



A "Please Leave Only Your Footprints" billboard is erected on Route 50 near WalMart in July, courtesy of the Ocean City Chapter of the Surfrider Foundation. The campaign, urging visitors to the beach to pick up trash before leaving for the day, is also touted on a banner at the foot of the Route 90 bridge leading into Ocean City, and on garbage cans along the beach.

Surfriders to expand 'Leave only your footprints' campaign in '08

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(March 7, 2008) Inundating the resort with the message, "Leave only your footprints," has helped make the beach a cleaner place, according to the Ocean City Chapter of the Surfrider Foundation.

Year three of the Surfrider's five-year campaign to clean up Ocean City's beaches and educate the public on how to keep them clean begins this year, and member Terry Steimer shared the organization's planned efforts with the City Council on Monday.

Most debris on the beach is cigarette butts and plastic materials, Steimer said. To eliminate this and other trash left behind by beach goers, the Surfriders adopted the motto "Please leave only your footprints," to encourage people to be mindful of what they leave behind.

"I believe we're making some headway on this by education," Steimer said.

In the first two years of the campaign, the Surfriders stenciled more than 700 beach trash cans and city trash trucks

Last year, the trashcans at the inlet included the message in Spanish, to educate the number of Hispanic visitors to that area of the beach. Steimer said he was "very impressed with how clean it was there" as a result of the program.

Mayor Rick Meehan agreed.

"I think it's been a tremendously successful campaign," he said.

In 2008, the Surfriders want to add a footprint stencil to the motto printed on trash trucks; because the motto appears in so many spots around town, Steimer said people might no longer notice it. Adding a new image could draw more eyes to the message.

The Surfriders also plan to partner with Comcast Spotlight this year in running student-produced public service announcements on television that promote the importance of keeping the beach clean. Stephen Decatur High School students are being asked to create a 60-second message that will air on Comcast Spotlight and on other local channels, Steimer said.

"Repetition is the key to the campaign," he said.