



How to Organize a River Cleanup in 10 Easy Steps

1. Get help. Create a team, partner with an organization, call Friends of the Fox River.
2. Look at a good map. Find publicly owned land along the river for your cleanup in your community. This is usually park or municipal property. Find a location that has adequate nearby parking, space for a couple canopies, space for a dumpster, portapotty, handwashing stations, and a large enough gathering space that you can speak to all volunteers at once.
3. Contact the site's landowner and ask for permission use the property. Call your city, park district or whomever owns your proposed meeting and cleanup location(s). Describe what you'd like to do and ask what you need to do to conduct a cleanup. Ask if their agency or organization would co-sponsor the event (and waive permit fees).
4. Get legal! Apply for and obtain a special event permit. Register your cleanup with Friends of the Fox River and we'll provide a "certificate of additional insured" to the issuer of the event permit.
5. Announce your Cleanup. Call for volunteers. Reach out to friends, community groups, service and fraternal organizations, the Chamber of Commerce, post your event on social media, put out a media alert and press release, customize our "Community Outreach Letter and send it to organizations in your town. Invite elected officials, and the media.
6. Raise money and/or get supplies donated. You want to provide volunteers with snacks, trash bags, gloves, tools and maybe even a free lunch. All that costs money. Ask your city council, your local elected representative, the Chamber of Commerce, national retailers like Walmart or Target, and local business owners for donations and/or supplies.
7. Get the trash picked up. Arrange for a dumpster. Often your town, township or the public land owner (park district or forest preserve), has the equipment and manpower. You may have to reach out to a waste hauler for a donation.
8. Run the Cleanup. Set up registration & a food table. Welcome and register volunteers. Organize them into teams. Hand out maps, tools, etc. Deliver the safety talk. Take photos. Take photos. Take photos. Thank everyone. Clean up the site.
9. Thank everyone! Thank your partners, volunteers, donors, and funders.
10. Send your volunteers, supporters and Friends of the Fox River a "Cleanup Report".

Friends of the Fox River preserves, restores and protects the Fox River Watershed's resources by connecting people with nature through education, research, restoration and advocacy.