

## *Trash Free Park*

George Washington Memorial Parkway

Frequently Asked Questions Fact Sheet

April 10, 2013

### **1. What is a Trash Free Park?**

It is a solid waste management strategy of removing trash receptacles from all or sections of a park. Visitors are expected to carry out the refuse they generate and dispose of it properly at home or at another appropriate destination. Integral to the concept is fostering a partnership between visitors and the parks by encouraging all visitors to help maintain clean parks, reduce solid waste within the park, and embrace the ideas of reduce, reuse, and recycle.

There are many other national park areas that have adopted this solid waste management strategy. Nearby, the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historic Park, Prince William Forest Park, Catoctin Mountain Park, and Monocacy National Battlefield have *trash free* programs. State parks such as, Maryland State Parks and Forests, Delaware State Parks, Wisconsin, and Ohio State Parks have a long track record.

### **2. What do we (visitors) do with our trash in the park?**

Visitors are responsible for removing all refuse they generate in the park when they leave the park. Trash must be picked up and the area left in a clean condition before departure. Visitors are encouraged to come prepared when visiting the park. If they plan to picnic, barbecue, or in any way generate waste, they should plan ahead to provide the means to organize materials needed, and correctly package items and refuse, in order to efficiently remove it with them by the means in which they came -by walking, metro, bicycle, car, etc..

The park encourages visitors to consider how they package items. Using materials that can be recycled or composted when they return home is a positive way to help the environment.

### **3. Where are the Trash Free Park areas in the George Washington Memorial Parkway?**

The following park sites will be *Trash Free Park* in 2013:

- Great Falls Park
- Turkey Run Park
- Two GWMP Overlooks
- Fort Marcy
- Theodore Roosevelt Island
- Lyndon Baines Johnson Memorial Grove On The Potomac
- United States Marine Corps War Memorial
- Netherlands Carillon

- Roaches Run
- Daingerfield Island
- River Farm Drive Parking Lot
- Clara Barton National Historic Site
- Clara Barton Parkway Parking Areas

**4. What are the benefits of a Trash Free Park?**

- Fosters a partnership between visitors and the parks by encouraging all visitors to help maintain clean parks.
- Encourages an outdoor ethic that places emphasis on recycling and reusing materials in order to reduce our impact on the environment.
- Improve the appearance of the parks by removing trash cans that detract from the beauty of the park environment.
- Encourages visitors to bring reusable containers and to recycle as much as possible.
- Increases visitor safety by reducing the number of bees, wasps and other pests in the picnic areas and eliminates odors associated with trash cans.
- Eliminating the need for trash receptacles and disposal services will allow the park an opportunity to make more productive use of its available resources and redirect staff to other important park projects and operational needs (i.e., educational programs and tours, facility maintenance, grounds care, safety patrols, and trail work).

**5. What am I supposed to do with my pet waste?**

Park visitors will be expected to remove pet waste and dispose of it properly outside the park.

**6. What do I do with my baby's diaper?**

There are a variety of handy products in the market for the travelling care of a baby or small children. Also, the park has multiple locations with dispensers of *Trash Take Out Bags* for visitor convenience to remove refuse generated while in the park.

**7. What do I do with my large picnic group?**

Larger groups consume and require larger resources. More planning will be involved to provide the materials necessary to pack out refuse. Plan well ahead of time. Bring enough supplies to remove your trash when you leave.

**8. What are you going to do about the litter? People won't listen and will throw or leave their trash on the ground.**

The park maintenance staff has been and will remain actively engaged in litter pick up in the park. This fact does not mean it is okay for people to package their refuse and leave it for the park to clean up. The park is introducing a program by which park visitors can make a personal commitment and have a stake in reducing solid waste in

the park – they remove and dispose of their refuse outside of the park. If done properly, they will leave no trace.

Well established park programs have shown average ranges of success between 80-95%. This statistic means 80-95% of the people who visit *Trash Free Parks* are responsibly removing their refuse. The park must deal with the rest who will leave trash behind. Park staff will continue to remove litter in the park.

In addition, visitors who leave trash behind are littering. This illegal activity is enforced by the United States Park Police and subject to penalty.

**9. What does *Carry In, Carry Out* Mean?**

*Carry in, Carry out* is an outdoor ethic that coincides with familiar *Leave No Trace* (LNT) principles. The LNT message for front country parks (those places close to urban centers) on the matter of trash is similar to back country and wilderness areas. *Pack it in, Pack it out*. Put litter—even crumbs, peels and cores—in garbage bags and carry it home. Be sure to properly dispose of materials. Many items that are carried out should end up in the recycling bin. Food scraps can be composted.

**10. Who can I talk to about this program? I have a complaint.**

First, you may start with any park employee who can assist in answering questions about the program or connect you with someone in the park with more information. You may also contact the park at 703-289-2500 or visit the park web page for additional information. You can also send an email message to [gwmp\\_superintendent@nps.gov](mailto:gwmp_superintendent@nps.gov).

**11. When did we start planning this program?**

The George Washington Memorial Parkway first contemplated the idea of reducing solid waste in 2011, after the introduction of the National Park Service Climate Friendly Parks initiative. In 2012, the Green Parks Plan was published and the park again renewed discussions about initiating more sustainable practices in parks.

Around the same time, several park managers attended a presentation about the *Trash Free Park* program in Maryland State Parks and Forests and learned of the successes and benefits of the program. Field visits to Greenbrier State Park in Maryland and the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park (both with over a decade of experience) generated insight to the development of a program. Planning at the George Washington Memorial Parkway began in earnest during January 2013 with the idea of introducing the program during spring of the same year.

## 12. Why did the park decide to go to a *Trash Free Park Program*?

The National Park Service is responsible for managing park operations efficiently and sustainably. Department of Interior Executive Order 13423, Strengthening Federal Environmental, Energy, and Transportation Management calls for maintaining cost effective waste prevention and recycling programs in its facilities.

Also, Executive Order 13514 and the Green Parks Plan require federal agencies to explore sustainable alternatives that reduce energy consumption and solid waste among other goals.

Committing to a *trash free park* demonstrates our commitment to reducing the NPS waste stream.

- It reduces the amount of money we have to spend on disposal.
- It reduces fuel consumption associated with trash pick-ups and disposal.
- It also reduces staff hours spent on trash removal and allows the park to allocate work hours to other important park functions and projects.

[www.nps.gov/gwmp](http://www.nps.gov/gwmp)

Links to related Trash Free Park information

<http://www.nps.gov/greenparksplan/>

<http://www.nps.gov/climatefriendlyparks/>

<http://www.nps.gov/fone/planyourvisit/trashfree.htm>

<http://www.destateparks.com/rules/cico.asp>

<http://www.dnr.state.oh.us/parks/outdoorfun/carryin/tabid/19564/Default.aspx>

<http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/parks/shelters/carryout.html>

<http://loveourparks.blogspot.com/>

<http://www.vindy.com/news/2009/jul/14/trash-free-parks/>

[http://www.monroecounty.gov/File/CarryInCarryOut\(1\).pdf](http://www.monroecounty.gov/File/CarryInCarryOut(1).pdf)