



Image courtesy of Sissy Perryman, Spanish Moss Trail

Install a Pet Waste Station

Extension Brief EBR-31
April 2015

Scoop the Poop!

When disposed of improperly, pet waste can be a source of water pollution because it contains diseases and bacteria. When precipitation falls on pet waste, bacteria and diseases are picked up and carried to local waterways and eventually the Chesapeake Bay. The pollution caused by unscooped pet waste affects both wildlife and humans – diseases associated with pet waste can cause illness and even death in people with weakened immune systems.

Scooping pets' waste reduces the opportunity for the spread of waterborne disease and bacteria and helps to beautify parks and our neighborhoods.

What is a pet waste station?

A pet waste station provides the waste bags and container necessary to remove and dispose of the pet waste from the surrounding area. Dog owners are more likely to clean up after their pet with a pet waste station nearby. In addition to its function, a pet waste station's signage and presence communicates the community's desire for a healthy, clean open space and watershed.



Image courtesy of Morgan Ellis

Benefits of Installing Pet Waste Stations

It is estimated that 33% of all water contamination originates with pet waste. Installing a pet waste station will reduce the amount of pet waste left behind by pet owners and significantly reduce water pollution in the watershed.

Water quality and community benefits of pet waste station installation include:

- Safe human recreation and drinking water consumption
- Ecologically healthy and thriving waterways and Chesapeake Bay
- Healthier, safer open spaces
- Knowledgeable residents and open space visitors

How to Install a Pet Waste Station

Pet waste stations are often used in public and shared spaces. Your community may require applications, plans, reviews, or permits from the local authority (i.e. government, homeowners association, or park managers) for pet waste station installation.

Step 1: Purchase the pet waste station

Pre-fabricated pet waste stations are available commercially and range from approximately \$200 to \$600. Possible sources for purchasing a station would include online retailers and hardware or home improvement stores. Some local governments and neighborhood associations offer stations at reduced rates to increase installation.

Step 2: Site the station's location

Pet waste stations will be most effective in high traffic areas for pet walkers. Open space access points, dog parks, and heavily-traveled sidewalks are ideal locations. The location should be extremely high visibility to attract pet owners to the station.

Step 3: Installation

Prefabricated pet waste stations require minimal assembly but must be anchored using concrete or some other method.

Step 4: Maintenance (bag replacement & pick up)

Long-term maintenance is a major component to the success of a new pet waste station.

1. Waste bags must be available and replaced consistently to keep up with demand.
2. Open space managers must place waste liners in the trash bin and remove the dog waste in a timely manner.
3. If local managers will not take the responsibility, recruit neighbors.

Additional Resources

University of Maryland Pet Waste and Water Quality Fact Sheet:

http://extension.umd.edu/sites/default/files/_docs/_programs/ipmnet/FS703-PetWasteAndWaterQuality.pdf

Arundel on the Bay Guide: Pet Waste Station Guide

http://arundelonthebay.org/pdf/How-to-Guide~Pet_Waste_Station_Community_Program_2_010Final.pdf

Krisztian Varsa (kvarsa@umd.edu)

This brief, *Install a Pet Waste Station* (EBR-31), is part of a series of publications of the University of Maryland Extension and the Watershed Protection and Restoration Program. The information presented has met UME peer review standards, including internal and external technical review. For more information on related publications and programs, visit: <http://extension.umd.edu/watershed>. Please visit <http://extension.umd.edu/> to find out more about Extension programs in Maryland.

The University of Maryland Extension programs are open to any person and will not discriminate against anyone because of race, age, sex, color, sexual orientation, physical or mental disability, religion, ancestry, national origin, marital status, genetic information, political affiliation, and gender identity or expression.