

# **New Bedford's Unofficial City Dumps: Not built by "evil" corporations, but narcissistic city residents**

Humanity has a long history when it comes to abusing the environment. The SouthCoast in general, and greater New Bedford specifically, are no exceptions. The most infamous being the 572 toxic plots of land, including our harbor and Acushnet River, polluted with heavily contaminated with PCBs – the legacy of Monsanto.

While Monsanto is still raising the ire of environmental activists today, that is simply because they are a face to the pollution and an easy target to seek out. However, Monsanto was not the sole contributor to the pollution: greater New Bedford citizens are equally to blame.

For decades the common citizen would dump waste, chemical, even hazardous right into the harbor or river. If they had too much solid waste or didn't want to risk getting caught, they would simply find a secluded section of woods to toss their tires, mattresses, or refuse. In fact, since the first settlers to the region, the environment was the designated town dump and the practice persists today.



While the government is now a watchdog that cracks down on “evil” corporations, they can’t monitor the systems with equal efficiency – the common man or woman can dump away and then disappear and that’s exactly what they do. Do you recall a time when you or someone you know got busted by the police for getting rid of a tire or mattress? It rarely happens. Police often feel there are more important crimes and concerns.

In fact, on any given drive during your day you are likely to come across someone tossing garbage out their car window, chucking cigarette butts or wrappers into the wind, or you’ll pull into a parking lot and see a Dunkin’ Donuts cup in the parking spot – “The garbage barrel is soooooo far away and cost too many calories and I could blast out a text on my phone in that time – screw the environment!”

While that is sarcasm and hyperbole as no one actually says that, but it is the subconscious thought that leads to those actions. Narcissistic actions to boot. If that stings, then guess what – you are likely one of those selfish narcissists doing those things. If that’s the case, then I don’t care about your feelings. Smarten up – get some perspective.

The same goes for any walk in public areas or attempt to sit on designated park areas. If you aren’t paying attention you will step or sit and dog-poo since these narcissists don’t

clean up after their dogs or assume responsibility for it.

Having grown up in greater New Bedford for decades, I have seen what I shall dub "Unofficial City Dumps." These are sites that seem to accumulate garbage from litterbugs over the years. Sadly, I have never ever seen these city dumps cleared away over the decades. With so many Environmental Police, community volunteers or those sentenced to community service, I have to wonder why not?



Now, lest you think I am a hypocrite, I am one of those guys that picks up garbage on the ground everywhere I go. I do not think to myself "Who tossed that McDonald's wrappers onto the ground? What a jerk!" I have the mindset that it is my planet and our community and I assume responsibility knowing that if I don't pick it up and toss it, who will? There is great wisdom in the maxim of Mahatma Gandhi who said: "Be the change that you wish to see in the world." It literally cost me a bleen's worth of time to stoop over as I'm walking.

The unofficial town dumps have accumulated so much trash over years that to tackle one of them would initially require a rather large group of people. Once cleared of trash, a much larger group perhaps even one person, could visit periodically



and maintain it.

When it comes to these unofficial city dumps, I believe they have been around so long because they have become “part of the furniture.” If you grew up in the area, you get so used to certain features that they no longer stand out. You get used to it and no longer “see” it. This is likely why these sites don’t attract the attention of the good and well-meaning Environmental Police and volunteers.

Some of the sites that are atrocious, borderline obnoxious? Alongside the highway across from Antonio’s Restaurant. No, it has nothing to do with Antonio’s, as the refuse has piled up from people throwing it out their windows as they take the highway exit and it spills down the side. For as long as I have been eating at one of the best restaurants on earth, the view has always been that city dump.



### *Refuse piling up at East Beach*

Another spot is off of Nash Road near the indoor soccer field. Another site that has had garbage for as long as I can recall.

In fact, there is even a busted up old oven on top of the pile like a crown standing proud.

The banner image highlights the all-too-common garbage trap that sidewalks are – garbage mostly left by cigarette smokers. You'd be hard-pressed to find a city street that isn't lined like this.

Many of our beaches are neglected, in fact, a concerned citizen voiced her opinion on East Beach in an article [here](#). She summed it summed up best when she said "We have to do better, we are better than this."

Any place where there are panhandlers, you will find a small pile of refuse that they leave behind. I could easily turn this list into about a score of them, but I would simply be pointing out the obvious.

While we have made progress in effectively cracking down on companies dumping waste into the environment, we don't have a way to effectively crack down on the general populace. In fact, there really is no way the government could. The only way to crack down on throwing garbage onto the ground, our forest, or waterways is to take personal responsibility for our own actions and within our own community – picking up waste even if we didn't place it there.



Does it really strain the brain's ability to keep a small garbage bag in one's car? Does it really require that much time and effort to put your trash in a garbage barrel that is likely within 25' of the spot you parked in and placed your leftover Dunkin' Donuts cup? Ain't got time 'fo dat?

I'm unsure of another way because those people who really don't care about anything or anyone but themselves simply lack the emotional maturity, common sense and intelligence to consider the importance of the environment today and as a legacy for our kids and future generations. These folks don't care about laws, fines, or any appeal to ethics or morality. Their ignorance is a force-field.

So, it is in the hands of those of us who care about our environment and the legacy we leave our kids. We have to take up the slack of the uncaring, but that's alright because it's not about us or them, but about the community, environment, and future. Those things are worth the extra effort. If you are one of those who volunteer like the fantastic folks at Be The Solution To The Pollution or simply pick up other people's trash during your daily routine, then pat yourself on the back.

In closing, I'd like to leave a quote by J. Krishnamurti to consider "We are the world. The world is you and me, the world is not separate from you and me. We have created this world. We are the world essentially, basically, fundamentally. The world is you, and you are the world. Realizing that fundamentally, deeply, not romantically, not intellectually but actually, then we see that our problem is a global problem. It is not my problem or your particular problem, it is a human problem."

Right on, Jiddu.