

# Protecting Our World



## Snuffing Out Toxic Tobacco Waste

(NAPSA)—It's a little known fact that smoking hurts both your health and the environment. The earth is not an ashtray, but, sadly, the remnants of cigarette smoking are the most common source of litter collected across the world's shores.

According to environmental cleanup reports, nearly 2.2 million cigarettes and cigarette filters are picked up internationally from beaches and inland waterways every year. There are more than 1 million in the United States alone. Thousands of cigarette lighters, cigar tips and tobacco packages or wrappers are also found. Cigarette trash is the No. 1 littered item found on U.S. beaches and waterways as well as on roadways and streets. Tobacco products comprise roughly 38 percent of litter found along U.S. roadways.

"Smokers might be tossing their butts without realizing the impact it could have on the environment," said Cheryl Heaton, DrPH, president and CEO of Legacy. "It's possible that smokers think that since tobacco is organic, its waste is harmless," stated Dr. Tom Novotny, professor of Global Health in the Graduate School of Public Health at San Diego State University. "However, that is not the case, because both the plastic filters and the remnants of tobacco are poisonous to children and other living organisms. These contain nicotine, heavy metals and other toxic chemicals."

In fact, cigarette filters are not biodegradable. Under ideal conditions, the sun breaks down the filter but only into smaller particles of toxic waste.



**One way to help save the earth may be to stop smoking.**

### Other Environmental Problems

There are other environmental consequences of tobacco use, including:

- Deforestation as a result of tobacco production: Wood is used in the curing process (drying the leaves), and land used for tobacco farming is devalued for other crop uses.
- Wild fires are often caused by cigarette smoking.
- Solid, liquid and airborne wastes, several considered hazardous, are produced during the manufacturing process.

### Where To Get Help

Smokers who want to quit for good can get help from a national smoking cessation campaign called EX at [www.BecomeAnEX.org](http://www.BecomeAnEX.org). It encourages smokers to "relearn" life without cigarettes and provides evidence-based tools to help smokers overcome their addiction with practice and preparation. The campaign is run by the nonprofit organization, Legacy, which is dedicated to building a world where young people reject tobacco and anyone can quit. Want to learn more about how to stop this form of environmental pollution? Visit [www.cigwaste.org](http://www.cigwaste.org).