

CIVIC AND NATURAL AREA EVENTS



Hundreds of yearly waste management and cleanup events reach beyond individual neighborhoods into wider and less familiar landscapes. This section includes information about planning, staffing and promoting civic and natural area cleanups and highlights how they differ from neighborhood cleanups.

Civic events are large, public gatherings staged for a wide variety of reasons: live outdoor music performances, athletic events, fundraisers and a diversity of “fests” that draw crowds and generate trash. Cleanup projects at such events are subsets of overall event planning.

Natural area cleanups address the trash that collects in park lands and waterways due to intentional littering, careless trash disposal and, sometimes, the unintentional, illegal dumping of hazardous waste. Exposure to unfamiliar terrain, possible encounters with wild creatures and the unpredictable nature of waste in natural areas make these cleanups especially challenging.

BEFORE AN EVENT



Before an event

When planning an event, there are some important things to consider long before the day of your cleanup.

- ✓ **Funding.** There are a number of local organizations that provide funding and support for neighborhood cleanups.
- ✓ **Recordkeeping.** Be prepared from the beginning to keep receipts and records, from the number of people who attended to the cost of waste disposal.
- ✓ **Site plans.** Planning your site another critical step. You'll need to work closely with the civic organization hosting the event. If you are planning a cleanup in a natural area, there may be government agencies you'll need to talk with to get the necessary permits or permissions.
- ✓ **Volunteers.** How you recruit, motivate and communicate with volunteers will make a difference in the success of the event.
- ✓ **Publicity.** You want to invite the right people and give them good information about what they can and cannot bring to the event.
- ✓ **Logistics.** Lining up haulers and deciding what material you want to accept at your event is the last crucial piece of the "before" stage. Good planning and preparation will ensure that you keep costs down and recycling up. For natural area cleanups, there may be large amounts of woody debris or illegally-dumped appliances and other litter to handle.

BEFORE AN EVENT

Funding sources and reporting

There are a number of funding sources for civic events and natural areas cleanups.

Event sponsors

Civic events may have waste diversion activities built into their overall budgets, or you may be able to advocate for inclusion.

Government agency grants and/or services

Several agencies support natural areas waste removal and enhancement. These are competitive funding sources requiring applications. Examples include:

- Metro’s Nature in Neighborhoods and community enhancement grants (information available at www.metro-region.org/grants).
- The City of Portland Bureau of Environmental Services Watershed Stewardship grants (information available from staff at 503-823-7917, or at www.portlandonline.com/bes).
- Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board grants (www.oweb.state.or.us/OWEB/GRANTS/index.shtml.) For information on other potential funding sources, contact the jurisdictions associated with your cleanup site (see Appendix 2.)

Metro disposal vouchers

These vouchers cover the cost of disposing waste (called “tipping fees”) at Metro transfer stations in Northwest Portland and Oregon City, or at another approved facility that is closer to your event. For voucher information and an application, contact Metro Recycling Information at 503-234-3000, or visit www.metroregion.org/cleanup. Vouchers will not cover the fees for renting or hauling drop boxes, which may be covered by partnering local governments listed in Appendix 2.

SOLV supplies and grants

SOLV provides resources to communities in support of cleanup, beautification and enhancement projects. This non-profit organization offers small grants through various programs to assist with certain costs. Grants of up to \$100 can be used for waste disposal and hauling fees, promotional assistance and some supplies and equipment.

To receive a SOLV grant, you must fill out an application. SOLV-sponsored events can also receive free supplies such as litter bags, gloves and signs geared toward assisting volunteers in sorting debris.

PROFILE: **SECOND GRADERS & SOLV**

Camille Rickis and Peter Kuskie are miniature versions of the passion and commitment displayed by so many cleanup organizers. As second graders, they got fed up with the litter and vandalism at their Hillsboro elementary school and decided to take action. Camille's supportive mom, Christine Rickis, called SOLV in search of support.

While some of SOLV's events like the annual beach cleanup are big and attract lots of attention, the majority of SOLV's projects are smaller, and are initiated and run by people just like Camille and Peter – though usually they are a little older.

With encouragement and direct assistance from SOLV staff, Camille and Peter organized and coordinated a SOLV IT/Earth Day event at their school. SOLV Program Coordinator Nancy Willmes helped the children complete a project application, determine a scope of work, establish safety standards and develop a plan to recruit 20 to 40 community volunteers.

Other sponsorship support the students received included:

- production of bilingual recruitment brochures, donated by a local print shop
- use of the school's dumpster for mixed waste collection
- a \$40 SOLV contribution for disposal of green (plant) waste
- safety equipment, litter bags, bottled water, snack bars and signage provided by SOLV.

Peter and Camille's efforts yielded impressive numbers, including:

- recruitment of 51 volunteers, ranging from students and families to community members
- 300 pounds of litter and five cubic yards of plant debris removed from the campus and a nearby park.



BEFORE AN EVENT

In addition, events held in partnership with SOLV benefit from

- inclusion in their Web-based volunteer recruitment
- visibility through SOLV media and publicity efforts;
- use of SOLV's online volunteer registration system;
- coverage under SOLV's liability and key volunteer medical insurance policies.

For information on SOLV's programs, call 503-844-9571 or visit www.solv.org.

SOLV also covers some waste disposal expenses for SOLV IT, Team Up for Watershed Health and Clean and Green events. These sponsored events do not qualify for Metro disposal vouchers.

Business sponsors and donors

Local businesses may be willing to provide financial and/or in-kind sponsorships and donations. Non-cash donations might include supplies, food/refreshments, printing, graphic design and garbage hauling, among others. Sponsorship of natural area cleanups may particularly appeal to businesses interested in presenting a “green” image.



Site planning and layout

STEP

1 Secure and/or assess the location

Civic events

The event coordinators determine civic event locations. However, you may have input into where to locate collection stations and dumpsters. Some site layout criteria to consider:

- a designated area for sorting materials
- a paved surface with adequate clearance for drop boxes
- good visibility
- adequate access for haulers, separate from main event entrance
- bathroom facilities
- electrical hookups.

Natural area cleanups

- Contact the property owner(s) or appropriate government agencies for permission to be on the site. This may also apply to some civic events, such as a concert in a public park.
- Assess the site layout and features.
- Identify potential safety hazards and strategies to ensure participant safety (see “Safety First” section in the front of this guide).
- Determine how to overcome such challenges as uneven, unpaved surfaces, difficult access and/or traffic flow, poor visibility and lack of restrooms, electricity and/or water.

Arrange for equipment rentals, collection and hauling

- Contact hauling companies and negotiate for the specific services needed.
- If planning food waste recovery for composting, determine whether you need to arrange for separate hauling (or self-hauling). For information, call Metro Recycling Information, 503-234-3000.
- Arrange for collection/recycling station materials (see Appendix 1).
- Order drop boxes and delivery to the site (if not provided by the hauler).
- Purchase or rent any necessary utility vehicles, safety equipment or special tools based on the size and features of the site.

BEFORE AN EVENT

STEP

2

Map the site

- Conduct a thorough walkthrough as a part of your planning process.
- Refine your goals to reflect site conditions.
- Determine logistics and estimate the number of volunteers you will need.
- Invite the garbage hauler and other service providers, property owners and other key partners to walk the site with you.
- Create an initial site map (see Appendix 3 for a sample).

Key elements of your site planning should address:

- Volunteer parking
- Volunteer hub - where volunteers sign in, receive training, and find refreshments
- Restroom locations
- Traffic flow- try to reduce or eliminate foot traffic through areas where vehicles will be parked or near access routes for utility and hauler vehicles
- Drop box locations- allow room for volunteers to circulate and for hauling trucks to pick up full boxes
- Collection and recycling stations

STEP

3

Communicate needs and expectations

- Contact civic event coordinators to ensure collaboration throughout the event.
- Inform vendors of goals and strategies for waste reduction, such as eliminating plastic “goody bags,” providing compostable utensils, or collecting recyclable materials from their areas and delivering it to collection stations at the end of the event.
- Have vendors sign a pledge or have them provide their own waste plan for their booth during the event. Inform volunteers of any special concerns regarding the site, especially if they need to bring tools or special clothing.

Volunteers

General guidelines for recruiting and working with volunteers

- For annual events, approach recruitment as a year-round activity. Mention the need for volunteers in all publicity and provide both phone and e-mail contact information if possible.
- When you recruit volunteers in person or by media, briefly describe the goals of the event and some specific volunteer jobs available. Emphasize the community benefits of your event.
- Encourage volunteers to further develop the event based on their strengths or interests. A project builds community when volunteers feel that their contributions are appreciated and their judgment is trusted.
- Safety and volunteerism are integrally connected; if volunteers do not feel safe, they will not return (see “Safety First” section).
- Be clear about your expectations of volunteers. If the work will be dirty or will involve potential hazards, let them know.
- Build informal social gatherings into your planning process to engage committed volunteers. You may be building a network of people who will continue to address sustainability and livability issues in the community.



BEFORE AN EVENT

Recruiting volunteers

- Civic events and natural area cleanups have larger pools of potential volunteers than neighborhood cleanups, but you'll need to cast a wider net through many more sources to reach them. Some good sources of volunteers include:
- past volunteers; ask your committed volunteers to recruit family, friends and neighbors.
- area schools that have service learning and/or environmental programs
- churches and service clubs
- groups with a special “affinity” for the project, such as outdoor clubs for natural area cleanups
- businesses and business organizations
- youth groups such as Camp Fire, Boy/Girl Scouts or Earth Scouts
- SOLV or the Master Recycler Program, which as project partners can provide event volunteer recruitment using their databases and recruitment programs. SOLV also offers coordinator training programs.
- Hands On Greater Portland, a nonprofit organization that connects volunteers with projects throughout Portland and Washington County. They also offer workshops on volunteer recruitment and management. More information can be found at www.handsonportland.org
- County corrections or community service program work crews. A county employee supervises these crews. Programs include:
 - Clackamas County** Call the Community Service Department at 503-655-8727
 - Multnomah County** For information on juvenile work crews, contact 503-988-3460 at least one month prior to your event. For information on adult crews, contact the Alternative Community Service Program at 503-803-4033 at least one month prior to your event.
 - Washington County** Call the Community Service Program at 503-846-3730.
- On-line listings such as Craigslist (portlandcraigslist.org, go to “Community, Volunteers” subsection), or Idealist (www.idealists.org, go to “Post” tab, choose “Volunteer Opportunity”). Craigslist and Idealist may be options for recruiting volunteers, but first try the other local resources listed above.

PROFILE: EARTH DAY CELEBRATION

The Earth Day Celebration in Portland remains true to its origins in the grassroots activism of the 1970s. The annual celebration of sustainability and community is totally volunteer-run, and includes a serious commitment to minimizing waste and maximizing recycling.

The 2007 Earth Day Celebration — sponsored by City Repair Project and a diverse coalition of local businesses and community organizations — took place in northeast Portland's Woodlawn Park. It's a large property where distance and terrain could easily thwart efforts to control waste. Still, Earth Day 2007 recorded a 96.2 percent diversion rate, closer to "zero waste" than all other regional events. An estimated 3,000 to 4,000 people attended.

Among the secrets to Earth Day Celebration's successful recovery and recycling program:

- pre-event communications with vendors, emphasizing the event's "waste not" values
- large recycling stations, evenly distributed across the park, including prominent signage with instructions for separating and sorting materials
- clustering food vendors in two paved areas, providing a measure of trash control and containment
- instructing food vendors to use recycled or recyclable materials, such as compostable corn-based tableware and recycled paper goods, whenever possible.

To make the Earth Day Celebration truly sustainable, ten volunteers gathered the day after the event to sort trash and recyclables in what coordinator Oso Martin likened to a barn raising or sewing circle: people socializing and building community while working together toward a common goal. They separated recyclable paper, plastic, glass and aluminum, as well as 156 pounds of compostable food (organic) waste.

After sorting, volunteers transported recyclable materials to various destinations for reuse and/or processing. The School and Community Reuse Action Project (SCRAP), for example, took reusable items. Trellis Earth, a local manufacturer of corn-based plastic products, accepted used flatware for reprocessing. In the end, Earth Day Celebration 2007 yielded only 21 pounds of non-recyclable refuse. "What a wonderful accomplishment!" said Oso Martin. "It's the best result since our recycling efforts began at the 2002 City Repair Earth Day Celebration."



BEFORE AN EVENT

Divide and assign planning tasks

Specific job assignments increase volunteer commitment to both present and future events.

Event coordinator Has responsibility for overall planning and logistics. Delegates jobs, but has responsibility to see that all of the other jobs get done. This person fills out funding applications and reporting forms, and handles communications with the garbage hauler, including signing vouchers on the day of the event.

Volunteer coordinator Recruits volunteers, assigns event day jobs.

Sponsorship coordinator Solicits donations of goods and services.

Site coordinator Secures permission to use site. Creates site map and ensures that containers and equipment are set up according to plan.

Reuse and recycling coordinator Makes arrangements with reuse and recycling companies. Works with Site coordinator to locate collection areas. Master Recyclers are a good choice to take on this role.

Publicity coordinator Writes articles, prints signs and fliers, sends press releases.

Treasurer Keeps track of expenditures and receipts. On cleanup day, collects monies from volunteers taking fees.

Divide and assign event day tasks

- Use a form that allows you to fill each job for each block of time during the day.
- Schedule shifts to begin before and remain after the actual event hours.
- Overlap shift times to ensure “gap” coverage in case incoming volunteers are late, and to allow exiting volunteers to brief their replacements.
- Provide pre-event training, if at all possible, or provide information orientation by phone, mail or e-mail.

Determine on-site jobs to assign

- site set up and clean up
- participant/volunteer check-in
- hospitality – picks up refreshments for volunteers
- greeter – checks in customers, ensures funds are properly collected
- traffic monitor
- trash/recycling station monitor
- materials sorter/reuse specialist
- utility vehicle driver – transports materials that will not be picked up



Courtesy of REACH Community Development

Publicity

General guidelines about publicity

- Size the promotion of your event with your capacity. Civic events and large-scale cleanups need to attract greater numbers of volunteers and attendees, so your promotion needs to reach a larger audience. Limit news releases and pre-event fliers to one page.
- Use your publicity to clarify the objectives and/or limitations of the event.
- Make certain that waste reduction and recycling goals are included in all forms of publicity.
- Acknowledge sponsors and partners in your publicity and onsite signage (include their logos as requested and/or appropriate).
- Consider non-English speaking residents in your community. Seek out residents who can translate publicity materials into other languages, or seek a bilingual volunteer who can assist non-native speakers before the event or at the event itself.
- Consider residents without computer and/or Internet access by providing telephone contact information in addition to an e-mail or Web page address.
- Use post-event publicity to celebrate achievements, acknowledge volunteers and recruit new ones.

The ABCs of publicity

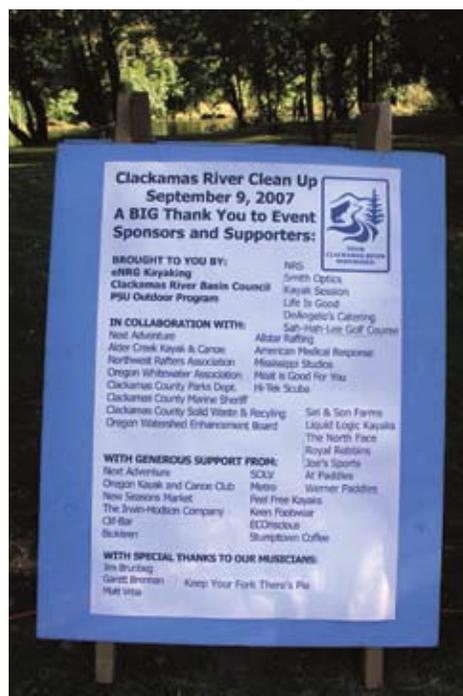
- Publicize your event only after you have confirmed your site and obtained all required approvals to use the intended site on the desired date.
- Produce fliers (for natural areas), or make certain that civic event promotion highlights waste reduction and recycling. Fliers may include a site map, information on event components (litter patrol, community outreach and tabling), a call for volunteers, contact information and identification and appreciation of sponsors and partners.
- Post and distribute fliers in some or all of the following locations:
 - community newspapers and newsletters (as inserts, or reprinted as ads or announcements)
 - local businesses (posted in windows and/or handed out to customers)
 - “community bulletin boards” located in businesses and public gathering places
 - area libraries, community centers, schools and churches. Ask local schools and churches to mention your event or print your flier in their newsletters or other communications.
 - Web pages and e-mail (as Acrobat PDF files).
- Submit articles to local and regional publications that serve your target area/audience.
- Write additional pieces on partner recycling businesses or reuse agencies.

BEFORE AN EVENT

- Send press releases to media outlets (see Appendices 5 and 6), requesting inclusion as calendar items. If you can connect your project to a larger issue or timely community topics, you may attract coverage as a human-interest story.
- Purchase advertisements, if your budget allows, in community newspapers.
- Ask sponsoring non-profit community organizations and neighborhood associations to distribute information via their bulk mailing permits and/or non-profit mailing rates and then reimburse them.
- Attend community events, where you might make a presentation to recruit volunteers or rent a table to provide information on your event. This is an excellent role for an experienced, committed volunteer.

Signage

- Yard signs like those used by political candidates can be placed on busy corners and heavily traveled streets near the site. Be sure to follow sign placement laws in your local jurisdiction. Signs should provide basic event information such as date and time and a contact number or Web site address for more information. Purchase signs with replaceable lettering so they can be reused year after year.
- Banners can be hung a week or more before your event at or near the site. These are most appropriate for annual events and should be reused each year. For that purpose, keep details to a minimum. For example, if your event occurs each year on a Saturday, a banner hung at the site the week before the event might read, “Here next Saturday.”
- Ask whether local schools or other buildings with reader boards are willing to advertise your event.
- “Sandwich boards” can be placed on strategic corners on the day of the event.
- Post Web-based listings on Web sites and “listservs” (e-mail distribution lists) to reach targeted and/or widespread areas.
- Deliver fliers two weeks before the event to residents whose homes abut the site or who may be otherwise affected.



Courtesy of Catha Loomis

Materials and haulers

Learn about regulations

Garbage and recycling hauling services are managed differently in various areas in the Metro region. You may be holding your event in an area with franchised garbage and recycling service, meaning that only one hauler is allowed to work with you. Call your local government office for available options (see Appendix 2.)

The types of waste you'll encounter differs between civic and natural areas events. Common materials discarded at civic events include:

- plastic water bottles
- paper and cardboard
- eating utensils such as disposable flatware, cups and plates
- food wrappers
- food scraps
- wooden pallets.

The variety of potential materials encountered at natural area cleanups is much broader and less predictable than those associated with neighborhood cleanups. These might include:

- Bulky or mixed waste, like furniture, mattresses, small appliances and plumbing fixtures. It may be possible to sort these items for reuse or recycling.
- Yard debris and wood waste (scrap lumber) should be separated from other debris and can be recycled at most facilities.
- Scrap metal, which should be placed in a designated drop box. If the hauler that is transporting your mixed waste also is taking metal, they will typically deliver it to a company that will purchase it. If they transport it to a Metro transfer station, the load will be accepted at no charge.
- Large appliances are generally accepted with scrap metal, but there are sometimes fees for appliances such as refrigerators, freezers, and air conditioners that contain coolant. Consider how appliances will be moved, and provide dollies and safety training.
- Tires may be sent to Metro transfer stations, which currently send them to a recycler. Tires should be placed in one section of a drop box load and should be counted for reporting purposes.
- Paper and cardboard are highly recyclable. As with metal, you may be able to find a recycler who will donate the container and hauling fees for cardboard and paper (called "fibers") and/or you may be able to sell it. Designate a small drop box for these items.

BEFORE AN EVENT

Find and hire a hauler

- Use Appendix 8, (Coordinator’s hauler worksheet), to identify a hauler.
- Get a signed agreement or contract that specifies all terms agreed to with your hauler.

Create a reuse and recycling plan

- Determine what you are able to recycle through your hauler’s drop box service.
- Clarify how these materials need to be separated.
- Call Metro’s Recycling Information (see p. 61 for details) for information on other materials that might be separated for recycling, such as:
 - reusable goods such as building supplies (dimensional lumber, kitchen and bath fixtures, windows, doors, etc.)
 - plastic food and product packaging
 - block packaging foam
 - electronics
 - mattresses
 - carpet padding
 - athletic shoes
 - media products, including CDs, DVDs, CD/DVD cases and cassettes.
- After getting contact information for reuse and recycling businesses from Metro Recycling Information, use Appendix 8, (Recycler worksheet), to assist in gathering information.

You also can contact scrap metal recyclers directly. Some are willing to donate drop box and hauling services, and some will donate the proceeds from the sale of the contents. For information on recyclers, ask Metro Recycling Information.

Be sure to confirm what items are allowed. See Appendix 8, (Recycler worksheet), for suggested questions for a metal recycler. Remember that metal markets change. When markets are good, recyclers may take hard-to-recycle items, such as aluminum frame windows. When markets are poor, they may not.

DANGER! Be on the lookout for unidentified tanks such as old propane tanks that can be explosive or that may contain hazardous materials. These must be dropped off at the appropriate facility with household hazardous waste.



Metro's hazardous waste disposal program



What is hazardous waste?

Hazardous and **toxic** are scientific terms to indicate levels of threat to human health posed by a particular substance.

What is household hazardous waste?

Materials accepted by Metro's hazardous waste program include: paint and thinner; solvents; pool and spa chemicals; pesticides and herbicides; motor oil, antifreeze, and other automotive fluids; household cleaners and disinfectants; aerosol spray products; art and hobby chemicals; batteries; medical sharps (syringes); propane tanks and bottles; fluorescent lights (compact bulbs and 4-foot tubes) and ballasts.



It's unlikely that you'll encounter hazardous or toxic materials during a civic cleanup. However, you may find some hazardous items in cleaning up natural areas and you should be aware of Metro's Hazardous Waste Disposal Program.

As you probably know, Metro is the regional agency responsible for managing the solid waste system, including hazardous wastes generated by households and small businesses in the Portland metro area. It's important to prevent toxic materials that may be collected during your event from being disposed in regular landfills, where they can pollute soil and groundwater.

Metro operates two permanent facilities where household hazardous waste is collected, recycled whenever possible, and properly disposed. Metro also sponsors household hazardous waste collection events from March through November at rotating sites around the region. There is no charge to drop

off 35 gallons or less of household hazardous waste at Metro's facilities or collection events.

In 2006, Metro's hazardous waste program served 56,453 customers at its facilities and events, collecting 4.4 million pounds of hazardous materials.

In the past, Metro has offered collection of hazardous waste onsite in partnership with neighborhood cleanup events, or has taken requests to schedule events in a particular neighborhood. Currently, the hazardous waste program focuses on equitably distributing events around the region, based on population and factors such as distance from the two permanent facilities. Realistically, few sites have the capacity for a simultaneous hazardous waste collection and regular cleanup event (see photo on page 35 for a view of a collection event.)

Hazardous waste at cleanup events

- Be clear with your volunteers about how to handle hazardous waste, and **when not to handle them at all.**
- Unidentifiable materials packaged in a barrel, can, bag, jug, or box should be treated as hazardous waste. If these items (as well as identifiable hazardous waste) are brought to a neighborhood cleanup, the customer should be given information about the two Metro facilities and the closest upcoming collection event.
- If you are planning a street cleanup or natural resource area cleanup, be prepared for any hazardous waste your volunteers may encounter and inform them of the proper procedures.
- Metro can provide containers for sharps that may be found, but if you expect your volunteers to handle these, you must provide gloves, tongs and training on safe transfer of sharps into containers.
- If you encounter any hazardous waste at your event and need assistance, call Metro Recycling Information at 503-234-3000, Monday through Saturday, between 8:30 a.m. and 5 p.m.
- If you suspect that you have encountered an explosive material, call 9-1-1.

Hazardous waste resources

Metro distributes numerous publications on household hazardous waste, which you can make available to your customers. These resources, which are available through the Recycling Information Center, explain what materials are considered hazardous. They also provide information on Metro's disposal program and safer alternatives to toxic home and garden products.

DURING AN EVENT



Courtesy of Bruce MacGregor

During an event

During your event or cleanup, the benefits of your preparation and organization in the “before” stage pay off. With your funding in place, your volunteers ready to go and your site well planned, you’re ready to hold your cleanup.

- ✓ **Coordination.** During your event, having different people in charge of specific tasks will really help. As the coordinator, you just have one head and one pair of hands. Rely on others to do their part.
- ✓ **Volunteers.** Your volunteers are critically important at this stage. They will help keep customers and material moving throughout the day, make sure that material is sorted correctly and ensure that all receipts and records are tracked for later reconciliation. If you have a Master Recycler onsite, he or she will help educate your volunteers and the public about recycling and reuse opportunities.
- ✓ **Publicity.** The signs and banners you’ve created will help people put the right material in the right place. For publicity, you’ll want to take pictures and gather some comments from customers and volunteers.

DURING AN EVENT

Funding sources and reporting

Collect data

- Use forms and processes that allow you to keep accurate track of information for your sponsors, and for planning future events. Examples can be found in the Appendices.
- Keep track of the time that haulers arrive, pick up and deliver containers.
- Collect and organize relevant receipts. It is crucial to get receipts or “weight slips” from any facility accepting materials from your event.

Site planning and layout

- If applicable, have approved permits available onsite.
- Use cones, barricades and directional signs to indicate collection areas, control traffic flow and ensure safety of volunteers and other event participants.
- Set up equipment according to your site map.
- Provide signs or visual cues above bins (pictures or samples of recyclable materials), and ensure that recycling bins look different from trash cans. Assign trained volunteers to monitor these stations.
- Provide volunteers with site plan/map.
- Use cell phones or walkie-talkies to maintain contact with volunteers, especially if the site is too large to maintain face and/or voice contact.



Volunteers

- Greet and thank volunteers.
- Provide on-site training and orientation (if not done prior to event), to include:
 - how to perform specific jobs
 - what to do in case of an emergency
 - safety precautions. Larger events often require more in-depth coverage of site features and safety issues. For example, Down the River Cleanup volunteers are oriented to both river safety and how to handle a broad array of materials.
- Introduce coordinators and “go-to” people to contact for on-site assistance. Include where these people will be located and their cell phone numbers.
- Distribute clothing, name badges or safety gear that identifies them as event staff/ volunteers.
- Provide incentives to thank, and ideally to keep, volunteers returning year after year.

Some things to consider about incentives:

- Highlight the experiential and social benefits of volunteering such as leadership, connecting with neighbors, developing job skills or improving the environment.
- Show respect and equal status to all volunteers. Experienced coordinators not only seek out input from their volunteers, but act on that input in determining how repeat events will evolve.
- Food and drink for your volunteers may be more important than gifts, in terms of retention and productivity. Provide plenty of drinking water and a timely lunch.
- Provide gift certificates or items purchased from, or donated by, local businesses.
- Include free or discounted admission off-shift at civic events with admission fees.
- Offer thoughtfully chosen gifts, carefully selected with waste reduction values in mind.

Publicity

- Take high resolution photos (or assign this duty to a volunteer).
- Publicly thank volunteers, sponsors and partners.
- Gather comments (feedback surveys, recorded interviews) from customers, partners and volunteers, with publicity in mind.

Materials and haulers

- Train volunteers how to sort all materials.
- Walk the site at the beginning of the day with volunteers and share the site plan, showing what material should be delivered where.
- Use signs and banners to reinforce instructions on “what goes where.”
- Areas for collection of recyclable items should be set well and away from drop boxes.
- Request receipts and weight slips. If possible, have reuse and recycling businesses supply itemized receipts or weight slips.

PROFILE: RACE FOR THE CURE

One day each year, Portland's downtown and waterfront become a sea of pink as walkers, runners and onlookers observe Komen Oregon's Race for the Cure. The 2007 Race drew 47,792 participants, making it the third largest in the U.S. and one of the largest such events worldwide.

Not only has the event raised millions of dollars to fight breast cancer, but thanks to dedicated volunteers the Race has developed a model waste diversion and recycling program. For several years, Lisa Heigh has supervised waste reduction operations at the Race. She relies on a well-oiled process that in 2007 resulted in a recycling rate of 77 percent of the event's total waste.

Heigh's annual planning begins with a call to the City of Portland's Public Place Recycling Program (contracted to Portland State University's Community Environmental Services), which provides eight recycling stations. The clearly marked clusters of recycling bins and trashcans are placed down the middle of Tom McCall Waterfront Park, where pre- and post-race activities and vendors draw constant crowds.

To ensure the program's waste diversion success, Heigh:

- assigns at least two volunteers per location to monitor refuse and educate people about separating and sorting recyclables
- ensures signage is visible and clear
- delegates volunteers to circulate throughout the event to empty filled containers and resolve problems quickly
- sends volunteers to make on-site visits to vendors' booths, reinforcing the zero-waste agenda
- uses walkie-talkies to maintain constant contact with volunteers
- oversees a day's-end "sweep" of the grounds to pick up any remaining refuse.

After the end sweep, volunteers complete the final sorting. Food waste is either composted or sent to a hog farm as animal feed. Charities receive all unused food items, such as bottled water, snack foods, yogurt and fruit. Remaining materials are transported by a hauler to a Metro transfer station. Metro provides vouchers to offset the drop-off fees.

Heigh is selective about her team. "I'm vigilant about constantly setting the bar high for volunteers," she says. "It takes a special kind of person to sort through garbage." Her approach to cultivating good workers includes:

- clearly communicating duties and expectations
- sending thankyou letters after the race
- personally inviting back the most valuable volunteers

Vendor practices also are factors in the recycling equation. Letters sent months before the event:

- instruct them on what and where to recycle (e.g., cardboard, plastic)
- urge them to reduce waste through the use of compostable utensils, proper disposal of garbage, and elimination of plastic “goody bags.”

A sustainability ethic extends to the registration and fund raising components of Portland Race for the Cure. Race Manager Kyle Camberg reports that, in 2006 alone, 36,000 participants registered and \$700,000 was donated online, significantly reducing the use of paper forms. In addition, Race planners arrange for shuttle vans to transport participants from several Portland area locations, reducing both local traffic congestion and air pollution.

With its high diversion rate, “[Portland Race for the Cure] is probably the largest event with the highest recycling rate in the Metro area,” says Heigh. “I’d be surprised if you could find higher recycling statistics from any event of this size in the region.”

In 2002, Komen Oregon published “A Guide to Recycling and Reducing Waste at Komen Race for the Cure Events.” Compiled by volunteer Robin Hawley, who developed the Race’s waste reduction program, the manual documents the event’s model sustainability practices and highlights:

- specific actions to take before, during and after an event
- tips on waste prevention
- a list of related resources.

Now used by several Komen affiliates around the U.S., the booklet is equally useful for other types of civic events. It is available online at www.komenoregon.org/files/PDF/Race_-_pdfs/RaceGuide.pdf



Courtesy of Catha Loomis



Stash the Trash project provides year-round reminders to keep the Clackamas River clean.

AFTER AN EVENT



After an event

Your event is over. It was a wild success, and you, your many volunteers and partners have diverted a lot of material from the landfill and created a cleaner community.

However, it's not quite time to call it a day. There are a number of very important tasks that need to be done before you can wrap things up. The good news is that you've been so well organized all along the way that this stage should go well too.

- ✓ **Recordkeeping.** You'll need them to get reimbursement from the organizations funding your event. Good records also will help you plan for next year.
- ✓ **Thank.** You'll want to thank and acknowledge all those invaluable volunteers, sponsors and donors. There are a number of ways to do that, from giving them small gifts, to holding a celebration after the event.
- ✓ **Publicity.** Your publicity efforts will pay off now too. Local newspapers, especially neighborhood association and community newspapers, are hungry for local news involving everyday people. If you had the support of large organizations or governments, remember to send articles and high resolution photos that they can use for external publicity or in their own internal publications.
- ✓ **Celebrate.** This last stage can be the most satisfying. Be sure to celebrate your success, and give yourself – and everyone else who helped – a huge pat on the back.

AFTER AN EVENT

Funding sources and reporting

Complete reporting

- Promptly submit expense reports, with receipts and any other required documentation, to all sponsoring agencies.
- Acknowledge and thank every sponsor.
- Provide follow-up (results) reports and statistics to sponsors as soon as data are available.

Site planning and layout

- Remain on site until all containers have been collected or locked.
- Clean the site thoroughly (this should include volunteers assigned to this role).
- Follow up with a thank you note to the property owner.

Volunteers

- Follow up with notes of thanks, by mail or e-mail, including data (if available) on the impact of their efforts (diversion rates, tonnage) and highlighting memorable aspects of the event.
- Hold a volunteer recognition event, such as a party or a field trip to a recycling facility, a Metro transfer station or to organization(s) that benefited from the event.
- Inform volunteers of future/repeat events and ask them to take part as planners and/or on-site volunteers.
- Ask volunteers to refer others to volunteer for future events.

Publicity

- Write articles for community media outlets highlighting what was accomplished. If your event is annual, use articles to discuss planned improvements, and to begin to recruit volunteers for next year. Be sure to include information on how much trash was diverted from the landfill, where materials were sent, and other examples of the event's achievements in minimizing its environmental impact.
- Publicly thank sponsors, partners and volunteers, taking every possible opportunity to express appreciation for those who made it possible.

Materials and haulers

- Collect and report data. Based on information from reuse and recycling businesses, calculate “diversion,” or how much material you were able to keep out of the landfill. Include this information in post-event publicity and reporting to funders and partners.
- Publicize accomplishments.

PROFILE: DOWN THE RIVER CLEAN UP

“Down the River Cleanup” is a testimony to the power of a few devoted individuals to make big changes in their communities. The annual Clackamas River event began with three angry kayakers and has grown into a well-organized annual day of food, fun and hard work, supported by hundreds of volunteers and a large, diverse group of community partners.

In August 2003, paddlers Kristin Dahl, Sam Drevo and Eric Johnson found appalling conditions on the river. Beer cans, cigarette butts, clothing and Styrofoam coolers were in the water and on the shore. After they got mad, the trio got busy. First, they tapped business and personal e-mail and phone lists. In early September, 60 outdoor enthusiasts showed up.

“We all launched at one time and leap-frogged down [a six-mile stretch of] the river,” says Kristin Dahl. “It was a little chaotic, but we got the job done.”

With no disposal plan or sponsorship, the entourage filled bag after bag with the popular waterway’s detritus. At the end of the day, they piled dozens of bags of waste at the Carver [boat] ramp.”

The organizers took inspiration and gratification from the outpouring of enthusiasm at this initial event. “People talked about it year-round,” says Dahl.

With a much longer lead-time, Dahl began planning for a more organized follow-up event. She mustered influential partners, including the Clackamas River Basin Council. In 2004, they started getting a little more systematic. Clackamas County provided dumpsters and trash bags. The Marine Sheriff’s Office and American Medical Response signed on to oversee safe navigation and emergency backup. Sponsors included Metro, providing disposal vouchers, local grocers donating food for volunteers and performers entertaining the troops.

Now at the annual river events, cleanup procedures are carefully orchestrated. Coordinators assign volunteers to “pods” of watercraft, which are captained by river experts. Each group gets a laminated map illustrating their assigned stretch of the river and a “garbage scow,” a boat designated to carry trash. Group members fan out in individual canoes, kayaks and small boats, plucking trash from the river and adjacent shoreline.

Cleanup results invariably include some memorable finds, like dentures, a rat in a bottle, and a long-lost prom picture. At one cleanup, a pod of ingenious volunteers inflated several garbage bags, blowing them up like giant balloons, and used them to float a massive tire to the surface.

Color-coded collection bags, provided by SOLV and Clackamas County, facilitate the separation of recyclables from collected debris. Everything is delivered to large on-site dumpsters that go to a Metro transfer station, where recyclables are sorted for processing.

PROFILE: **DOWN THE RIVER CLEAN UP** continued

As volunteer numbers and tonnage have steadily increased, the numbers speak for themselves:

- 2004: 136 volunteers pulled 2.24 tons of garbage from six miles of river
- 2005: 190 volunteers, 2.57 tons, 14 miles
- 2006: 280 volunteers, 4.29 tons, 14 miles
- 2007: 300 volunteers, 3.22 tons, 14 miles

The significant drop in 2007 tonnage may reflect a county ban on alcohol consumption in riverside parks, as well as greater awareness among river users.

In 2006, the Clackamas River Basin Council initiated its “Stash the Trash” program. With corporate, government and community sponsorship, the Council ordered 20,000 mesh bags placed in prominent locations near the river. Dolan involved Clackamas High School students in the bags’ design. A mini-focus group of local park rangers ensured input and buy-in from that influential group. Graphics were provided pro-bono by a community design firm.

Riverside businesses immediately saw a reduction in litter on their properties. “I talked with several park staff and river users... who said they observed people... using and distributing the bags,” Dolan reports.

“Down the River” planners also strive to minimize the event’s impact on the environment. “We try to keep it as sustainable as possible,” says Dolan, citing disposable bottles as an example. Concerned about the potential for hundreds of throwaway plastic bottles, she arranged to have big jugs of water on hand so volunteers could fill and refill their own bottles. In 2007, a local outdoor store donated hundreds of Nalgene water bottles for volunteers.

Significant to the event’s overall success is “the synergy of the different groups coming together,” says Dolan. “Great ideas are the start, but synergy makes it work.”

Kristin Dahl concurs. “It’s the partnerships we’ve built that really allow [the cleanup] to be successful, and allow us to address the social disease of environmental degradation and the rogue behavior throughout the year.”



Courtesy of Bruce MacGregor