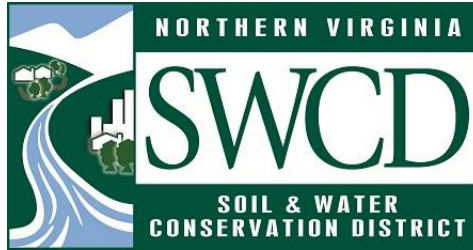


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**Contact**

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ConservationDistrict@fairfaxcounty.gov

*Working for Clean Streams and Protected Natural Resources in Fairfax County*

September 28, 2021

Supervisor Rodney Lusk  
6121 Franconia Rd  
Alexandria, VA 22310

Dear Supervisor Lusk,

The Northern Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District (NVSWCD) promotes sustainable urban and suburban activities and stewardship to conserve our soil, water, air, plants, and animal resources in Fairfax County. We achieve this through effective leadership, technical assistance, and outreach programs to private landowners in partnership with government, industry, non-profit organizations, and the public.

The invasive plant running bamboo is sold in Virginia as a fast-growing privacy screen. Unfortunately, it spreads rapidly across property lines where it can emerge many feet away to damage driveways or masonry of neighboring properties. It is very difficult and expensive to control. These costs, often in the thousands of dollars, are now typically and unfairly borne by the landowner who did not plant the bamboo.

Running bamboo on private property also encroaches on county roads, parks, and utility rights of way, where the Fairfax County taxpayer ultimately bears the burden of controlling it. In natural areas, it degrades conservation values by crowding out native vegetation upon which birds, pollinators, and other native wildlife depend.

The NVSWCD recognizes the ecological and economic impacts of invasive species in Fairfax County, including running bamboo. We are bringing this to your attention and ask that the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors consider options for suppressing the spread of running bamboo.

In 2017, the General Assembly granted the following local governments the authority to regulate the spread across property boundaries of running bamboo.

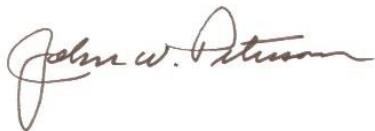
[Title 15.2. Counties, Cities and Towns §15.2-901. Locality may provide for removal or disposal of trash and clutter, cutting of grass, weeds, and running bamboo; penalty in certain counties; penalty.](#)

Stafford and Fauquier Counties have subsequently each adopted ordinances that prohibit property owners from allowing their running bamboo to invade adjoining properties. Property owners must remove the bamboo from the invaded properties or pay the cost of its removal. They must also prevent overgrowth of vegetation, including running bamboo, on their property. Noncompliance with either ordinance may result in modest fines or property liens.

Residents and community groups regularly reach out to NVSWCD seeking advice for managing running bamboo on their property. Our technical staff provide recommendations for treatment and lists of landscape professionals and contractors to assist and inform the decisions of the property owner/group. Often the scale of the issue is significant, requiring multiple years of treatment at a substantial cost. We would appreciate the opportunity to learn more about the Board of Supervisor's running bamboo working group, to share our experiences, and to developed shared solutions that will assist private landowners with addressing their running bamboo challenges.

Thank you in advance for your continuing commitment to our County's environmental quality.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "John W. Peterson".

John W. Peterson  
Chairman, Northern Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District