

Intro to Activity

Hosting a river or creek cleanup in your community is a great way to make a direct impact on your local watershed and the life it sustains. This is a hands-on, intergenerational activity that requires light physical activity and a willingness to navigate uneven terrain, and getting a little wet is all part of the fun!

Removing trash and litter from creeks not only beautifies shared green spaces but also protects the plants and animals that depend on them for water, food, and shelter. Creek cleanups reduce water pollution, and in turn, also improve the water quality of the rivers they flow into.



Planning Your Cleanup

Site Selection:

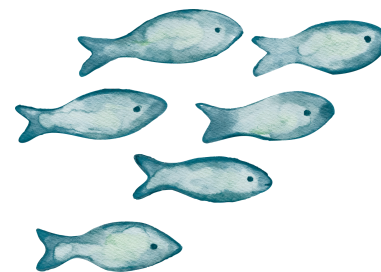
- Identify a heavily littered area
- Avoid areas with safety hazards, such as steep banks or proximity to busy roads
- Do a walk-through to determine the cleanup site boundaries and access points
- Pick an easy-to-find meeting spot where volunteers can check in and get supplies
- Confirm the site is on public, not private, land



Consider choosing a site with public restrooms.

Supply Checklist

- Closed-toe shoes
- Sun protection: hat, sunscreen, sunglasses
- Water and snacks
- Optional: trash pickers, waders, watershed map, clipboards and paper for volunteer check-in and data collection
- First aid kit
- Gloves
- Trash bags



Create a Disposal Plan

- Contact the Park Service or your city or county's public works department to see if you can secure free waste pick-up
- If free waste pick-up is not an option, designate a volunteer to bring the waste to a nearby landfill or recycling center



A truck will help with the disposal process.



A community creek cleanup in Asheville, North Carolina

Sample Run of Show

Time	Segment	Description
0:00 - 0:15	Gathering & Opening	Welcome participants. Begin with a brief silent worship or reflection on our testimonies (<i>Simplicity, Integrity, or Stewardship</i>). Divide up into pairs.
0:15 - 0:30	Event Overview	Introduce the waterway that the group will be stewarding. Perhaps bring a map of the local watershed to help create a visual connection between volunteer homes and the waterway. Discuss the ecosystem services of the waterway and why cleanups make a difference.
0:30 - 0:45	Safety talk & instructions	Discuss safety measures and an emergency preparedness plan. Go over the cleanup site boundaries and divide the group into zones.
0:45 - 2:00	Cleanup	Begin picking up litter, and don't forget to take photos along the way! Encourage breaks for snacks and water as needed.
2:00 - 2:15	Celebrate!	Tally how much litter was collected, and take a moment to celebrate this collective effort and action!
2:15 - 2:30	Blessing & Closing	Gather in a circle to share one thing you appreciate about the creek. Close with a prayer or moment of silent gratitude for the role of water in the web of life.

Tips & Resources

Find Your Local Watershed Map

- www.topozone.com
- US Geological Survey, www.usgs.gov

Recommended Further Resources

- **American Rivers,** www.americanrivers.org: A great resource to help you organize and plan a successful cleanup
 - Consider submitting photos and data from your cleanup to American Rivers to help advance their national movement of improving the health of our waterways!
- **Ocean Blue Project,** www.oceanblueproject.org: find cleanup programs by state and educational information on why watersheds matter.

