This grant was one of only three awarded in Alabama.

"It's great to see these projects move upstream. We can make a meaningful impact on marine debris and aquatic trash here in Birmingham," said EPA Region IV Administrator Mary Walker.

KEY PARTNERS

Key partners include:

- Black Warrior Riverkeeper
- Cahaba Riverkeeper
- Osprey Initiative, LLC
- The Cities of Bessemer, Birmingham, Brighton, Homewood, Trussville, and Vestavia Hills
- Jefferson County Department of Health
- Jefferson County Conservation District
- Litter Quitters
- Village Creek Society
- River Network
- Coca-Cola Foundation
- Birmingham Coca-Cola Bottling Company
- EPA

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Project Litter Gitter focuses specifically on local creeks and rivers in Central Alabama. The goals of the project are to:

- Remove trash in or about to enter waterways
- Reduce future litter
- Educate the community about the importance of trash abatement and clean water, with a focus on students

Install Litter Gitter Devices

Currently, ten litter gitter devices are in the water: three in Birmingham, two in Homewood, and one each in Bessemer, Brighton, Trussville, and Vestavia Hills. Alabama-based company Osprey Initiative installs, maintains, removes trash from, and shares data from the devices and recycles as much collected litter as possible.

Educate Students and the Public

Project Litter Gitter also supports Jefferson County's Litter Quitters education program, led by the Jefferson County Conservation District. Grant funding will help build on this program's success and reach more schools and students over the next three years, as well as support new communications materials regarding the hazards of littering.



JEFFERSON
COUNTY
CONSERVATION
DISTRICT



HOW YOU CAN HELP

You can donate to support future litter gitter devices or recommend potential litter gitter sponsors. Additional financial and community support for litter gitters is critical in order to combat litter effectively across our region and sustainably fund litter gitter devices. You can also become a "Litter Gitter Getter" and be listed as a project supporter on FLT's website and project materials.

freshwaterlandtrust.org/litter-gitters

CONTACT

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