



CLEAN FAIRFAX

2023 ANNUAL REPORT

Yearly Snapshot

COMMUNITY CLEAN UP PROGRAM

	
98 Community Cleanups	2k+ Community Volunteers
	
5.1k Volunteer Hours	\$162,418 Value of Volunteer Time



12 Public Presentations



95 Meetings and Workshops



2 Public-Private Partnerships



33k Impressions on Social Media



2.5k+ Attendees at Earth Month Events



5 Fairfax Streams Monitored Quarterly

About Clean Fairfax

Mission

The mission of Clean Fairfax is to encourage environmental stewardship & urban sustainability in Fairfax County, Virginia through education, programming, and community involvement.

Vision

To be Fairfax County's non-profit leader in environmental and sustainability education, advocacy and action by creating relationships with schools, businesses, municipalities and other organizations.

Leadership & Partnership

- Virginia Governor's Plastic Waste Prevention Advisory Council (2019 – 2023).
- Consulted with multiple Virginia localities on adopting the 5-cent bag tax.

This year, we represented Fairfax County and Clean Fairfax at **68 meetings** as partners of:

- *The Virginia Conservation Network*: Legislative Committee and Water, Plastic, Land Use & Transportation workgroups.
- *Choose Clean Water Coalition*: Stormwater workgroup.
- *Virginia Plastic Pollution Prevention Network*.
- The NOAA Mid-Atlantic Marine Debris Action Plan (2021 – 2026) and Virginia Marine Debris Reduction Plan (2021 – 2025).

The environment is constantly changing, which is why we are committed to staying informed and connected to the emerging issues facing our region. This year, Clean Fairfax attended **20+ educational webinars, presentations, and conferences.**

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In the Community



Community Clean Up Program

- Activated **2000+** volunteers who removed over **66 tons** of litter from the environment.

Outreach & Education

- Delivered environmental & sustainability information and materials to all 9 Fairfax County Districts. Material was featured in multiple countywide and districtwide (Board of Supervisors) newsletters, reaching an estimated **18,000 households**.
- Expanded Polystyrene (EPS, “Styrofoam”) education campaign (digital & print).
- Plastic Free July and Earth Month+ social media campaigns reached over **8.4k users**.
- Provided educational material and explored collaboration opportunities with Fairfax County Public Schools and the Get2Green program.

Sponsored Events & Collaborations

- Sponsored the 4th annual Mt. Vernon Environmental Expo.
- Partnered with one of Clean Fairfax's best friends, Aslin Beer Co., to celebrate Earth Day with our annual Earth Daze event.

2024 and Beyond



Next year, we're excited to continue the important work we do as well as launch new programs & projects! Keep an eye out for these coming soon:

- **Speakers Bureau** — connecting Fairfax County audiences with subject matter experts across a wide range of environmental topics.
- **Plastic-Free Farmers Market Toolkit** — helping our local markets eliminate single-use plastic.
- **Earth Daze 2024** — *it's back!*
- **Business is Picking Up** — a business association for companies wishing to create meaningful employee engagement events around the environment.
- **EPS Education Campaign** — more to come!
- **Operation Stream Shield** — expansion of the current Litter Data Collection Pilot with our partners in the Department Public Works and Environmental Services.

Early Impacts of the Bag Ordinance



Since its adoption two years ago (Jan. 1, 2022), Clean Fairfax has closely monitored the impact of the \$0.05 bag fee (“tax”) on the level of single-use plastic bags in the wild. Through the quarterly stream monitoring we perform for our friends in Stormwater, we have observed a **steady decline** in littered bags over time, amounting to a nearly **50% decrease** from pre-tax levels to today! And no grocery stores went out of business!

However, despite evidence of fewer littered bags, the bag tax still generated and obscene **\$2 million+** in revenue during 2022.

And while the tax exemplifies a great return on investment from an environmental policy standpoint, we cannot ignore the **40+ million bags still being used in Fairfax** (plus more from stores and farmers markets not under the ordinance).

Clean Fairfax continues to work within Fairfax County and across the Commonwealth to 1) advocate for an overall reduction in single-use plastic bags, and 2) promote valuable environmental projects that the tax could fund (such as: supporting curbside recycling or composting programs, transitioning to plastic-free farmers markets, offering free dumpster days, or improving outdated solid waste systems and policies). *Note: Clean Fairfax does not receive any funds from the bag fee.*

For more data and info on litter and plastic pollution issues in Virginia, we encourage you to check out our partners at LitterFreeVA.org!

THANK YOU!

For supporting a cleaner, greener Fairfax County. See you in 2024!

— Jen, Eleanor and Vanessa

The Clean Fairfax Team



**If you're not a part of the solution,
you're a part of the pollution.**