



THE WEEK

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Neighborhood Teams Help Improve Water Quality

Do you know where your drinking water comes from, or where the water spiraling down the drain in your sink goes? What about the water that runs off your driveway and into the nearest storm drain?

Although water is critical to our survival, many people do not know much about the water they use. We all live in a “watershed,” which consists of the land surface that drains into a local water body, such as a stream or a river. Our behavior impacts our local streams, the Potomac River, and the Chesapeake Bay—often, in ways we may not even realize.

Since 2003, selected Falls Church City neighborhoods have been participating in a national pilot project called the Livable Neighborhood Water Stewardship Program. Through this program, volunteer leaders recruit their neighbors to form a team that works together to help each individual become a better water steward. A workbook with a “menu” of activities is provided to each team member. Participants then choose those actions that best fit their needs and interests. Examples of water-friendly actions are reducing the use of toxic products in your home and yard, creating a rain garden, and installing water-saving devices. All the

actions in the workbook fall into one of three areas (water quality, water conservation, and community involvement), and all are designed to foster water-friendly lifestyles. Each team meets four times over a two to three-month period, providing support to team members in their efforts to become better water stewards.

Last year, teams were formed on Great Falls Street and N. Virginia Avenue. This spring, teams will be forming in the areas of Langston Lane, James Thurber Court, and Welcome Drive. Many thanks to volunteer team leaders Sandy Tarpinian, Laurie Huber, Judy Oglethorpe, Suzanne Young, and Maryll and Erika Kleibrink—as well as to all their many team members—for helping to improve our local water quality and enhancing the health of our neighborhoods and the whole community in the process.

Additional neighborhood teams will be forming in June and September. To find out how you can become involved in the Livable Neighborhood Water Stewardship Program, please contact Annette Mills, Department of Environmental Services, at 703-248-5176 or amills@ci.falls-church.va.us.