



Friends of San Ramon Creek

FSRC CREEK CLEANUP GUIDANCE

Timeframe: Preparations for a successful clean-up project should begin at least 1 month in advance of the event. Organizing the event is very important. The following information serves as a guideline to assist you with planning your event. The size and scope of your event will determine how many of these suggestions are utilized; adjust to suit your needs.

Disclaimer: Friends of San Ramon Creek is not a legal entity. As such, we cannot serve as sponsor of your activity. You must take responsibility to assure the safety of all participants. Many organizations, e.g., churches, BSA, can provide insurance riders if necessary.

Organize Your Crew: Identify a Planning Committee of 3 to 6 volunteers to organize the project. This could include a local citizen, a member of government, local business owner, staff of your local school system, local church members, and youth within your community. Arrange a meeting of the Planning Committee to plan the event and assign roles throughout the project. This should be a FUN project, so choose individuals that will make the project fun - so folks will work hard and be proud of the results. Individuals who have contacts in the community and can reach new sources of volunteers are vital, so forming the Planning Committee is key to ensuring success. Establishing a Planning Committee will spread the workload and enable you to plan an effective clean-up project. Plans are critical to help communities set goals and continue to grow the program successfully.

Select a Volunteer Coordinator: The coordinator, or co-coordinators will guide the committee as project plans are developed to outline the methods the group will use to generate awareness and motivate volunteers. The plans should include detailed activities that will take place during the event. Assign the Planning Committee tasks during the planning process as well as throughout the event. Your plan should include the following:

- Name your clean-up project.
- Select a date.
- How many teams will you need?
- How long will your clean-up project last? – determine beginning and ending times, 2 hours max.
- How will you get supplies?
- How will trash bags be distributed?
- Who will take photos?
- How will water be distributed? Consider paper cups and a dispenser, not plastic bottles.
- Who will check-in volunteers on the day of the event?
- What information do you need at check-in (i.e., name/phone/email, etc.)? Liability waiver?
- Who will give assignments as to where the teams begin the project?
- Who will oversee a First Aid station?
- Restrooms or Port-o-Potty? Or let people know in advance if one is not available.
- What is the plan for disposal of the trash?
- Who will handle marketing the event?
- What kind of signage is needed?
- Who will send thank you? – will they be sent via e-mail, Facebook, local newspaper, etc.?

Select a Date: Select a date to launch the clean-up project. An ideal day to hold a clean-up project is on Earth Day - April 22 or a Saturday before or after the celebrated day. “Changing the world starts by changing your own little corner of it.” Organizing an Earth Day event or activity is one of the best ways to engage your community to protect the planet. Register your event through EarthDay.org’s “The Great Global Cleanup” platform. [The Great Global Cleanup General Info \(earthday.org\)](#)

If your cleanup project is later in the year, that’s just as well; a great time to clear trash is before winter rain storms can flush it downstream.



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Choose a Location: Identify areas in your community to be cleaned that are safe and accessible. Be creative! It may be that you need to plan for consecutive clean-up projects depending on the needs in your community. Be sure to contact the appropriate individuals to ensure that you have permission to be there and determine what to do with the trash and recyclables you collect. You may need to check with your local sanitation department, neighborhood associations, Park and Recreation Authority, County Flood Control District, or private property owners to get approval. Be sure to ask if a permit is required. Possible Locations For Your Clean-up Project: Parks, Neighborhoods, Vacant lots, Roadsides, Schoolyards, near schools, Downtown, Near the freeway (lots of trash comes from highways), etc. Let FSRC know of locations with heavy trash accumulations.

Recruit Volunteers: Sometimes it's easier to recruit groups rather than individuals to participate in a community activity like a clean-up project. Contact local churches and schools to ask them to help form teams of volunteers. Consider organizing contests between teams to get them enthused. Encourage friends, family, local citizens, private landowners, churches and schools, neighbors, local business owners, to participate in the project. And don't forget to include the youth in your community. Remember, there is power in numbers. Get people together, get them personally motivated to succeed. You may also wish to recruit family groups that include two to three generations of participants. Consider unique groupings for your local newspaper and social media to highlight.

Possible Groups To Contact To Find Volunteers: Local churches, Local schools (elementary, middle and high school age), Kiwanis, Rotary, Boy Scout/Girl Scout Troops, 4-H Groups, Neighborhood Associations, Garden Clubs, Professional Associations, Local Businesses, Local Media - utilize the media to attract volunteers and reinforce your message about the project.

Sponsors/Support Organizations: Determine if you will need sponsors for your event. Sponsors can be asked to donate trash bags, gloves, bottled water, snacks, disposable hand wipes, hand sanitizer, poster board for signage, buckets, recycle containers, tape or zip-ties to tie up bags, First Aid supplies, etc. They may even donate manpower, or assist with printing flyers, printing of T-shirts, etc. Ask local businesses to donate prizes to be presented to the team that collects the most litter. You may consider using a luggage scale or fish scale to weigh the bags collected, and present prizes to the team that collects the most pounds of trash. **If you don't ask for support, you won't receive it!**

Possible Sponsors You May Consider: Local Businesses: Grocery Stores may donate trash bags, bottled water or snacks; local businesses may donate door prizes/incentives for the team members; your local hardware store may donate trash bags, buckets, recycle bins, etc. Make sure the local businesses understand that by supporting the clean-up project, they can build their business. Businesses want to connect with projects and activities that present a positive message to the community! Local City/County or Waste Service Provided – ask to provide dumpsters (free of charge) in various locations during the clean-up event. Local government will probably allow dumping of trash in their dumpsters. Your sponsoring organization may have dumpsters that are available. Most of us want to see trash disposed of responsibly.

Develop a Marketing Plan and Publicize: Your marketing plan could be as simple as: 1) Facebook posts – letting people know WHEN the clean-up event will take place. Include the date, time of event, where the event will begin, and how individuals can participate. 2) Flyers: Develop a flyer with the same information as the Facebook post, hang in store windows, put on car windshields at the local grocery store, hardware store, Library, Sr Center; include information in church bulletins, etc. 3) Ask business owners to include details about the clean-up event on their websites, store windows/doors, etc. 4) Contact your local newspaper, radio stations to publicize; 5) Ask the Chamber to add to their website, etc.

Get Supplies/Coordinate Set-Up: Determine what kinds of supplies you will need - work gloves [or have volunteers bring gloves], trash bags, buckets, trash receptacles, etc.; bottled water, snacks, sign-in sheet for volunteers [to enable you to thank the volunteers via e-mail], tables and chairs, First Aid kit for minor cuts and scrapes, eye wash; hand sanitizer, disposable hand wipes, poster board and markers, zip ties, shovels (for the rare



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case of a buried grocery cart - generally do not disturb soil near the creeks), rakes, etc. Make assignments for delivery of materials and supplies for set-up on the day of the event. Map layout of event, such as parking, signage, check-in table, first aid station, water station/distribution, supply distribution, and dumpster or trash bag staging location. Establish time and place for set-up.

Communicate with Volunteers: As volunteers register to participate and the event approaches, communicate the status of the event. These reminders will keep volunteers engaged with the event. Communicate appropriate dress and personal protective equipment (PPE), if not being provided. Solicit any additional support or provisions that still may be needed. Encourage the volunteers to recruit others to the event.

The Day of the Event:

Set-Up: Meet at the established place and time with your set-up crew to review assignments and timeframe to complete. Coffee and donuts for your set-up crew will fuel them up. The set-up should flow the volunteers smoothly and efficiently from registration, to supply distribution, and to the event kick-off congregation area.

Kick-Off: Once your volunteers have registered and received their clean-up supplies, have your event coordinator address the volunteers to convey critical information and energize the crowd. Thank the volunteers for showing up and for their forthcoming effort. The objective for the event is to complete a cleanup SAFELY! The kick-off should serve as a safety tailgate meeting. Review hazards associated with the activities and environment (sharps, terrain/trip hazards, poison oak/ivy, insects, heavy lifting, heat stress/stroke, etc.) and the proper procedures and behavior for mitigating the hazards. Follow the buddy system with volunteers paired appropriately or in teams. Emphasize that the event's success is contingent on no one getting hurt. The volunteers should be reminded of the timeframe of the event, specifically the end time so they are not left behind. The volunteers should be shown the first aid station, water station/distribution, restrooms, etc. Remind the group to stay out of the creek and avoid propagating erosion. Clearly communicate the physical boundaries of the clean-up event. Instruct the volunteers what to do with the filled bags of trash. Direct volunteers to contact a designated crew member for any hazardous wastes encountered for proper handling and disposal.

During Clean-Up: Have a crew member take photos of the event. Maintain a crew member at the check-in location in case of emergencies or late arrivals. Maintain a crew member at the first aid station. Maintain a crew member at the dumpster or trash drop-off location to assure all collected trash is disposed appropriately and accommodate weighing or bag counting if desired. If it can be accommodated, sort the waste into trash and recyclables, and hazardous waste. Be mindful of any hazardous waste encountered; proper handling and disposal should be done by a knowledgeable crew member. If volunteers are tracking waste, have waste inventory forms collected with crew member at check-in table. Consider providing a prize for most unique piece of trash!

After Clean-Up: Congregate and socialize. Pat each other on the back. Consider providing drinks and snacks. The coordinator should offer a "thank you" to the volunteers and let them know a summary of the event will be distributed. Best not to congregare and socialize too long because the clean-up needs to be cleaned-up. Pack-up and haul away your supplies and materials. Haul away your trash to its predetermined destination or cover your dumpster for pending pickup. Leave no evidence of your event behind other than a pristine creek.

Express your thanks by sharing the results! Include photos and a short article in the local newspaper and town website identifying the volunteers and include the number of trash bags collected or the weight of all trash (if using scales). Send a social media post or e-mail to volunteers saying "Look What We Collected" with photos and the number or pounds of bags collected. Update/share your event via EarthDay.org's "The Great Global Cleanup" platform. This will more than likely encourage others to participate in future events! Ask volunteers to share their own stories, experiences, and personal photos on social media. Identify another clean-up day while the enthusiasm is high.
