



River Friendly Products

What is a *river friendly product*?

River friendly products are those items that have limited negative side effects on the water quality and biological life of the Potomac River, its tributaries, and the Chesapeake Bay.

Buy non-toxic products by looking for the following:

- Biodegradable components
- Low toxicity to aquatic wildlife
- Low Volatile Organic Compound (VOC) content
- Reduced or no added dyes or fragrances
- Low flammability
- Plant-based, non-petroleum ingredients

The cleaning and bathing products that wash down our showers, sink drains, or toilets affect the health of the Potomac. Although water treatments plants clean chemicals from wastewater before releasing it back in to the river, overuse or improper disposal of draining products can affect water quality. **By using river friendly cleaning and bathing products - and using them properly - fewer toxins will enter the Potomac, lessening their effect on its water quality.**



The Potomac River as seen from the Billy Goat Trail in Great Falls, Maryland.



Plastic microbeads can be seen in a facial scrub.

What about microbeads?

Microbeads are tiny particles of plastic that are typically 0.5 to 500 micrometres in diameter and are used in hundreds of personal care products, including toothpaste, shaving cream, shower gel, and exfoliating scrubs. **These micro pieces of plastic have a tremendous effect on the biological life of the Potomac. Sewage treatment facilities are not designed to filter these tiny microbeads from wastewater so some microbeads will still be present in water leaving the treatment plant.** What's more, microbeads are not biodegradable and are mistaken for food particles by various wildlife. These beads attract persistent organic pollutants, toxic chemicals that adversely affect human health and the environment, to their surface through chemical bonding. This means microbeads could show up in the food chain, leading to human consumption of these toxins.



Fish commonly mistake microbeads as food particles, causing them to enter the food chain.

Illinois, Ohio, and New York are leading the way to ban microbeads from products within their states and throughout the nation. What can you do to help? Don't buy products with microbeads and contact your local legislature to encourage them to consider microbead bans.

For more information on river friendly products, please see the additional resources on the reverse page.

Where to find more information

Many state and county services can help you gather more information on river-friendly products and services. Regional non-profit and volunteer groups also offer excellent resources as well. Visit these organizations online:

Non-toxic cleaning products:

- US Environmental Protection Agency
epa.gov/dfe/index.htm
- Cleangredients
cleangredients.org/home
- St. John's Riverkeeper
stjohnsriverkeeper.org/river-friendly/chemical-and-cleaners/
- Heron River Watershed Council
river-huron.org/?page_id=2119



Microbeads

- Beat the Microbead
beatthemicrobead.org
- 5 Gyres
5gyres.org/how_to_get_involved/campaigns/



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About Potomac Conservancy

We believe the foundation of healthy, sustainable, and connected communities starts with clean water.

Potomac Conservancy is the region's leading clean water advocate, fighting to ensure the Potomac River boasts clean drinking water, healthy lands, and connected communities. We combine the grassroots power of 10,000 members and online activists with local land conservation and policy initiatives to strengthen the Voice of the Nation's River.

Land Protection

We work one-on-one with private landowners to protect forested and open space lands in the headwaters regions, and provide resources to ensure our working lands are both productive and river-friendly.

Clean Water Advocacy

We build a vibrant and diverse river constituency in targeted counties to advocate for, and successfully urge passage of, river-friendly land use policies that have broad impact on water quality.

Community Conservation

We mobilize thousands of volunteers in hands-on restoration efforts to raise awareness, inspire action and empower our friends and neighbors to make a difference in their communities.

TAKE ACTION & GET INVOLVED

Find out how you can help improve local water quality by discovering fun opportunities to make a difference in the fight for clean water.

Visit potomac.org/take-action



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