

Adopt-a-Stream

The Town of Fort Mill encourages local businesses, civic organizations, churches, watershed associations, academic institutions, homeowner associations and scout groups to adopt local streams, rivers, lakes and coves for the purpose of keeping them free of litter and potential pollutants.

General Program Conditions

- A. Adopting organizations will be awarded an Adopt-a-Stream sign which will include the organization's name. The sign will be erected at the location of their choice*, which should be in an area that is visible to the public. *Permission must be secured before posting on private property. Representatives of the Town of Fort Mill will determine the best location for the sign.
- B. Each group must include participating adults 18 years or older. Individuals under 18 years of age may participate in a stream clean-up if supervised by adults.
- C. Adopting groups agree to collect litter on both sides of the stream (or around the entire cove) at least two times per calendar year. The Town of Fort Mill recommends one clean-up in the spring and one in the fall. Traditionally, the amount of litter is greatest during these times due to spring runoff and the end of the water recreation season.
- D. The adopting group is encouraged to adopt a stream for a period of not less than two years. After the initial two years, organizations may renew their designations and agreement on an annual basis or modify their designation (choose a different stream section).
- E. The Town of Fort Mill reserves the right to deny an adoption request or to cancel the Local Program Designation and Agreement of any group.

Site Selection Conditions

- A. Each group must select a reach of stream or a cove and contact the Town of Fort Mill Stormwater Department to discuss their site selection and obtain approval from the program coordinator. The program coordinator will assist the group in locating a suitable area.
- B. The amount of time required to clean each section of stream will vary depending on the length of stream section and the number of volunteers, but should last approximately 2 to 4 hours. Typically a team of two people can cover one mile of a lightly littered stream in about one to two hours. The Town of Fort Mill suggests groups adopt no less than one mile of stream or river (depending on the size of your organization). Saturday mornings and Sunday afternoons are popular stream clean-up times.
- C. When scouting your community for a possible clean-up site, consider the following factors:
 - a. Is the site safe? (consider stream bank slopes, water depth and velocity)
 - b. Is the site accessible to volunteers (easy to enter and exit)
 - c. What was the site used for in the past?
 - d. IS the site too large for a single clean-up? Should several clean-ups be considered?
 - e. What types of trash or debris are present?
 - f. Are there sensitive areas that should be treated with care?
 - g. Are there hazardous substances present that make a stream unsuitable for clean-up by volunteers?

- h. Remember that written permission must be obtained from property owners if the site is within private property. The Town of Fort Mill and the program coordinator will assist groups in determining property owners and negotiating Access Agreements.
- D. When an organization commits to the Adopt-a-Stream program and has a site approved by the Town of Fort Mill, an Application for Local Program Designation and Agreement Form shall be completed and returned to the Town of Fort Mill Stormwater Department.

Stream Clean-up Preparation Conditions

- A. Select a date for the organization's clean-up event. Avoid holiday weekends and schedule clean-up events during daylight hours.
- B. Two weeks prior to the clean-up event, contact the Town of Fort Mill program coordinator to inform the Town of the scheduled date so that the Town may provide the organization with supplies (safety vests, gloves, safety information, support, maps and bags). Please return the vests to the Town of Fort Mill upon completion. Organizations may save any additional bags and/or gloves for their next clean-up event.
- C. One week prior to the scheduled event, the Primary Contact for the adopting group must send a copy of the Informed Consent; Liability and Hold Harmless; Publicity Permission form indicating that the representative will have volunteers participating in the event sign before clean-up.
- D. Adopting group participants shall not trespass on private property. Groups must obtain written permission from any affected property owners before the scheduled clean-up date. Please retain a copy of this written permission during the clean-up event and provide a copy to the Town of Fort Mill.

Stream Clean-Up Event Day Conditions

- A. On the day of the event, participants should meet at a central meeting location that is free from traffic to discuss the plan and review the safety guidelines. Park vehicles legally and safely and obtain permission prior to parking on private property.
- B. The primary contact must review the safety guidelines with all of the participants and identify any known hazards before beginning the clean-up event. All participants are required to obey the Adopt-a-Stream Safety Guidelines.
- C. The adopting group is responsible for cleaning litter on both sides of the stream, including the upland areas (areas adjacent to the stream). It only takes a short time for any trash found anywhere within the watershed to wind up in the stream.
- D. All trash should be bagged, with the exception of larger debris (tires, appliances, etc.) and staged in a location along a nearby road. Upon completion of the event, please contact the Town of Fort Mill Program Coordinator with information about the specific location of the staged trash so it can be scheduled for pickup.
- E. Within one week following the clean-up event, organizations should complete the Adopt-a-Stream Field Data Sheet. Adopting groups are encouraged to survey their stream section for signs of pollution and illegal dumping. Citizen reporting is often the only way illegal discharges and dumping are ever discovered.
- F. After the first clean-up event has been completed, and the Program Coordinator has received all the necessary forms (application, Informed Consent, waiver forms for all participants and the field data form) the adopting group will be awarded an Adopt-a-Stream sign.