

COMMUNITY WATERWAY CLEANUP

AGES

Teens/tweens

Multigenerational

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Partner with a local park or conservation group to learn more about waterways in your community! Planet Earth is full of water, from freshwater streams to mighty rivers to vast oceans. Sadly, humans have had a negative impact on many waters. Pollution, littering, and overcrowding can hurt the fragile ecosystems of aquatic areas. But libraries can be leaders of conservation. After a guest speaker (optional), teens or families collect trash from a local waterway or park. Suggested runtime: 90 min.



Image source: Shutterstock

MATERIALS AND PREPARATION

Materials:

- Rubber gloves (one set per participant)
- Trash bags and recycling bags
- Grabbers or trash-pickers (optional but recommended)
- Snacks and drinks (individual water bottles discouraged, but if necessary, provide a place to collect and recycle the bottles).

TIP:

This is also a great way for teens to get in their volunteer hours, or a great event for a teen advisory board to organize and lead.

TIP:

You can also ask participants to bring their own gloves, bags, and reusable water bottles. Have a few extras on hand for those who forget.

GAME/ACTIVITY | OUTDOORS | OUTREACH

Prep beforehand:

- Identify local waterways (or parks) and the organizations that protect them. Invite a guest speaker from a local park or conservation group. If you aren't able to book a speaker, provide handouts with information on ecology and environmentalism, aquatic life, and local conservation.
- Make sure to clear your cleanup effort with the local parks and recreation department, or other authority.
- Prepare and be ready to share any rules for cleanup (i.e., areas that participants should not disturb).
- Arrange for someone to take the collected trash and recycling to the appropriate facility.

UNIQUE SPACE AND/OR PERSONNEL NEEDS

You will need a local waterway in need of cleanup. Add 2+ extra staff members or volunteers.

RESOURCES

Web

"Teen's Project Helping To Clean The Ocean" from *Teaching Kids News*: <https://bit.ly/3p18rfx>

"The Dutch boy mopping up a sea of plastic" from BBC: <https://bbc.in/3wAQyXy>

"Action Center" from *Ocean Conservancy*: <https://bit.ly/3yJEzc3>

"Take Action" from *Surfrider Foundation*: <https://bit.ly/3oXxq3n>

Books

Non-fiction

Going Blue: A Teen Guide to Saving Our Oceans, Lakes, Rivers, & Wetlands (2010) by Cathryn Berger Kaye and Philippe Cousteau (YA)

Generation Green: The Ultimate Teen Guide to Living an Eco-Friendly Life (2008) by Linda Sivertsen and Tosh Sivertsen (YA)

101 Ways to Help the Planet: A One Year Challenge (2020) by Gaia Appello

How to Change Everything: The Young Human's Guide to Protecting the Planet and Each Other (2021) by Naomi Klein and Rebecca Steffoff (YA)

Into the Deep: Science, Technology, and the Quest to Protect the Ocean (2020) by Christy Peterson (YA)