



Clean Up a Community Site



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Earth Day Canada presents the *Clean Up a Community Site* booklet. It provides guidelines to help your group wage war on litter in your community.

Note: Use this booklet in conjunction with your CAN manual. The Project Planner Pack may help you as well.

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About Earth Day Canada

Earth Day Canada is your link to positive action in your community.

Earth Day Canada is a national environmental charitable organization that provides youth and community organizations, schools, businesses, government departments and individual Canadians with an opportunity to make a positive difference.

We have a network that now includes thousands of organizers in every sector—all working for positive change.

Operating year-round, our mission is to improve the state of the environment by motivating and helping individual Canadians just like you to take positive environmental action. We offer interactive programs, a free community Earth Day/Earth Week public Events Calendar (available in March and April), and information and tools you'll use again and again.

CHARITABLE #131951378RR

Earth Day Canada is the national organizer of Earth Day/Earth Week in Canada.

April 22 is International Earth Day—the largest environmental event in the world. Every Earth Day, millions of Canadians join people in about 100 countries in positive environmental action. This popular event has grown into Earth Week in Canada to accommodate the scores of events that take place across the country.

Clean Up a Community Site

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Goals

1. Remove garbage from nature sites to protect your community's variety of wildlife and to make sites visually appealing.
2. Help people in your community recognize how litter affects them and the environment.

FAST FACTS

- Often, the few natural wilderness sites in cities are littered and polluted.
- Litter contaminates ecosystems which are home to the variety of wildlife that humans depend on for survival. The variety of wildlife forms delicate ecosystems that make the Earth habitable for humans and other life forms. These species control climate, filter air and create oxygen, circulate water, create and maintain soil, dispose of waste, recycle nutrients, and control "pests" in forests and farms (Canadian Nature Federation, CNF).
- We can't contaminate an entire ecosystem or even part of one without affecting others (CNF).
- Litter can take anywhere from a few weeks to thousands of years to decompose. A traffic ticket will probably take two to four weeks to degrade, a wool sock one year, a painted wooden stake 13 years, an aluminum can 200-500 years, and a glass bottle an undetermined period of time (Office of Recycling, State of Rhode Island). *
- Canadians dispose of roughly 425 million litres of used lubricating oil annually. Of that some 25% is re-fined and 5% is burned as fuel. The remaining 300 million litres a year are dumped, one way or another, into the environment (Environment Canada). *



- Plastic ocean pollution in U.S. waters - ranging from discarded six-yoke packs to lost fishing nets to plastic bags - is blamed for the death by entanglement or ingestion of about 100,000 marine mammals annually, including endangered whales and turtles (Plastics Recycling Action Plan for Massachusetts). *

* facts obtained from the Recycling Council of Ontario's *Tips and Trivia Sheet*.

Challenge: You, Litter, and the Environment

Litter is contaminating wildlife habitat in communities across the country. By polluting our nature sites, we're transforming tranquil, visually appealing areas into ugly dumps. And we're destroying the biodiversity that supports human survival.

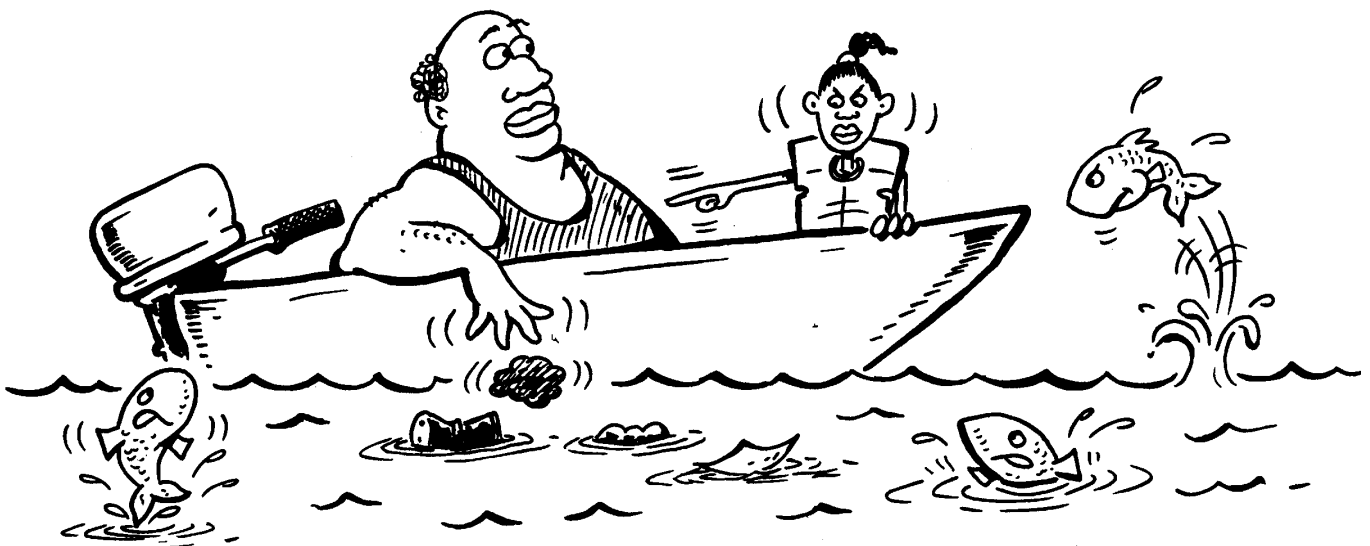
How litter harms wildlife habitat:

- Many products and packaging that people throw out contain chemicals that can contaminate the area's ecosystem.
- Litter can inhibit plant growth.
- Litter from packaging harms wildlife that mistake it for food, and wildlife that gets trapped in the packaging.

How do these beautiful, valuable sites get polluted in the first place? Well, many people aren't aware of how litter harms the environment; others don't respect or value the natural environment.

Littering starts when someone drops food, packaging, etc., on the ground. When people see litter already on the ground, they think their piece of garbage won't be noticed. They litter as well.

Some individuals even throw out their sinks, beds, and other large items into nature sites rather than donating them to local charities (that accept reusable items) or taking large items to a local disposal facility. This is how garbage builds up in nature sites (wild areas, parks, waterfronts, etc.). Unfortunately, in nature sites, it's no one's job to clean up the litter.



Solutions

1. RAISE AWARENESS THROUGH AN EDUCATION CAMPAIGN

Components of the campaign can include:

- *Community Pride:* Encourage individuals to take pride in their community by not littering. Encourage your local government to increase the number of available garbage and other waste collection bins.
- *Knowledge:* Inform people (schools, community groups, residents, local businesses, etc.) of the negative effects of litter.
- *Solutions:* Suggest how people can stop littering

by implementing the 3 Rs in their lifestyles: They can save their garbage until they can throw it into a garbage can; they can save their recyclables until they can place them into recycling bins; they can send their reusables to local charities and church groups.

- Encourage people to immediately report polluted areas needing a clean-up or polluters in action to the nearest Environmental Protection Office, Provincial Environment Department, or police department.

2. ORGANIZE A CLEAN-UP PROJECT

Note: This project is not recommended for small children because littered sites may contain needles and other hazardous wastes.

Needs

Have your planning committee review this section. Hold regular meetings to give organizers progress reports on what items have been obtained. Divide up the work. (For example, assign two people to do the telephone research, two to look after acquiring equipment, and two to obtain permission to clean the site.)

1. Safety guidelines

Refer to the *Safety Guidelines* section (see page 9) for basic safety tips. We also recommend that you consult people (Public Works Department, Parks and Recreation Department, Health Department, and the staff of conservation areas) who have experience in clean-up projects for advice on:

- safe waste-handling procedures
- type of protective clothes to wear
- disposal regulations on what you can and can't send to landfill sites and incinerators. (For example, to protect human health and the environment, household hazardous waste should be sent to a

Recruit community members to join your project's planning committee, to participate in the clean-up, and to monitor the site for future contamination.

hazardous waste depot. If your community doesn't have one, encourage your local government to implement one.)

- how to avoid potential dangers and health risks, and how to avoid back injuries when lifting heavy items

Don't begin your clean-up project until you inform all organizers, supervisors, and participants of the safety procedures. Supervisors should ensure that these procedures are carried out by participants.

- On clean-up day, keep a first-aid kit at the central site, and appoint a volunteer who is certified in administering first aid to stay at the site.

** *Safety precaution:* To avoid any cuts, scrapes, or other injuries, ensure that "speed cleaning" does not take place.

2. A site to clean up

Have your planning committee decide on the site to clean up. The size of your project depends on your resources and the ages of your volunteers. Consider nature trails, parks, playgrounds, school yards, parking lots, creeks, waterfronts, company properties, roadside ditches, etc.

Contact your local Parks and Recreation Department, Parks and Property Department, Works Department, Conservation Authorities, Ministry/Department of the Environment, and other agencies for a list of local sites that need to be cleaned, for permission to clean a local site, and for assistance.

3. Permission to clean the site from the site owner/manager

4. Time to plan, prepare, and implement the clean-up project (from several weeks to about six months), and depending on the size of the site, about one or more days to clean the site

5. People power: planning committee, supervisors, team leaders, and clean-up day volunteers

6. Equipment/supplies:

- colour-coded or well-labelled waste-collection containers (e.g. pails and bags) to separate reusables, recyclables, and garbage
- brooms
- shovels
- rubber gloves and boots, and additional protective clothing
- a central area to place tables, chairs, tents, and equipment
- a map of designated areas to be cleaned
- scale to weigh the garbage and record-keeping materials (pencils, paper, calculator)
- transportation of participants and equipment to and from the site
- if supplying food, relevant equipment and supplies
- a garbage disposal company to dispose of the garbage
- a recycling company to pick up recyclables
- hand-washing facilities, if possible

7. Refreshments: Nutritious snacks and drinks to keep the volunteers' energy high.

8. Rewards to motivate participants

Consider Earth Day merchandise (see Earth Day brochure) and environmentally friendly products donated by local businesses.

You may want to surprise the team that collected the most garbage with an award.

9. A promotional plan to invite the public to participate in the clean-up and to inform your local media about it (The *Publicity and Promotions* booklet may help you.)

10. A central location with tables and chairs

Include:

- sign-in sheets for volunteers
- maps, supplies, and equipment
- first-aid kit
- refreshments and rest area
- scale and sheets to record amount of garbage collected by each team.
- information table

11. Funding:

A community clean-up could cost next to nothing. To identify potential expenses, consider:

1. Equipment, supplies, and services (See *Needs* section). Try to get these on loan or donated by hardware retailers and other community partners.
2. Nutritious snacks and refreshments for volunteers, and prizes (Try to get donations from local businesses.)
3. A method for handling and disposing of garbage, recyclables, hazardous waste, and reusables

In some communities, garbage disposal services are funded by local governments. If this is the case where you live, ask your Public Works Department to arrange the garbage pick-up from your clean-up site.

If your local government doesn't provide this type of service, hire a garbage disposal company to pick up and dispose of the waste. Try to get a donation of services from a garbage disposal company. Your Public Works Department may be able to provide you with a list of companies to contact. If you're unable to get a donation, consider doing a fundraising project.

4. Transportation of participants and equipment to and from the site

Tips for raising funds

- Sell Earth Day merchandise (see Earth Day brochure).
- When approaching businesses for donations to pay for the project's expenses, tell them that by donating money they are supporting positive environmental action and endorsing that the site needs to be cleaned up.

- The *Publicity and Promotions*, and the *Public Event Staging and Management* booklets can show you how to offer benefits to sponsors to encourage their support.
- The *Budgets and Fundraising* booklet can show you how to create a budget for your project.

Preparation Tasks

1. Timeline

Prepare your time line, and schedule in all project tasks. Remember to plan your clean-up well in advance—weeks, months, even half a year ahead. You need lots of preparation time. Often, some steps, such as obtaining permission to clean the site, take a great deal of time.

2. Research

Do some research to find out if other groups have completed clean-ups in the community. Contact environmental, community, and youth organizations to find out what they've done. They may be able to assist you.

3. Volunteer recruitment and management

(Refer to the *Valuable Volunteers* chapter in your CAN manual for more tips. The *Public Event Staging and Management* booklet may help as well.)

- **RECRUITMENT:** Do you want to involve the wider community in your project? Then publicize it, and invite people to get involved. (The *Publicity and Promotions* booklet can show you how.) Individuals or teams of people can join. Encourage representation from local businesses and your local government.
- **MANAGEMENT:** Appoint volunteer coordinators, supervisors, and team leaders.

Recruit good leaders who'll make sure everything goes well.

Pick one or two people to be supervisors on clean-up day. The supervisors should stay in a central area to supervise the collection, answer ques-

tions, and provide information.

Arrange volunteers into groups of four. For each group, two people are to pick up garbage, two more are to pick up recyclables (if sanitary). One person from each pair carries a waste collection container. The other partner holds any tools needed to help pick up the waste.

4. Schedule and Plan

Include the following:

- Choose a date for the clean-up. But bear in mind that you may need to change the date to accommodate bad weather and the conflicting schedules of volunteers. Be sure to pick a rain date.
- Chart a clear schedule of every activity on the clean-up day. Your schedule will be influenced by the size of the site, where it is, and the number of participating volunteers.
- Get a map of the site or draw your own. Mark the designated clean-up areas, the central site (with first-aid and information booths), and locations of containers. Map out areas for each group to cover. If there are areas left over, assign them to groups who finish early. You may want to distribute the maps to team leaders and supervisors before the clean-up day(s).
- Make a list of the jobs that need to be done on the clean-up day and of the tools you need to get the jobs done. Assign volunteers to these jobs, and assign individuals to be supervisors and team leaders.
- Develop your plan to accommodate the number of participating volunteers and the time they're

able to commit. After all, they're contributing their valuable time and energy. So organize your activities well so your volunteers will have fun doing the work.

- The day before the clean-up, contact key volunteers to confirm plans and their attendance.

5. Permits and insurance

Get permission to clean the site. Make sure every level of authority (e.g. site manager/owner, etc.) knows of the clean-up project and approves. Be ready to discuss your project with these people. Make sure you investigate liability insurance requirements.

6. Equipment and supplies

Determine how much equipment and supplies will be donated or loaned, how much needs to be purchased, and where equipment can be obtained. Refer to the *Project Needs* and *Project Expenses* sections. Confirm that the equipment will be delivered to the

site well before the clean-up starts. If equipment delivery relies on only one person, ensure you have a back-up plan.

7. Funding

Arrange for funding if necessary. The *Budgets & Fundraising* booklet may help you. Refer to the *Idea Pack* in your CAN Manual for suggestions on fundraising activities.

8. Transportation

Make arrangements to take people, equipment, refreshments, etc., to the site on the clean-up day.

Also, make arrangements to have the garbage, recyclables, reusables, and hazardous waste taken away from the site after the clean-up. You may want to bring items back to your organization and have it picked up with the regular waste.

* Remember to weigh items before they're removed so that your group can track and promote the amount of garbage collected.

Tasks for the Clean-Up Day

If everyone is informed of their duties and executes them, your day should run according to schedule. Be ready to handle weather changes, loss of people due to illness, etc.

Basic tasks:

- Set up the central site
- Distribute equipment and supplies

- Make sure participants are wearing protective clothes
- Review safety procedures with participants
- Review clean-up procedures with participants
- Above all, HAVE FUN!

Tasks for After the Clean-Up

- Thank-you's: Thank everyone who participated in and supported the clean-up, including those who gave you permission to clean the site.
- Publicize the results, and inform everyone about the success of the project.

- Distribute prizes and gifts to participants and supporters.
- Monitor the site you cleaned to determine if and when it becomes contaminated again. Your monitoring may help identify those who continue to litter the area with garbage.

Project Safety Guidelines

This is only a brief list of safety procedures. You can get complete safety procedure information from St. John Ambulance and the Red Cross.

1. *Have an emergency kit available at all events and locations. Include the following:*

- Bandages, gauze (squares and wrap), medical tape, disinfectant
- Tension wrap
- Disposable rubber gloves
- Corn syrup for diabetic assistance
- Aspirins
- Scissors, tweezers, pen light, flashlight
- Long piece of rag to use as a pressure clamp

Optional items—we strongly recommend you include:

- Laminated recipe cards with written instructions for medical procedures and emergency numbers
- Cold packs
- Large blanket, and towels or cloths for cleaning and absorbing

2. **Insurance:** Liability insurance is an absolute must for your event. Ask landowners for the requirements. Find out if liability insurance is offered through your own organization or through the landowner's policies.
3. **Indemnification forms:** People may be required to sign indemnification forms to ensure that the property or facility owners will not be sued for injury or harm experienced during the event.
4. **Notify others (appropriate authorities, parents of participating youth, etc.) of plans.** Always make sure other people are aware of your location, schedule, and plans.
5. **Information on health regulations:** Contact your local Health Department for guidelines.
6. **Information about fire regulations and codes applicable to your event.** Contact your local fire department for information and assistance.
7. **Fire safety equipment:** Always have fire safety equipment nearby in case of fire.

SAFETY GUIDELINES FOR YOUR CLEAN-UP PROJECT

Always make sure supervisors, team leaders, and participants are fully aware of all safety procedures.

- Supervisors and team leaders must instruct clean-up participants of these procedures and ensure that they are carried out.
- Remember to give special attention to young children.

USE COMMON SENSE!

Many natural or wilderness sites are safe in areas managed by your municipality's Department of Parks and Recreation or Parks and Property Department. When visiting nature sites, individuals and groups **MUST ADDRESS SAFETY HAZARDS**.

The following guidelines are recommended by David Stonehouse of Bring Back the Don, a Toronto-based environmental organization:

1. In isolated areas, **LOCATE** the nearest telephone lines for access in case of an emergency. Research the area well and keep your group together.
2. Broken glass, rusty nails, animal waste, and used hypodermic needles are periodically found in outdoor sites as well as on school play grounds. **PREPARE** your group for dealing with needles and other kinds of garbage. **DEVELOP PROCEDURES** for handling and disposing of these items.
3. **NOTE** that rivers, streams, and creeks are subject to flooding, especially in the spring. The water quality may be poor, so don't enter or drink the water.
4. Participants **SHOULD PROTECT** themselves from the sun by using UV-rated sunglasses, hats, long clothing and sunscreen.
5. Participants **SHOULD PROTECT** themselves from contact with certain types of plants, such as poison ivy, by wearing clothes that cover their arms and legs.
6. **ENSURE** that participants **DON'T CONSUME** plant material.
7. **WEAR** appropriate clothing to accommodate the type of clean-up project and the weather conditions.
8. **PROTECT** skin when touching water.

Success Stories

More and more Canadians are realizing that a healthy environment is everyone's responsibility. And clean-ups rank among the most popular Earth Day projects staged by schools, community groups,

environmental groups, and employee groups. Here's what an employee group in Moncton, New Brunswick and a community group in Oakville, Ontario are doing to wage war on litter.

Moncton, New Brunswick

Employee Group Wages War on Litter



Nadine Gauvin, Earth Day Coordinator at Co-op Atlantic, organized a flat-out fun-filled Earth Week '95 program for employees.

130 employees took part in *Greening the Streets*, a lunch-hour clean-up of the surrounding business community. Eco-cow, Co-op's corporate ecology mascot, "moo-ved" to the streets to lead employees in the event.

A booth displayed a large colour-coded map with six designated locations (city blocks). Employees in six divisions received gloves and colour-coded garbage bags corresponding to their assigned location. The booth also had a scale for participants to weigh their garbage.

The litter pickers collected 373 kg. of garbage. They were then treated to fresh fruit, compliments of EcoCow.

Greening the Streets was such a success that neighbouring businesses and the local high school volunteered to team up with employees in an annual joint community clean-up.

Oakville, Ontario

**Community Group
Cleans Up Oakville's
Waterways**



**CLEAN UP
Morrison Creek**

from Falgarwood Drive to Glenashton Drive

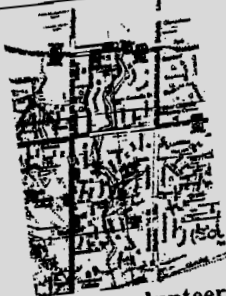
SATURDAY, APRIL 22nd
EarthDay 1 - 4 pm

Volunteers can pick up their bags and gloves anytime from 1-4 pm at the tennis courts of **Litchfield Park** which is east of Trafalgar Road and north of White Oaks Boulevard. Snacks, refreshments and gifts for all.

Organized by the:
Oakville Community Centre
for peace, ecology and human rights
 148 Kerr Street
 Oakville ON L6K 3A7



Proud Sponsor of EarthDay 25 Canada



Call to volunteer
 or just show up!

849-5501

Take Action: Clean Up Our Creeks!

Stephen Dankowich, director of the Oakville Community Centre for Peace, recognizes that our precious waterways are being contaminated by litter. So he decided to transform concern into action by organizing THE FOURTH ANNUAL EARTH WEEK WATERWAYS CLEAN-UP.

200 people—students, families, youth groups and church groups—joined forces to collect 3 tonnes of trash. After the event, the clean-up crew was treated to refreshments and a Jamfest featuring local bands.

80 local businesses contributed to the cleanup's costs. Participants received two containers to separate garbage from recyclables. BFI Recycling picked up the containers, recycled the recyclables and disposed of the garbage free of charge.

4th annual **EARTHWEEK WATERWAYS CLEAN-UP**
"Take Action: Clean Up Our Creeks!"
Saturday, April 15, 1995



organized by the:
Oakville Community Centre for peace, ecology and human rights
 148 Kerr Street, Oakville, Ontario L6K 3A7
 phone/fax (905) 849-5501 e-mail: occpehr@web.apc.org



January 1995

Dear community group,

Join with hundreds of local citizens in cleaning-up our beautiful creeks and lakefront as your contribution to *EarthWeek '95* and environmental protection.

We are now preparing for Oakville's 4th annual *EarthWeek Waterways Clean-up*. Rain or shine, it is scheduled for *Saturday, April 15th, 1995*.

There will be designated morning and afternoon Clean-up locations throughout our community.

Water is our most precious and valuable natural resource. Waterways can be found in almost every neighbourhood in Oakville. That's why this year's theme is *"Take Action: Clean Up Our Creeks"*.

Last April, over 200 environmentally-minded local citizens actively cleaned-up Oakville's waterways and parks in a concentrated effort *to show the Earth that we care during EarthWeek*. Over fifteen tonnes of garbage has been removed from the shores of our beautiful creeks and lakefront thanks to our past three annual *EarthWeek* clean-ups.

Over five tonnes of garbage was picked-up in 1994 at the six designated locations: Bronte Creek under the QEW Overpass; lakefront at Coronation Park; McCraney Valley at Sheridan College; Sixteen Mile Creek at the Old Mill Road; Lion's Valley Park; and, Joshua Creek near Deer Run Park.

Inspired by the annual Campaign, individuals called in to report that they had cleaned up Bronte Harbour at the Pier, Grand Boulevard at Grosvenor, and Leighland Avenue at Oakville Place.

"We are definitely winning the war on garbage at local creeks and lakefront," reported Stephen Dankowich, Director of the *Oakville Community Centre for peace, ecology and human rights*. "There was less litter at sites also cleaned-up in 1993 and there were fewer large items discarded."

Youth groups from Munn's United Church, St. Jude's Anglican Church and Maplegrove United Church participated last year. Many other groups were involved too including the Big Sisters and Big Brothers. We received a much greater response from local businesses as well.

The Oakville Community Centre sent this letter to community partners to encourage them to support the clean-up project.

The Campaign is succeeding in its goal to increase awareness of the need to keep our waterways free of garbage. Last year, we outreached to most not-for-profit organizations throughout Oakville. Over 1000 posters were distributed throughout the community for display in windows and on bulletin boards. We visited all area high schools and signed up students at our information table. Over forty organizations endorsed the Campaign illustrating the broad concern people have for their natural environment.

The response to past Clean-up's has been tremendous. We have brought together members of the community in a constructive and conscientious effort to protect our environment. People from all walks of life have participated in making the annual *EarthWeek Waterways Clean-up* a big success.

You can make the difference in making sure our waterways are kept clean by supporting the April 15th clean-up.

Please endorse the clean-up campaign at your next meeting and make a minimum \$25 donation to its success.

Let the community know that you care about the Earth! A poster identifying all the endorsing organizations will be prominently displayed throughout our community. To be listed, **your group's commitment must be confirmed by March 1st**. Don't delay...get involved in protecting your waterways today!

Your financial donation will help produce the poster and circulate an educational brochure to households throughout Oakville. In addition, your generous support will assist in office expenses and help pay for a promotional poster to be advertised on local buses. *Thank you.*

Sincerely,

Stephen Dankowich, Director, *occpehr*