



Community Cleanup, Beautification, or Restoration

Volunteer Site Coordinator Planning Guide

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In case of emergency, call 911, or if using a cell phone to make the call, call the local Oakland emergency number: 510-777-3211. After calling the appropriate services, call your Environmental Stewardship Liaison with the City. If it's a special event day, call your rover ASAP to notify him/her of any situations. For non-emergencies, call the police at 510-777-3333.

1 Prior to Project Day

Careful planning is key for a successful event. The more prepared you are, the smoother the day will go. Happy volunteers who feel like they accomplished their tasks are more likely to volunteer again.

1. Plan Your Event

Plan the project(s) for your site well before your event. Consider the following:

- What will the project scope be?
- What human, material, and institutional resources are needed to complete the project?
- Are there neighborhood, interest, or community service groups who may want to join your efforts to clean your project site?
- How many volunteers are needed?
- How many volunteers will we have?
- Have we identified all tasks that can be performed?
- Are there a range of projects for people of varying abilities, adults, and children?
- Who will direct the volunteers? Have they been prepared for leadership roles?
- What kind and how many tools do we need?
- How will you dispose of debris?

2. Know Your Site – Prepare for the Unexpected

Think about possible logistical problems with your site. City staff can assist you in planning your project. Do a walk-through prior to the event to determine:

- Where the event will be staged (sign-in table, food, water, etc.).
- Where the work stations/areas for the volunteers will be located.
- How to communicate to volunteers the information they need (presentation, easels, hand-outs).
- How you will physically organize the groups. For example, early arrivers can be placed at the far ends of the creek and walk-in volunteers could work in the middle section.

Other considerations include:

- Pick **one** meeting site for volunteers to check in, sign in, and pick up giveaways, gloves, tools, and bags.
- Parking – is there enough parking around your area for volunteers? Is your site accessible to public transit?
- What to do in case of emergencies or injuries. Do you have a first aid kit? How will these situations be handled?
- Potential hazardous areas that should be avoided. Point these out using flags or other noticeable markings.
- The availability and location of restrooms.

The location of trash and green waste. Make sure you coordinate this with City staff so that the information can be communicated to City cleanup crews.

3. Photograph

Take before pictures of your site and plan on taking pictures during the event and after the project has ended. Before and after pictures are very compelling and provide great publicity. Before and after photos are best when taken from the exact same location and angle.

4. Recruit Volunteers

Help to publicize your event with fliers, posters, and announcements in local newsletters. Consider reaching out to your [Councilmember's Office](#), the nearest [Neighborhood Crime Prevention Council \(NCPC\)](#), nearby community organizations, schools, recreation centers, businesses, and nonprofits.

Social media is also a valuable tool to recruit volunteers, such as [Nextdoor.com](#). Reach out early enough so people can schedule to come, but not so early that they forget about the event. Maintain strong relationships with current and potential volunteers in order to encourage them to return to your events in the future.

Publicity materials for events can be found at:

- www.oaklandadoptspot.org
- www.oaklandcreektobayday.org
- www.oaklandearthday.org

5. Prioritize Safety

Safety is the key factor in project operations. When recruiting volunteers, advise them to bring necessary items that they will need, such as sun block, heavy work or gardening gloves, appropriate footwear, jackets, etc. Review your site and make note of any safety concerns that you will need to address with volunteers on the day of the event. Emergency and non-emergency Oakland Police phone numbers are on the first page of this document.

6. Establish a Debris Plan

How will debris be handled? Will you need a green waste and/or garbage bin? Will you need to coordinate a special debris pickup after the event? These needs must be coordinated with City staff in planning your event.

7. Confirm Your Logistics

- Use flags, banners, or signs to identify your meeting place and to direct volunteers to the cleanup area.
- Ensure that you have adequate tools and supplies
- Have drinking water and cups, but encourage volunteers to bring their own bottles to refill.

8. Pick up Tools and Supplies

Make arrangements with City staff to pick up tools and supplies that you will need for the event. You will receive a phone call from a City staff member to confirm the times you will pick up and return tools. (See Appendix for the City Volunteer Tool Request Form). You can borrow additional tools from the [Oakland Tool Lending Library](#) for free for a 4-day period.

2 Day of the Event

1. Set up for the Event

- Arrive at least 30 minutes prior to the event's start time to set up your check-in station and prepare for volunteers to arrive.
- Meet with your crew leaders and helpers to discuss necessary logistics.
- Volunteers who come early can help you unload tools and set up for the event.

2. Sign in Volunteers and Give the Orientation and Safety Talk

- **All volunteers must read the [Volunteer Guidelines](#) and sign the [waiver](#) stating that they have read the Volunteer Guidelines and are aware of the risks of the event. (See Appendix).**
- Do not let volunteers work if they have not signed the waiver.
- **Legible names and addresses are critical, so please stress this to your volunteers.**

Orientation and safety talking points:

- Introduce yourself and others who played a role in putting together the event.
- Thank everyone for coming out and explain the overall goals of the project.
- **Reporting injuries and near-miss accidents:** In the event of injury while volunteering, please notify the site coordinator who will notify City of Oakland staff immediately. If emergency services are needed, the site coordinator will immediately call the Oakland Police (see first page).
- **Outdoor preparedness:** All participants should wear gloves and close-toed shoes. Sunscreen, sunglasses, and wide-brimmed hats are also recommended.
- **Working near traffic:** Always wear bright yellow safety vests when working on sidewalks or near traffic. Advise volunteers to stay out of the street and only enter it if/when it is clearly safe to do so. Volunteers should always be aware of their surroundings and keep an eye on other volunteers, too.
- **Stay hydrated:** Stop to take breaks and drink water.
- **Tool safety:**
 - Do not use power tools.
 - Carry tools carefully to avoid hitting others. It is best to carry tools vertically with the tool pointed down.
 - Always use the right tools for the job. Ask a team leader if you are unsure.
 - Never allow children to play with tools. They should be supervised at all times and never allowed to use sharp tools.
 - Keep tools close to you. When not in use, neatly place tools out of the way to prevent trip hazards. Shovels and rakes should always be placed down.
- **First Aid kits:** Keep this easily accessible. Crew leaders and helpers should always know where the kit is located.

- **Steep banks and in-stream work:** Banks and channel areas can be slippery and hazardous. Ask volunteers to avoid working in these areas or make sure they take extra precaution.
- **Sensitive habitat:** Creeks and natural areas are ecologically sensitive areas that cannot always take the stress of human activity. Volunteers should stay on paths, unless an activity explicitly requires otherwise. Do not walk in creeks.
- **Hazardous materials:**
 - Always sweep, rake, or shovel **glass**. Never pick up **sharp objects** with your hands. Small shards of glass and metal can be hard to see. Volunteers should **never** reach their hands into areas where they cannot see what they are picking up. Always use gloves and appropriate tools to avoid handling sharp and/or hazardous objects.
- **Homeless encampments:**
 - Please ask all volunteers to stay clear of encampments, and not to pick up items nearby which may be personal items and not debris. City of Oakland protocols require volunteer debris bags to be staged for pickup at least 25' from a homeless encampment. To be safe, we request that you pile your debris bags at least 50' from an encampment. Call your rover if you have any questions or concerns.

Never touch medical or hazardous waste (including hypodermic needles, automotive fluids, or unknown fluids and materials). Flag the location of the waste. If your event is on a City-wide volunteer day, call your rover. Otherwise, report the items to the Public Works Call Center or to a City employee.

Public Works Call Center: 510-615-5566, opwcallcenter@oaklandnet.com

Mobile app: [SeeClickFix](#) on your mobile device.

3. Distribute Tools & Supplies

Maintain control of your tool inventory and supplies. Tell volunteers when to return to the check-in site.

4. Photographs

Take pictures of the event as it happens, including the introductory talk and while volunteers are working. Consider taking a group shot of the volunteers at the end of the event. If you are unable to take pictures, assign a volunteer who likes to take pictures to photograph the event and send the pictures to you.

5. Media – If Press Comes to Your Site

If press comes to your site, please immediately notify the designated City Of Oakland press contact. Feel free to talk to the press person about your event. **Emphasize the positive – what you're doing, the impacts you're having on the environment and the community, and the connection to greater efforts to care for and clean up the environment.**

6. Site Cleanup

At the end of the event, have everyone return to the meeting location and provide a quick debrief. Ask if anyone would like to share any interesting information about their experience with the group. Be sure to thank everyone for their contributions.

Additionally,

- Collect and count all tools.
- Consider getting a group photo of the volunteers before they depart, or photos of them wrapping up the project.
- Count the number of bags of debris, estimate their weight, and group them together in the planned pick up location(s). Consolidate bags if possible.
- Ensure that the debris bags are not blocking the public right of way or otherwise in the way for pedestrians, cars, etc.

Make sure the site is in better condition at the end of the project than it was before.

3 After the Event

1. Report Results via Summary Form

Please use the **Track It Forward** mobile phone application or online tool to report volunteer hours and other workday results. Go to www.trackitforward.com/site/oakland-adopt-spot and find your site in the first drop down menu. Your reports on activities and accomplishments help us tell the volunteer story and improve event coordination. **Track It Forward** also provides you with a record of your volunteering and a way to view other volunteer reports. Volunteer coordinators can also track on behalf of their groups. Tutorial videos are available here. Contact adoptaspot@oaklandnet.com for more info or assistance.

Reporting timeline:

- [Oakland Earth Day](#) results are requested by the end of the day of the event.
- [Oakland Creek to Bay Day](#) results are requested by 1pm on the day of the event. We report these total numbers collected in Oakland to the California Coastal Commission by 2pm on the day of event.
- **Results for all other projects are requested within 7 days of the event.**

If you do not have smart phone or computer access, please report your numbers by phone to your assigned rover, or you may submit a hardcopy in person when returning your tools.

2. Submit Photos

Take after photos of your site to document all the work you and your volunteers did. Consider sending pictures to volunteers after the event as a thank you. If posting on social media, add the appropriate hashtag to help advertise your site and share with volunteers around Oakland:

- [Adopt a Spot](#): **#oaklandadoptaspot**
- [Creek to Bay](#): **#oaklandcreektobay**
- [Earth Day](#): **#oaklandearthday**

Please email any photos (or links to photos) to adoptaspot@oaklandnet.com. Include the photographer's name, names of individuals, sites, and activities depicted. We love before and after photos, and action shots of volunteers engaged and enjoying themselves, especially images that convey sense of place. Note that we may use photos on our website or for other outreach purposes.

3. Maintain Relationships with your Volunteers

Keep a copy of your sign in sheets and contact your volunteers after the event. A thank you email with pictures can go a long way in building relationships and encouraging volunteers to come to your future events.

4 Important Documents

1. Forms

The following documents are all available online at www.oaklandadoptaspot.org, or click on the links below if accessing this document from the web. These forms are also available in Spanish and Chinese (where indicated).

1 [Volunteer Waiver & Release of Liability](#), [Renuncia de responsabilidades de individual](#), [個人免責聲明](#)

2 [Group Waiver Form](#), [Renuncia de responsabilidades de grupos](#), [團體免責聲明](#)

3 [Volunteer Guidelines](#), [Reglas para voluntarios](#), [義工守則](#)

4 Tool Request Form

a. [Online form](#)

b. [Download fillable PDF](#)

5 [Injury Reporting Form](#), [Lesiones formulario de informe](#), [受傷報告表](#)

6 [Tool Maintenance Guide](#), [Guía de mantenimiento de herramientas](#), [工具維修守則](#)

7 [Photo Documentation Tips](#), [Tips para documentar fotografías](#), [照片紀錄提示](#)

8 [Best Practices for Acquiring Donated Refreshments for Volunteer Events](#), [Las mejores prácticas para obtener donaciones de refrigerios para eventos de voluntariado](#), [為志工活動獲贈茶點的最佳範例](#)

9 [Donation Request Template](#), [Carta modelo para pedir donaciones](#), [要求捐贈樣板](#) - for requesting donations of food or other goods for your volunteers

10 [Donation "Thank You" Template](#), [Carta modela para dar la gracias](#), [多謝捐贈樣板](#) - to acknowledge donations received for volunteer projects

Check back for additional documents covering safety, supplies, best practices for cleanups, landscaping, and habitat restoration, and more.

Adopt A Spot Site Sample Day of Volunteer Day Planning Outline

Time	Logistics	Safety & Tools	Notes
8:00-8:30 AM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set-up table and chairs Display event fliers Lay out tools, giveaways, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Display Volunteer Guidelines Lay out gloves, tools, and supplies 	<p>Turn on your cell phone.</p> <p>If you need anything, call your assigned Rover (Creek to Bay Day and Earth Day only).</p>
8:45 AM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assign lead volunteers for Sign- In Table, Tools, Photography, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tool Loan Captain maintains tool inventory 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Captains help make sure tasks are completed that day. See Photo Documentation Tips.
9:00 AM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Welcome all volunteers Introduce the site, logistics, hazards, relevant background info, etc. Consider circling up for an intro/icebreaker Assign Team Leader roles 	<p><u>Review</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Volunteer Guidelines Use of tools Debris plan Photography Etc. <p>Everyone Signs Waiver</p>	<p>Make sure volunteers understand the scope of the activities for the morning.</p>
11:30-11:45 AM	Check to see that green waste and/or debris bags are placed according to your debris plan		Finish by agreed upon pick up time if coordinating debris pickup with an outside agency.
11:45 - NOON	Collect tools and supplies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Check the entire site for tools left behind Account for and clean all tools 	
NOON	Thank volunteers!		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acknowledge leaders, partners, donors, and everyone who pitched in. Announce follow-up activities and opportunities
11 AM-2	<p>Complete and submit paperwork and event reporting.</p> <p>Trucks begin picking up debris. Be patient as they are making multiple stops. Some will be picked up as late as Wednesday.</p>		<p>Return tools, vests, gloves, and other supplies according to pre-arranged appointment with City staff.</p> <p>Report hours via Track it Forward or by calling in.</p> <p><i>For bags not picked up by Wednesday afternoon, contact the Public Works Call Center at (510) 615-5566 (Mon-Fri between 8am - 4:30pm), or report online 24/7 by emailing opwcallcenter@oaklandnet.com or visiting www.seeclickfix.com/oakland.</i></p> <p>Report that you are a volunteer along with the type of debris, quantity of bags, and the nearest address or intersection.</p>

