

## Collections take in more than 1,219 pounds of old meds

Written by Liv Osby Staff Writer

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More than 1,219 pounds of unwanted medications were collected at the Upstate's fifth drive-through dropoff aimed at keeping expired drugs out of the region's waterways.

Unused antibiotics, narcotics and other drugs are often flushed or dumped down the drain, then wind up in rivers and streams where they can affect wildlife and the people who drink the water downstream, according to the event's organizers. They can also wind up on the street.

"The problem with holding on to medications is the potential for them to find their way into the wrong hands, whereas flushing the medications can disrupt the balance in our local waterways," said Stacey Flax, customer service and contracts manager for ReWa, or Renewable Water Resources, formerly the Western Carolina Regional Sewer Authority, one of the event's sponsors.

"We need to continue to push this important change in the community of how we handle medication disposal in an effort to both prevent misuse and protect our water supply for the long term," she said.

Held Saturday at 18 sites around the Upstate in conjunction with the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration's National

Drug Take-Back Day, the event, called Project Rx: A River Remedy, uncovered drugs from as far back as 1960 and as far away as China, organizers said.

Kicked off in November 2010 at one location, the event has so far amassed 6,756 pounds of old and unused medicines, which then are incinerated by law enforcement agencies. Along with prescription drugs, residents bring over-the-counter medicines, vitamins and supplements, and veterinary medications.

"Our efforts ... demonstrate both great success

and also the need for more take-back events," Flax said. "A participant at this event brought a medication dating back to 1960, so that was 52 years they were waiting for a disposal solution."

Statewide, 3,539 pounds were collected at 63 sites participating in the event, which is held twice a year, organizers said.

The project is in partnership with the DEA, Bon Secours St. Francis Health System, the Greenville County Sheriff's Office, Greenville Family Partnership and Greenville Technical College

For more information, go to [www.aRiverRemedy.org](http://www.aRiverRemedy.org).