

trashblitz

COMMUNITY

WINYAH RIVERS ALLIANCE

NORTH CAROLINA AND SOUTH CAROLINA

GREATER WINYAH BAY WATERSHED

2023



5 GYRES
SCIENCE TO SOLUTIONS



PROJECT

Winyah Rivers Alliance is a science-based environmental nonprofit focused on protecting water and land for the benefit of local communities, our families, and our future. Collectively, we refer to this large watershed (the 3rd largest on the East Coast) as the greater Winyah Bay watershed because all rivers ultimately discharge into the Winyah Bay estuary at Georgetown, South Carolina. It is also known as the Lower Pee Dee Basin (Hydrologic Unit Code 030402).

In 2023, we collected data specific to our numerous Riverkeeper trash cleanups, including Riverkeeper Adopt-a-Landing, South Carolina's Beach Sweep River Sweep, Palmetto Pride's Great American Cleanup, SC Lieutenant Governor Pamela Evette's Grab a Bag Challenge, North Carolina Big Sweep, American Rivers National River Cleanup, and other initiatives.

Through TrashBlitz, we amplify our efforts to protect clean water and engage more volunteers in the collection and documentation of plastic trash impacting their watershed. This project was created to increase community engagement in stewardship for litter prevention and cleanups, pressure local efforts to enforce anti-litter laws, and co-develop locally driven initiatives to prevent plastic waste from entering our local waterways.

COMMUNITY SCIENCE

TRASHBLITZ PARTNER

Big change starts at the community level, and TrashBlitz is a proven tool to increase environmental stewardship, build coalitions, and drive policy change. In 2023-26, 5 Gyres will expand the TrashBlitz program to six new cities/regions with the support of local coalitions and organizations, including Winyah Rivers Alliance. 5 Gyres awards funding and on-the-ground support to groups that can leverage the TrashBlitz research platform to drive change in their communities.

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Winyah Rivers Alliance is proud to partner with 5 Gyres, a leader in the global movement against plastic pollution. Through education, advocacy, community building, clean hearts and dirty hands, we will continue the battle to protect our rivers and open spaces for future generations.

- Debra Buffkin, Executive Director

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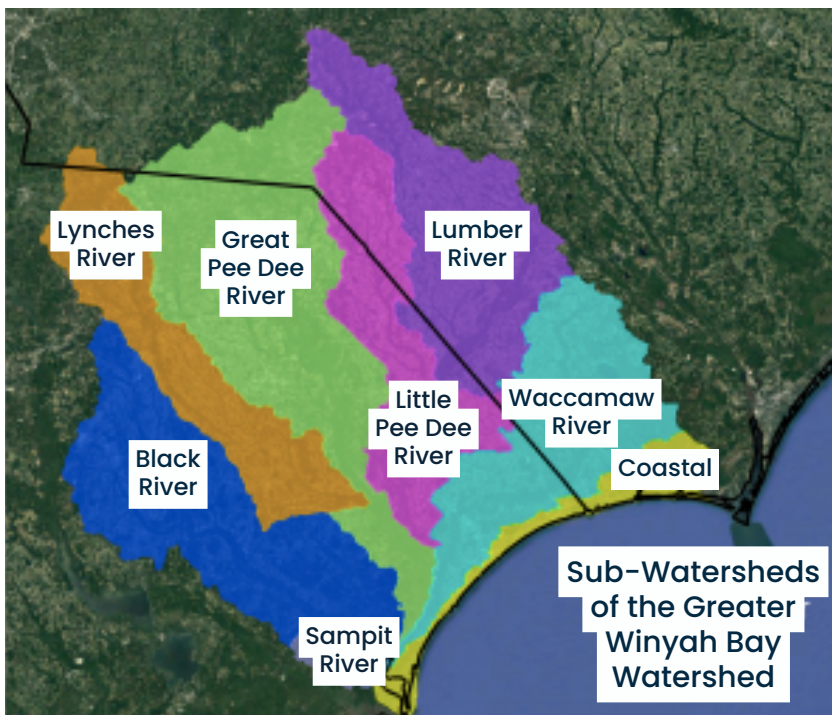


METHODOLOGY

TrashBlitz data collection methodology is derived from the United Nations Joint Group of Experts on the Scientific Aspects of Marine Environmental Protection (UN GESAMP) report that outlines standardized measuring tools to assess plastic pollution. TrashBlitz aligns with the goals of global NGOs to measure plastic pollution and give government agencies, municipalities, business leaders, and the public the data they need to focus solutions on mitigating the problem.

TrashBlitz partners mobilize volunteers around the U.S. to organize cleanups at their nearby communities. From May to November 2023, participants took part and submitted data on a voluntary basis.

This report relies on self-reported data submitted by Winyah Rivers Alliance and their volunteers. The data presented is a sample of plastic waste found across the Greater Winyah Bay Watershed. It is possible that some brands not captured in this report may produce even more plastic pollution than those listed in this report.



DATA COLLECTION SITES

Winyah Rivers Alliance and their volunteers collected TrashBlitz data from a total of 15 sites within the Greater Winyah Bay Watershed, throughout North and South Carolina. These locations included boat landings, drainage ditches, roadsides, and waterfront properties in the basin.

CLEANUP LOCATION & WATERSHED



BLACK RIVER

- A. Cowshead Landing
- B. Rocky Point Community Forest
- C. Plantersville

LUMBER RIVER

- D. McNeil's Bridge Landing

LYNCHES RIVER

- E. Alexander Landing
- F. Halfmoon Landing

LITTLE PEE DEE RIVER

- G. Galivants Ferry Landing
- H. Huggins Landing
- I. Pitts Landing
- J. Sampson Landing

GREAT PEE DEE RIVER

- K. Highway 301 Landing
- L. Port Harrelson/Yauhannah Landings

SAMPIT RIVER

- M. East Bay/Morgan Park
- N. Carol Ashmore Campbell Marine Complex

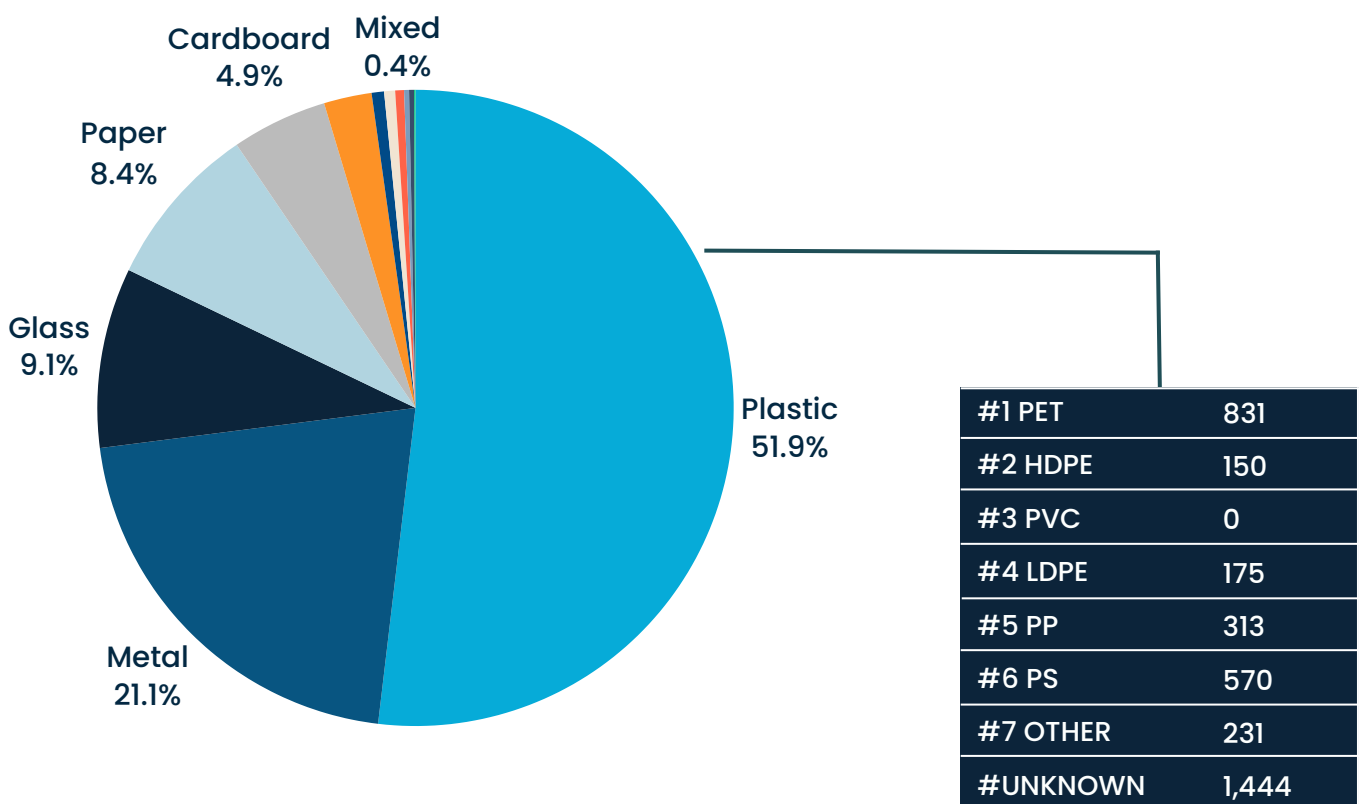
WACCAMAW RIVER

- O. Coastal Carolina University Campus

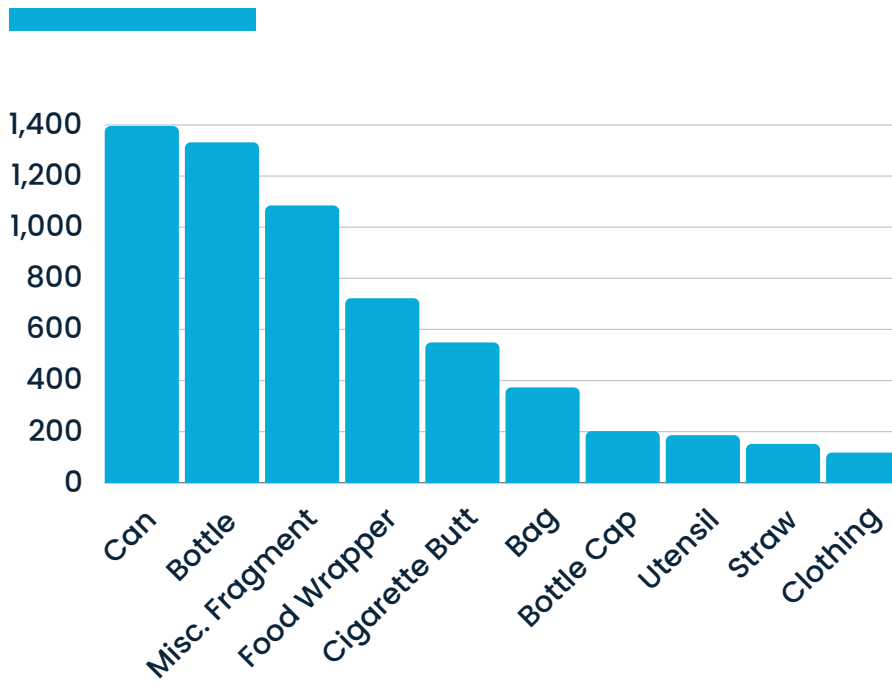
RESULTS

7,482 pieces of trash were logged on TrashBlitz data cards over the course of 15 cleanup events.

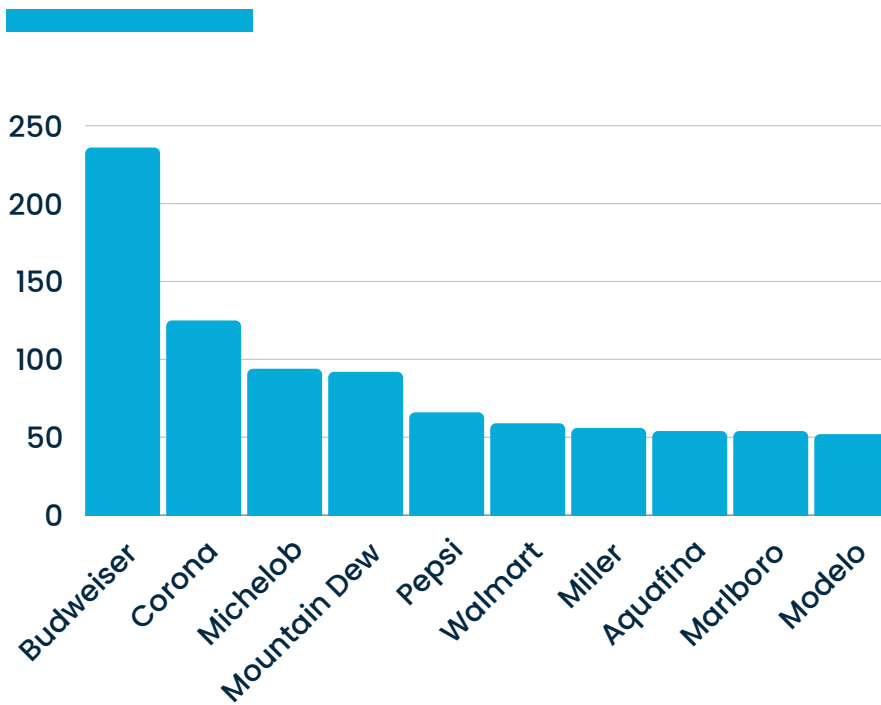
- Plastic was the top material recorded, making up more than 50% of identifiable trash.
- Anheuser-Busch products were the most frequently collected branded items.
- Bottles, bags, and cigarette butts were among the top plastic items recorded.
- The highest density of material was recovered from wooded areas along waterways, rather than in parking areas or entry roads.



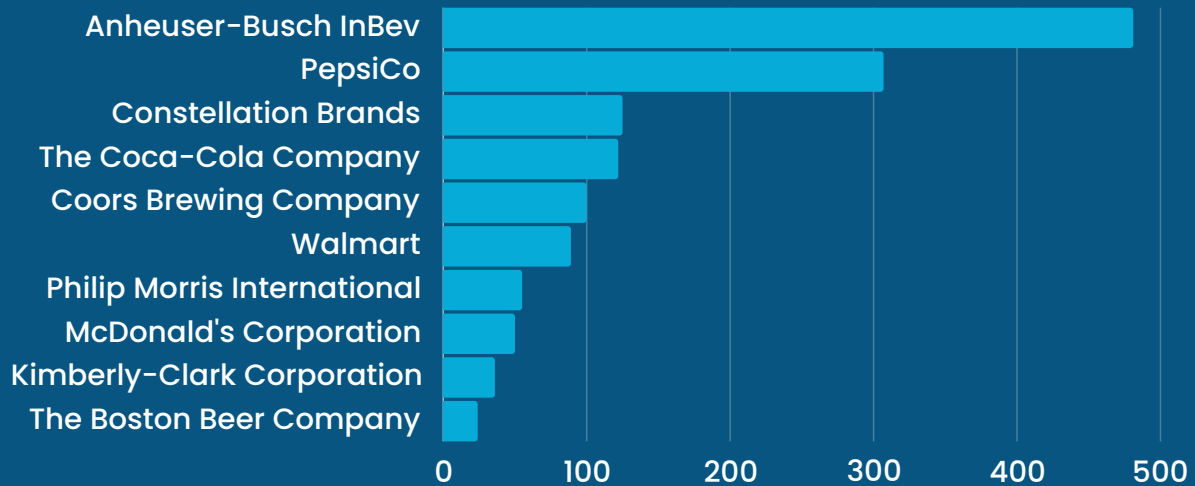
RESULTS: BY ITEM



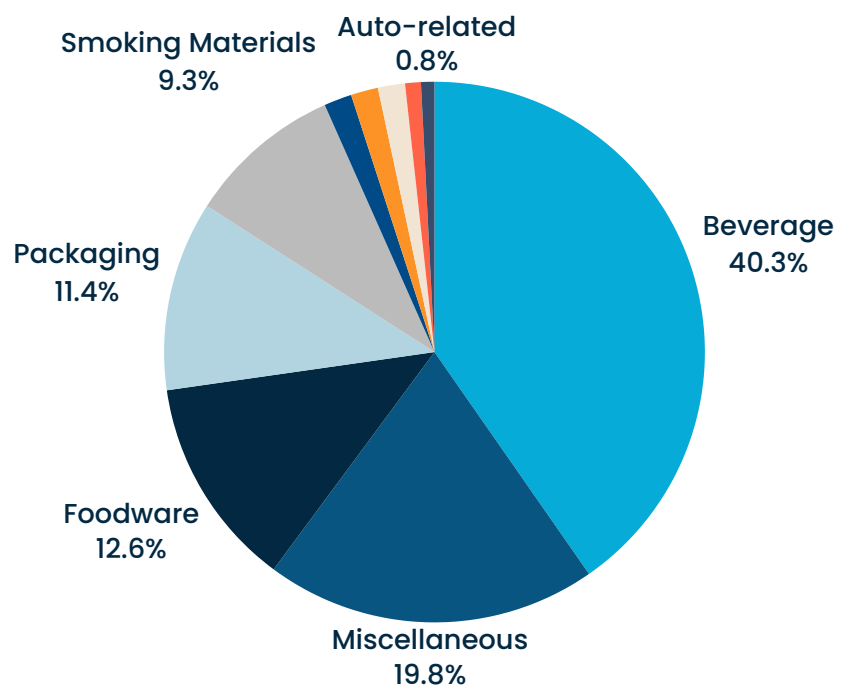
RESULTS: BY BRAND



RESULTS: BY PARENT COMPANY



RESULTS: BY CATEGORY



RECOMMENDATIONS

INSTALL INFORMATIVE & PROHIBITIVE SIGNAGE

Mitigation begins with education. Many, if not most, of the survey areas lacked adequate signage addressing illegal littering or dumping. Such signs should include the penalties ascribed under state law for littering, as well as the potential risks it can pose to public health and the environment. Fines and accountability encourage people to think twice before missing the trash can.

IMPLEMENT A BEVERAGE CONTAINER RECYCLING PROGRAM

Of the over 7,000 individual items collected and logged in this report, cans and bottles constitute the two most frequently found items. States like Iowa have implemented “Bottle Bills” that financially incentivize recycling of aluminum, glass, and plastic beverage containers. Bottle return policies actively discourage litter and also motivate individuals to clean their communities.

INSTALL CIGARETTE BUTT RECEPTACLES

Cigarette filters make up a large percentage of the litter found during cleanups. Due to many of these areas having paved surfaces, these butts are more likely to find their way into the water when left on the ground. However, a small-to-medium sized receptacle, mounted on a post or pole, could help encourage smokers to be more mindful about leaving their butts behind.

URGE BUSINESSES TO DO THEIR PART

Plastic cups, fast food wrappers, bags, product packaging, and similar branded items make up a large portion of the litter data in this report, originating from both corporations and local businesses alike. Businesses can help actively combat litter and plastic pollution by joining local cleanup events, using eco-friendly packaging, or by joining the Winyah Rivers Alliance Adopt-a-Landing program.

APPENDIX

ITEMS: A full list of items tagged in the TrashBlitz research platform.

Beverage Can (includes other cans)	1396
Beverage Bottles (includes other bottles)	1332
Miscellaneous Fragment	1085
Food Wrapper	722
Cigarette Butts	549
Grocery Bags (includes other bags)	373
Unknown item	352
Bottle Caps	202
Forks, Knives, Spoons	186
Straws	152
Clothing Item (Jacket, Shirt, Pants)	118
Take Out/Away Containers	110
Plastic Film	102
cup	87
Plate/Bowl/Tray	85
Tobacco Packaging/Wrap	80
broken car part	43
Bullet/ Shell Casing	41
Fireworks	39
Tissues	36
Bait Bags/Containers	33
Bags	31
Cigarette Lighters	23
Diapers	23
Cigarette Box	21
Toys	21
Medical Waste	18
Ppe - Face Masks	17
Fishing Line	14
Rope	14
Boxes	13
Broken Appliance	13
Treated Wood (Not Driftwood)	12
Cigar Tips	10

E-Cigarette	10
tires	10
Batteries	9
Nitrile Gloves	9
Zip Ties	9
Tile	8
Lures/Hooks/Sinkers	7
6-Pack Holders	6
Condoms	6
Cleaning Spray Bottle	5
Juice Box/ Pouch	5
Net	5
Oil Containers	5
Medical Container	4
Shoes	4
Furniture	3
Menstrual Products	3
Sign/ Poster/ Banner	3
Balloons	2
Tools & Multitools	2
Toothpicks, Floss	2
Bracelets/ Necklaces	1
Buckets, Baskets And Crates	1
Buoy And Floats	1
cables	1
Clothing hanger	1
Combs And Brushes	1
Compressor	1
Gas tank	1
Hand Sanitizer	1
Handsoap	1
Lids	1
Pen	1

APPENDIX

BRANDS: A full list of brands tagged in the TrashBlitz research platform.

n/a	5671
Budweiser	236
Corona	125
Michelob	94
Mountain Dew	92
Pepsi	66
Walmart	59
Miller	56
Aquafina	54
Marlboro	54
Modelo	52
McDonalds	50
Natural Ice/ Natural Light	49
Coca Cola	46
Gatorade	37
Kleenex	36
Busch	34
Great Value	30
Coors	29
Twisted Tea	24
Taco Bell	20
Dasani	19
Doritos	19
Food Lion	19
Red Bull	18
Solo	18
BodyArmor	17
Fireball Cinnamon Whisky	17
Baby Wipes	15
Seagrams	13

Smirnoff / Smirnoff Ice	12
Wendy's	12
Dollar General	11
Frito Lay	11
Keystone Light	11
Truly Hard Seltzer	11
Bic	10
Sprite	10
Brisk	9
Clover Valley	9
Wicked Weed Brewing	8
Cook Out	7
Dr. Pepper	7
Game Cigar	7
Milwaukee's Best	7
Monster	7
Bojangles	6
Crown Royal	6
Ice House	6
Kool-Aid	6
Rayovac	6
Slim Jim	6
Yeunling Beer	6
Armour Vienna Sausages	5
Cheetos	5
Heineken	5
Lay's	5
Minute Maid	5
Swisher Sweets	5
Blue Moon	4

APPENDIX

Continued: A full list of brands tagged in the TrashBlitz research platform.

Cheese Puffs	4
Four Loko	4
Icehouse	4
Majic Spray Paint	4
Mike's Hard Lemonade	4
Misty	4
Seneca	4
Yoo-hoo	4
Yuengling	4
7 Up	3
Bootlegger	3
Burger King	3
Dunkin Donuts	3
Fanta	3
Hot Spot	3
Maruchan	3
Mellow Yellow	3
political sign	3
Angry Orchard	2
Bahama Mama	2
Big Red Worms	2
Cerveza Victoria	2
Core Power	2
Dole	2
Grey Goose	2
Hennessy	2
Hershey's	2
Jack Daniel's	2
Kool	2
Nehi	2
Pennzoil	2

PowerAde	2
Redd's Apple Ale	2
Sam's Water	2
Shock Top	2
Starbucks	2
Steel Reserve	2
Stella Artois	2
Tampax	2
TEN Water	2
Twist Up	2
Valvoline	2
3 Musketeers	1
7-Eleven	1
AirHeads	1
Apple Jacks	1
Bacardi	1
Barefoot Wine	1
Biscuitville	1
Black & Mild	1
Bumble Bee Tuna	1
Burnetts	1
chick-fil-a	1
Chips Ahoy	1
Clear Fruit	1
Colt	1
Deer Park	1
Dial	1
Duracell	1
Energizer	1
Fabreeze	1
Family Dollar	1

APPENDIX

Continued: A full list of brands tagged in the TrashBlitz research platform.

Fiji Water	1
Frostie	1
GHOST Energy	1
Good Year	1
Goya	1
Hanes	1
Haribo	1
Havoline Oil	1
Hawaiian Punch	1
Heath	1
Herr's Salt and Vinegar Chips	1
HUG	1
IGA	1
Jeffers Pet	1
Jim Beam	1
Jimmy Dean	1
Johnsonville Sausage	1
Kahlúa	1
Keebler	1
krylon spray paint	1
M&M	1
mac's	1
Magic Bait	1
MD 20/20	1
Milky Way	1
Nerds	1
Nesquik	1
Newport	1
Niagara Water	1
Nobivac	1
NOS Energy	1

Nue Vodka	1
Off Mosquito Repellant	1
Old Tyme Cocktail	1
Pacifico	1
Paper Mate	1
Pop Tarts	1
Popeye's	1
Pure Leaf	1
Purell	1
Quickcrete	1
Rain Vodka	1
Refridgerant	1
Revlon	1
Rice Krispies	1
Rockstar Energy	1
Smartwater	1
Sunkist	1
Tropicana	1
Twix	1
V8	1
White Owl	1
Wormville	1
York Peppermint Pattie	1
Z-Man Fishing Products	1
Zevia	1
Zig Zag	1

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Learn more about work being conducted in the Winyah Bay Watershed [here](#).

Learn more about becoming a TrashBlitz partner [here](#).
