

# Waterway Cleanup Logistics

The rivers and lakes of our country provide recreation, drinking water, agricultural irrigation and beauty. Unfortunately, many of our waterways are polluted. Everything from harmful bacteria to old tires contributes to substandard water quality and affects our ability to enjoy the outdoors. There are two primary tasks that make organizing a waterway cleanup different from a traditional roadside cleanup. The first is that obtaining property owner permission can be more difficult. Some waterway cleanups cover considerable distances and obtaining permission can be complicated, because you may have to work with many different property owners. The second challenge is providing for the safety of your volunteers. Larger bodies of water and waterways may require boats and volunteers entering the water. Refer to the Litter Cleanup Logistics in this section.

## Identify Location

Walk along the waterway and take notes, if possible, on a map, of all the trashed areas. USGS topographical maps can be downloaded for free at <http://www.usgs.gov/pubprod/> or they can be purchased at outdoor recreational stores or from your parish conservation district. Be aware that high waters and spring flooding may move or add debris. Invite others to join you. Don't feel that you have to clean the entire waterway in one day. Target a section that's easy to do. The more difficult sections won't seem as monumental once you've gained experience and have community support. The trash didn't accumulate in one day and it may take more than one cleanup to remove.

## Suggested Cleanup Locations:

- ▶ ditches along rights-of-way
- ▶ detention ponds/areas
- ▶ riverbanks
- ▶ lakefronts
- ▶ creeks
- ▶ bayous
- ▶ drainage areas
- ▶ areas that carry water
- ▶ storm drains



**\*\*Safety is important as these areas may be slippery and may attract animals and snakes. Please use caution around water and provide supervision to youth**

## Determine Who Will Participate

If entry into the waterway is necessary to remove trash, individuals with professional training, such as divers and rescuers, should be used. Be sure to designate these people ahead of time. Divers are especially helpful in securing heavy items which should be pulled from the water by more powerful sources, such as tractors, horses, teams of volunteers, or special equipment. Military reserve units sometimes get involved with community service projects. These men and women are trained to work together and know how to handle special situations and respond in emergencies. Invite representatives of each group to your waterway prior to the cleanup. They need to become familiar with the cleanup areas so they can determine what tools and equipment will be necessary for the cleanup.

## Tools and Safety Equipment

Please refer to cleanup section for suggested cleanup tools and safety equipment.

Other tools that may be helpful include:

- ▶ Fishing nets to collect litter unable to be reached by hand
- ▶ Mesh bags or 5-gallon buckets should be considered, since litter and debris collected during a waterway cleanup may be wet and will be heavy.
- ▶ Litter pickers/grabbers
- ▶ Rakes or grab pole
- ▶ Gloves
- ▶ Personal floatation device for volunteers conducting cleanup activities via boat or near water.