

## IV. Recruiting Volunteers

Whether you're running a big or small Cleanup, your success depends a lot on how many volunteers you can recruit. It's worth noting that in one survey 90% of people said they volunteered because they were asked and 42% learned about volunteer opportunities through someone they knew—so getting the word out about your Cleanup is important!

People volunteer for all sorts of reasons, ranging from 'dedication to the cause', the desire to make an impact or make friends, to get to know a new community or simply to have fun. Below you'll find a long, but not exhaustive list of ways to recruit volunteers.

- Use your existing database
- Ask Board Members to recommend potential helpers
- "Bring a Friend" night
- Coordinate a volunteer fair
- Reunion of former volunteers ("We'd love to have you back!")
- Satisfied volunteers sharing experiences at service clubs, churches, etc.
- Contact college instructors in relevant classes (e.g., biology, environmental classes)
- Recruit a whole group or organization to be involved (key clubs, churches, boy scouts, fishing club, schools)
- Recruit through social media - Facebook, Twitter, Instagram
- Internet mailings and websites
- Boy scouts are required to help in their own community. Contact the troop and encourage them to stay in their community. You can use Boy Scouts as Life Guards (those certified). Design a Cub Scout patch.
- Local media
- Get kayakers, boaters, and SCUBA divers involved. Dive shops may donate air.
- Involve juvenile probation teams in Cleanup to meet service requirements.
- Get community service lists from city. Your County Sheriff has a work alternative service.
- Flyers at community colleges/churches/community centers/around town
- Print ads on shopping bags, stuff flyers in grocery bags
- Work-study projects
- The school districts can send fliers advertising the Cleanup to all schools/teachers in the district.
- Put an ad on your local bus.

### **IMPORTANT!** **Your Volunteers** **MUST Pre-Register**

All of your promotional materials should stress that ALL volunteers must pre-register. This is an important part of the event since you probably came up with a set number of volunteers for each of your sites. Remember - if you just let volunteers go to whatever site they'd like, you may have too many at one place, and not enough at another! If need be, you can create a "drop-in site" that could be flexible for those volunteering or showing up at the last minute.

- Make printed fliers with maps to be given out at city events or inserted into garbage and water bills.
- Get your local Chamber of Commerce to help with advertising.
- Craigslist or Meetup can be used to advertise the GSRC and recruit volunteers.

**Be creative about groups and clubs you can invite to help. Examples are flyfishing clubs, OHV riders, mountain bike clubs, geocachers, and California Conservation Corps workers. All have helped in Cleanups around the Sierra.**

### *A. Enhancing Cultural Diversity in Cleanups*

According to recent information compiled by the California Council of Land Trusts:

- 39% of 12-year-olds and 54% of 13- to 17-year-olds cite a lack of interest as the top reason for not getting out into nature.
- By 2050, we will be larger, more urban and diverse, older, poorer, and less healthy.
- In 2050, more than 75% of the population will be centralized in three regions – Southern California, Central Valley, and the Bay Area.
- By 2050, non-whites will comprise a super-majority (greater than 66%) in four of the state's six regions.

These population trends have potential ramifications for support for conservation-related activities in the future, so it is definitely worthwhile to consider ways to provide a changing population with additional opportunities to connect with the outdoors. Here are some ideas to enhance cultural diversity at your cleanup:

- Package the project as one that demonstrates a commitment to the communities in which we all live and that offers children exposure to outdoor venues.
- Reach out to more diverse communities, such as cities in the Central Valley – Stockton, Fresno, Sacramento, etc.
  - » Distribute the Spanish-language GSRC promotional materials (check out what is available on the Materials Order Form in the Forms Packet).
  - » Put notices in community newspapers. Contact local radio stations.
  - » Ask high school science teachers to give their students extra credit for participating.
  - » Reach out to faith-based organizations, youth groups, and non-profits.
  - » Cultivate face-to-face relationships with targeted community leaders and engage them in helping to recruit volunteers.
  - » Utilize strategic partnerships with local family resource centers, First 5 organizations, etc. They may be willing to allow you to come in and talk about the importance of clean waterways and ask people to sign up to participate in a cleanup.
  - » Participate in local festivals to be visible to community members.
  - » Reach out to tribal groups throughout the Sierra using any of the above ideas that are applicable.
  - » International clubs at colleges, volunteers, and local newspaper can be a great resource for translating.

## ***B. When Your Volunteers Call***

When your volunteers start contacting you, it's important that you're ready with all the questions you need answered and all the information the volunteer will need to participate in the Cleanup. Remember - all volunteers need to PRE-REGISTER!

### **What information to ASK the volunteer when they call:**

- Full name of all participants including their kids
- Address – check on database to keep/change if already there
- Phone number and email for contact
- What site they want to clean up

### **What information to TELL the volunteer when they call:**

- Bring heavy gloves if possible (we will provide disposable gloves) and OWN reusable buckets or trash bags (see Appendix H)
- Bring sunscreen, water/snacks, own water bottle, serving ware (see Greening of Event, Appendix H)
- If in poison oak areas – long pants and long shirts
- Directions to their site and name of their site
- Any specific information that might be pertinent to their site
- Their Site Captain's name
- When to arrive and end time of clean up
- Details about any post-Cleanup celebration
- Thank them for volunteering

### **What to do when you've completed all of the above:**

- Make sure to enter their name/info on the specific site spreadsheet
- Confirm/edit/enter name/s into the database if you have one

### **When talking to a Site Captain:**

- Confirm their personal information
- Discuss specific information about their site (steep terrain, need truck, strong bodies?)
- Tell them when and where the Site Captain meeting is and time
- Discuss the maximum number of volunteers recommended for their site
- Get/give very specific directions to their site
- Give them a list of their site volunteers and contact info



## C. Thanking Volunteers

Whatever you do, don't forget to thank all of your volunteers after your Cleanup is over. Some Cleanups are able to put on a party directly after the event; others can give away "schwag" items like T-shirts. But even if you can't do any of these things, all volunteers must be thanked in some way and it's especially important to thank your Site Captains and any other "high-level" volunteers that you rely on for larger tasks. This will ensure that they know that their work has been recognized and will make them want to come back next year. Apart from personally thanking as many people as you can on Cleanup day itself, a personal call or thank-you postcard is the easiest way to thank your volunteers. Other ideas include:

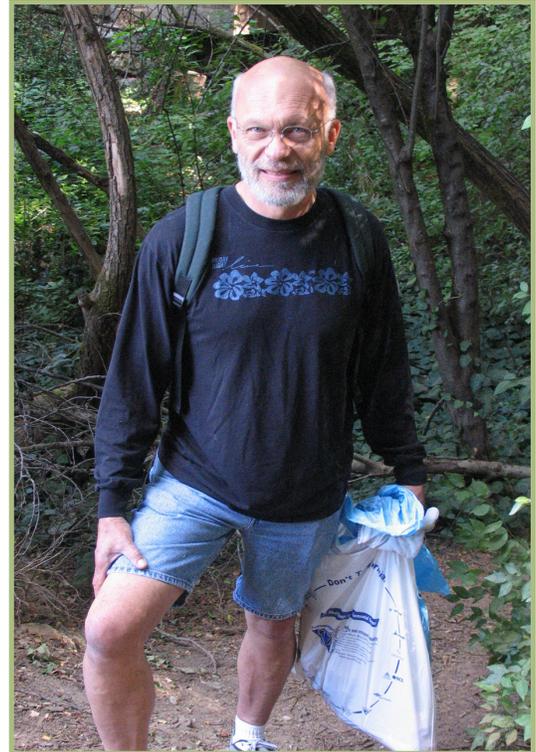
- Personal thanks from your Board
- Volunteer spotlight in your newsletter
- Volunteer of the Year award
- Highlight individuals in your press releases
- Volunteer appreciation parties
- Discounts on your organization's tickets, gift items, etc.
- Lunch with your executive director or staff

However you decide to thank your volunteers, remember to ask them for feedback too. Your volunteers on the ground will have lots of good suggestions to help improve your Cleanup. Collect all their suggestions and remember to look at them again before you plan next year's Cleanup!

## D. Signing Your Volunteers Up Online

When you have many sites, or need to recruit a large number of volunteers, it is much easier to use an online sign up process. Having your volunteers sign up and register online allows you to capture more info about them and provide all the event info to them that they can print out. It is a good way to save time and phone calls and eliminates the need to contact everyone individually. One free (and easy!) way of doing this is by using a Google form. You will need a gmail email account to do this. If you don't already have an account, you can easily set one up online - and the account is free.

For complete directions on how to do this, see the separate training document in Appendix I,



## Online is Easy!

- Use your website for event details + all the information your volunteers need to know about their sites.
- It is handy to put the pdf version of the waiver online - especially for school and large groups to complete before the event.
- Make it easy for your volunteers to find the above info from your homepage.
- If signing volunteers up online (e.g., with a Google form), you can ask them to read and initial the "safety talk" before they can participate.

## “How to Create a Google Document Form for the River Cleanup.”

By creating a Google sign up form, you can put all your event information there, plus gather all the info you want about your volunteers - age, how they heard about the event, if they are interested in volunteering for your organization year-round, etc. At the end of creating the form, you can choose to publish your form, which you can paste easily and directly into your website.

### E. Create A Site Map

Google Earth is a useful tool to create a map of your Cleanup sites, which will allow your volunteers to see exactly where they will be cleaning up on the day of the event. If you don't already have this program, you can download it for free here: <http://www.google.com/earth/>.

In Google Earth, zoom in to your Cleanup location. Use the polygon drawing tool  on the tool bar located at the top of the screen to draw the boundaries of each individual site. Write the site's name in the top text box and the directions/site description/other in the large text box. Click 'OK' and your new site will be added to the map. Repeat for all Cleanup sites.

To save the file (which you can later send via email or link to on a website), simply click 'Save, Save Place As' and save it to your computer. The file will be saved in KMZ format and you can hyperlink it to your website. However, these files can be very large, so we recommend testing this technique beforehand to see if it meets your organization's needs.

