



## ***Stormwater Protection: No Butts About It***

### ***Simple truths***

If you're reading this, you probably live in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed, along with 16 million other people. You may have never set foot in the Bay itself, but your footprint has been carried to its shores nevertheless. The Bay's shallow aquatic ecosystem, with its peculiar mix of fresh and salt water, is sensitive to changes in water chemistry. Enter the cigarette butt. Cigarette butts accumulate outside buildings, in picnic areas, and along roadsides. These eventually make their way to the Bay via storm drains. According to the organization Clean Virginia Waterways, chemicals leached from a **single cigarette butt** in a two gallon bucket of Bay water are lethal to aquatic organisms (fish larvae, crustaceans, etc.).



### ***Hard Truths***

On occasion we may view ourselves as external to the Bay's aquatic ecosystem. It is on those occasions (and when that view is shared by a few million people) that the situation pictured at left is created. Plastics, aluminum cans, cigarette butts, and Styrofoam™ all have one thing in common: buoyancy. According to the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, stormwater is the fastest growing source of pollution affecting the Bay's health. This *surge* in stormwater pollution invariably leads to more junk making its way to the Bay via stormwater. The end result is littered

shorelines that compromise the health of underwater vegetation, crabs, oysters, and fish. If you've ever sat at a table lined with butcher paper, and uttered the phrase "Save the Crabs/Fish/Oysters So We Can Eat Them" this fact should stir you.

### ***Now What?***

Awareness is paramount when it comes to stormwater protection. We all want what's best for the Bay, and try to avoid littering. Still, a sizable majority of us are unaware how intimately our actions are interconnected to the Bay's health. This fact is the number one reason why people litter. Your actions are the Bay's first line of defense. There's this piece of garbage, and there's this receptacle, they need to meet for things to work. *Capish?*





*Please, give you poor overworked storm drain a break.*

*For more information, please visit the websites below:*

*Clean Virginia Waterways <http://www.longwood.edu/cleanva/index.htm>*

*Chesapeake Bay Foundation: <http://www.cbf.org/Page.aspx?pid=1000>*

*Chesapeake Bay Program: <http://www.chesapeakebay.net/index.aspx?menuitem=13853>*

GSFC environmental bulletin