



Chapter

10

Litter Control

Litter Control in Fairfax County

Litter control helps ensure that items such as paper, plastics, glass, metal objects, building materials, discarded food items, cigarette and cigar butts, rubber scraps, and other items are properly disposed. The primary goal of most litter control programs is to improve the image and appearance of the community.

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Fairfax County

The Clean Fairfax Council, a private, nonprofit organization, manages litter control in Fairfax County. Established by the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors in 1978, it educates Fairfax County citizens on litter prevention and control, supports county recycling programs, discourages graffiti, and provides environmental education to citizens. The Clean Fairfax Council became a private, nonprofit organization (501(c)(3)) in 1985.



The Clean Fairfax Council sponsors two countywide cleanups (in the spring and fall) as a member of the national program, "Great American Cleanup". Citizens plan their own cleanups and the council provides supplies (litter bags, recycling bags, vests, hats, safety tips, and an auto litter bags) for each participant. Roughly 15,000 to 22,000 volunteers participate in the cleanups annually.



The Clean Fairfax Council sponsors the Adopt-A-Spot Program, which encourages citizens to keep an adopted location (other than a highway) in their community clear of litter for a 2-year period. The citizens are provided materials to assist with the cleanups, along with a posted sign with their name in the area. At the end of the 2-year period, the Clean Fairfax Council gives volunteers a certificate and an opportunity to renew their agreement.

Another initiative in the county is the special outreach that Clean Fairfax Council provided to the Fairfax County Public Schools. Efforts with the schools have resulted in innovative paper recycling programs and other campaigns to recycle specific materials. The council has given more than 250 presentations annually over the past several years. In addition to presentations, the council also provides newspapers to every 5th and 8th grade student providing environmental information from the county and activities for fun and education.



The Clean Fairfax Council also hosts the Fairfax County Earth Day/Arbor Day Celebration each year at the Northern Virginia Community College, Annandale Campus. During the one-day event, the council provides environmental information, events, exhibits, and awards.

Commonwealth of Virginia litter taxes are used to fund the Clean Fairfax Council. Litter taxes are collected by the Commonwealth in Richmond and disbursed through noncompetitive grants to localities.

Commonwealth of Virginia Programs

The Commonwealth of Virginia has several litter control efforts:

- *Adopt-A-Highway Program.* This program provides an opportunity for residents, businesses, and civic groups to pickup litter on designated two-mile sections of state-maintained highways. The “adopting” groups agree to pickup litter four times a year for 2 years. In return, the Virginia Department of Transportation provides trash bags, vests, safety information, and highway signs that recognize the group’s contribution.



The Commonwealth of Virginia litter control efforts include the Adopt-A-Highway, Adopt-A-Stream, and Abandoned Vehicle Programs.

- Adopt-A-Stream Program.* The Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation's (DCR's) Adopt-A-Stream Program offers opportunities for local businesses, civic groups, watershed associations, churches, schools, scouts, and environmental organizations to clean up litter from local waterways. Through this program, groups collect litter once or twice per year for at least 2 years along a minimum length of shoreline of one-quarter mile. DCR provides trash bags, gloves, safety vests, first-aid kits, hand-sanitizer, and instructional and promotional documents' it also gives each group a sign featuring the adopted waterway and organization.



The logo is circular with a blue border. Inside, the words "Adopt A Stream" are written in a curved path at the top. In the center, "DCR" is written in a bold, sans-serif font. Below "DCR", there is a wavy line representing water, and underneath that, the text "Partially funded by the Litter Control and Recycling Fund" is written in a smaller font.
- Abandoned Vehicle Program.* The Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) established the Abandoned Vehicle Program to help remove abandoned inoperable vehicles from public and private properties. Under this program, DMV pays localities \$50.00 for each abandoned car that they recycle.

In 2001, the VDEQ and the Virginia Litter Control and Recycling Fund Advisory Board (of which Rosemary Byrne, Executive Director of Clean Fairfax Council is a member) funded the development of a unified, statewide campaign to raise awareness about the importance of litter prevention. When fully implemented, the campaign will provide litter prevention programs across the state with a unified theme and design for campaign materials, which they can customize for their local litter prevention program activities. The theme of this program is "Litter. It Just Isn't Natural."

Future Litter Control Programs

Fairfax County plans to continue the current litter control programs over the SWMP planning period to ensure that items are properly disposed.