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Sully District e-Newsletter

Annual Potomac Watershed Cleanup

The Fairfax Watershed Network is partnering with the Alice Ferguson Foundation to coordinate the Annual Potomac Watershed Cleanup in Fairfax County. The cleanup officially will be held the weekend of March 31-April 1, but cleanups also will take place in the weeks before and after those dates. Last year's cleanup was a huge success for Fairfax County with 75 sites established in county parks and streams.

"This year, we hope to do even better, but we can't do it without the help of enthusiastic volunteers," said Dan Schwartz of the Northern Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District, a member of the Fairfax Watershed Network.

"We not only need volunteers to remove litter at established cleanup sites, but also to serve as site captains--individual volunteers or groups who will set up their own cleanup sites in local streams and parklands," said Schwartz. "We will help the captains choose and prepare a site, promote the cleanup, and find volunteers. We will provide all necessary materials for the day of the cleanup, including trash bags, gloves, and sign-in sheets," he said.

Since 1989, the Alice Ferguson Foundation has spearheaded the Potomac Watershed Cleanup. Now the largest regional event of its kind, the cleanup has engaged over 35,000 volunteers and 250 partners and removed more than 2.5 million pounds of trash from the Potomac Watershed. The detrimental effects of trash are numerous.

- Trash harms wildlife,
- decreases property values,
- hurts businesses, recreation and tourism,
- costs local governments precious funds for clean up and removal,
- poses a public health threat by increasing breeding grounds for virus carrying insects and rodents, and
- poorly reflects on the pride residents of the region should feel for their neighborhoods.

In addition to the Conservation District, the Fairfax Watershed Network includes the Fairfax County Park Authority and Department of Public Works and Environmental Services, Clean Fairfax Council, Audubon Naturalist Society, Reston Association, other organizations, many "Friends of" streams and watersheds groups, and individuals.

Those interested in becoming a site captain should contact Dan Schwartz at dan.schwartz@fairfaxcounty.gov or 703-324-1422.

If you would prefer to volunteer at an existing site, you will find information after the first of March at: http://www.potomaccleanup.org/trash_initiative/rc_sites.html

Fairfax County Police Department Adds Convenience to Reporting Non-violent Crimes

Fairfax County residents who are victims or witnesses of certain misdemeanor crimes can file police reports by telephone or online. The “Citizen Reporting System” or CRS operates seven days a week and includes evening hours. Although the CRS system has been in place since 2003, and telephone reporting was available before then, the Police Department has recently introduced some enhancements to improve accessibility. The system has been centralized at police headquarters, and a cadre of officers is assigned to the system full time.

Not all crimes can be reported using the Citizen Reporting System. The following criteria must be present to use the system:

- The crime or incident must have occurred within Fairfax County;
- The identity of the suspect must not be known, or the citizen must not want to pursue criminal prosecution;
- The report is being made for informational and/or insurance purposes only and the citizen understands and agrees that the Police Department will take no further action;
- The suspect information is so general in nature that it provides no real investigative leads (i.e., blue van or white man).

An example of a crime that could be reported using CRS would be a missing bicycle. A young boy leaves his bicycle in the front yard one night and doesn't realize it's missing for a few days. No one knows when the crime happened and there aren't any suspects or leads. The parents are able to go online, fill out the required information and within 24 hours receive a case number. The case number can be used for insurance claims.

The following types of crimes or incidents can be reported using CRS (keeping in mind the criteria mentioned above):

- Alcohol violation
- Counterfeit prescription
- Check/credit card case
- Civil dispute
- Destruction of property, littering
- Disorderly conduct
- Drunk in public
- DWI
- Forgery
- Fraud
- Larceny under \$5,000
- Loitering
- Lost property
- Parking violation
- Solicitor violation
- Suspicious vehicles, persons or events
- Telephone violation
- Traffic violation
- Trespassing
- Vehicle tampering

Reports cannot be handled using CRS if any of the following criteria apply:

- The offender is still on the scene or the incident occurred within the last 30 minutes;
- The crime was perpetrated based upon race, religion or national origin;
- The report is for a lost or stolen passport or firearm.

One convenient option for those with access to a computer is through the Department's online reporting system. Citizens can visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/police and click on the link to "file a police report." They follow the directions, providing all the information required about the crime, and receive a case number within 24 hours. The second method for filing certain reports is through the Department's non-emergency phone number at 703-691-2131. Citizens tell the call taker they would like to use the Citizen's Reporting System (CRS) to report a crime (or incident). If citizens choose this option, their names and contact numbers will be taken by the call taker and a CRS officer will call them back to take the report over the phone. This process typically takes

less than 24 hours to complete.

The advantage to using CRS is convenience. Instead of having an officer respond to take a report, citizens can file the report at a time and location convenient to them. Waiting for an officer to free up from more urgent calls is eliminated. When the reports are filed online, officers can e-mail a case number, for documentation or for insurance purposes, usually within 24 hours.

When citizens use CRS, patrol officers are able to use their time to conduct proactive and preventive patrols, such as traffic enforcement, community policing, high visibility patrols in residential and business districts and criminal/drug interdiction.

Information obtained by CRS officers assists the Police Department in preventing crimes by allowing the Department to analyze trends, locations and times of incidents. The report may also assist in the identification and return of stolen property recovered as a result of other investigations.

For more information on CRS visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/police.



Michael R. Frey
Sully District Supervisor
Fairfax County Board of Supervisors
4900 Stonecroft Boulevard
Chantilly, Virginia 20151
703 814-7100
703 814-7110 fax
Sully@fairfaxcounty.gov

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