



## Visible Trash Survey Instructions

This survey was developed for volunteer surveyors. The survey involves categorizing and counting visible trash along a 200 foot length of a water body, road, or land, within the confines of the Potomac River watershed; completing 3 forms; and returning the 3 forms to the Alice Ferguson Foundation by mail.

Mail to: Trash survey/AFF 2001 Bryan Point Road, Accokeek, MD 20607

### INSTRUCTIONS

#### Pre-Survey Check List

1. Once you have chosen your site, please contact us. We'll give you a site number that will be used to identify the site and will be used to record on your forms.
2. We will contact you to arrange time to train over the phone.
3. If needed, obtain permission to be on the land where you will perform your survey.
4. Please read and familiarize yourself with all of the forms
5. Identify the fixed point which is nearest to your planned survey site, and record this on the Site Description Form. This will allow others to find your site precisely. You may use Google Earth ([earth.google.com](http://earth.google.com)), ADC Map ([www.adcmap.com](http://www.adcmap.com)), or GPS to locate the latitude and longitude coordinates; or you may use a street address. Later, when you are at the site, you will record instructions on how to find you site from this fixed point.  
If you do not have access to GPS, ADC Map or Google Earth, please provide a street address on the Site Description Form.

#### Completing the Visible Trash Survey

1. Go to your site.
2. Use string or other measuring tool to measure a 200 foot linear length, and mark the start and end of the length with a rock or other item available.
3. The width to survey is **10 feet**.
4. Fill out the Site Description Form.
5. With the Trash Item Tally in hand, start the tally.
6. Count what you see. Do not disturb vegetation or trash.
7. **Do not count very small items. We classify a very small item as 1" squared or less.** Note that there is a separate step (see next step) for counting cigarette butts.
8. Count cigarette butts by returning to your starting point and estimate an area of 10 feet by 3 feet. Within this 10' by 3' area, please count the total number of cigarette butts, and record it. It is important that you start the cigarette butt count at the spot where your survey began.
9. When you are done, total the tally marks and record your totals for each category in the "TOTAL" column.

**Return the three completed forms (Site Description Form, Evaluation, and Trash Item Tally) within two weeks of the survey completion.**

Please make a copy of the survey forms for your records and to serve as a backup copy.

Return the original forms by mail to:

Trash Survey, The Alice Ferguson Foundation, 2001 Bryan Point Road, Accokeek, MD 20607.

**If you have questions on the day of the survey, you may contact Ginny Harris, 202-518-7415 or 301-292-5665.**

We will interview you by phone after you have completed the survey, to evaluate our survey and survey process. In the meanwhile, please feel free to email us ([PotomacCleanup@fergusonfoundation.org](mailto:PotomacCleanup@fergusonfoundation.org)) with your feedback.

We greatly appreciate your interest in surveying trash in the watershed, and we look forward to sharing the results with you.

*Alice Ferguson Foundation Staff*

2001 Bryan Point Road

Accokeek, MD, 20607

301-292-5665

[www.potomaccleanup.org](http://www.potomaccleanup.org)

### **SAFETY INSTRUCTIONS, We care about you.**

**Please be aware of your personal safety while conducting this survey. If surveying a road: stay out of the path of traffic. If surveying a water body: do not walk too closely to the shore line and take an accidental swim! If surveying land: stay away from wildlife and avoid poisonous plants. Take a cell phone with you and make sure someone knows where and when you are conducting your survey, especially if in a rural area. Stay off of private property unless you have the owner's permission. Do not survey in inclement weather.**

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