

LIVE LAUGH LOVE...
NATURE

CREEK
CLEANUP
PROJECT



Organizer's Guide

For more Live Laugh Love Projects visit us @ LiveLaughLove.com

LIVE LAUGH LOVE...NATURE CREEK CLEANUP PROJECT

THE CREEK CLEANUP PROJECT

What are Live Laugh Love® Projects?

Live Laugh Love® was founded on the core philosophy that life should be lived with heart! What you live for...what makes you laugh... what you love... can be different for each person, but when you put your heart and soul into them, it makes life worth living. Every day becomes an adventure that brings more excitement, more joy, more satisfaction. We've created Live Laugh Love Projects to help you do that. They are fun, easy ways for you to get involved with something you care about and bring positive changes to your community. So if you want to live a life that is inspired and that inspires others, then Live Laugh Love projects are made for you.

Life is better when you really live, laugh and love.

When you embrace life, you appreciate it and you want it to be the best it can be -- not only for you, but for everyone. And the best life is one that is lived to the full, one filled with laughter and love. Whether you live laugh love nature and animals, or people and community, these Projects offer something that will speak to your heart.

Change starts with you.

We give you all the information you need to organize and successfully carry out great initiatives that will not only benefit the wildlife and community around you, but will give you the opportunity to have fun as you build and grow relationships with your friends, family and neighbors. So don't sit around and wait for someone else to do it. Every person is unique and has something important to contribute. Each of us can make choices that bring beauty, love and good into the world we live in. Will you?

**So jump in. Have fun.
Make a difference.**

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Do you have a heart for nature? We do! And we hope you will join us in preserving the health and beauty of the natural world we live in.

When you're surrounded by nature do you feel more alive? Do you love the sound of a tranquil brook, the feel of a summer breeze, the smell of spring flowers? Do you enjoy laughing and sharing with good friends? If so, then your love of nature and passion for life make you an ideal candidate to start a [Creek Cleanup Project](#) in your area.

Trees, flowers, animals, people. We all need clean water to enjoy vibrant lives. Cleaning up our rivers in one way we can protect and improve this way of life ... And have a good time in the process.

We at [LIVE LAUGH LOVE](#) encourage you to get involved right where you live and start a [Creek Cleanup Project](#) in your neighborhood. Not only will you improve the health and safety of the environment in your community, but you will have an opportunity to build great relationships with friends and neighbors.

Each of us has the power to make big changes, especially when we work together.
So don't wait! [Get started today and make a difference!](#)



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Introduction

Did you know that our nation's rivers provide more than 65% of our drinking water and that most Americans live within 1 mile of a river or stream? (source AARP doc - confirm facts are true)

Our rivers are a source of life for us and for all the creatures on this planet. Keeping them clean makes them safer and more beautiful for all to enjoy. Let's work together to restore some of our great earth's most valuable resources.

Time commitment

Preparation: Approximately 4 hours

Clean up: Based on you. It can range from just 1 hour to a full day. If you choose to organize a cleanup that lasts more than a $\frac{1}{2}$ day, then you need to be sure to provide food and refreshments to your volunteers and make sure there is a proper way to dispose of all trash.

Special skills/Limitations

No special skills are needed and the cleanup activity should not be strenuous. It involves walking along the riverbanks and/or wading in the edge of the water. It can also include people who can navigate streams in a boat to access hard-to-reach debris in the middle of the river.

Group Size

The group can be as small or large as you wish. It can include a small group of family and friends or a large group of volunteers from your community or organization.

All Over Benefits

Not only will you create a healthier environment for people and animals alike, but you will add beauty to your community and in the process build positive relationships with friends, neighbors and colleagues. It's a life-enriching program in more ways than one. As you give, you receive even more.

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So give your time, your energy, your positive attitude and help make a difference one program at a time.

PROJECT GUIDE

Step 1: Plan Your Cleanup Event

A. Choose a Site

Choose a local river or stream that has easy access. For help finding a cleanup site contact a local watershed association or outfitter.

Things to keep in mind:

- Parking availability
- Safety (try to avoid rivers near busy roads, keep in mind the speed of the river water, look for any dangerous areas along the riverbanks that could compromise the safety of the volunteers)
- Time needed to conduct a successful cleanup
- Are there kayakers or boaters in the group that can pick up trash while floating the river? If not, the volunteers can clean the trash within reach as they walk along the riverbank.

B. Secure Permission to clean up the site

The county auditor or land title office should be able to tell you if the land is publicly or privately owned and specify the owners so you can seek their permission to organize a cleanup.

- **Public Land**

Contact the government agency that manages the property and ask for permission to organize a cleanup. You can also ask the agency if they would like to help support the volunteer effort by donating equipment or helping with trash disposal.

- **Private Land**

If the land is privately held, arrange to speak with the landowner and tell him/her you and your group would like permission to organize a river clean up. Explain how you want to clean, beautify and restore an important natural resource which will benefit the owner and the surrounding community.

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C. Prepare the Site for the Clean-up Event

- Scout out the section of the river you plan to clean and target key areas.
- Identify the easiest paths along the riverbank for volunteers to use during trash cleanup.
- Identify any dangerous areas to be avoided or other safety issues.
- Speak with the owner of the land (whether government or private owner) and ensure that proper safety procedures are in place before cleanup day arrives.
- Choose an open area as your "base of operations" where volunteers will check in, check out and obtain supplies.
- Coordinate with the land owners regarding where volunteers can park their cars for the event.
- Ensure there is easy access for safety and health vehicles to reach volunteers if needed.

D. Choose a Day and Time

Give time to prepare. A month is ideal. You can choose how long the cleanup will be. It can be a few hours, a half day or a full day. If you choose a full day, make sure you make arrangements for lunch so that the volunteers are properly taken care of. Also make sure water is available for the volunteers.

E. Recruit Volunteers

This can be the most fun part of your program. It's a great opportunity to bring old friends together for a good cause, or a chance to do a family program, or a way to get acquainted with your neighbors. Above all, it gives each person a chance to make a difference and show they have a heart for their environment and their community

You can look for volunteers from a number of sources. Some suggestions include:

- Family and friends
- Neighbors
- Community groups
- Local scout troops, 4H groups
- Local clubs including canoe/kayak clubs
- Local environmental organizations

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You can also post or hand out flyers to recruit volunteers. If allowed, try posting flyers at your local community center, public library, supermarkets, local churches and online. You could even organize a Meetup Event online. **Make sure to get sign-up sheets including email addresses and phone numbers so you can keep track of anyone who wants to volunteer.**

F. Public Relations: Talk to the media to get your river cleanup event in the news

Start by contacting your local media as they are very open to publishing positive stories about the community. You can contact all forms of media, including newspapers, radio and television stations.

- Talk to the media at least 1 week before your planned cleanup.
- When you first make contact, stick to the basics - you want to let the community know you are planning a river clean up.
- Once they are interested, let them know the details of the event. Include answers to the following key questions:
 - What? A river cleanup
 - Why? To improve the health of our rivers, its inhabitants, the environment and the overall community.
 - When?
 - Where?
 - Who? Identify the volunteers involved and be sure to highlight any local celebrities or noteworthy groups that might incur more media interest and coverage
- Be positive, upbeat and respectful. Make sure to emphasize the benefit to the community and encourage others to get involved.

F. Involve Civic Leaders

Try to get your government leaders involved in the event *as early as possible*. They can be from the state, city, county or even more local levels. Not only will this help you get more media coverage, but it may also help you in getting approvals for the clean up as well as potential help with tools and trash disposal for the event.

If you already have the media interested in covering the story, the government leaders may also be more interested in getting involved, as well. You can also reach out to other local leaders and groups like the Chamber of Commerce, Rotary clubs, etc.

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Tips to get Government leaders involved:

- Call their office and ask for the person in charge of the leader's schedule.
- Be brief and to the point: Introduce yourself, your organization and advise that you have scheduled a river cleanup event.
- Invite the leader to attend.
- Ask as early as possible to improve the chances of their participation.

Step 2: Prep for the Event

A. Choose clean-up leaders to help organize the event. Make sure this includes a set-up and clean-up team.

B. Your set-up team will need to arrive with you early the day of the event.

C. Send written event instructions to all volunteers—(email is an ideal way to do this)

- Advise volunteers what to wear and bring to the cleanup. Suggestions include:
 - Comfortable clothes and shoes you can get dirty. Preferably long pants and long sleeves to protect against insect bites, poisonous plants and sunburn.
 - Bug spray
 - SPF lotion/spray
 - Hat
 - Sunglasses
 - Waterproof work boots. No sneakers or sandals.
 - Latex gloves for handling trash (or you can provide these items at the event)
 - Change of clothes and shoes
 - Wet wipes
- Advise volunteers what NOT to wear during the cleanup. Such as:
 - Expensive Jewelry
 - Nice clothing
 - Strong Deodorants and Perfumes (to avoid attracting insects)
- Include directions to the event site and instructions on what to do when they arrive.
- Make sure volunteers also know where to park.
- Include safety tips and emergency phone numbers for the river clean-up as a separate attachment.

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D. Checklist of Items for the Cleanup

Purchase or ask for donations of the following from businesses, public authorities and/or volunteers.

- Map of the river and the surrounding area
- Tables and chairs for the base of operations area that includes sign-in/sign-out station, food and beverage station, first-aid station, trash removal station.
- Markers and pens
- Cardboard for signs. Paper for sign-in and sign-out sheets.
- Latex gloves to protect hands while collecting trash from the water and handling garbage bags.
- Drinking water for the volunteers. Lunch if the event will be more than a half day.
- Trash bags and clean-up supplies
- Sign-in, sign-out sheets, pens for volunteers and press
- Camera to take pictures during the event. Also take "before and after" photos of the river.
- First Aid kit(s)
- Acknowledgement of Risk statement that must be signed by all volunteers to protect against any liability.

E. Trash Removal/Disposal

Depending on the scale of your cleanup, you can handle the trash removal in two ways:

- Call your Local Waste Management Company. Tell them you are involved in a volunteer community service to clean the river. Ask if they can dispose of the trash for free or at a discounted rate. Make sure to ask about the proper way to dispose of special or hazardous materials.
- Recruit Volunteers with pickup trucks to transport the collected trash to a landfill or the appropriate location.

F. Contact local businesses

Ask if they would donate snacks or any other cleanup items for the event.

G. Call a caterer (if needed)

If you plan a full day event, you may want to consider using a caterer or asking volunteers to bring food and beverages for everyone for lunch.

H. Check the weather

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As you get closer to the event date, check for any forecasted inclement weather such as extreme cold or hard rain that will keep you from successfully completing your cleanup event. Make sure you check the weather a week and especially a day before for any changes. If you need to reschedule the event, make sure to let all volunteers, press and VIPs know the day before.

I. Prepare a Brief Speech

Write a brief introductory speech for the day of the event, making sure to thank all volunteers, public agencies, VIPs and press for attending. Also, be sure to talk about the river you are cleaning and the benefits of the clean-up. Be sure to also give safety advice and clean-up instructions.

J. Check and double check

- Make sure you have all the supplies you need. Have a checklist with contact numbers and make sure all items will be delivered or ready for the event day.
- The day before the event, call any vendors and service providers to confirm their arrival and make sure they know where and how to get to the event.

Step 3: Event Execution

ARRIVE EARLY at the clean-up location with your set-up team -- 1 to 2 hours before the event is scheduled to begin.

- As you drive to the clean-up site, place signs along the road to indicate where the event is taking place.
- Review the site to ensure you have taken into consideration all safety concerns. Be sure to take note of these and communicate them to all volunteers and participants.
- Check the water levels and the river flow to ensure it is safe for anyone planning to float on the river to clean-up trash.
- Set up the following stations/tables near the parking area:
 - Check-in table: for volunteers, press and VIPs. Include volunteer sign-in and sign-out sheets, "acknowledgement of risk" statements for volunteers to sign, map of the river and the surrounding area, flyers/fact sheets about the benefits of a river cleanup to the environment and the community.
 - Refreshment table: Include water and snacks or lunch if needed.

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- First aid and safety table.
- Supply table: Include trash bags, latex gloves, cleanup supplies, life jackets and paddles (if you are floating the river)
- Trash receptacle area: where the dumpsters or trash bags are collected.

CHECK-IN TABLE

This is important to keep track of all volunteers. Upon checking in, each volunteer should sign in and sign an "Acknowledgement of Risk" statement. This form outlines the dangers associated with river clean-ups and reiterates that each volunteer is responsible for his or her own safety. This protects the organizer(s) and anyone else involved from any liability if someone is injured during the clean-up event. **Make sure all volunteers sign out at the end of their participation in the clean-up to ensure everyone is safely accounted for.**

Pre-Clean-up Briefing

- Briefly talk about the river, including its history and importance to the surrounding area, and how the clean-up will benefit the environment and the community.
- Thank the volunteers, VIPs, and press for attending. Be sure to include any groups who helped with the event, including any public agencies, trash collectors, etc.
- Give the VIPs an opportunity to speak before the event commences.
- Introduce clean-up leaders
- Make sure to take pictures of the group, as well as any VIPs who attend.
- Cover safety points
- Make sure to stress the importance of signing in and signing out when finished. Anyone leaving early should advise the leaders in advance.

Step 4: River Cleanup Conclusion

- Make sure each volunteer signs out before leaving.
- Dispose of trash collected during the cleanup. If possible, separate out any steel, aluminum, plastics and glass to send to the local recycling center.
- Make sure the cleanup team is in place to take away an extra refreshments, as well as tables, chairs, signs, etc. after the event is completed.
- Send out a thank you email or letter to all who attended with pictures and a summary of the objectives that were achieved at the event.

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SAFETY TIPS

- Make sure that volunteers are aware of the physical demands of the river clean-up and that they are involved in the appropriate volunteer activity. For example, if a volunteer is not able to do the physical clean-up, he or she can still participate by helping with organization and preparation of the event as well as working at the event tables.
- Parents and guardians must be responsible for the supervision of their children. Every child should have adult supervision.
- If water levels are above average you must postpone your clean-up.
- Consider postponing if you expect heavy rain close to your clean-up date, as this will probably raise the water level too high.
- Have a buddy system in place to make sure everyone is accounted for and can help each other.
- Create a tip sheet with a map of the river.
- Make sure everyone is made aware of the proper attire for the clean-up.
- Have a list of emergency phone numbers
- Scout out the river and make note of any drops, dams and other more difficult river features.

Legal

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Send an Event News Report Back to Live Laugh Love®

Congratulations! You are a leader and a change-maker and you should be proud. You've made a positive difference by implementing a Live Laugh Love project in your community. But it doesn't have to stop there. Your efforts can have even more of an impact. How? By sharing your story. Just tell us about it and we'll help you spread the news so others can be inspired to do the same.

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

Let us know more about you, what you have a heart for and what you've done to make a difference so we can share it with the entire Live Laugh Love Community!

It's easy. It's simple. Just send us an email or CD with some attachments.

- Pictures
- Copies of the sign-up sheets
- Some text
- What was done
- Who did it
- How many people did it
- Total time spent
- The number of people the project will likely benefit
- Why you did it
- A story if you like
- Anything else!

Feel free to add anything else you feel is important.

- What was the project?
- Why did you choose the project?
- What were your goals for the project? Were they met? (ex. Number of people helped, area of land that was cleared, the increased number of people that used the park once it was cleaned) was cleaned, etc.)
- Who worked on the project? (friends, family, scout troop, club group, etc.)
How many people?

- How much time was involved?
- Were any news articles written about your event? Can you include them for us to share or send us a link where people can read about it?
- Did you get any support from your community or local government leaders?
- Do you plan on doing this project again later on or perhaps a different one?
- Was anyone inspired to do something similar because of your example?
- How did the community respond?
- What did you do to recruit volunteers?
- What did you learn from the experience?
- Pictures would be great to have so if you can, please include “before and after” photos. Then everyone really get an understanding of what you and your team were able to do.
- If you really want to get everyone’s attention, you can also write a short news article summarizing your event and its success. Hearing it from your perspective makes it that much more meaningful!

SO TAKE SOME TIME, SHARE YOUR HEART, AND HELP US MAKE THE WORLD A GREAT PLACE TO LIVE LAUGH LOVE.

Thanks!

The LLL Team

LiveLaughLove.com