RANDLEMAN — Nearly 10,000 pounds of trash was removed from the Worthville Dam area of Randleman by a record-breaking number of high school volunteers on Saturday, Sept. 30.

A group of about 180 Randolph Early College High School (RECHS) students and their families and friends met at 9 a.m. at the Worthville Baptist Church in Randleman, where they put on safety and protective gear provided by Keep Randolph County Beautiful.

As the coordinator for N.C. Big Sweep, Bob Langston, executive director for Keep Randolph County Beautiful, began working with RECHS when the school opened in 2006. RECHS Litter clean-up activities had grown from about 20 students to 128 in 2016.

“As a frame of reference, the first year I did litter clean-ups in Randolph County, in 2004, we had five clean-up locations with a total of 107 Participants,” Langston said. “Prior to 2005, going back to 1989, Randolph County had never had more than 153 participants.”

This year, Lauren Wood, science teacher and faculty advisor for the BETA Club, and Principal April Thompson set a goal of 160 participants. To boost participation, teachers

and staff for $5 each were created for this year’s event as well.

When Langston visited the school on Friday, Sept. 22, 124 students had already committed to participating in this year’s event.

Randleman Mayor Bucky Jernigan and Planning Director Greg Patton welcomed the RECHS group to their community and participated in the clean-up event alongside the volunteers.

“I thought they did a super job,” Jernigan said. In addition to being impressed with the character displayed by helping the community, “I was impressed with their enthusiasm. They just couldn’t wait to pick up that paper!”

Last year, the school’s clean-up event netted 2.5 tons of litter and trash. This year, the group doubled their impact, pulling nearly 5 tons of debris from the Worthville Dam area.

See TRASH, page 5A