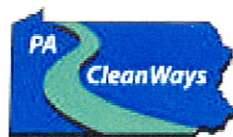


PEOPLE

A Solution to Waterway Pollution



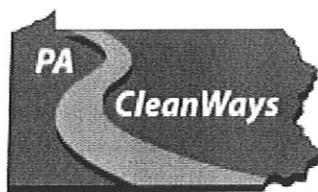
10 Steps to Organizing a Waterway Cleanup



TABLE OF CONTENTS

STEP 1 – Find Someone to Organize	3
STEP 2 – Survey the Cleanup Area	4
STEP 3 – Find Volunteers	6
STEP 4 – Get Permission to Enter	8
STEP 5 – Get Releases of Liability	10
STEP 6 – Community Involvement & Support	11
STEP 7 – Designate Persons to Enter Water	13
STEP 8 – A Plan for the Day	14
STEP 9 – Public Education & Awareness	17
STEP 10 – Volunteer Thanks	18
Note Page	19
Donor and Order Forms	20

Ten Steps to Organizing a Waterway Cleanup



Introduction

Are you fed up with the trash that is spoiling our lands and waters?

Litter is a problem in almost every community and every county is plagued by illegal dumping. Waterways are frequently victimized by these harmful behaviors. Rainwaters flush litter to the nearest waterway and trash dumped “over-the-hill” usually finds its way to the waterway at the bottom. Floodwaters and stormwaters also collect litter and trash, adding to the never-ending accumulation of natural and manmade debris in our waters.

People are the solution to waterway pollution – people willing to give their time and energy to help remove trash from in and near our waterways. Of all the pollutants entering our waters, trash is one we can easily do something about.

This booklet breaks down the process of organizing a waterway cleanup into ten steps. This “ten step process” has been created by successful waterway cleanup organizers and will help ease the apprehension individuals and/or groups may have about tackling a much needed waterway cleanup for the first time.

This booklet is a supplement to the PA CleanWays booklet, “Cleaning Up Your Neighborhood and Keeping it Clean!” and the video, “People – A Solution to Waterway Pollution.” The booklet provides more detailed information about the process of organizing a cleanup. The video illustrates the ten steps to organize a waterway cleanup and shows the many resources that may be available in your community.

To order a copy of the booklet and/or video, see page 20. The booklet is also available as a free download from the publication section of the PA CleanWays website.

What Makes Waterway Cleanups Different?

There are two primary tasks that make organizing a waterway cleanup very different from a traditional roadside cleanup.

The first is that obtaining property owner permission can be more difficult. Some waterway cleanups cover considerable distances and obtaining permission can be complicated, because you may have to work with many different property owners.

The second challenge is providing for the safety of your volunteers. Larger bodies of water and waterways may require boats and volunteers entering the water. If this is the case, it is critical that you recruit trained people.

The uncertainty of the weather also presents obstacles. The small ankle-deep stream may become too dangerous to enter after a spring rain. It will be important for you to note these things and prepare for them in your planning.

By being aware of these tasks ahead of time, your team will have time to plan and address them. Many waterway cleanups have been conducted over the years by dedicated individuals and groups ready to make a positive difference for their environment.

STEP 1

Find Someone to Organize

All it takes to get a waterway cleanup started is someone willing to lead the effort. That person does not need to be experienced at organizing events. All that's necessary is the time and the desire to rid our waterways of trash.

Once you get started, you'll find that others will rally behind you and give you their support. Forming a committee to help organize the cleanup is a great way to get things done efficiently and build ownership at the same time.

The amount of time needed depends on many factors – the amount of trash, the surrounding terrain, the willingness of the community to be involved and unanticipated problems that may arise. It is recommended to start planning at least three months in advance of the cleanup date. That should give ample time for you and your committee to secure the needed resources and volunteers.

STEP 2

Survey the Cleanup Area

To determine what you'll need in the way of volunteers and supplies, you must survey the cleanup area. The best time for most cleanups is in early spring, when temperatures are comfortable, snakes, bugs, and other creatures are inactive, and before vegetation makes seeing trash and getting to it difficult. Try to survey the stream and cleanup area in late fall before the snow and ice make it difficult. Otherwise you will have less planning time and may be limited in how much you can accomplish.

If you will be entering or walking through any private property, you need to get permission, in advance, from the property owner(s). Use this chance to introduce yourself and let the property owner know what you are planning. You can also use this opportunity to invite them to the survey and/or to be part of the cleanup team.

Walk along the waterway and take notes, if possible on a map, of all the trashed areas. USGS topographical maps are inexpensive and can be purchased at outdoor recreational stores or from your county conservation district. Be aware that high waters and spring flooding may move or add debris. Invite others to join you. The more people you have along, the more ideas, contacts and support you'll have in your planning.

Don't feel that you have to clean the entire waterway in one day. Target a section that's easy to do and save the difficult sections for future cleanups. The more difficult sections won't seem as monumental once you've gained experience and have community support. The trash didn't accumulate in one day and it may take more than one cleanup to remove.

If you'd like to accomplish more or if high waters and other circumstances prevent removal of some items, consider another cleanup in late summer, when waters are lower, or in the fall, when the vegetation dies back.

Note the following:

- The amount and types of trash - estimate number of rolloff boxes needed, and the number of appliances, tires, etc.(you may find it helpful to invite a local waste hauler along)
- Situations that need special tools/equipment or consultations
- Particular safety concerns
- A rough estimate of the number of volunteers you'll need
- Possible locations for rolloff boxes or trash, tire, and metal piles
- Work areas suitable for younger volunteers with parental supervision
- Landmarks
- Neighboring businesses, homeowners, and other potential partners
- Tools needed, such as ropes, rakes, or shovels

It is also recommended that you invite your local PA Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) solid waste specialist to the survey. The specialist will be able to give you advice on special handling materials, such as oil or paint, and may be able to give you other safety advice.

Take pictures of the area targeted for cleanup. They may prove helpful as you seek support and they can definitely be used to help increase public awareness of the problem.

People to Invite to the Site Survey:

DEP solid waste specialist, property owner, municipal officials, waste hauler, Emergency Management coordinator, other members of your group.

Some Hazards to Consider:

High water, slippery rocks and areas, steep slopes, narrow bridges and roads, traffic, deep water, swift currents, limited boat access.

STEP 3

Find Volunteers

It can take a lot of volunteers to cover a waterway cleanup. Setting the date for the cleanup well in advance will allow time to publicize and promote the event and will increase your volunteer response. Use a broad approach to finding volunteers:

- Distribute and post fliers at public places – store fronts, bulletin boards, bus stops, restaurants, etc. Don't forget to ask permission – it may also lead to cleanup support.
- Visit the homes located near the cleanup area and talk to the residents or leave information for them to read.
- If you are affiliated with an organization that publishes a newsletter, use the newsletter to publicize the event.
- Ask other organizations for volunteers. Attend their meetings or ask them to put information on the cleanup in their newsletters and announce the cleanup at their meetings. Provide them with the necessary contact information. Sportsmen's groups, watershed associations, conservancies and scout troops are active in conservation activities.
- Your local newspapers, radio stations, and public access TV stations are other ways to get the word out to a lot of people. Call to introduce yourself, then send a press release well in advance of the cleanup. Some newspapers will also accept a brief news release just prior to an event to remind the public.
- Encourage families with older children to be involved.

Although these approaches will help you gain volunteer support, the best way to recruit volunteers is through personal contact. This doesn't mean that you need to contact every single person by yourself. If there are organizations that may be interested in helping, the main contact person can inform the rest of the membership for you.

Information to include in public announcements and press releases:

- Date of cleanup
- Information about the area targeted for cleanup (history, location, etc.)
- Meeting time and place (include map if location is not well known)
- Who is organizing event
- Partner and sponsor names
- Contact name and number for further information
- Number to call for rain cancellation or rescheduling
- Proper apparel (boots, gloves, long pants, long sleeve shirts...)
- Free lunch

When defining your cleanup boundaries, keep in mind that the volunteers should not work more than three or four hours. While some may have the strength, stamina and desire to spend a whole day cleaning a stream, the majority will not. You want the volunteers to always be alert. A 9 a.m. start with lunch at noon works well.

STEP 4

Get Permission to Enter

For your protection and that of the property owners, it is critical that you ask them to sign a permission to enter form well in advance of the cleanup. Be willing to work with property owners. They may agree to allow your group to perform an initial cleanup but may not be willing to grant additional or on-going access for maintenance cleanups.

If you don't know who the property owners are, a search at your municipal or county tax office will provide their names and addresses. Neighbors may also provide you with information, but do not rely solely on their information as fact.

Personal contact is the most friendly and successful way to work with property owners. These contacts may even lead to their helping you on the day of the cleanup.

If the property owner does not live in your community, you'll probably need to send him or her a letter along with the permission to enter form. Allow plenty of time for a reply and follow up if necessary.

There will be some property owners who refuse entry. Respect their wishes and work around their properties. If you perform another cleanup, ask them again. They may have been leery of your initial efforts and will reconsider after they've seen your good work.

Remember that trespassing is illegal, so be aware that you and your volunteers cannot enter any property without permission from the property owner. Even if you will just be passing through a property and not removing trash, you still need to have property owner's permission.

Ten Steps to Organizing a Waterway Cleanup

Sample Permission to Enter Form

I, (Name) _____, being owner of a property situated at
(Description of property location) _____
in (Name of Municipality) _____
(Group or individual's name) _____ do hereby grant permission to
represented primarily by (Name of organizer) _____ and the volunteers recruited by this
group and/or organizer for a cleanup on my property to remove refuse from my property.
By granting this permission, I do, with intent to be legally bound, hereby release
(Group's name) _____ and their volunteers from any
liability and do not assume liability for actions incurred during the cleanup to be held on (Date) _____
with an alternate date on (Alternate date) _____

(Signature of property owner)

(Printed name of property owner)

Date

(Signature of group representative)

(Printed name of group representative)

Date

(OPTIONAL) Also, I do hereby grant this group and recruited volunteers permission to enter my property henceforth to help
maintain this property as a refuse-free property and to remove any trash as may be deemed necessary by them.

(Signature of property owner)

(Printed name of property owner)

Date

(Signature of group representative)

(Printed name of group representative)

Date

PA CleanWays, Inc., developed this form as a general sample only. Actual use of this form does not constitute approval, ownership,
endorsement, or sponsorship of any person or event for which this form may be used. Be aware that some of this sample has legal,
financial, and/or other implications. If you are not sure about the use of any form, consult with an appropriate professional first.

STEP 5

Get Releases of Liability

To address the landowners' concerns of liability and to protect yourself and your organization, require all volunteers on the day of the cleanup to sign a form releasing the property owner and your organization from liability. Do this before anyone starts picking up trash.

For additional protection, you can consider purchasing general liability insurance or partner with an organization or agency that already has it.

Sample Volunteer Registration Form

Name _____

Organization _____

Address _____

Zip _____

E-mail _____

City _____

Work Phone _____

Home Phone _____

Cleanup Location _____

Date _____

NOTICE

The undersigned, recognizing and accepting all risks of accident and injury, hereby agrees that the following persons and volunteers

will not be liable or legally responsible for any injury sustained by the participant, or for loss or damage to property owned or in the possession of the participant during, or as a result of, participation in this cleanup project at the above location whether such personal injury or property damage is caused by the negligence of the landowner or their respective employees, officers, agents, or otherwise.

Signature _____

Parent/guardian if signatory is less than 18 years of age

Witness, Date _____

Thank you for volunteering!

AA (Clean Water, Inc.) developed this form as a general sample only. Approval of this form does not constitute approval, endorsement, or representation of any person or entity for which this form may be used. Be aware that some of the liability releases may be subject to state and/or federal regulations. If you are not sure about the use of any form, consult with an appropriate professional and

STEP 6

Community Involvement & Support

In every community there are people and groups that value clean waters and will be willing to help and/or donate what they can.

Local businesses, utilities, governments, and government agencies are valuable sources of support. Ask them to help in your "volunteer" cleanup. If you have photos from "Step 2 - Survey the Cleanup Area," show them the problem. Be specific with your requests and always accept what is offered graciously, even if it's not what you hoped for. Every little bit helps.

Trash disposal and hauling are often the most difficult resources to secure for any cleanup. Landfills that receive your community's trash often support community efforts. Many municipal officials are happy to work with proactive citizens to clean up their communities and will lend the support of their crews and equipment (you may or may not get weekend support). If your municipality can't help with the cleanup, contact your local trash hauling companies. Other businesses that have crews and equipment as part of their daily operations may also be willing to help transport trash. Don't forget to make arrangements with a scrap dealer or local recycler to recycle scrap metals, appliances, auto batteries, etc.

If your waterway flows through public lands, contact the government agencies that maintain the lands and ask them for their support. The PA Department of Environmental Protection, Department of Conservation and Natural Resources' bureaus of Forestry and State Parks, Game Commission, and the Fish and Boat Commission are eager to work with citizens to keep public lands clean. The US Army Corps of Engineers may have jurisdiction along your waterway and may be interested in helping.

In all of your requests for help, stress that you are organizing a **community** project and you would like them to be **part of the team**. Throughout your planning, keep track of everyone who becomes part of your team and what they contributed so you can personally and publicly thank them. These records will also be helpful when planning another cleanup.

Major cleanups have been performed without any money exchanging hands. Just keep seeking new sources until you get everything you need. If time runs out, save that section of the waterway for another time, and continue to work on gaining the necessary support. Keep in mind that many waterways do need regular cleanups.

Similar to volunteer recruitment, personal contact is the most effective way to gain support. Don't be discouraged by those who won't or can't help – not every business or group places the same level of importance on the environment and some just may not be in a position to help.

STEP 7

Designate Persons to Enter Water

If entry into the waterway is necessary to remove trash, individuals with professional training, such as divers and rescuers, should be used. Be sure to designate these people ahead of time. These individuals and the organizations to which they belong are generally dedicated to community service and may be happy to help.

Divers are especially helpful in securing heavy items which should be pulled from the water by more powerful sources, such as tractors, horses, teams of volunteers, or special equipment.

Military reserve units sometimes get involved with community service projects. These men and women are trained to work together and know how to handle special situations and respond in emergencies.

Invite representatives of each group to your waterway prior to the cleanup. They need to become familiar with the cleanup areas so they can determine what tools and equipment will be necessary for the cleanup.

If you will be creating a disturbance in the waterway, be sure to contact the PA Fish and Boat Commission and the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection prior to the start of the cleanup to address any concerns they may have. Local phone numbers for these agencies can be found in the blue pages of your phone directory.

Under no circumstances should an untrained individual who has not been designated prior to the cleanup be permitted to enter the waterway. Even though the water may seem shallow and perfectly safe, swift currents, deep holes, slippery rocks, and other subsurface hazards may be present.

Helpful Water Cleanup Tools

Boats, canoes, ropes, waders, chains, winches, life preservers, waterproof gloves, personal floatation devices.

STEP 8

A Plan for the Day

After all your effort, it's critical to have a well thought out plan for the day, that includes strategies and procedures from start to finish.

BEFORE THE CLEANUP

Since waterway cleanups can cover a considerable distance, take a team approach in which each team covers a designated section. Designate "team leaders" before the cleanup and provide them with a sketch or map of their area and a list of the necessary tasks for their sections. You'll also need to make sure that the resources and equipment that you arranged for will be ready to go.

Make plans for inclement weather. Heavy and/or constant rains can make waterways treacherous with high, muddy, fast water and slippery banks. Publicize a phone number for possible cancellation and rescheduling information.

Remember, the safety of every volunteer comes first!

Make arrangements for communications equipment and have the phone numbers of local emergency agencies on hand. If there isn't a public phone nearby, have cellular phones or other forms of radio communication available. This is absolutely essential for safety, but will also prove helpful for communications between teams and if you need additional support.

Make sure there is plenty of parking available for your volunteers. Ask your local emergency personnel, such as firefighters, police, and ham radio operators, to help with communications and traffic safety.

If possible, make arrangements for drinking water, refreshments and/or lunch for the volunteers. Not only will food replenish their energy, but taking time out for breaks or lunch will give them an opportunity to share their cleanup stories and feel good about what they are doing.

THE DAY OF THE CLEANUP

As the volunteers arrive, have them sign a release form, assess them for proper attire, and make sure young volunteers have sufficient adult supervision. After everyone has signed the release form and before picking up any trash:

1. Welcome them and thank them for coming.
2. Review and discuss safety precautions (page 16) as well as areas identified as off-limits. Many of the safety precautions seem like common sense, but volunteers must be reminded.
3. Assign volunteers to team leaders. Arrange for the team leaders to be easily recognized by bright colored armbands, hats, vests, etc. The team leader will give volunteers specific instructions on what needs to be done and how to do it.
4. Instruct volunteers to give any evidence they discover to their team leaders to be given to the appropriate enforcement agency.
5. If refreshments/lunch will be served, tell the volunteers when and where to meet.

WATERWAY CLEANUP SAFETY PRECAUTIONS

- Wear sturdy shoes, hats, long sleeves and long pants to avoid falls, sun exposure, scratches and exposure to poisonous plants.
- Always wear heavy duty work gloves and bring a spare pair. Leather and waterproof work gloves work best.
- Avoid heavy equipment at all times.
- Let all volunteers know the location of the first aid kit and communications equipment.
- Do not work during inclement weather.
- Avoid overexertion.
- Do not enter the waterway unless you have been designated beforehand, as defined in Step 7.
- Do not work on steep or slippery banks and slopes.
- Do not attempt to remove heavy or partially buried objects.
- Use teamwork for difficult tasks.
- Do not remove any unknown, suspicious or known hazardous substances such as chemicals and toxic materials in containers.
- Do not remove animal carcasses.
- Do not work in areas identified as "off limits."
- Do not attempt to remove heavy or bulky items alone.
- Be alert for snakes and rodents.
- Do not overfill your bags.

If working near roadways:

- Erect safety signs which are available from your municipality or PennDOT (dependent upon who is responsible for the road's maintenance).
- Always wear brightly colored safety vests.

Volunteers should also be given instructions for emergency situations, i.e. allergic reactions, snake bites, cuts or abrasions.

STEP 9

Public Education & Awareness

Major waterway cleanups may be perpetual events if you don't educate the public and create an awareness of the problem. You may always have to remove items swept into the waters by heavy rains or floods, but you can impact the amount of trash entering the waterways as a result of people's carelessness or intentional actions.

You've already started your education process by organizing and completing the cleanup. For the volunteers, a positive environmental experience such as this can help formulate or even change their values and behavior. Young volunteers are especially impressionable and will perhaps gain the most and return the most from this experience. These volunteers will unknowingly become models and educators, through example and through personal communications. And those who were aware of the cleanup, but were unable to attend, have also been informed of the problem.

To maximize your educational efforts, send press releases and invite your area newspapers and TV media to the event. This should be done well in advance of the cleanup. It may also be helpful to identify a reporter or editor who is interested in the environment.

Be prepared to do your own publicity. Have someone take action photos and send pre- and post-cleanup press releases announcing your plans, success and recognizing your volunteers.

Often, newspapers with limited staffing prefer you take your own pictures. Be sure to identify volunteers in every picture.

REMEMBER:

Education is one of the primary keys to a cleaner tomorrow.

STEP 10

Volunteer Thanks

Most people pick up trash because:

- They are concerned for the environment,
- They like working with and meeting other volunteers, and
- They like seeing the difference that they can make.

To enhance these feelings, you can have a lunch afterward or a gathering to give them the opportunity to share experiences and build on new friendships.

Personal thanks are also well deserved - a spoken word or a personal letter will go a long way in letting volunteers know you appreciate their work. You may consider giving out awards or certificates suitable for framing. Donated T-shirts, soft drinks and food coupons are all nice ways for local businesses to say thank-you and show their appreciation.

Public recognition is also a good idea. Take every opportunity to mention your supporters and their contributions, especially when talking with the media. A letter to the editor or a small ad in a local paper is another way to publicly recognize those who help.

At the end of your cleanup, everyone will be glad they decided to be **part of the solution**. They'll feel great about the job they've done and they'll probably be surprised at the amount of trash they've removed.

NOTES



Become a Friend of PA CleanWays!

To join PA CleanWays in the fight against illegal dumping and littering, return this form and your donation to the address below.

☐ \$500

☐ \$250

☐ \$100

☐ \$50

☐ \$25

Name _____

*If using credit or debit card, name and address must be
exactly as they appear on your credit card statement.*

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____

Fax _____

E-mail _____

Enclosed is my check for \$ _____
payable to PA CleanWays, Inc.

Please charge my credit card for \$ _____

Credit card # _____

☐ Visa

☐ Mastercard

Expiration Date _____

Cardholder Signature _____

Return this form and your donation to:

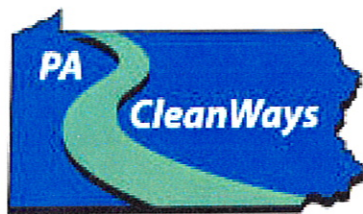
PA CleanWays

105 West Fourth St.

Greensburg, PA 15601-2981

*A copy of PA CleanWays' registration and financial information may be obtained from the
PA Department of State. Gifts to PA CleanWays are tax-deductible.*

About PA CleanWays



PA CleanWays is a nonprofit organization that helps people who are ready to take action against illegal dumping and littering in their communities. Since 1990, we have been dedicated to empowering people to resolve and prevent these destructive problems. We are known for our experience and expertise in:

- Helping people to plan and carry out illegal dump and litter cleanups,
- Sharing information about proper waste disposal, recycling, and practical alternatives to dumping and littering,
- Providing hands-on learning opportunities and kid-friendly learning tools,
- Helping people to adopt local roads, trails, waterways, parks, and greenways in their communities,
- Offering proper disposal events for hard-to-dispose items,
- Restoring natural beauty at cleaned areas through tree plantings and reseedling,
- Preventing future dumping with volunteer monitors and physical deterrents.

For more information, contact:

PA CleanWays

105 West 4th Street

Greensburg, PA 15601-2981

Toll free: (877) 772-3673

(724) 836-4121

www.pacleanways.org



PA CleanWays
105 West 4th Street
Greensburg, PA 15601-2981
Toll free: (877) 772-3673
(724) 836-4121
www.pacleanways.org

