



Clean Fairfax

# 2024

# ANNUAL REPORT

## Yearly Snapshot

COMMUNITY CLEAN UP PROGRAM



**190** Community Cleanups



**2.7k** Community Volunteers



**7.3k** Volunteer Hours



**\$246,821** Value of Volunteer Time



**10** Public Presentations



**99** Meetings and Workshops



**25** Fairfax Streams Monitored



**43k** Impressions on Social Media



**2k+** Attendees at Earth Day Events



**83.8k** Partner Newsletter Audience

## 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

Environmental and sustainability work is a team sport, which is why we contribute to and rely on so many wonderful partner organizations and networks to do our work, including:

- *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) groups.

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 **25+** educational webinars, workshops, presentations, and conferences.

# 2024 Director's Statement



2024 has been a year of growth for Clean Fairfax!

After decades operating as a one-person show, handing out trash bags and gloves to school groups and HOAs and giving lectures on the importance of recycling, we have grown into a dynamic, forward thinking (and doing!) big-picture organization with three full-time employees, plus interns.

While we continue our important work with our colleagues at Fairfax County's Stormwater Planning on MS4 Compliance—a public private partnership that started in 2017—as well as supporting Operation Stream Shield, supplying community cleanups, and answering questions about recycling in Fairfax County, this year we expanded our offerings to the community.

In 2024, we launched our **Clean Fairfax Speakers Bureau**: a listing of staff, board members, and friends of the organization who are subject matter experts who can speak at town halls, lectures, and lunches on a number of topics pertaining to sustainability and the environment.

We press on with the work we started 8 years ago to reduce plastic bags at farmers markets, and our relationship with our Farmers Market Coordinator colleagues has never been stronger as we work together to figure out the path forward. We applied for and received a grant from the Community Foundation for Northern Virginia to create a **Plastic-Free Farmers Market Toolkit**, which is published on our sister site, [LitterFreeVA.org](https://LitterFreeVA.org). We have presented it at webinars and conferences and hope it helps markets reduce single use plastic!

And speaking of plastic bags, we are excited by recent reports of the success of the \$0.05 bag tax in Fairfax County. According to the Office of Environmental and Energy Coordination, “3.6 million fewer plastic bags have been used by

consumers in the county” since the tax began. That means less plastic in use, in circulation, and as eventual *litter*. This is also supported by cleanup data in the Ocean Conservancy's TIDES database, where grocery bags have fallen from the #1 reported litter item—making up about 20% of litter reported—in 2021, to just under 8% in 2024.

This year, we also began a monthly **Sustainability Spotlight** to highlight businesses, organizations, and individuals in our region who prioritize sustainability. Our annual **Earth Daze** event was yet another success with over 2,000 attendees on-site for rock climbing, games, sustainable vendors and environmental info. Save the Date: April 12, 2025 for our next Earth Daze!

Clean Fairfax is proud to be an Ally with the **Green Business Partners Program**, through which we support the Fairfax County business community in becoming more sustainable. And we continue to be leaders in the environmental community as members of Virginia Conservation Network and the Virginia Plastic Pollution Prevention Network.

We are not the only ones growing and expanding. In 2024, our office of over 30 years at Government Center was needed by Solid Waste, so we moved our daily operations to an office just up the road, where we have our own adopt-a-spot to clean up. We still retain a small space at G.C. to coordinate our Community Cleanup Program and stay in touch with our colleagues within Solid Waste. While we miss seeing our County friends every day, our commitment to being team members in our adopted departments of Solid Waste Management and Stormwater never wavers.

We wish you the very best in the new year!

Sincerely, 