

I'm Betsy Martin, president of the FOLHC. I've been coordinating cleanups on Little Hunting Creek for over a decade.

Little Hunting Creek is the historical eastern boundary of George Washington's Mount Vernon estate. It is named on maps from the early 1700s. It's not only historical, but beautiful.

Unfortunately, we have a terrible litter problem, and we need your help to help us solve it. We need tools to help prevent littering and dumping before it occurs, rather than relying on volunteers to clean it up after the fact. We'd like to see more enforcement of existing litter laws, and we need incentives for people not to litter, and for producers to take responsibility for proper disposal of their products. Clean-ups are inefficient, and put the burden on the wrong people—instead of relying on people who don't litter to clean up after those who do, we'd like to encourage people to pick up after themselves.

In the past year, we discovered that LHC is a shopping cart graveyard—there are dozens and dozens buried in the mud, in the creek. Based on my research it's my understanding that grocery stores expect a shelf life of two years for their carts. Now ethical managers ensure that carts get recycled when they are due to be retired—but not all managers may be so conscientious. Del. Surovell's bill would create an incentive for retailers to behave ethically by ensuring that their carts don't walk off the lot and end up in our creek. If they behave ethically, there will be no penalty—but if they don't, we will have a tool to get them to act to prevent their carts from ending up in our creek.

Volunteers Removing Shopping Carts from Little Hunting Creek, County hauls them away—April 2012

