



CLEAN LAND.
SAFE WATER.
HEALTHY LIVES.

Template LTE/Op-Ed

NAME OF COUNTY Builds Traction Against Trash

What do four states and the District of Columbia have in common?

A complex system of rivers, creeks and tributaries - woven throughout D.C., Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia and West Virginia – make up the Potomac Watershed. All of these bodies of water flow into the Potomac River and, ultimately, into the water we drink, bath in and in which we play.

Sadly, the vast amount of litter peppering our shoreline, combined with trash tossed down storm drains, has severely compromised the Potomac. The most recent regional Potomac River Watershed Cleanup, for example, removed whopping *503,800 pounds of trash* from the water and shoreline. **INSERT NUMBER** of those regional Cleanup sites took place in **INSERT NAME OF COUNTY**.

Based on the results of a 2009 phone survey conducted among 1,004 area residents, many people don't know that improperly disposed trash can result in filth and disease-causing bacteria and emit harmful toxins. In fact, a full 63 percent of respondents believed that litter is filtered out of storm water. This is actually, not the case; water running into the storm drains does not go to a waste water treatment plant.

Creating awareness and taking some simple steps will make an enormous difference. 63 percent of respondents in the 2009 survey said that they are bothered "a lot" by the litter they see, while 84 percent of those surveyed believed it is incumbent on individuals to resolve this problem, a clear sign that people are willing to do their part to eliminate litter.

It is my desire to reduce the amount of trash rampant in the Potomac Watershed and create a sustainable drinking source for not only **INSERT NAME OF COUNTY**, but the entire region. For this reason, **INSERT NAME OF COUNTY** has partnered with the Alice Ferguson Foundation to implement a Regional Litter Prevention Campaign, a multi-state, multi-jurisdictional campaign aimed at increasing public awareness and making the Potomac Watershed trash free. In order to accomplish this, we all must take personal responsibility. Together, we have the power to help create clean land, safe water and healthy lives for ourselves, our families and our neighborhoods.

Small changes in our behaviors will help to meet the goal: recycle, walk an extra few steps to throw your trash in a bin, always carry a trash bag in your vehicle and participate in a cleanup in your neighborhood, to name just a few. For more information on the Regional Litter Prevention Campaign and to learn how you can support the cause throughout **INSERT NAME OF COUNTY**, visit **COUNTY WEBSITE URL** or www.fergusonfoundation.org.