

Anne Arundel County Pet Waste Behavior Change Campaign

Talking Points for Spokesdog Owners and HOA Leaders

TABLING/WALKING EVENTS:

Hello! My name is [your name] and this is [dog's name] and we're here today sharing resources and information to help pet owners in Anne Arundel County make Bay-friendly decisions for their pets. **How do you feel about pet waste?**

- **If the person is a pet owner that claims to pick up all the time**, then ask if they'd be interested in signing a pledge to "Stop POollution in its Tracks" in exchange for a free pet waste bag dispenser.
 - **If they say yes**, ask if they'd be willing to snap a picture with you at the table to be featured on Facebook/Instagram and prompt them to tag @aacbwpr and use the hashtag #StopPOollution if they post anything themselves from the event!
 - **If they say yes but indicate that their neighborhood has a pet waste problem**, then let them know about the free materials available through the County to help a community launch a neighborhood-wide behavior change campaign. Materials publicly available for download/print include educational fliers, pledge cards, and yard signs featuring local Spokesdogs Lizzy (corgi from Severna Park) and Cher (pitbull terrier from Edgewater)!
- **If the person is a pet owner that doesn't pick up all the time**, then say that you understand and kindly ask (without judgment) what barriers make it more challenging and/or less appealing to pick it up. **If they don't pick up because...**

They believe it's fertilizer	~Unlike cow manure, dog waste is not fertilizer! A cow's diet of grass is fundamentally different from the high-protein, meat-based diets of most dogs. A single gram of dog waste can contain 23 million bacteria. ~Anne Arundel County waterways are closed to human contact for 48 hours after EVERY rain storm exceeding 1 inch of rainfall. This is due to bacteria pollution, much of it from pet waste that washes into the rivers and streams during each rain storm. ~2-3 days of waste from 100 dogs can contribute enough bacteria, nitrogen, and phosphorous to close 20 miles of bay watershed to swimming and shell fishing.
It's gross	~Picking it up is a lot less gross than swimming in it or stepping in it and tracking it into the house!
The dog only goes in their yard	~When a rain event comes through, it will pick up loose waste in the yard and wash it down the nearest storm drain, directly into your nearest stream or river and most likely without any treatment. ~The only way to ensure that your dog's waste stays in the yard is to pick it up before the rain carries it away.
They don't have time	~Suggest a local pick-up service (some in AACo include Doody Calls, Scoopers, Poop Happens, Dirty Deeds, POOP 911, and Southern Maryland Pet Waste Removal) ~Recommend that they, at the very least, keep pet waste away from impervious surfaces and pick up before a rain event

	<p>~ You can even go a step further and purchase your own personal on-call pet waste patrol, like the neat “rumba-esque” yard robot by Beetl.</p>
There’s no pet waste station nearby	<p>~Share contact information for BWPR Education & Outreach Coordinator (Sally Albright, pwalbr00@aacounty.org, 410-222-0136) to request a free pet waste station to be installed in your community.</p> <p>~Note that a community volunteer will need to be identified for maintenance of the station after it is installed.</p>
They don’t have bags	<p>~Here, take a pet waste bag dispenser!</p>
They use “biodegradable” or “compostable” bags	<p>~Most “compostable” and “biodegradable” bags still require industrial processing to break down and can still take anywhere from 10 to 1,000 years to fully decompose in landfills.</p> <p>~If you’d like to try out compostable bags, look for corn-based bags and try to avoid petroleum-based products. These can break down in about 3 months if properly turned in a compost pile.</p> <p>~No matter what bags you use, we always recommend the “back-up bag” method for disposing of pet waste, which means placing bagged pet waste into bag-lined household trash or a local pet waste station (just in case that first bag breaches).</p>
They don’t use bags because the bags are harmful to the environment	<p>~They are not wrong! This is a valid concern and make sure to commend them on thinking broadly about the topic of pollution.</p> <p>~A landfill is never the best outcome, but picking up the poop in a bag that will not break down and leech bacteria from the trash can is the most immediate concern for your keeping your local waterways and groundwater aquifers clean.</p>
What about the contribution of deer, fox, and other wildlife?	<p>~According to a study done by MDE in 2005, pet waste contributed to an average of 46% of the bacteria pollution in County waterways, compared to 35% from wildlife and 13% from livestock.</p> <p>~Dog poop is different from the waste created by the wild animals that inhabit our communities, such as deer, raccoons, squirrels, and foxes. These animals are primarily consuming nutrients that are part of the ecosystem where they live.</p> <p>~There are way more domesticated dogs in Anne Arundel County than what the natural system is able to process.</p> <p>~When the nutrients from pet waste are introduced into our local environment as dog waste, it introduces new matter into our ecosystem, and disrupts the natural balance.</p>

COMMUNITY PRESENTATIONS:

- **Why are we talking about pet waste?**
 - Results from a 2017 intercept survey of County residents conducted by BWPR indicated that:
 - 48% of County residents own pets;
 - 70% of these pet owners reported letting their dog(s) swim in the Bay and/or local creeks/rivers; and
 - 14% of these pet owners reported never picking up pet waste on their property.

- Results from a 1999 study conducted by the Center for Watershed Protection indicated that, on average, 46% of the fecal coliform in Anne Arundel County's waterways is sourced from pet waste. This can be much higher in extreme cases, such as 68% of bacterial pollution in the Severn River watershed and 87% of bacterial pollution in the Magothy River's Forked Creek tributary.
- **What is this campaign hoping to accomplish?**
 - The goal of the "Stop POollution in its Tracks" campaign is to reduce bacteria from pet waste in Anne Arundel County waterways by encouraging dog owners to pick up and properly dispose of pet waste regularly on their property.
- **Who are the partners in the campaign?**
 - Anne Arundel County DPW Bureau of Watershed Protection & Restoration
 - Anne Arundel County Watershed Stewards Academy
 - Pinnacle Communications, Inc.
 - Local pet professionals (pet stores, vet clinics, groomers, pick-up services)
- **What resources are available as part of this campaign?**
 - Free downloadable/printable materials, including fliers, pledge cards, and yard signs that feature local Spokesdogs Lizzy (corgi from Severna Park) and Cher (pitbull terrier from Edgewater).
 - Request a FREE pet waste station for your neighborhood (to be managed independently by the community after installation).
 - Learn more about and spearheading this campaign in your neighborhood and identifying your own community Spokesdog! Anne Arundel County will provide all training and materials to volunteer block leaders free of charge.
 - Hold a pet-centered event in your community and invite us to set up a booth!