



Project Guide

Campus/Community Cleanup Event

Water Pollution Prevention





Generation Earth Program

Generation Earth is a Los Angeles County Public Works environmental education program presented by TreePeople. Our goal is to educate and encourage youth in Los Angeles County to be an active part of the solution to environmental concerns in their community. We offer do-it-yourself environmental projects that help youth make a positive difference in their schools, at home and in the world. Our programs are built to support the needs of teachers, students and schools.

The School Campus

The school campus may generate polluted runoff that ends up in the ocean. The school landscape allows for water from rain, sprinklers, faucets and garden hoses to be directed into the storm drain system. As the runoff makes its way to a storm drain, trash and other pollutants are picked up and carried into the storm drain system, negatively impacting the environment beyond the campus. Students, teachers, administrators and maintenance staff are responsible for what flows off the campus, into the storm drains and to the ocean.

Campus/Community Cleanup Event Project Guide

To help reduce trash and other pollution on campus, this guide provides the guidelines for students on how to run a campus/community cleanup event. It includes a timeline, checklists, suggested management roles and more to ensure a successful event.

The Steps

1. Cleanup Preparation Checklist

Using a Cleanup Preparation Checklist and Cleanup Event Timeline, students take the first steps needed to plan and run a cleanup event.

2. Promotion Plan

Students create a promotion plan for reaching the largest audience possible. Guidelines are provided.

3. Cleanup Event Team

For a well-run event, team members or assigned volunteers are provided various roles to create the Cleanup Event Team.

4. Event Day Set-up, Supplies and Management

Students run through the guidelines provided for event day details, including station set-up, supplies needed and helpful hints for managing before, during and after the event.

5. Evaluation

Complete the project by answering questions that serve to evaluate the process and offer next steps for potentially taking on an additional water related project.

MAKE A PLAN & GET STARTED

A student-run campus or community cleanup event is an opportunity for students to address trash accumulation problems in areas that contribute to water pollution problems on campus and in their local neighborhood and environment.

Procedure

1. Have students use the Cleanup Preparation Checklist to plan and complete the first steps.
2. Once a date is set, use the Timeline to complete the necessary tasks needed to ensure a successful event.



Materials

- Water Audits and maps
- Cleanup Preparation Checklist (pages 3 to 4)
- Event Timeline (pages 5 to 6)

How it Works

- Students identify pollution hot spots in their campus or community watershed, where trash debris regularly accumulates.
- Students gather the supplies necessary to remove trash and debris. Outreach is conducted within the campus and community to recruit volunteers for their cleanup event.
- During the event, students provide their volunteers with background information on the impact of trash and debris on local waterways and the ocean, directions for the area to be cleaned and safety instructions for safe participation.
- If possible, volunteers sort trash that's collected during the cleanup into separate areas for recycling.
- Once complete, the students design and implement strategies to prevent further trash accumulation.

Cleanup Checklist

☐ Choose a Location

- Identify an area where trash regularly accumulates.

Consider an area:

- Adjacent to a large open area for staging cleanup supplies and gathering volunteers.
- Adjacent to an area where collected trash can be picked up for disposal.
- Easily accessible for volunteers.
- Free of potential trip and fall hazards (if unavoidable, make sure to identify for volunteers).

☐ Choose a Date

- If on campus, select a day during the school week or if in the community, select a day during the weekend to ensure the greatest number of volunteers.

Remember:

- Check with school administration to ensure the date is available and can be reserved, if the event is on campus. If held in the community, check with local residents or businesses to ensure minimal impact.
- Avoid local holidays or religious observances.
- Check the school calendar or local community to see if there are other events that the cleanup might coincide with (cleanups are great opening and closing activities for related community events or celebrations).

☐ Choose a Time

- Select a time of day appropriate to seasonal weather conditions (warm weather cleanups should be held in the morning to avoid midday heat).

Remember:

- Plan to have volunteers cleaning for two to three hours.
- Plan for a total commitment of four to five hours, which includes an hour for set-up and an hour for breakdown.

☐ Get Permission

- If cleaning on campus, make sure you have permission from the principal and plant manager. If cleaning in the community, check in with local residents and businesses to minimize impact.

Remember:

- Check with school administration about whether safety waivers for volunteers are required, if on campus.

Secure Supplies

- A variety of materials will need to be secured for use during the event. See Supply Checklist on page 10 for full list of supplies needed.

Consider:

- Several large tables are needed, for staging cleanup supplies and any event materials.
- At a minimum, trash bags and protective gloves are required for the cleanup. Brooms, rakes, shovels, wheelbarrows and other cleaning supplies may be needed depending on the area and trash to be removed.
- Garbage and recycling collection bins will need to be available. The size and amount of trash to be collected will help determine the size and number of bins needed. If necessary, consider renting or getting a large dumpster sponsored for use by the school or local council member's office.
- Reusable items, such as buckets for trash and garden gloves, are encouraged to minimize additional waste.
- Cleanup volunteers will need water, snacks, sunscreen and a shade tent.
- Giveaway items for a volunteer raffle at the end of the cleanup is a nice way to reward and encourage participation throughout the event.

Determine Number of Volunteers Needed

- Consider:
 - Small cleanup areas, such as lunch eating areas or small alleys, can support up to 10-20 volunteers; while large areas, such as campus fields or several streets within the community, can support 100 or more.
 - More helping hands to remove trash can support community building and stewardship, but too many volunteers can overcrowd a small area.

Cleanup Timeline

It takes approximately two months to plan and execute a campus or community cleanup event.

Two Months Before the Event

- ☐ Identify and secure a location for the cleanup.
 - Evaluate the desired site so cleanup needs can be supported. This includes a space for volunteer check-in, a staging area for supplies and an area for trash collected during cleanup.
- ☐ Prepare a cleanup event plan for the event day including time (event set-up through take down), location and desired participants.
 - Use the details determined in the Cleanup Event Checklist.
- ☐ Present the cleanup event plan to key stakeholders (e.g. principal, plant manager, local residents and businesses) to obtain permission.
 - This includes volunteer safety waivers.
- ☐ Create a promotion plan (see page 8).
 - Be sure to designate the Cleanup Event Manager (see page 9) for any questions or concerns regarding the event.

One Month Before the Event

- ☐ Begin the Promotion Plan.
 - Make, distribute, post flyers, ads, etc.
- ☐ Begin to arrange and gather the needed supplies (see Supply list on page 11).
 - To remove large amounts of trash, arrange to have a large dumpster for the event.
 - Seek out donations or sponsorships for the dumpster from school or local Council office.
- ☐ Confirm that there are no campus or community calendar conflicts. Check for any potential opportunities for collaboration.
- ☐ Create information sheets and talking points to share with participants about stormwater pollution prevention.
- ☐ Distribute and collect any necessary volunteer waivers and photo release forms.

Two Weeks Before the Event

- ☐ Continue Promotion Plan.
 - Begin in-person outreach.
- ☐ Continue to gather supplies.
- ☐ Assign team roles for event day (see Cleanup Event Team, page 9).
- ☐ Solicit other student groups or local community organizations to have an outreach booth at the event.
- ☐ Verify cleanup site layout with key stakeholders, including: parking, staging area, trash collection bins and any potential site hazards (see page 10).

Create a Larger Event

A cleanup event is a great opportunity to share the work of others. It also increases community participation.

Invite the following to have an outreach table:

- Local non-profits and community organizations
- Neighboring schools
- Youth clubs or organizations

One Week Before the Event

- ☐ Confirm space and access with key stakeholders.
 - Verify nearby restrooms for volunteer use.
- ☐ Arrange a place for volunteers to store their personal items during the event.
- ☐ Arrange for water and snacks for volunteers.
- ☐ Confirm cleanup team roles and team members to support them.
- ☐ Go over last minute preparation and tasks for Event Day Management (see page 11).
- ☐ Continue promotion.
- ☐ Ensure all necessary volunteer forms are received.

A Day Before the Event

- ☐ Store supplies near cleanup site for quick setup on event day.
- ☐ Pick up water and refreshments.

Event Day

- ☐ Have fun and be safe!
- ☐ Take pictures.

After the Event

- ☐ Return any unused or reusable supplies.
- ☐ Thank all organizations and stakeholders involved.
- ☐ Complete an evaluation (see page 12).

Volunteer Safety Guidelines

A cleanup event is a great opportunity to share the work of others. It also grows participation.

Invite the following to have an outreach table:

- Local non-profits and community organizations
- Neighboring schools
- Youth clubs or organizations
- Campus clubs



PROMOTION PLAN

Create a promotion plan for reaching the largest audience possible for the cleanup event.

Consider:

Who do you want to reach in the community?

- Who is your audience?
- Will some materials need to be in another language?

What do you want to communicate?

- The reasons for the cleanup.
- Date, time and location.
- Free for all participants.
- Details for involvement.
- Items for volunteers to wear/bring (closed-toe shoes, clothes that can get dirty, reusable water bottle, sunscreen, etc.).
- Any additional activities happening or organizations attending.
- Phone number or email for more information.

Posters

- Create posters that are appealing to your audience.
- Present information in a way that it is easily understandable.
- Include important information such as: who, what, when, where and why.
- Make sure the title and subheadings can be noticed from a distance and are eye-catching.
- Include appropriate graphics and photos.

How do you want to communicate?

- Create and send ads
 - School PTA newsletter
 - Local newspapers
 - Radio stations
- Create and distribute flyers
 - Community centers
 - Local businesses
- Social media
 - Online blogs
 - Facebook Event
 - Community websites
 - X posts
 - Instagram
- Word of Mouth
 - Door Knocking
 - Classroom Announcements

CLEANUP TEAM

Team members or assigned volunteers will be needed to support the various roles below.

Cleanup Event Manager

- Oversees the set-up and event needs of the various stations.
- Serves as the point person for any issues or questions that arise during the cleanup, including event partners, safety concerns.

Volunteer Greeter

- Signs-in volunteers.
- Directs volunteers to the Safety and Cleanup Instruction Station.

Volunteer Coordinator

- Provides instruction on where and how to clean and any safety hazards to avoid.
- Signs-in volunteers and has waivers completed if necessary.
- Directs volunteers to the Cleanup Supplies Station.

Supplies Coordinator

- Manages and distributes supplies to volunteers.

Collection Coordinator

- Manages the trash that is brought by the volunteers.
- Manages the sorting of any recyclable materials and bags for recycling.



EVENT SET-UP

Use the list below to plan out the locations for each station and how they will be managed.

Volunteer Check-In and Staging Station

- Located in front of the event area with space for volunteers to gather.
- Run by the assigned Volunteer Greeter with the support of one or two team members.
- Serves as volunteer sign-in, refreshment/break area, first aid and for any questions.

Safety and Cleanup Instructions Station

- Located outside the cleanup area.
- Run by the assigned Volunteer Coordinator with support of one or two team members.
- Serves to verify that volunteers have signed in and collect necessary signed waiver forms, provide directions on what and where to clean and any hazards to avoid.



Cleanup Supplies Station

- Located next to the Safety and Cleanup Instructions Station.
- Run by the assigned Supplies Coordinator with support of one or two team members.
- Serves as supply management and distribution.
 - Any reusable materials should be separated and set up to be easily accessed and distributed.
 - Cleanup volunteers will return any unused supplies or reusable items here.

Trash Collection and Recyclables Sorting Station

- Located in the area designated by cleanup stakeholders.
- Run by the Collection Coordinator with support of one or two team members.
- Serves as the area to place the trash dumpster, Sharps Station for any sharp items found and recyclable materials.

Supplies

Volunteer Check-in

- Shade tent (if available)
- 3 to 4 large tables (3'x6')
- Sign-in sheets
- Pens/pencils
- Name tags
- Blank safety waivers
- Hand-sanitizer
- First-aid kit
- Refreshments/snacks/water

Cleanup Instructions Station

- Safety guidelines (see Resources page 7)

Cleanup Supplies Station

- Large, thick garbage bags (50+)
- Protective latex and work gloves
- Face masks
- Medium-sized buckets for trash collection (50+)

Trash Collection Area

- Signs for where trash is to be left
- Large dumpster (if needed)
- Sharps container or sturdy plastic jug

Recyclables Sorting Station

- Large tarp for sorting trash
- Signs showing where recyclable materials can be placed for separate bagging
- Clear bags for recycling collection (25+)

EVENT DAY MANAGEMENT

Before

- The Cleanup Team should arrive at least one hour before the event.
- Verify any concerns regarding access and potential safety issues.
- Review assigned responsibilities.
- Set up the various stations.

During

- Be sure to include in the volunteer briefing the location of the various stations, available restrooms, if recyclable items are to be separated and the cleanup end time.
- The Volunteer Coordinator should ensure that volunteers take breaks.
- Plan to keep count of how many participants come to the cleanup.
 - Use a sign-in sheet or assign an additional volunteer at the Check-In Station to count the number of volunteers entering.
- If there are any safety issues that occur during the event, have the Cleanup Event Manager address the situation and contact the necessary officials.
 - Write down the person(s) involved, time, location of the incident and a brief summary of what happened for reference.
- If there are any concerns that arise regarding access to various spaces or volunteer activities, direct any interested individuals or questions to the Cleanup Manager.

After

- Remove any additional trash from the event and place in the Trash Collection Station area.
- Put away any supplies brought to the event (tables, tent, cleanup supplies, etc.)
- Take any leftover refreshments home or donate to a local food shelter.
- Thank the volunteers, location partners and any other groups participating.

Community Awareness

Share what you have learned about stormwater pollution prevention with the community

- Create an awareness tour in the neighborhood.
- Create information sheets to pass out to volunteers.
- Create talking points for the team to use when sharing information with volunteers.
- Use the Water Pollution & Prevention Education Campaign Project Guide as a resource.

EVALUATION

Once students have completed their campus/community cleanup event, have them answer the following questions to evaluate their project and introduce some possible next steps.

Questions

1. What was the most successful part of the project?
2. What was the least successful?
3. What would you do differently next time?
4. What can be done to prevent further trash accumulation?

What's Next?

Are you interested in another project?

Consider using another Project Guide:

- Water Pollution & Prevention Education Campaign
- Campus Curbside Recycling
- Textile Recycling Event





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