



# IOWA StreamKeepers Volunteer Handbook

Iowa Department of Natural Resources  
March 2007

## COVER

The Green River Wildlife Area along the Mississippi River  
in Jackson County between Bellevue and Clinton.

Cover photo by Clay Smith.

*Printed in-house on recycled paper.*

# IOWA StreamKeepers Volunteer Handbook

Prepared by  
Iowa Water Trails and IOWATER Programs

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the Iowa Department of Natural Resources.

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March 2007



## Where do I start?

Start by attending a river cleanup. Participating in a cleanup will give you the experience and confidence to organize one of your own. Additionally, you will see firsthand the effects that a cleanup effort can generate.

## Why am I doing this?

Cleanup projects on streams and rivers are satisfying and rewarding events for volunteers. You have the opportunity to lead in an effort to restore quality to Iowa's waterways. Organizations, groups, and individuals throughout Iowa are motivated to get involved. The voice of Iowans is loud and clear; we have a strong desire to experience these beautiful natural resources free from trash.

Unfortunately, when someone dumps a load of unwanted litter into our waterways, it does more than create an eyesore. A dirty river can reinforce harmful habits and lead to a dangerous downward spiral – garbage seems to attract garbage. The negative impact of a trash-laden waterway includes loss of fish and wildlife habitat, water quality issues, and safety concerns for those recreating on polluted bodies of water.

Instead, we need to demonstrate our desire to halt this cycle of deterioration. A river cleanup is a community's opportunity to set a powerful example, one that enforces stewardship and responsibility. Through river cleanups, you will develop a relationship with Iowa's aquatic resources, understand their complexities, and learn how to protect and improve them.

Other benefits associated with cleanup events include:

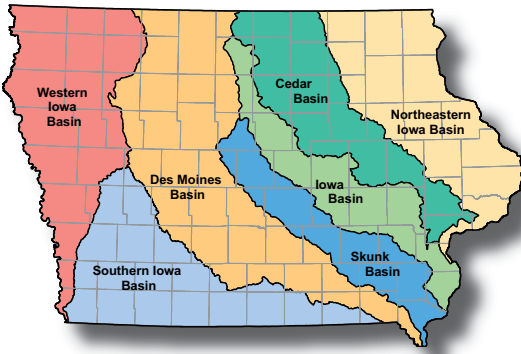
- A renewed appreciation for Iowa's rivers and streams
- A greater understanding of watersheds and their impacts on water quality
- An increase in water-related tourism (boating, canoeing, fishing, camping, etc.)
- Healthier and safer environments for local and migrating wildlife provide a deep sense of pride for those involved and living in the watershed.



*River trash (top photo) and river cleanup events in action (lower three photos)*

## What is a watershed again?

The most important influence on water quality is the watershed. Surface waters originate in and pass through watersheds. Thus, it is the watersheds and our activities within them that determine the quality and quantity of our waters. In order to truly protect and enhance a river, stream, lake, pond, or wetland, one must first focus attention on its watershed (a watershed is the land that surrounds and drains into a particular water body; see map, left).



*Iowa's Major Watersheds*

**“By monitoring the water resources in their backyards, Iowans can ensure the protection, productivity, and longevity of high quality water resources...”**

## How else can I help our watersheds?

With each passing year, water quality becomes more and more important. It is difficult to pick up a paper, turn on a television, or tune into the radio without learning about environmental problems, public health concerns, agricultural initiatives, urban sprawl, natural disasters, or political issues that do not have either a direct or indirect association with water and its quality.

Volunteer water quality monitoring has been occurring in Iowa for many years. At first, these efforts were scattered throughout the state and without a centralized goal or a standardized approach to address Iowa's water quality issues. In the late 1990s a statewide volunteer initiative was set in motion to offer interested individuals a medium through which to organize, standardize approaches, centralize data reporting/data storage, and distribute information. In May of 1998 a statewide volunteer water quality-monitoring program – IOWATER – was born.

IOWATER, Iowa's volunteer water quality monitoring program, empowers citizens to take a proactive approach to water quality. By monitoring the water resources in their backyards, Iowans can ensure the protection, productivity, and longevity of high quality water resources, as well as evaluate, assess, and improve those of lower quality. IOWATER volunteers are not only provided with monitoring equipment, but they are also given the freedom to monitor wherever and whenever they choose. The program brings people closer to the land-

scapes that surround them and encourages them to develop a sense of place within the watersheds in which they live. This tie between ourselves and the water resources that give us life will lead to the understanding, respect, and protection of Iowa's water bodies long into the future.

Please visit [www.iowater.net](http://www.iowater.net) if you are interested in getting involved with Iowa's volunteer water monitoring program.

## Ok, let's plan a successful cleanup project.

### Safety, Safety, Safety

Safety is the most important issue of any river cleanup and should be on the top of everyone's mind – from the earliest planning stages of the event to the placement of the period at the end of the final report. The following are some safety considerations you should address during your event.

#### Plan

**Survey** – Survey the cleanup area before the event.

**Maps** – Develop maps of your cleanup area that include:

- Locations of your starting and stopping points.
- All river access points and roads leading to them.
- All hazards that may exist on the river, such as:  
*Low-head dams* – Volunteers should portage ALL low-head dams.

*Fences across streams* – Often, canoes can travel safely under fences. Low fences, however, may be propped up with a notched stick, which should be removed upon safe passage. If this is not possible, paddlers should bypass these barriers by using the least invasive strategy possible. All such barriers should be left as they were found.

*Rapids* – Experienced paddlers should be staged at rapids areas to coach volunteers through them.

*Other obstacles* – Any areas of concern.

- All support locations – If your cleanup event covers a large section of river, you should set up volunteer support stations at select access points along the way. First aid, water, food, and restroom facilities should be available at these stations.



IOWATER Volunteer Monitoring



**Contact list** – Create a list of all event volunteers and support people, local emergency services, local law enforcement, and any others who need to be aware of your event or who may need to be contacted in case of an emergency. An emergency contact template can be found at the end of this handbook. It would be a good idea to laminate several copies of your emergency contact list (or print it on waterproof paper) and distribute it amongst various volunteers on the cleanup who will be carrying cell phones.

**Organize** – Establish some type of registration system so that you know who is participating in the event. Have volunteers sign in and out of the event in order to account for everyone.

**Liability** – Develop a liability waiver for all participants to sign. A sample waiver is included in this guide.

#### Come prepared.

**Life jackets** – ALWAYS wear a life jacket (PFD – Personal Flo-tation Device) if you are working in or near the water.

**First aid** – Always have a first aid kit available and know how to use it. CPR training is recommended for cleanup event organizers.

**Weather** – Prepare for all types of weather. Hypothermia can be a concern during cold and wet weather, and heat stroke is a concern during hot weather. Learn how to identify the signs and symptoms of these conditions, and how to treat them. Dress for the weather and stream conditions and do your best to make sure your volunteers are adequately prepared. Always be ready for the worst weather conditions so that if the weather does become inclement, you are prepared.

**Leaders & Sweepers** – All canoe and kayak based cleanups should include a leader, who knows where obstacles and take out points are, and a sweeper, who makes sure no one is left behind.

#### Be healthy.

**Emergencies** – Know how to get to the nearest hospital from any given point on the map.

**Stream water** – Do not drink stream water. Water can harbor bacteria or parasites that can make you sick. Take care not to expose cuts and wounds to stream water as this increases the potential for infection.



**Lifting** – Lift using your knees, not your back, and get help carrying heavy objects.

**Meth labs** – Warn everyone about health and safety hazards related to meth labs and their associated paraphernalia – medicine bottles/packets, coolers, plastic hoses, etc. Do not touch, move, or tamper with meth labs or meth lab paraphernalia as this can cause bodily harm or death to you or those around you. If a meth lab is located, leave the area and contact local law enforcement immediately.

**Foul smells** – Avoid foul-smelling areas, unknown spilled substances, and containers of hazardous or unidentified materials. Contact emergency response agencies or municipal crews for advice on removal of the materials.

### Other safety concerns

**Be visible** – Notify local emergency personnel and law enforcement before your event and supply them with contact names and numbers, maps, schedules, and any other relevant information they may need in case of an emergency.

**Fast waters** – Do not attempt to wade in fast flowing water or water higher than your knees. This type of situation can lead to being swept downstream due to loss of balance. Watch out for slippery streambeds, undercut banks, waterfalls, and fast flowing areas. Logjams can be very dangerous causing you to stumble on submerged logs, lose your balance, and become trapped in or submerged below the logjam.

**Waders** – Waders or boots with sturdy soles are recommended when walking in the stream to give the most protection against foreign objects in the water. Never go barefoot.

**Be aware** – Advise volunteers of safety concerns for your cleanup area. These may include, but are not limited to: storm warnings, general water safety (wading and paddling do's and don'ts, fast flowing water, PFDs, etc.), removal of large items, and safety precautions around items thought to be drug related (e.g., meth lab paraphernalia, syringes, etc.).

**Roadways** – Utilize orange cones and safety vests when working on or around busy roadways.

**Isolated areas** – When working in isolated areas, volunteers should have access to a survival kit containing at least a lighter, fire starter, candle, and flares. Volunteers should also carry cell phones and/or two-way radios if they are available.

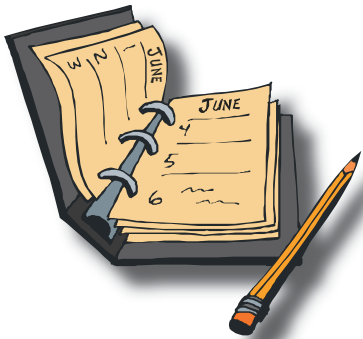


### **Develop a planning team.**

Taking a team approach to river cleanups is strongly recommended and can greatly increase the success of your event. As the old adage goes, "Two heads are better than one." Initial planning team members should consist of those people who will be intimately involved with the event. As the cleanup plan progresses, the planning team will likely grow in size. It's best to start small to develop the basic plan and identify the project goals and objectives first. Additional people may be added along the way to help fill in the event details.

### **Select a date(s) for your event.**

The event date should be decided upon early for a number of reasons, including availability of target audience, river conditions, climatic conditions, partner availability, and anything else that may be important to the event. The month of June, for example, is recognized as National Rivers Month. County fairs and other community events often occur during July and August, and may be great venues during which to either promote an upcoming event or publicize the impacts and recognize volunteers, partners, and sponsors from past events.



When selecting a date, one question you have to ask yourself is, what will work best for the target audience? It is very important to consider the availability of your target audience. For example, if you want to involve children and families, you may want to plan your event for the summertime, before organized sports and family vacations begin, but after school has let out for the summer.

River levels are vital to river cleanups – stream flows that are too high are not only extremely dangerous, but high water can also cover up a lot of trash. Typically, rivers are highest in the spring and lowest in the fall, but heavy precipitation events can make a river unsafe at any time. If you have any doubts about whether the water level is too high for your group's experience level, canceling or postponing the event is a wise choice.

Low water, on the other hand, may also make cleanups difficult. While much more trash is exposed and may be safely

removed, if water levels are too low, canoes may not be able to float, especially after they are loaded up with trash. This may result in a push, pull, and drag event, which can physically tax volunteers and take much more time than expected. Participants subjected to too grueling a day with no way out but downstream can succumb to dehydration, heat exhaustion, or heat stroke, any of which may require an emergency response. A suggestion for low water would be to either substantially shorten the length of the journey if possible, or consider postponing or canceling the event (especially if conditions are extremely hot).

River levels and flow information may be obtained from the following sources:

- USGS – <http://waterdata.usgs.gov/ia/nwis/current/?type=flow>
- Corps of Engineers – [Rivergages.com](http://Rivergages.com)
- NOAA – <http://www.weather.gov/ahps/>

### Select a location.

What river do you want to clean up? To select a location, you must first consider a number of different factors including:

#### The size and ability of the cleanup volunteers

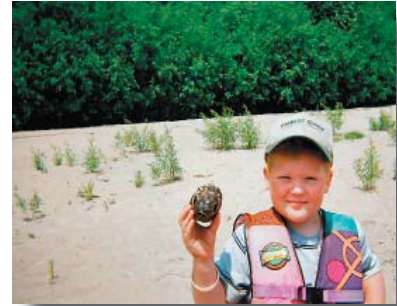
While it may seem simplistic, small groups should focus on small areas, while large groups tackle the larger areas. You do want to be careful, as the old saying goes, not to bite off more than you can chew. You also should consider the demographics of your target audience. Cleanup efforts with small children, for example, may need a cleanup location with gently sloping banks, and the focus may be on smaller more manageable litter like cans and bottles rather than large items like tires and barrels.

#### The size of the river

No two rivers are alike, and it's important to select a stream or river that is appropriate for the cleanup volunteers.

#### Trash available

Unfortunately, trash is not a scarce resource. While you might assume that trash can be found on any river in Iowa, a survey

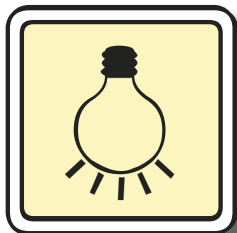


Jim Blakeney



*Be sure to consider the size and ability of your cleanup volunteers when determining your cleanup location and size of the trash to be removed.*

“River cleanups should be considered more a privilege than a right... request permission first.”



of the area is recommended before any cleanup. Pictures are an important part of any survey, and pictures of trash, access points, and any other areas of interest should be included. A pre-event survey will not only help give you an idea of what type of trash to expect, it might also identify areas along the river that are unsafe for volunteers.

#### Land ownership issues

River cleanups should be considered more a privilege than a right. If access is needed on private land, you must contact landowners and request permission first. Written permission is recommended. For public lands, it is recommended that you contact the land managers as well.

You may also find it beneficial to contact landowners who own land adjacent to the cleanup site. Letters sent to landowners who own land adjacent to the river can really help garner support for the event as well as help spread the word and market the event. Landowner names and addresses may be gleaned from plat maps or obtained from the county assessor's office, many of which now have Geographic Information Systems specialists. Please refer to the Land Ownership Guide For Watershed Cleanups located on the Project AWARE (A Watershed Awareness River Expedition) website – [www.io-waprojectaware.com](http://www.io-waprojectaware.com) – for more information on this issue.

#### Amenities and facilities available along the river

Knowing where restrooms, running water, and electricity are located may help you plan your specific cleanup route.

#### River access points

Access to your cleanup site not only includes the physical location of the access points, but also their condition. Getting volunteers into a river with empty boats is one thing, but trying to get them back out again with boats full of trash is another. Not only can an access make the removal of trash difficult, but it may also pose some unsafe and dangerous conditions to volunteers.

## Expand the planning team.

When a cleanup river is selected, you may wish to expand your planning team by inviting those connected with the river (public lands managers, state and county officials, active groups and individuals from the area, etc.) to participate in the planning of the event. Soliciting local input and participation is perhaps the most important and crucial step in planning a successful event.

## Select where to start and where to finish.

When the river has been selected and planning team expanded, the stretch of river involved in the cleanup may be identified. When you know where you will start and where you will end, you can begin to develop the detailed plan. Essentially, how will you get from point A to point B and what needs to happen to get that accomplished?

When the cleanup area has been established, maps should be put together that identify access areas, trash removal and pickup locations, and any other points of interest. When completed, these maps should be shared with local law enforcement and emergency personnel, trash collection personnel, and cleanup participants.

## Determine trash logistics.

In any cleanup, you'll need to figure out how to get the trash from the river to the recyclers, those who may be able to reuse it, or as a last resort, the landfill. Local contacts for trash removal may include municipalities, recycling agencies, landfills, etc. You may also wish to contact statewide agencies that might also be able to help provide assistance or expand your list of local contacts. The Iowa Waste Exchange (within the Iowa Department of Natural Resources), for example, has representatives across the state who specialize in assisting companies in the diversion of their waste materials to a source who can use it as a raw material.

## Identify other logistical needs.

One of the best ways to develop a plan is to identify where you want to start, where you want to end, and what you want to accomplish, after which you may begin to plan backwards.



Map showing cleanup event on the North Raccoon River. The beginning and end locations are noted, as well as dams, trash pickup sites, points of interest, and numbered mile markers.

“Volunteers involved in river cleanups tend to be a very hungry and thirsty bunch.”



If you want to end at point B, what must happen for you to get there? This type of backwards planning may help you identify logistical issues and help you identify ways to deal with them. As a rule of thumb, you should make your plan as detailed as possible but realize that it will not work as you planned. A detailed plan, however, must be in place so that when it doesn't work out, you still know where you want to end up and can adjust accordingly to get back on track.

Volunteers involved in river cleanups tend to be a very hungry and thirsty bunch. Logistical details should include plans for keeping volunteers hydrated and nourished during and after an event. Other logistical needs may include equipment, transport, and communication.

### **Identify sponsors.**

Many volunteer events would not be possible without contributions and support from sponsors. When logistical needs are identified, it is time to identify and contact sponsors. Sponsorship contributions may come in two ways – monetary contributions or in-kind contributions of time, resources, equipment, etc. Knowing your logistical needs may help you identify potential sponsors who may be able to provide those items or the means through which to secure those items. Personalized letters followed up with phone calls are a great way to solicit sponsorship opportunities.

### **Advertise and publicize.**

While this is certainly an ongoing process, once the basic plan is in place, advertising and publicizing should begin in earnest. For an event to be successful, people must know about it. Whether they choose to volunteer for a cleanup or not, advertisement and publicity of your event may help garner community support and perhaps entice potential sponsors to support the event.

There are a number of ways to spread the word about your event. Word of mouth tends to be the best method; however, a lot of mouths have to know about it before they can spread it to others. Press releases and other media communications may be one of the most efficient ways to spread news of your

event quickly and effectively. Flyers, press releases, mailings, newsletters, and presentations to civic organizations and other community groups may also be beneficial. You may also want to advertise your events by coupling them up with other related news and events. National River Cleanup Week, for example, traditionally occurs during the second or third week of May each year. In Iowa, however, it may be difficult to safely and effectively conduct cleanups during this week because of flooding concerns. Although it may not be the best time for a river cleanup itself, it may be a great time to advertise and promote your event.

### **Keep accurate records and take many photographs.**

During the event, you should make a concerted effort to record every detail and take as many photographs as possible to record the event. You will may wish to keep records of:

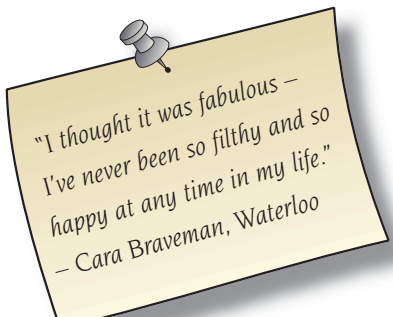
- How many volunteers helped with the cleanup event?
  - Keep an accurate list of participant names and contact information.
  - Take lots of pictures, encourage volunteers to take pictures, and when the event is complete, take a photo of all the volunteers with all of the trash.
- How many sponsors/partners supported your event?
  - Keep an accurate list of all sponsors/partners, their contact information, and what they contributed.
- How much trash was collected during your cleanup (in pounds and/or cubic yards).
  - Keep an itemized list of trash items.
  - Conduct a visual estimation of trash volume.
- How much trash was recycled (percentage)?
- How much trash had to be sent to the landfill (in pounds and/or cubic yards)?
  - Maintain an accurate list of the items that were sent to the landfill.
- After the event, write a short summary of the event – what was planned, what happened, and future plans.



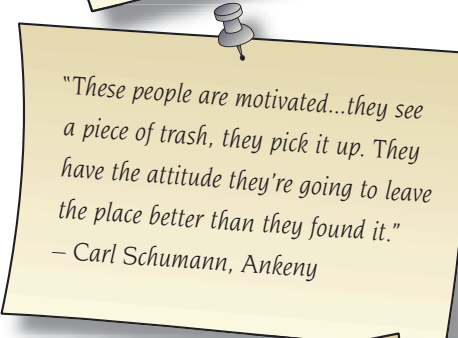
Rick Dietz

**“Take lots of pictures, encourage volunteers to take pictures, and when the event is complete, take a photo of all the volunteers with all of the trash.”**

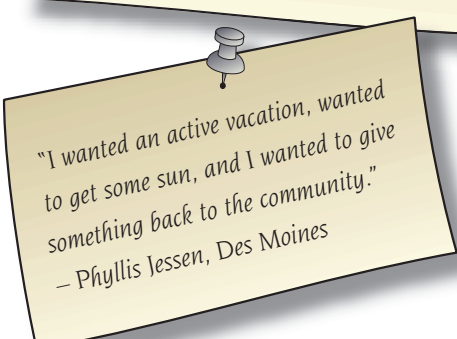
**“Ask for feedback from volunteers, partners, and sponsors to help improve and enhance your future events.”**



“I thought it was fabulous – I’ve never been so filthy and so happy at any time in my life.”  
– Cara Braveman, Waterloo



“These people are motivated...they see a piece of trash, they pick it up. They have the attitude they’re going to leave the place better than they found it.”  
– Carl Schumann, Ankeny



“I wanted an active vacation, wanted to get some sun, and I wanted to give something back to the community.”  
– Phyllis Jessen, Des Moines

*Comments from past AWARE cleanup volunteers.*

## **Publicize results and recognize those involved.**

One of the most important components of a successful river cleanup takes place after the cleanup has come and gone. Just as every effort should be made to publicize and advertise the event, after it’s over, every effort should be made to share the results with the community. If you think about a cleanup event like reading a book, the planning process is like building the plot, and the event itself is the climax – when the action takes place. And just like books, cleanup events cannot end without a worthy conclusion. By sharing your results and honoring the volunteers, partners, and sponsors who made the event possible, you’ll be able to write a happy ending to your cleanup story – a story that you’ll be able to share with many more than just those who participated in the event.

River cleanup efforts are truly team efforts. Recognition of volunteers, partners, and sponsors should be an ongoing effort. After the event, however, it is very important to share with these folks the results of the event.

## **Evaluation**

Ask for feedback from volunteers, partners, and sponsors to help improve and enhance your future events. Shortly after the cleanup, while the memories are still fresh in the minds of those who contributed to your event, provide them with an opportunity to share with you their feedback.

## **Other Considerations**

River cleanup volunteers will encounter two types of debris – natural and human-made. Natural debris such as logs, stumps and leaves provide cover for fish and insects, dissipate stream energy, and trap sediment. *Remove only human produced material and do not disturb natural material.*

Although trash may be unsightly, it may not be possible (or legal) to remove all human produced trash during the cleanup. Concrete, bricks, and old cars, for example, may be difficult to remove and are often deliberately placed on riverbanks to protect them from erosion. Removing items intentionally placed on riverbanks for bank stabilization is not recommended, and may be illegal. *If in doubt, don’t take it out.*



Riverside landowners may also have special picnic, fishing, or other recreational spots along the river as it flows past their property. Respect their right to enjoy their part of the river by not removing items they may keep in these places. Items may include but are not limited to, lawn chairs, metal fire rings, grills, etc. Sometimes it may be hard to decipher between what is junk and what isn't, but if it looks like someone frequents the area for recreation, it's best to leave it as you found it.



## What equipment do I bring?

A suggested supply checklist for cleanup events is included in this guide. Other items you might want to include in your cleanup may include wire cutters, a hacksaw, length of rope, spade shovel, come-along (ratcheting device similar to a winch), bright flagging tape, pry bar, rubber or leather gloves, camera, waders/boot/old shoes, etc.

## Funding Sources

StreamKeepers endorses the use of donations and volunteers whenever available. An effort should be made to contact local organizations that may be willing to aid in the cleanup effort. This includes, but is not limited to, trash and hauling fees, food donations, clothing, etc. CLEAR mini-grants provide an additional, effective source of funding for cleanup efforts. Please visit the link shown below for more information on the \$1000 mini-grants that are creating waves of change in Iowa's rivers.

CLEAR mini-grants <http://www.iowater.net/ClearMiniGrant.htm>

## Liability Issues

Your group may want to consider having each volunteer sign a liability waiver. River cleanups are unpredictable events, and every effort should be made to conduct a safe and fun event. However, you may still find it necessary to protect yourself from any liability resulting from an accident. You may want to use the StreamKeeper's liability waiver as a reference.

“Concrete, bricks, and old cars, for example, may be difficult to remove and are often deliberately placed on riverbanks to protect them from erosion...”

If in doubt, don't take it out.”

Additionally, your group may want to invest in liability insurance if you feel the need to protect yourself against third-party claims. You may want to consider one or both of these options before conducting a volunteer river cleanup.

## Recommended Resources

Adopt-A-Stream Foundation. *Stream Cleanup Tips*. Everett, Washington. <http://www.pskf.ca/publications/Module06.pdf>

Hoogeveen, Nate. *Paddling Iowa: 96 Great Trips By Canoe and Kayak*. Black Earth, Wisconsin: Trails Books, 2004.

Wisconsin Water Action Volunteers. *Stream and River Cleanup*. Madison, Wisconsin. <http://clean-water.uwex.edu/wav/river/index.htm>

## Sources

Materials borrowed with permission from:

*Oregon Adopt-A-River, SOLV*. <http://www.solv.org>

# Forms and Samples

(can be photocopied as needed)





# SAFETY INFORMATION, RELEASE & WAIVER OF LIABILITY



Safety precautions, recommendations and regulations will be in place at all times during the cleanup.

- Safety policies, procedures and recommendations will be reviewed each day.
- Personal Floatation Devices (PFDs – life jackets) *are required* be worn at all times when participants are in a vessel on the water. Children require appropriately-sized PFDs. It is the responsibility of the participants to supply appropriately-sized PFDs for themselves.
- Checkpoint shuttles (“sag wagons”) will be provided each day, if needed.
- All participants must portage around all low-head dams.
- Parents/legal guardians and/or authorized adult companions of children under 18 years of age will be responsible the child’s safety. By signing below, the parent/legal guardian of the minor agrees to the terms and conditions of this waiver, and authorizes the designated legal adult named below to be responsible for the minor.

Are you 18 years old or over?  Yes  No – *a legal parent/guardian must also sign this form*

The volunteer and parent/legal guardian(s), by signing below, recognize that the program involves some risk and that she/he takes responsibility for all action or injury that may result in participating in the cleanup. **All children under 18 must be accompanied by a parent/legal guardian or authorized adult companion, and must have a parent/legal guardian signature(s) and, if applicable, authorization of an approved adult companion, below.** The volunteer and parent/legal guardian, by signing below, agree to the following statement: **All participants *are required* to wear an appropriately-sized PFD (personal flotation device) at all times when they are in a vessel on the water.**

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (volunteer name) and \_\_\_\_\_ (parent/legal guardian name), hereby release, waive, discharge and covenant not to sue the State of Iowa, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, any local Streamkeepers group, any canoe outfitter, county or other agencies, partners, cooperating landowners, event volunteers and coordinators, sponsors, and any of the offices, servants, agents and employees of the above-mentioned entities (hereinafter referred to as “RELEASEES”) for any liability, claim and/or cause of action arising out of or related to any loss, damage or injury, including but not limited to drowning or other event-related death, that occurs as a result of \_\_\_\_\_’s (volunteer name) participation in the cleanup.

I agree to indemnify and hold harmless the RELEASEES whether injury is caused by \_\_\_\_\_’s (volunteer name) negligence, the negligence of the RELEASEES or the negligence of any third party. I further agree that this Release and Waiver of Liability shall bind the members of my family and spouse, if I am alive, and my heirs, assigns and personal representatives, if I am deceased, and shall be deemed as a RELEASE, WAIVER, DISCHARGE AND COVENANT NOT TO SUE the above-named RELEASEES. I hereby further agree that this Release and Waiver of Liability shall be construed in accordance with the laws of the State of Iowa.

Participants understand that photographs may be taken during the project and may be used in the future to chronicle and publicize the project.

**By signing this Release and Waiver of Liability,  
I state that I have read and understand the conditions set forth in this Release and that  
I agree to all conditions set forth herein, and that I sign this voluntarily.**

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**Signature of Volunteer** **Printed Name of Volunteer** **Date**

I/we \_\_\_\_\_ (name(s) of parent/legal guardian) authorize \_\_\_\_\_ (name of child) to be accompanied on the trip by \_\_\_\_\_ (name of authorized adult companion).

---

**Signature(s) of Parent/Legal Guardian** **Printed Name(s) of Parent/Legal Guardian** **Date**

# Sample Press Release

(To complete, replace the highlighted text with your own information.)

For Immediate Release

June 1, 2006

## **VOLUNTEERS TO SCRUB WEST GREENWAY RIVER**

**RIVERFORD** — More than **30** volunteers will haul trash from the **West Greenway** River this month during a community cleanup event.

The public is invited to attend the "**Greenway River Cleanup**" on **Monday, June 19**. Join other volunteers for a fun outdoor workday, while helping to protect the environment.

Volunteers will meet at **9 a.m.** at the **east boat ramp in Greenway Park (234 East Greenway Drive)**. If interested, please contact **Josh Johnson** at **123-555-7890** or at [josh.johnson@mail.com](mailto:josh.johnson@mail.com).

Cleanup participants will **pilot canoes along a 10-mile section of the Greenway River, between Riverford and Streamville, Iowa**. Along the way, volunteers will remove pop cans, plastic sacks, tires, barrels and other pieces of trash they find in the river's waters and banks.

The cleanup will last until **5 p.m.** Organizers will provide **lunch and free canoe use**. Volunteers are encouraged to stay afterwards for **evening entertainment and a prize drawing**. Participants should dress for the weather, bring work gloves and wear closed-toe shoes.

"We hope to get the community out there to get the river as clean as possible," said **Lisa Lisson**, president of the Greenway Park Alliance, one of the cleanup's sponsors. "We want to show how important the river is to us."

The **Greenway Park Alliance** worked with various local sponsors to create this cleanup event. The project also received funding from the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR). This May, cleanup organizers secured a CLEAR (Community Leaders Enhancing Area Rivers) mini-grant given out by the DNR.

Worth up to \$1,000 apiece, the grants encourage communities to take responsibility for cleaning their waterways. Organizers of the DNR's annual river cleanup "Project AWARE (A Watershed Awareness River Expedition)" created the CLEAR mini-grants in response to public demand. For details, visit: [iowaprojectaware.com](http://iowaprojectaware.com).

**For more information, contact Josh Johnson at (123) 554-7890 or at [josh.johnson@mail.com](mailto:josh.johnson@mail.com).**

# Press Release

For Immediate Release

## **VOLUNTEERS TO SCRUB**

— More than volunteers will haul trash from the River this month during a community cleanup event.

The public is invited to attend the " " on Join other volunteers for a fun outdoor workday, while helping to protect the environment.

Volunteers will meet at at the  
If interested, please contact at or at

Cleanup participants will Along the way, volunteers will remove pop cans, plastic sacks, tires, barrels and other pieces of trash they find in the river's waters and banks.

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**For more information, contact at or at**

# Cleanup Data Sheet

Please complete and return to StreamKeepers coordinator.

1. How many volunteers helped out with the cleanup event?
  - Provide a list of participant names.
  - Provide a picture of volunteers, and preferably, a photo of all the volunteers with all of the trash.
  - How many total hours were volunteered by all participants? (For example, 2 people working together for 8 hours would be 16 total hours.)
2. How many sponsors/partners helped support your event?
  - Provide a list of all sponsors/partners and what they contributed.
3. How much trash was collected during your cleanups (in pounds)?
  - Provide an itemized list of trash items.
4. How much trash was recycled (percentage)?
5. How much trash had to be sent to the landfill (in pounds and/or cubic yards)
  - List the items that were sent to the landfill.
6. Collect and submit participant evaluation forms.
7. Submit a short summary of the event – what was planned, what happened, and future plans.



# StreamKeepers Volunteer Evaluation Form

1. **Overall, how would you rate your river cleanup experience?**  
(1=Poor, 10=Excellent)      1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

2. **How likely would you be to coordinate this cleanup as an annual event?**  
(1=Not at all, 10=Definitely)      1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

If not likely, why not? \_\_\_\_\_

3. **How likely are you to apply what you've learned during this cleanup to future events?**  
(1=Not Important, 10=Crucial)      1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

What's the most important thing you learned? \_\_\_\_\_

4. **In your opinion, how important are river cleanups?**  
(1=Not Important, 10=Crucial)      1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

5. **Overall, how would you rate your river cleanup experience?**  
(1=Poor, 10=Excellent)      1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

6. **How could the cleanup have been improved?** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

7. **Name a trash item you found that was memorable to you.** \_\_\_\_\_  
Why was it memorable? \_\_\_\_\_

8. **What are the biggest problems Iowa's rivers face today?**  
(Rank from 1-5, with 1 being the worst problem and 5 being the problem of least concern)

- Trash
- Sediment
- Bacteria
- Nutrients
- No public access
- Habitat loss
- Lack of fish diversity
- Temperature change
- Not sure
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

9. **How likely would you be to participate in water quality initiatives in the future?**

- What's a water quality initiative?
- Not likely
- Somewhat likely
- Very likely
- Definitely
- Not sure

**Please provide any additional comments or suggestions you may have.**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



# Emergency Contact Form



## Dial 911

Local Law Enforcement		
Agency	Name	Phone Number
<insert city> Police Department		
<insert county> Sheriff's Office		
<insert county> Iowa DNR Conservation Officer		
<insert district> Iowa State Patrol		
<insert region> Iowa DNR Field Office		

Cleanup Support Staff		
Name	Phone Number (Cell)	Phone Number (Work)

Camping Location Contacts		
Location	Name	Phone Number

Halfway/Support Location Contacts		
Location	Name	Phone Number

Trash Contacts		
Agency	Name	Phone Number

Program Presenters		
Name	Phone Number (Cell)	Phone Number (Work)

Caterer		
Name	Phone Number (Cell)	Phone Number (Work)

Miscellaneous Contacts (Canoe Outfitters, Partners, Sponsors, etc.)		
Agency	Name	Phone Number

**TIP** – You may wish to laminate (or print it on waterproof paper) several copies of this list and distribute it amongst various volunteers on the cleanup who have cell phones with them.



# Emergency Contact Form



## Dial 911

### Local Law Enforcement

Agency	Name	Phone Number
Police Department		
Sheriff's Office		
Conservation Officer		
Iowa State Patrol		
Iowa DNR Field Office		

### Cleanup Support Staff

Name	Phone Number (Cell)	Phone Number (Work)

### Camping Location Contacts

Location	Name	Phone Number

### Halfway/Support Location Contacts

Location	Name	Phone Number

### Trash Contacts

Agency	Name	Phone Number

### Program Presenters

Name	Phone Number (Cell)	Phone Number (Work)

### Caterer

Name	Phone Number (Cell)	Phone Number (Work)

### Miscellaneous Contacts (*Canoe Outfitters, Partners, Sponsors, etc.*)

Agency	Name	Phone Number

# Organizer Checklist

## **Don't Leave Home Without It:**

- Shovels
- Pickaxes
- Handsaws and/or chainsaws
- Tow chain
- Large bolt cutter
- Small bolt cutter
- Sledge hammer
- Tin snips
- Dry bag
- Life jackets – appropriately sized and worn!
- Cell phone
- Rope or bungee cords
- Duct tape
- Bilge sponge or bailer
- First aid kit
- All items on Volunteer Checklist
- List of Participants (Check in/out sheets)
- Emergency Contact Form
- Cleanup maps
- Bottled water

# Volunteer Checklist

## Don't Leave Home Without It:

- Identification
- Driver's license
- Cash
- Credit card
- Phone calling card
- Health insurance information
- Water bottle(s)
- Personal cooler for lunch
- Sunscreen
- Dry bag
- Life jacket(s) – Appropriately sized and worn!
- Cell phone
- Rope & 2 carabineers for bow line
- Bilge sponge or bailer
- First aid kit
- Paddle(s)
- Updated tetanus shot

## Dress For Success:

**TIP:** Pack fresh clothes in zipper-lock bags and put a sheet of fabric softener in each bag.

- River boots (trashed out tennis shoes or boots – sandals NOT recommended)
- Full finger work gloves + 1 extra pair (leather or Kevlar recommended)
- Extra socks
- Bandana
- Windbreaker
- Rain pants
- Rain jacket
- Cap with sun visor
- Sunglasses
- Safety strap for glasses
- Waterproof sunscreen
- Waterproof bug spray

## Thanks For The Memories:

- Waterproof or cheap disposable camera
- Fresh film
- Fresh batteries and spares

**Thanks for volunteering!**

## Thanks for your help

on the Greenway River Cleanup  
on June 19, 2006!

We hope you can participate  
in the next Greenway River Cleanup  
on Saturday, July 14, 2007.

Please contact Josh Johnson  
for event information:  
josh.johnson@mail.com  
(123) 554-7890

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Iowa Department of Natural Resources  
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502 E. 9th St.  
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[www.iowadnr.com](http://www.iowadnr.com)