

Alice Ferguson Foundation
Potomac River Watershed Cleanup
Site Leader Planning Guide
potomaccleanup.org



**CLEAN LAND.
SAFE WATER.
HEALTHY LIVES.**

Get Involved:

301-292-5665 or 202.417.3524

potomaccleanup@fergusonfoundation.org

This year's cleanup will take place at hundreds of different sites throughout the District of Columbia, Maryland, Virginia, Pennsylvania and West Virginia – the entire Potomac Watershed. Locations include fields, forests, parking lots, shorelines, parks, and waterways. For 27 years, volunteers like you have helped make this annual cleanup a catalyst event for improving the health of our watershed and educating the public on trash pollution.

How the Cleanup Works

About The Cleanup

For 27 years and counting, the Potomac Watershed Cleanup remains a successful event for cleaning litter from our watershed. The Alice Ferguson Foundation's (AFF) Trash Free Potomac Watershed Initiative invites all people in our Watershed to help be a part of the solution for eliminating trash from our waterways, public lands and communities.

Cleanup Highlights & Accomplishments include:

- Over the last 27 years, the Annual Cleanup has removed over 8 million pounds of trash from the Potomac Watershed with the help of 170,000 volunteers. In 2015 alone 23,898 volunteers at 805 sites removed 1,203,543 pounds of trash.
- Watershed-wide event now including sites throughout MD, VA, DC, WV and PA
- Held concurrently with the 6th Annual Litter Enforcement Month, also run by the Alice Ferguson Foundation.

Data Collection

Data collection is an important part of the cleanup. Recording *what kind* of trash is in the watershed shapes regulations, policies, and educational tools.

We ask volunteers and site leaders to fill out a data tally sheet, which you can find on the Site Leader Center at potomaccleanup.fergusonfoundation.org

Data is collected on:

- **Number of Volunteers**
- **Bags of Trash**
- **Bags of recyclables**
- **Bags actually recycled**
- **Number of Tires**
- **Number of Sharps**
- **Number Plastic bags**
- **Estimated number of Cigarette Butts**
- **Estimated weight of bulk trash**
- **Top 3 viewed Brand Names**

We provide blue bags for recyclables, yellow for trash. Even if you aren't able to recycle on the cleanup day, it is still important to sort accordingly, so we know how much **litter** could have been recycled.

Results By registering on the Trash Network and receiving supplies, the site leader agrees to report the results tally sheet and the volunteer waiver form. **RESULTS ARE DUE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE, IDEALLY THE SAME DAY AS THE CLEANUP.** Final deadline is May 1. Submit results on the Trash Network, via email, phone or fax. Fax number is 301-292-1070.

AFF analyzes the data and shares it with our county partners. This data is critical for data supporting the Total Maximum Daily Load for Trash, mandated by the Environmental Protection Agency.

How to Prepare as a Site Leader

Overview The categories below highlight preparations for the cleanup.

Recruit Volunteers In addition to the media and web recruitment provided by AFF, we ask site leaders to help recruit volunteers at their site.

Spread the Word

- Post flyers in your area and ask your friends, family, co-workers and community members to join you.
- Check the AFF Website for printable flyers, standard announcements and wording.
- Send out press releases to local newspapers and media outlets.
- Reach out to local civic and environmental groups, homeowner associations, religious organizations and schools. Many schools have volunteer service requirements and are a good source of help.
- Contact your local volunteer agencies, websites, list-serves, or blogs and ask for help promoting the event.
-

Note: Please coordinate with AFF when contacting a major media outlet.

Arrange for Trash Disposal

On-Site Transport

- Where should trash be placed for convenient pick up?
- Is there vehicle access? Where are the best routes?

Hauling & Removal

- Who will haul your trash away?
- Is there a nearby dumpster that can be used with prior permission?
- If you have a large site, you might need a roll-off container (dumpster).
- If you are hauling the trash yourself, you could acquire a tipping fee

- waiver. Contact county landfill for assistance.
- There is a list of local haulers on the website:
www.potomaccleanup.org

Insurance & Liability

The Alice Ferguson Foundation does not provide liability insurance to your individual site or volunteers.

Liability Issues

- If the site is at a Federal, State or County Park, their liability insurance should cover volunteers. Coordinate with staff to obtain waiver forms, etc.
- Contact the landowner to determine if they have insurance or liability coverage to host a volunteer event.
- Many site leaders will have an established group, such as the Boy Scouts or a civic association "adopt" the site because these groups have their own liability insurance.
- Ask volunteers to sign a waiver releasing you and the landowner from liability. The sign-in sheet on the Site Leader Center includes a waiver clause at the top so that volunteers sign the waiver as they are signing in. Check with a lawyer or established organization in advance; waivers do not necessarily exclude you from risk of penalty.

Safety & HAZMAT

Plan Ahead

- Prepare for the possibility of dealing with HAZMAT or Sharps. See "Safety Guidelines & Hazmat Sheet" for directions.
- Consider making a HAZMAT kit for each group leader, if necessary.
- Contact your county health department to request specific safety procedures and disposal assistance.

What To Do With Hazmat Trash?

- If you have hypodermic needles on your site, it is recommended that you contact your county health department. They may send someone to your cleanup site to collect the medical waste.
- Contact local emergency rescue squad and ask them to help, if necessary.
- Before picking up sharps or HAZMAT materials, refer to "Safety Guidelines & Hazmat Sheet."
- Do not open or put in with recyclables any plastic bottles that have unknown liquid inside. These should be put with the trash.

Media Outreach

We encourage site leaders to speak to reporters and editors about their Cleanup site.

Why Talk to Media?

- Heighten awareness and educate the public about the Potomac River Watershed and the related trash issue.
- Increase the number of volunteers involved, and improve impact.
- Demonstrate your commitment and dedication to improving our communities.
- Show elected officials, policy makers, and residents that trash is an issue we can solve.
- This is not required for those who do not wish to speak to the media.

We request that all PRWC partners include the following in all local announcements, press releases, media advisories and media outreach:

1. Identify that you are part of the larger 28th Annual Potomac River Watershed Cleanup coordinated by the Alice Ferguson Foundation.

EXAMPLE -- _____ will be hosting a neighborhood cleanup site as part of the Alice Ferguson Foundation's 28th Annual Potomac Watershed Cleanup on April 16, 2016.

This is critical as it alerts media and public that your local cleanup site is part of a larger, watershed-wide event. Furthermore, it assists the Alice Ferguson Foundation in fulfilling its obligation to the sponsors who pay for the cleanup: coordination, supplies (gloves, trash bags and signs), and promotion. AFF is able to plan and coordinate this effort with the generous support of these donors.

2. List the Potomac River Watershed Cleanup contact information:

PotomacCleanup.org
301.292.5665

EXAMPLE – Cleanup locations throughout the watershed are looking for volunteers!

Visit PotomacCleanup.org or call 301.292.5665 for a complete list of cleanup sites and to get involved.



Pre-Cleanup Checklist

Overview

Use the checklist provided below to verify that you have completed all of the requirements for hosting a cleanup site.

- Choose a site and get permission from the land owner
- Register your event on the AFF Trash Network
- Order supplies, if needed through the AFF Trash Network
- Arrange for trash and recycling disposal
- Identify parking, a meeting place and access to Cleanup location.
- Prepare a HAZMAT container
- Print off the Volunteer Waiver and Results Data Tally Sheet
- Get the word out! Post flyers, contact the media, reach out to the community and neighbors!

Day of Event Master Checklist

Overview Use the following checklist to help you organize your day **during your cleanup**. Suggested timeframes are in parentheses under each category, based on an assumed cleanup schedule of 8:30 am to 12 pm. We have also provided an abbreviated checklist at the end of this page, for your convenience.

Pre-Cleanup Photography (8:30) Take multiple pictures of the existing “trashy” state of your site.

Organize Supplies & Materials (8:35am)

Required Supplies

- Bags (blue – recyclables, yellow – trash)
- Gloves
- First-Aid Kit
- Safety/Hazmat Information
- Hazmat Container
- Required Paperwork (and clipboard):
 - Volunteer & Results Form,
 - In-kind Site Leader Hours
 - Volunteer Sign In Sheet

Optional Supplies

- Directional signs to your site (put out a day or two early if possible)
- Extra tools (wheelbarrow, rakes, shovels, grabbers, nets, etc.)

Welcome Volunteers (9am)

- Introduce yourself and thank volunteers for participating.
- Make sure everyone has signed in.
- Note that this cleanup is part of a larger, Potomac River watershed-

wide effort

- Explain recycling procedure & data collection.
- Point out location of restroom and drinking fountain, if accessible.

**Safety
(9:15am)**

- Go over Safety/HAZMAT and Sharps Pick-up Procedures.
- Ask volunteers to report HAZMAT items so that you or a special volunteer can retrieve items safely. (See “HAZMAT & Safety Guidelines”)
- Point out possible hazardous land features & slippery terrain. Remind volunteers to be careful of any vegetation or wildflowers as they work.
- Alert volunteers to first aid kit location and where to find you in case of an emergency.

Note: It is a good idea to have a safety kit in the site leader’s possession.

Day of Event Master Checklist, Continued

Organize Volunteers (9:20am)

- Assign volunteers to specific jobs: trash pickers, trash bag transfer people, volunteer check-in greeter, data recorder, recyclers/separators, safety/HAZMAT helper, rover to check needs of the group, photographers/interesting item collectors, etc.
- Designate a visible place for the greeter to check-in any latecomers.
- Trash collection: tie all bags when full, leave wood debris on shore, collect tires but do not put them in a bag.
- Identify trash collection stations where trash, large bulky items and recyclables will be placed for removal.
- Give out supplies.

Clean Up! (9:30am – 11:45pm)

- Separate recyclables into blue bags and general trash into yellow bags.
- Tally special trash items throughout Cleanup.
- Use plastic grocery bags for small children and then place those in the larger trash bags.
- If tide is high, work your way out as tide recedes. If tide is low, start at waterline.

Haul Trash For Removal (11:45pm)

- Transport trash from various collection stations to the pre-determined removal stations.
- Neatly stack trash and bulky items for easy transport.

Wrap Up & Take Photos (12noon)

- Record final amounts on the “Volunteer Tally & Results” form.
- Estimate the weight of large bulky items and ask volunteers for “interesting items found.”
- Celebrate!!! Take group photos of your volunteers and their accomplishment.
- Ask volunteers to sign a “Citizen Pledge.”
- Remind everyone to visit the Website for final results.

Report Your Data (12:15pm)

- Important! REPORT YOUR DATA!**
- Fax: 301-292-1070,
- Phone: 301-292-5665,
- Enter Online: trashnetwork.fergusonfoundation.org, or
- E-mail potomaccleanup@fergusonfoundation.org
- Report the following required forms:
 - *Volunteer Sign-In*
 - *Results: Data Tally Sheet*

Thank you for volunteering to help us get closer to a Trash Free Potomac!

Safety Guidelines & HAZMAT Info

What is HAZMAT?: HAZMAT (short for hazardous materials) include items such as hypodermic needles, any sealed containers filled with fluid, personal protection and hygiene products, unknown toxic chemicals and any medical waste.

How To Make A HAZMAT Container: Use a heavy plastic detergent bottle with a screw top & handle for ease in carrying. Loosely attach a pair of tongs to the handle. Clearly mark the container with a [HAZMAT label](#).

Safety and HAZMAT Collection Tips:

- Individuals with open wounds should not expose them to the stream water.
- Wear protective gloves and boots to avoid sharp objects.
- Site leaders should point out any safety hazards such as particularly muddy areas, steep banks, rocky areas, etc.
- Review with volunteers the appropriate safety precautions regarding materials not to be handled: sealed barrels, gas canisters, full beverage containers, aerosol cans (they may explode if there is compressed gas inside)
- Do not open any unopened containers.
- Avoid eating, drinking, smoking, or touching eyes, and mouth, until hands are washed.
- Medical waste & HAZMAT materials should only be handled by the site leader or other designated leader and disposed of in a HAZMAT container.
- Have a first aid kit easily accessible & in a convenient, visible location.
- Have clean and sterile water on hand for washing and drinking.
- The person collecting HAZMAT materials should wear a double layer of latex gloves and steel toe or thick leather boots — not canvas shoes!
- HAZMAT materials should be picked up with a pair of tongs – do not allow contact with skin!
- When placing a needle in the HAZMAT container, place the container on the ground before inserting the needle, point down, using tongs. **Sharps Procedures**
- At the conclusion of the cleanup: remove & dispose of the top pair of gloves, sterilize the tongs, remove and dispose of second pair of gloves and container in a sealed trash bag. Wash hands carefully. For extra protection, you may fill the HAZMAT container with plaster of Paris.
- If a volunteer is pricked by a needle wipe off skin and clean with alcohol. Then wash with soap and running water. To avoid risk of infection injured person should consult a physician.