

Big River Cleanups



Planning and conducting a community river cleanup



MISSOURI
RIVER
RELIEF

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About the Big River Cleanup Manual

Missouri River Relief is publishing this manual to help people conduct big river cleanups. It is organized in three sections.

Section I : INTRODUCTION An overall look at big river cleanups. This section outlines the basic framework for a successful event.

Section II : RIVER CLEANUP OVERVIEW Detailed information for **conducting large-scale cleanups**. People organizing smaller cleanups should sift through this section to meet their needs.

Section III : APPENDICES Specific information about useful resources, **contact names and numbers, plus sample materials** from actual River Relief cleanups. This section includes check lists, timelines and examples of site maps.

The manual distills what Missouri River Relief members have learned from **thousands of hours of planning and conducting cleanups**. We've learned through trial-and-error and through the shared experiences of our river cleanup partners. We thank them for their help.

We continue to learn with each cleanup and we'd like to hear what lessons others have learned in conducting cleanups. **Please share your experiences with us** by contacting the River Relief office at (573) 443-0292 or P.O. Box 463, Columbia, Missouri 65205, or via email at riverrelief@riverrelief.org

Rather than an ironclad set of rules, **this manual should be used as a guide** that can be modified to suit local conditions.

DISCLAIMER: The authors and publisher of this river cleanup manual assume no responsibility for any loss of property, accident, injury or death sustained while conducting a river cleanup or when using any information provided in this book. Outdoor activities are by their very nature potentially hazardous. All participants in such activities must assume responsibility for their own actions and safety. The information contained in this guidebook cannot replace sound judgement and good decision-making skills nor does the scope of this book allow for disclosure of all the potential hazards and risks involved in such activities. Keeping informed of current conditions and exercising common sense are the keys to a safe, enjoyable outdoor experience. Follow all Coast Guard rules and regulations when conducting river cleanups.

NOTE: This manual is copyrighted, however River Relief encourages manual users to reproduce the contents in whole or part for use in volunteer cleanups when distributed without charge or for sale. Some of the names, addresses, phone numbers and web sites may change over time and should be verified by prospective users.

Section I: Introduction

Confluence Cleanup, St. Louis, MO, 2005 *Photo by Tim Cheney*



Confluence Cleanup, St. Louis, MO, 2005 *Photo by Tim Cheney*



Blue River Rescue, Kansas City, MO, 2008 *Photo by Melanie Cheney*



Confluence Cleanup, St. Louis, MO, 2005 *Photo by Dory Colbert*

Dana's big-river cleanup adventure

Just like many volunteers at a big river cleanup, Dana had never been on the Missouri River in a small boat. Although the weather forecast was good, she felt some jitters about going out on the river for the first time.

She worked at a university medical center where she'd joined a community service club who were volunteering on a Saturday to clean trash from the river. She was dressed for working in the outdoors and felt good about the chance to do something positive for the river environment.

As she drove toward the river, she noticed "river cleanup" signs directing her to the site. She turned into a parking lot where people in orange vests directed her into a parking space. She walked toward a blue tent with a sign for registration and a River Cleanup banner recognizing sponsors, including her university medical center.

Friendly workers in River Cleanup T-shirts greeted her at the tent where she signed a registration sheet and picked up work gloves, a water bottle and a T-shirt. Cleanup workers directed her to another tent where she listened to an orientation about the cleanup and was given a life jacket. Cleanup workers helped her adjust the life jacket for a proper fit and she listened to a safety talk. It was very clear and straightforward and made a lot of sense. Dana felt confident about boarding a boat and exploring the shores for trash.

She joined a group of 10 people who were given a stack of trash bags and directed to a heavy-duty motorboat idled into the boat ramp. They decided to name their boat group "Clean Rivers" and a dispatcher on the ramp wrote this down on a clipboard. As her group approached the river, a River Cleanup crew member helped each volunteer step into the boat and when everyone was seated, the operator backed the boat and turned upriver.

As they motored upstream, the boat operator told them about the river and what they'd be doing on shore. Their skipper made the ride fun while sharing his knowledge of the river with those on board. The scenery unfolded as a spectacular palette of colorful waterfowl flew low against a pale-green backdrop of willow trees.

Dana's group disembarked on a river island and spread out to pick up the trash. She was amazed at the volume and diversity of trash, especially the number of plastic bottles. A small group spent most of their time digging out a refrigerator half-buried in the sand. After a couple of hours of piling trash in a stack on shore, Dana's group had bonded from their shared exertion. As they exchanged stories of their adventures, the same boat returned to take the "Clean Rivers" group back to cleanup headquarters.

When they nosed up to the boat ramp, a River Cleanup crew member helped each volunteer out of the boat and a dispatcher recorded their safe return on a clipboard. They removed their life jackets and washed their hands at a portable sink.

After enjoying a lunch for the cleanup volunteers, Dana decided to join a new group and go back out on the river. Although most volunteers were finished, her new group volunteered to haul the trash collected during the morning back to the roll-off bins set up near the boat ramp.

She liked working closely with a small crew loading the boat with discarded tires, refrigerators, propane tanks, water heaters, foam blocks and bags full of trash. Each time the boat returned to the ramp, a group of workers off-loaded the debris into a front-end loader that hauled the garbage to the bins.

A few hours into the afternoon, the last load of trash filled the roll-off bin, and scrap metal and appliances covered a flat-bed truck. Several dozen tires were stacked near the ramp. All of this river debris would be properly disposed and Dana felt a sense of satisfaction for helping to remove tons of unsightly trash from the river environment.

As she drove home to a well-deserved shower, Dana wondered when the next river cleanup would be scheduled. She knew she'd be coming back for more.

What the heck is a river cleanup?

People organized to pick up trash from river banks and islands

A river cleanup is an organized event during which volunteers spend part of a day removing trash from the riverbank and nearby lands and taking it to a central location for recycling and proper disposal.

Success means the targeted area is noticeably cleaner at the end of the day and participants feel they've done something worthwhile.

This planning guide can help organizers conduct a successful cleanup. We encourage planners to adapt this information to their unique situation. Local organizers will know their own communities best and will bring more ideas into the mix. Keep in mind that there are no hard-and-fast rules for such an event – the only guidelines are:

Be Safe, Have Fun and Get Dirty!

Who does it?

Volunteers provide the brains and brawn at a cleanup

Volunteers do the bulk of the work at a river cleanup with an overall framework to perform the tasks. This framework is provided by an organization – perhaps just one person can organize a small cleanup or a group of people for a larger cleanup.

An energetic person and/or a close-knit group of people will need to commit to seeing the process through from beginning to end. The key is to never take “no” for an answer, whether it’s an organizing roadblock or a balking sponsor. Stay determined to keep the process rolling despite hurdles laid in the way.

When does it happen?

Time-of-day and time-of-year are critical factors

Early morning fog can delay safe boating. In general, **a river cleanup can begin at 9 a.m. with the last boat runs completed by 3 p.m.** Final sorting of trash should be finished around 5 p.m.

The event will need **stable river levels (from normal to low-normal)** to proceed smoothly. On the Missouri River and its tributaries, flooding and higher river levels typically happen in May and June, so it’s risky to schedule a cleanup then.

The summer months of July and August are usually hot, weedy and buggy so it’s difficult to find and remove the

trash. November through February can be dangerous with cold winter weather and icy river conditions.

In Missouri, the best months for cleanups are March and April or September and October.

Cleanups are hard work in any kind of weather but don’t rule out a cleanup due to “bad” weather. Hard-core volunteers will show up regardless and a small, dedicated crew can be as effective as more numerous “fair weather” participants. **The only time we’ve cancelled a cleanup is due to lightning, dangerous flooding or extremely high winds.**

Where does it happen?

Any accessible area will offer river cleanup opportunities

Cleanups can be successful on any reach of a river. However, cleanups are easier to conduct in a centrally located area that is accessible by road with features such as electricity, running water, parking lots and sanitation facilities. Hand-washing and bathrooms are a big issue for volunteers.

A riverside park with a boat ramp will simplify distribution of cleanup volunteers and removal of

trash. Access for trucks to remove the trash is a real plus. However, with ingenuity and creativity, any stretch of the river can be made suitable for a cleanup.

The site should provide the maximum opportunity for people of all ages and abilities to participate. Some volunteers will want to avoid going out on the river to gather trash, preferring to clean from shore. They can be accommodated easily.

How does it work?

River cleanups are community efforts

Any motivated individual or group can inspire a river cleanup, but successful events are inevitably the product of community involvement, careful planning, vigorous promotion, adequate fundraising and logistical organization.

In general, a river cleanup brings volunteer workers and boat operators to a central gathering place on the river for a one-day event.

Prior to the cleanup, organizers scout and map the trash sites. Boats then take the volunteers to pre-determined sites along the shores where they collect trash into bags

and then pile the trash bags and large, loose debris next to the river. These piles of trash will be picked up during the trash-haul at the end of the day. Volunteers are transported back to the central site when they've completed their work (generally from 1 to 3 hours) and they're usually provided with lunch (ideally a "litter-free" meal using reusable, recyclable and biodegradable products).

After lunch, the bagged and piled trash is hauled to the central site where it can be sorted for proper disposal.

Cleanups typically start at 9 a.m. with registration of volunteers and finish at 5 p.m. with the final sorting of trash.

Why do it?

Cleanups restore the environment, empower people and connect communities to the river

There are no government agencies that regularly clean trash from the river. If the river is to be cleaned up, it will happen because a community of people makes it happen.

Cleaning the river of unsightly and sometimes dangerous trash restores the river environment. A river cleanup **empowers the people who participate while connecting the local community to its river.** Taking part in a big river cleanup is fun!

NOTE: River Relief has the experience, people and tools to work with local communities to conduct cleanups. If you would like to partner with River Relief, please contact us on the Internet at riverrelief@riverrelief.org or call the Columbia, Mo., office at (573) 443-0292 or the Kansas City, Mo., office at (816) 812-5166.

Atchison, KS Cleanup, 2006 *Photo by Dory Colbert*



Blue River Rescue, Kansas City, MO, 2007 *Photo by Melanie Cheney*

Overall Cleanup Structure

The more people involved, the bigger the mountain of trash at the end of the day.

A river cleanup requires a close-knit group of people who are committed to performing a variety of planning tasks over the course of several months. The size and complexity of the cleanup organization should be proportional to the size and complexity of the cleanup itself.

In order to make the cleanup an **INCLUSIVE** community event, we suggest including **ALL** those who are interested in planning and hosting a cleanup. **A large group can spread the workload while creating an occasion for many people and groups to work together on a worthwhile project.** That old saying is true – “many hands make light work.”

We’ve delineated seven broad task areas based on our experience in conducting cleanups on the Missouri River. Each task area will ideally have one person -- a “Boss” -- to coordinate the people performing the tasks and to take responsibility for completing the tasks on-time and on-budget. In fact, one person can perform several or all of the “Boss” roles, depending on the scale of the cleanup.

The “Boss” structure assures accountability, and allows participants to understand their responsibilities while providing the freedom to pursue their tasks.

The “Bosses” will enlist others to help accomplish their tasks. On cleanup day, some Bosses may need specific helpers to assist with the last-minute crush of people and tasks. A “Boss” is implicitly responsible for all helper tasks.

Note: We chose the title of “Boss” because it’s a simple term people easily understand, but please use any word you prefer to indicate leadership roles.

The following pages in Section II explain in detail the responsibilities of each of the Bosses and their helpers.

The appendices in Section III contain specific information about useful resources, contact names and numbers, samples from actual River Relief cleanups and Cleanup event planning timelines.

Cleanup Boss

Provides overall coordination

Oversees schedule, maintains communications

Money Boss

Raises money and in-kind donations

Keeps the books

Publicity Boss

Announces the cleanup to the community

Develops printed materials for the event

Site Boss (Cleanup Headquarters)

Plans the central location

Oversees the site during the cleanup

River Boss

Scouts the river to locate trash concentrations

Coordinates boat-related activities

Land Boss

Scouts land trash

Coordinates vehicle-related activities

Trash Boss

Arranges for handling and disposing trash

Coordinates trash-handling activities during the cleanup

Section II: River Cleanup Overview

Osage River Cleanup, Bonnots Mill, MO, 2006 *Photo by Lindsay Tempinson*



Hartsburg, MO Cleanup, 2008 *Photo by Dory Colbert*



Mari-Osa Dump Cleanup, Loose Creek, MO, 2008 *Photo by Jen Courtney*

Cleanup Boss

The **Cleanup Boss acts as the overall organizer** for the river cleanup and is ultimately responsible for all the tasks and functions needed to accomplish a cleanup. This person coordinates with other “Bosses” and helpers to produce a successful event.

Initially, the Cleanup Boss **determines the river reach to be cleaned, the central location, the date and times, and the estimated costs for the cleanup.** We suggest scheduling the cleanup so it doesn't conflict with other community events.

Cleanup Boss responsibilities:

- Recruits other bosses;
- Coordinates bosses and helpers, and supports them in performing their tasks;
- Holds people accountable for their tasks;
- Calls and facilitates meetings;
- Distributes meeting minutes;
- Communicates with the cleanup crew;
- Manages the overall timeline to keep the cleanup group on-task and on-schedule;
- Assumes overall responsibility for site and equipment coordination, insurance coverage and collaboration with other organizations, government agencies, businesses and individuals;
- Ensures sponsors and supporters are thanked when the cleanup is completed.
- **Safety for all aspects of cleanup**
- **Volunteer recruitment and direction**

Safety

The Cleanup Boss or a designated helper is **responsible for contacting and coordinating with Public Safety** officials. This role requires coordinating with other bosses to support their safety measures.

Safety Tasks

- Contacts and coordinates with police, fire and emergency personnel;
- Coordinates with other bosses on their communication and safety needs;
- Coordinates with other bosses to obtain event insurance;

“You’ll have done all that you can do and the group momentum will take over. Your control will essentially be gone. At that point, just relax and enjoy it.”

-- John Brady, River Relief quartermaster

- Ensures First Aid is available on site.
- Produces and distributes a cell-phone directory for the cleanup.
- Arranges for two-way radios, if needed.
- Provides amplified sound system for addressing the public, if needed.
- Establishes a safety station and recruits people to staff it.

Volunteer Coordination

The Cleanup Boss or a designated helper is **responsible for recruiting volunteers and keeping them informed about the specifics of the cleanup.** In particular, this role requires coordination with the other bosses to ensure a safe, fun and worthwhile experience for volunteers.

The Cleanup Boss or helper **keeps a running pre-event tally of volunteers and communicates with them** about how to get to the cleanup location, when to arrive, and what to wear or bring with them (sturdy boots, work clothes, sun screen, etc.). This is an e-mail and telephone-intensive task!

Volunteer Coordination Tasks

- Distributes informational materials to potential volunteers.
- Recruits volunteers from local groups and from community, academic, corporate, philanthropic and service organizations.
- Communicates with volunteers about cleanup plans.
- Makes a plan for using group volunteers – especially youth groups like scouts or schools – and provides oversight to youth groups during the cleanup.
- Ensures water, food, gloves, trash bags, tools, signs, safety instructions and other needed items are available on the day of the event.
- Arranges for morning coffee, snacks and lunch.
- Assists with registration and dispersal of volunteers as needed on cleanup day.

NOTE: Add some fun to the cleanup. Organize a “trash contest” with prizes for the oddest, oldest, or most valuable trash.

Money Boss

"It takes money to turn the props."

-- Chad Pregracke, founder of Living Lands & Waters

The Money Boss helps develop a cleanup budget, keeps the "books" and ensures that bills are paid.

The Money Boss should be an enthusiastic person with business and community contacts who can identify sources of money and in-kind donations. **Many costly supplies can be donated or discounted, such as trash bags, work gloves, beverages and food.**

The Money Boss needs to communicate with the planning committee and cleanup crew to maintain a unified, coordinated fundraising effort.

The Money Boss should open a checking account and identify individuals who can sign checks. If big sums of money are involved, consider having a limit for individual expenses and possibly requiring two signatures to validate a check.

Money Boss Tasks

- Prepares a budget of both monetary needs, and goods and services acquired as in-kind donations;
- Considers partnering with a tax-exempt entity to assist with fundraising;
- Develops and distributes promotional materials to potential sponsors;
- Identifies and pursues sources of money, goods and services;
- Opens a checking account with security procedures;
- **Investigates and acquires adequate insurance (and co-insurance) to shield organizers from liability;**
- Keeps accurate records of donors and their contributions;
- Pays the bills;
- Produces a display banner and a newspaper advertisement to recognize sponsors.

Note: Donations of time and materials are as valuable as money.



Siouxland Cleanup, Sioux City, IA, 2009 Photo by Carol Merbach

Publicity Boss

“The face of the water, in time, became a wonderful book...And it was not a book to be read once, and thrown aside, for it had a new story to tell every day.”
-- Mark Twain

The Publicity Boss gets the word out in the community to recruit volunteers, to activate supporters and to recognize sponsors. This is a three-track process to target potential contributors and community groups while raising awareness in the general public of the opportunity to become a cleanup volunteer.

The Publicity Boss works closely with the both the Cleanup and Money Bosses to develop fundraising materials and to ensure that donors get credit for their support. In addition, the Publicity Boss develops informational material such as signs for parking, event information signs, event banners, etc.

Before The Cleanup:

The conventional media outlets are the primary vector for publicity. Send news releases and Public Service Announcements (PSAs) to the media before the cleanup and make reminder calls the day before the event. Make sure to include the cell phone number for a cleanup person who can be contacted on the day of the event. **It is also good practice to contact media outlets on the cleanup day to make sure the weekend staff knows about the cleanup.**

Be sure to get your cleanup posted on “community calendars.” Try to arrange pre-event interviews on radio and television, and feature stories in newspapers. A good news “hook” is scouting the river for trash as a pre-cleanup activity.

During The Cleanup:

Designate someone from the event committee to serve as media-contact person and designate a boat for media representatives, if possible.

After The Cleanup:

A wrap-up news release should be distributed as soon as possible to the media. **Be prepared to report how many volunteers participated and how much trash was removed.** This is a great opportunity to recognize your partners and sponsors.

Finally, consider printing a “thank-you” advertisement in the local paper to announce the results of the cleanup and to provide recognition to volunteers and sponsors.

Publicity Boss Tasks

- Decides on a name and logo for the event;
- Develops a publicity plan and budget;
- Develops a list of media contacts and strategies for using them (news releases, PSAs, community calendars, interviews on TV and radio);
- Works with Cleanup and Money Bosses to develop fundraising materials;
- Develops information/promotion materials (pamphlets and postcards with map to area, fliers, banners, hats and T-shirts);
- Hosts social/informational event(s) announcing the cleanup;
- Arranges presentations with Cleanup Boss to local civic and business groups;
- Attends festivals and fairs – distributes fliers there and gets people to sign up as volunteers;
- Makes informational signs to display for volunteers at the cleanup;
- Makes an event banner to display at the cleanup to recognize sponsors;
- Telephones media newsrooms before the event and on cleanup day to motivate reporters and editors;
- Serves as media-contact person on cleanup day;
- Distributes post-event news releases to wrap-up the event and thank sponsors (include the number of volunteers, the amount of trash removed, a list of trash items, trash prize winners, etc.);
- Ideally, publishes a “results” and “thank-you” advertisement in the local newspaper.

Note: Assign a cleanup scribe to keep a detailed record of the trash collected from the river—the general public and the media are fascinated by this list.

Site Boss

*“They paved paradise and put up a parking lot.”
-- Joni Mitchell, songwriter*

The Site Boss plans and oversees the central location for the event. The cleanup site must allow for parking vehicles, moving people and handling trash. A well-planned site will keep the event moving smoothly.

The Site Boss and Helper responsibilities:

- Set up the central site and take it down.
- Park vehicles;
- Provide tents, tables and chairs for volunteer registration;
- Distribute water, trash bags, work gloves and T-shirts;
- Assemble volunteers for safety orientation, boarding boats, hauling trash and recycling tasks;
- Set up portable toilets and hand-washing sinks, if needed;
- Serve food and provide entertainment during lunch.

Site Boss Tasks:

- **Obtains needed permits and/or permission to use the site for a cleanup;**
- Consults with Cleanup Boss to determine the space needs for various tasks;
- Inspects the site and makes a site-plan poster to display at the event;
- Arranges portable toilets and hand-washing sinks, if needed;
- Ensures on-site trash and recycling barrels are available and emptied throughout the day;
- Assigns parking responsibilities to helper(s);
- Sets-up signs for directions to the site, parking, registration, boat loading, and safety;
- Arranges a Lost-and-Found area;
- Establishes a First Aid area;
- Restores the site to pre-event conditions (remove all banners, signs, etc.).

Parking & Traffic Tasks:

A big cleanup can attract a lot of traffic for a short period of time. **Unless the parking lot is large and easily accessible, the Site Boss may need helpers to direct traffic on cleanup day.**

- Set-up signs along the roads to direct volunteers to the central site;
- Set-up signs for parking, if needed;
- Recruit helpers to direct parking and provide them with 2-way radios and safety vests;

- Coordinate a central area for boat-trailer parking—this makes a fabulous visual effect when lots of boats are working on the river cleanup.
- Remove all signs after the cleanup and restore area to pre-event conditions.

Registration

A big river cleanup can attract hundreds of people **all at once** who want to participate in the event. **It's important to register each person or group and to orient them to the cleanup site.** If several large groups are expected at the cleanup then a separate group registration area is useful.

At the Registration tent you can give volunteers instructions and also distribute work gloves, water bottles, T-shirts and other items. **This location also is useful for establishing a First Aid station and a Lost-and-Found area.**

Most of the registration will occur within the first hour and requires the use of several helpers who can work at other cleanup areas after the initial rush is over.

Registration Tasks:

- Arranges for a tent or other shelter for registration where a cleanup banner or flag is visible;
- Recruits helpers to work in the registration area;
- Provides on-site trash barrels, recycling bins, tables and chairs for registration workers;
- Provides sign-up sheets, clipboards and pens;
- Supervises signing up volunteers and provides orientation to the cleanup with a site map;
- Makes the sign-up sheet big, easy and quick with columns for name, hometown, email and any group affiliations;
- Stores and distributes water bottles, work gloves, T-shirts and other give-away items;
- Provides guidance to groups such as scouts, school clubs and businesses;
- Restores site to pre-event conditions.

Note: Keeping the sign-up sheets simple and quick prevents a bottleneck at the beginning of the cleanup.

The Flow of Volunteers

Since one-day cleanups create a “crush” of eager volunteers, it is helpful to have a progressive series of staging areas (or “ports”) to move them along.

Registration:

First, volunteers sign-in at the registration area where they receive supplies and are oriented to the cleanup. It is helpful to **post a map of the river and to display lists of “safety tips” and “what to do with the trash”** that volunteers can study while they’re waiting to board a boat.

Pre-Boarding Safety:

Second, volunteers are directed to a Pre-boarding Safety area on the high bank. This should be under a tent with a banner or flag where the Pre-Boarding Safety helper greets them and gets them ready to board the boats. **Volunteers are given instructions about the cleanup and are informed about safety issues. At this stage they are fitted with life jackets and divided into groups for boarding the boats.** Each group chooses a name for itself.

Dispatch Into Boats:

Third, when the volunteers are wearing life jackets and are in a named group, they are ready to be sent down to the river for boarding the boats. **At the ramp, the Dispatcher writes the name of each group and the number of its volunteers on a chart, and indicates the name of the boat operator with the time-of-departure and the time-of-return.** Our “dispatch” system requires that each boat operator returns with the same group that he or she took out on the river.

The volunteers generally work for 1 to 3 hours collecting trash before they’re picked up by the same boat that took them out. The small, loose trash is put in bags and these are piled with large debris in a spot next to the river that’s accessible by boat.

Volunteers typically return for a lunch provided by the cleanup organizers and then go home. After lunch, the people who want to keep working are designated into groups for the “trash haul.” These groups board boats to pick up the trash piled up along the river banks and haul it back to the central site for sorting and disposal.



Omaha/Council Bluffs Cleanup, NE & IA, 2007 Photo by Vicki Richmond

River Boss

“I can change the world with my own two hands; make a better place with my own two hands.”

-- Ben Harper, songwriter

The River Boss plans and oversees on-river activities for the cleanup – broadly defined as identifying trash sites, transporting the volunteers to and from trash sites, and hauling the trash to the central cleanup site.

The River Boss scouts the river prior to the cleanup to locate trash sites and identify potential difficulties. These sites are flagged with trash bags that are weighted with rocks. This information is compiled into maps that are given to the boat operators on the day of the cleanup.

The River Boss develops a boat plan for distributing volunteers to trash sites where they will collect trash and pile it along the shore. The plan also includes transporting volunteers back to the central site and, later, hauling all the collected trash for sorting and disposal. This planning is crucial for utilizing boats efficiently during the busiest hours of the cleanup.

The River Boss recruits the boat owners and operators to carry the volunteers and the trash. River Relief has developed good partnerships with government agencies such as the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Army Corps of Engineers and numerous other state agencies with responsibilities for wildlife and natural resources. Sometimes corporations and not-for-profit groups also have boats and proper insurance to help at river cleanups.

Generally, private boat owners do not have proper insurance to transport community volunteers. However, well-meaning individuals can bring a boatload of friends to help the cleanup team and River Relief can supply them with work gloves, water bottles, T-shirts, etc. and later haul the garbage at the end of the cleanup.

Usually, some boats take volunteers to trash sites and then pick them back up after an hour or so. These are the “clean” boats. Other boats are used for hauling the trash back to the central site. These boats can get quite dirty!

The River Boss ensures that each boat is equipped with **items required by the Coast Guard: Registration papers, a horn or whistle, a throwable life preserver, and a wearable life jacket for everyone in the boat. At night, navigation lights are required.**

Some additional items include a first aid kit, sunscreen, bug spray, drinking water, 2-way radios or cell phones, extra heavy-duty trash bags and snacks.

Useful tools include sledge hammers, digging shovels, scoop shovels, push brooms and pry bars. Five-gallon plastic buckets are easy-to-handle, puncture-proof items for carrying trash on shore.

The River Boss instructs all boat operators when to launch their boats prior to the start of volunteer registration. If the boat trailers can be parked together, it makes an impressive display for the news media.

The River Boss then conducts a boaters’ briefing to inform boat operators about safety measures for the volunteers and to instruct them on how the cleanup will unfold. The River Boss provides each boat operator with a map showing the designated reach of river where volunteers will be distributed.

Missouri River Relief has developed a “dispatch” system in order to keep track of the volunteers and the boats during a cleanup. Each group of volunteers chooses a name when they board a boat. This named group will be dropped off and picked up by the same boat and boat operators. This prevents confusion and ensures that everyone who goes out on the river also comes back.

Boat operators are in charge of the people in their boats and they should tell volunteers what to do to ensure a safe boat ride. **This may be the first time some volunteers have been in a small boat on a big river and they will appreciate a confident boat operator who tells them what to expect.** Some volunteers feel marooned when they disembark on shore during a cleanup.

Above all, plan and stress safety in all tasks. Have a system in place for dangerous items found during a cleanup. Keep a “sharps” container for hypodermic needles available at the cleanup headquarters. **Make safety a habit.**

River Boss Tasks

- Determines the reach of river and trash sites to be cleaned;
- Ensures availability of water, snacks, gloves, tools and trash bags (NOTE: Use heavy-duty bags);
- Arranges for a sufficient number of life jackets for the volunteers and ensures they're worn properly;
- Coordinates communication from boat-to-boat and between boats and shore using cell phones or 2-way radios;
- **Scouts the proposed cleanup areas and develops "trash maps" to show the location and general composition of the trash;**
- Flags trash sites prior to the event with weighted trash bags that are thrown on shore (be sure the volunteers fill this "flag" bag first);
- Briefs boat operators prior to the event: Tells them how the day will go, reviews safety issues, gives them maps showing the trash sites; answers questions;
- Provides morning coffee, juice, snacks and lunch for boat operators and fuel/oil for boats.
- **Keeps track of volunteers using a "dispatch system" so no one goes missing.**
- Provides a smooth transition from the Registration tent to the Pre-boarding site, establishes a safe waiting area for volunteers and then creates an orderly transfer to the boats.

Pre-boarding Safety

This area requires designated helpers who can prepare volunteers to board boats.

The helpers work above the boat landing to give a safety talk, fit volunteers with life jackets and organize them into groups for each boat. The volunteers go to the boats only when the boats are ready and the Dispatcher has called for a group.

Generally, volunteers will pick up trash for 1 to 3 hours on shore before the boat returns. They should be told to stay in contact with their group and watch out for each other (A good way is to implement the "buddy" system where people form pairs to keep track of each other). Volunteers are informed to wave both arms over their heads if they need assistance from a passing boat for any reason such as more trash bags, special tools, water or in case of an emergency.

Volunteers should be instructed to gather trash by bagging the small stuff, and collecting it in piles as close to the river as possible. This makes it easier for the trash-hauling crews

to work efficiently to collect all the garbage near the end of the cleanup.

We advise volunteers to **avoid over-filling the trash bags** and to **leave anything that can decompose naturally** such as wooden items or dead animals. Also, volunteers should **tell a cleanup crewmember about any dangerous or hazardous materials** such as hypodermic needles, propane tanks, unknown liquids, crime-scene materials and other questionable items.

A sample Volunteer Safety Briefing is included in Section III Appendices.

Pre-boarding Safety Tasks:

- Sets up Pre-boarding Safety area with tent, flags, signs, maps, life jackets, etc.;
- Welcomes the volunteers and orients them to the river;
- Tells volunteers what to expect, what to do and gives a safety talk;
- **Distributes life jackets and makes sure each volunteer is fitted properly. The Preboarding helper is responsible for the life-jacket inventory before and after the cleanup** (life jackets have a habit of walking away, so one person should be designated to keep track of them.);
- Arranges volunteers into groups for boarding boats according to boat capacity;
- Checks to ensure that each group has an individual name;
- Ensures availability of drinking water, work gloves, and trash bags;
- Breaks down the Pre-boarding area after the cleanup;
- Collects all life jackets.

Dispatcher

Works by the river where volunteers board the boats. This is an intense job and works best with an assistant. In a big cleanup, it's useful to have two dispatch teams with one taking the upstream reach and the other taking the downstream reach.

The Dispatcher finds out how many people can fit in each boat as it arrives at the boarding spot and then tells Pre-boarding Safety to send a group with that number of people down to the boat (two-way radios are useful here). The Dispatcher helps volunteers board the boats safely and also is responsible for implementing a tracking system to record when volunteers depart from and return to the boarding site (usually a boat ramp). These tasks really go smoothly when each Dispatcher has an assistant.

Dispatcher Tasks:

- Sets up boarding area for smooth and safe access by boats and volunteers;
- Coordinates with boat operators and Pre-boarding Safety helpers for a safe, efficient boarding process;
- Spot checks volunteers to make sure that life jackets are worn properly;
- **Implements a written tracking system for the volunteers to ensure that everyone who goes out also comes back;**
- Stores spare water, work gloves, trash bags and tools for distribution to boat drivers as needed.
- Assures that volunteer groups are properly recorded when they return and sees that volunteers remove life jackets when disembarking. The life jackets are returned to the Pre-boarding Safety helper for proper storage.
- Breaks down and cleans up the boarding area at the end of the cleanup.

Hint: Appoint one person with a cell phone to be group leader. Ask them to save the phone number of their boat driver for emergency purposes.

Omaha, NE Cleanup, 2007 Photo by Wayne Werkmeister



Kansas City Area Cleanup, LaBenite Park, Sugar Creek, MO Photo by Melanie Cheney

Land Boss

“Rivers are ribbons that tie us to the spirit of the land.”
-- Jeff Rennie

Sometimes volunteers prefer to work on land and the cleanup effort expands to land sites like roads, trails or known illegal dumps away from the river banks. In this case, the **Land Boss plans and oversees on-land activities for the cleanup** – broadly defined as finding the trash, transporting the volunteers to and from the trash sites, and hauling trash back to the central site.

The Land Boss coordinates people with vehicles and trailers to haul trash to the central site for sorting and disposal. Shuttle vehicles and drivers can be used to carry volunteers to distant trash sites. The Land Boss ensures volunteers have gloves, trash bags, water, snacks and tools.

The Land Boss scouts the areas of the trail, roads and land-accessible river sites to locate trash and identify potential dangers. This information can be compiled into a map that can be copied and given to truck drivers and volunteers on the day of the cleanup. **The Land Boss develops a plan for distributing volunteers to collect trash and deposit it in piles for collection later.** The plan should include parking for volunteers at distant trash sites.

The Land Boss implements a tracking system for volunteers so no one goes missing.

Typically, volunteers work for an hour or two bagging and piling trash near the road or river. A separate crew picks up the trash and brings it back to the central site for sorting and disposal.

Land Boss Tasks

- Determines land sites to be cleaned;
- Scouts the cleanup area and develops trash maps to show the location and composition of the trash;
- Flags trash sites with weighted trash bags prior to the event;
- Develops system so Registration can direct volunteers who prefer to work on land to the Land Crew;
- **Ensures availability of water, snacks, gloves, tools, trash bags (Note: Use heavy-duty trash bags);**
- Briefs volunteers and volunteer drivers prior to the event to tell them how the day will go, review safety issues and give them trash-site maps;
- Considers establishing a “tiger team” ready to go out to pick up difficult trash sites;
- Creates a system for communicating with drivers and volunteers off-site (cell-phones, 2-way radios, courier, etc.);
- Coordinates with Site Boss to provide a smooth transition from the registration area to the land cleanup staging area;
- Provides coffee, drinks, snacks and lunch for drivers and fuel/oil for vehicles;
- Ensures all trash along roads is picked up and site is restored to pre-event conditions.

NOTE: A land cleanup can be as small as collecting trash in the vicinity of the cleanup headquarters or picking up litter along the parking lot and nearby roads.



Old Plank Road Cleanup, Columbia, MO, 2007 Photo by Melanie Cheney



Hartsburg, MO Cleanup, 2008 Photo by Dory Colbert

Trash Boss

*“One man’s trash is another man’s treasure.”
-- Anonymous*

The Trash Boss is in charge of handling the trash when it arrives at the central site from boats and vehicles. A location must be determined for trash to be stored on-site and later removed for proper disposal.

The Trash Boss works with waste-disposal organizations to provide roll-off containers to store the trash collected during the cleanup. We suggest using low-sided containers that are easy to load by hand, unless you’re using equipment with front-end loaders. Recycling of aluminum, plastics, glass and scrap metal can be undertaken if recycling companies are willing to accept these materials.

Some materials require special handling. These include tires and appliances, and hazardous materials such as oil, batteries and chemicals. Keep a “sharps” container handy for hypodermic needles.

Trash Boss Tasks

- Ensures tools, equipment, water and work gloves are available for volunteers;
- Estimates amount and type of trash (recycling, landfill, appliances/scrap metal, tires, hazardous);
- Identifies local waste companies for each category and arranges for disposal (seek donated services);
- Identifies on-site handling and storage areas with the Site Boss;
- Oversees the placement of various dumpsters and trash bins on site;
- Coordinates disposal efforts on the day of the event;
- Arranges to move trash from the boats/vehicles to disposal site (trucks, front-end loaders, etc.);
- **Develops communication and safety systems for the work sites;**
- Ensures final removal of trash from the site;
- Makes sure disposal site is cleaned to its pre-cleanup condition.

Boat Unloading

One person should take charge of the area where trash-laden boats are unloaded. **This is a crucial and potentially dangerous spot that needs constant supervision.** Ideally,

the work area should be marked off with ribbons or tape so that only cleanup workers are allowed there. Once the trash is unloaded, it must be moved to the trash disposal area.

It helps to have motorized equipment to move the materials (a truck-and-trailer, a skid-steer or a front-end loader). Communication and safety systems must be developed and adhered to – volunteers working close to heavy machinery should wear hard hats and ear/eye protection.

Boat Unloading Tasks:

- Ensures that workers wear sturdy shoes and work gloves;
- Coordinates volunteers and trash-moving equipment to move trash from boats to disposal site;
- Ensures availability of drinking water, work gloves and tools on site;
- If heavy machinery is used, ensures volunteers wear hard-hats, wear ear/eye protection and use safety procedures;
- Makes sure unloading areas are swept clean at the end of the cleanup.

Recycling

In some places, haulers are reluctant to take river-ravaged recyclables but if you can recycle the trash many people are excited to help sort it into categories.

The Trash Boss identifies a smooth, flat spot where trash can be sorted. Entry should be prohibited to anyone but workers.

This is a potentially dangerous area so safety procedures should be followed by all workers. **The Trash Boss oversees the sorting process and teaches volunteers how the system works, especially if aluminum, plastic and glass are being recycled.** The recycling system generally varies from event to event based on the type of bins, bags or vehicles involved. (Hint: five-gallon buckets work well for sorting trash and carrying a reasonable load to bins).

Recycling Tasks:

- Uses caution tape to mark off trash sorting areas and keep out curious onlookers;
- Develops safety and communications procedures;
- **Ensures workers wear sturdy shoes and work gloves;**
- Coordinates with Unloading helper to move trash from boats to disposal site;
- Works with volunteers to sort trash and temporarily store it on site in bins, bags or piles;
- Ensures drinking water, work gloves and tools on site;
- Makes sure trash areas are swept clean at the end of the cleanup.

Note: Volunteer workers should be encouraged to work slowly and carefully!

Hartsburg, MO Cleanup, 2008 Photo by Dory Colbert



Heavy Equipment Communications:

A specific worker should be assigned to work closely with the heavy-equipment operator to help with movements, travel lanes and loading.

Heavy-equipment operators should shout “Clear” to warn bystanders before moving the machine. Volunteers should repeat “Clear” to let the operator know they heard the command.

Heavy-equipment operators should shout “Secure” when the machine has stopped moving. Volunteers should repeat “Secure” to let the operator know they heard the command.



Washington, MO Cleanup, 2004 Photo by Dory Colbert

Section III: Appendices

Coopers Landing, MO Cleanup, 2005 Photo by Dory Colbert



Yankton, SD Cleanup, 2009 Photo by Dave Stous



Mari-Osa Dump Cleanup, Loose Creek, MO, 2009 Photo by Dylan Lehrbaum

River Relief Connects People To The River

Missouri River Relief is a grassroots, equipment-based organization dedicated to connecting people to the Missouri River through hands-on river cleanups, education events and stewardship activities.

River Relief emerged from a group of people in mid-Missouri who simultaneously recognized the need for active stewardship of the Missouri River and the desire of people to take part in watershed solutions. Inspired by a video of Chad Pregracke's Living Lands & Waters river cleanup crew, this group in central Missouri put together a coalition of public and private organizations along with individual citizens to bring Chad's "garbage" barge up the river to Easley, Missouri, holding the first massive Missouri River cleanup on Oct. 6, 2001.

Since that effort, River Relief has become a 501(c)3, not-for-profit organization that has grown continuously in capability and expertise. Each year, through generous contributions from our corporate and government sponsors, we have expanded our equipment fleet to include four boats, a passenger van and three trucks that we fill with tools, trash bags, life jackets and camping gear for our volunteer crew. **In the first nine years, we've hosted 55 river cleanups that have inspired more than 12,000 volunteers to clean up 538 tons of trash from 588 river miles.**

In addition to our own events, we use our equipment and people to support cleanups and educational efforts throughout the region. We've convoyed these so-called "Away Teams" to 32 cleanups in six states ranging from Yankton, South Dakota, down to the confluence of the Mississippi River near St. Louis.

We place an emphasis each year on training a "core crew" of dedicated volunteers who travel throughout the Missouri River valley and put on events. **There are now around 40 "core" crewmembers who can be counted on to work throughout the year.** They are trained in river safety, boat operations, equipment handling and all aspects of putting on a public cleanup or educational event.

River cleanups accomplish a few crucial things: They bring people to the river, often for the first time, and showcase an incredible natural resource that is often overlooked or neglected. **Cleanups teach about the problem of solid waste on our rivers while bringing people together to accomplish something tangible.**

River Relief quickly realized broader education is a key component to solving our watershed problems and so we began hosting Watershed Festivals. **Since 2002, River Relief has sponsored 20 events that have brought together corporate, scientific, agency and non-profit experts to teach more than 10,700 students at outdoor learning festivals** right where it matters most—on the shores of the Missouri River, one of the world's largest river systems.

Missouri River Relief continues to broaden connections with other groups by hosting lectures and presentations, conducting tree plantings and habitat restoration, helping at river races, and taking groups on the river for education and training.

For more information call 573.443.0292 or email riverrelief@riverrelief.org



www.riverrelief.org

Volunteer Safety Briefing

1. You will be brought to a reach of river to pickup up trash for about **2-3 hours by an experienced boat operator.**
2. They are responsible for dropping you off, and **the same operator** will be picking you up.
3. Be safe.
4. Listen to your captain.
5. Keep your **hands and arms in the boat** at all times! Especially when alongside another boat, dock or barge.
6. **Stay seated** while the boat is in motion and until your **captain says it's ok** to stand!
7. Make sure your **life jacket** is buckled and snug.
 - have it on before you get on the boat
 - when you reach your destination, make sure to return it to the boat so others can use it.
8. The banks can be really slick! So **watch your footing** and stay out of the water!
9. Have the **proper attire**: water, hat, gloves, sunscreen, long pants (watch out for poison ivy and stinging nettles!) boots and shoes. No flip-flops on the river.
10. **Partner up** and watch out for each other. Take breaks, drink lots of water and **reassemble every half hour.**
11. If **railroad tracks** are in the vicinity, it is illegal to walk on or beside the tracks. Don't walk or leave trash bags on or near railroad tracks; that will cause the railroad company to investigate and trains could be stopped as a result.
12. All volunteers need to **be aware of dangerous objects** such as broken glass, rocky outcrops, syringes, etc. Gloves are provided and should be worn. Questionable objects should be brought to a cleanup leaders or your boat operators attention. Hazardous materials such as tires, household waste, paint cans, gas tanks, freon, and car batteries must be disposed of separately.
13. **Do not overfill bags**, as we will be going out to pick them up later. No dead or organic trash. Carry extra bags with you, tie them to your waist or stuff them in your pocket.
14. **Slow Down Before You Throw Down!** Take your time and be safe. This isn't a race, it's just picking up trash. Team up on anything that is too heavy and pay attention to who's around you when moving dangerous items.
15. Pile bags, metal, appliances, and tires in a **central area on the bank where our boats can get to it.** If requested, we can provide shovels, pry bars and other special tools to assist with difficult items.
16. If you are **in distress or need serious help at any time, wave both hands in the air** like so... and a boat will come for you. Report any injuries to cleanup leaders ASAP so they can be attended to. We are trained in First Aid.
17. **Search the high bank and weeds for trash** as the more floatable items are often hiding up there. **Leave all wildlife alone.** (Snakes often like to live in dirt-filled tires or refrigerators, so beware!)
18. We will bring you back for lunch around noon.
19. It's a great day to be out on the river! Have fun!

Missouri River Relief Lifejacket Protocol

- Lifejackets or Personal Flotation Devices (PFDs) primarily come in two sizes, S/M and L/XL. We have very few children's sized jackets.
- Use Missouri River Relief lifejackets before using those loaned to us by others.
- After volunteers have donned lifejackets, please tug on the straps to make sure they are secure.
- If jackets are loose, please pull on the straps to make them fit properly. If jackets are loose, one side can be pushed behind the other and the jacket tightened.
- **Lifejackets are to be worn in all boats at all times.**
- Instruct volunteers to leave PFDs in boat. **IF** a volunteer is uncomfortable with removing the PFD, allow them to keep PDF on. We want our volunteers to feel safe and comfortable.
- If working on a barge, lifejackets are to be worn at all times.

Sample Safety Poster

Safety Poster should contain the information shown and be large, at least 11 x 17 size. Hang the safety posters at the Sign-in, Safety and Boat-Loading areas so that the messages are reinforced.



Stay seated *...and listen to your captain!*

Hands in the boat

Only fill bags half full

Where's your team?
who's your buddy?

My vest on my body
when in the boat

Emergency wave
both hands over your head

and... enjoy the river!

SAFETY

and remember... when handling trash

Slow down
before you throw down!!!



Ramp Dispatch Log Sheet

Event: _____

Place: _____

Date: _____

Sheet #	Reach	Boat Operator Name & Cell Phone Number	Group Name	Number on board	Time Out	Time In
1						
A						
B						
C						
2						
A						
B						
C						
3						
A						
B						
C						



P.O. Box 463 Columbia, MO 65205
 573.443.0292
riverrelief@riverrelief.org
www.riverrelief.org

Event: Confluence River Cleanup

Place: Columbia Bottom Conservation Area

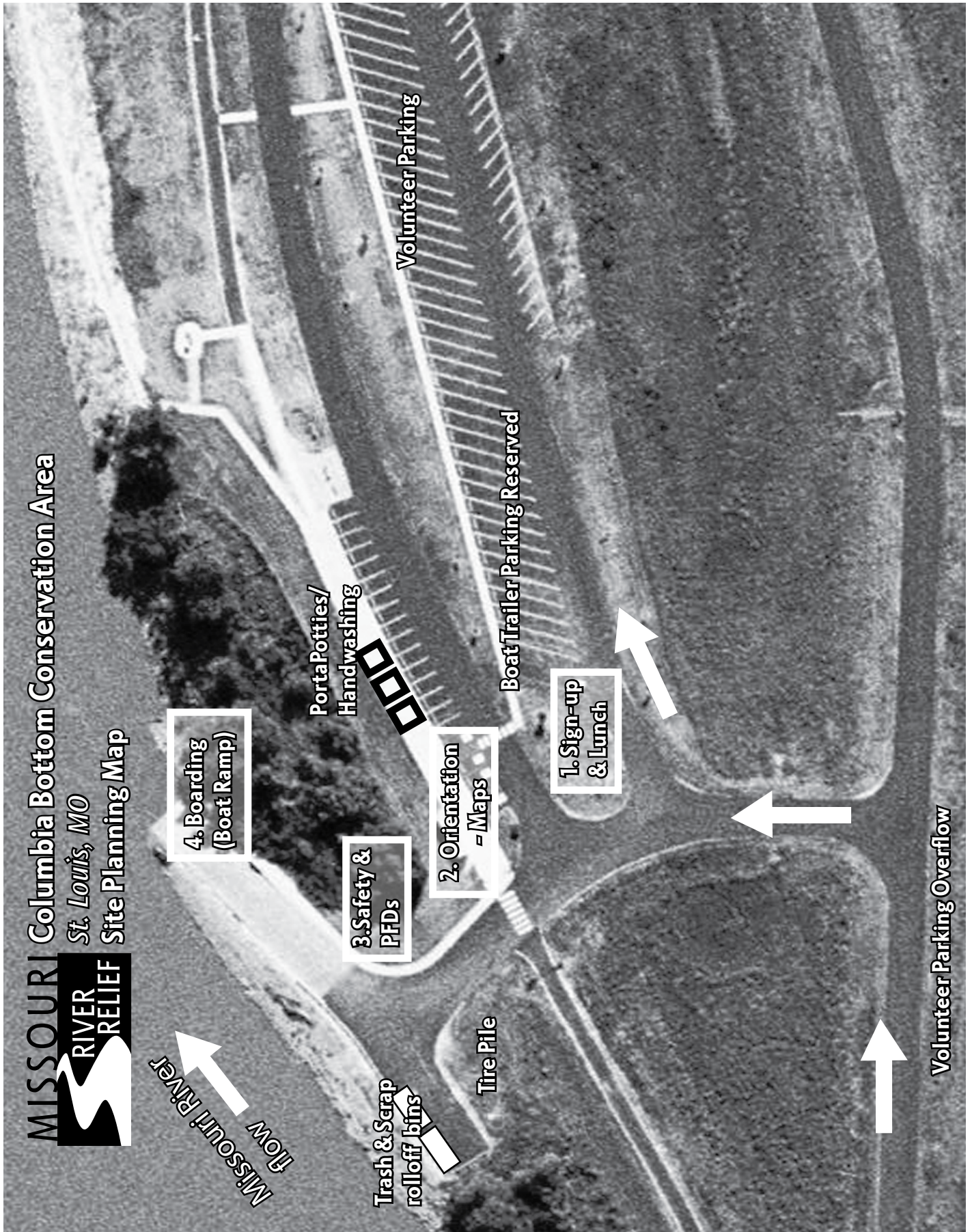
Date: MM/DD/YYYY

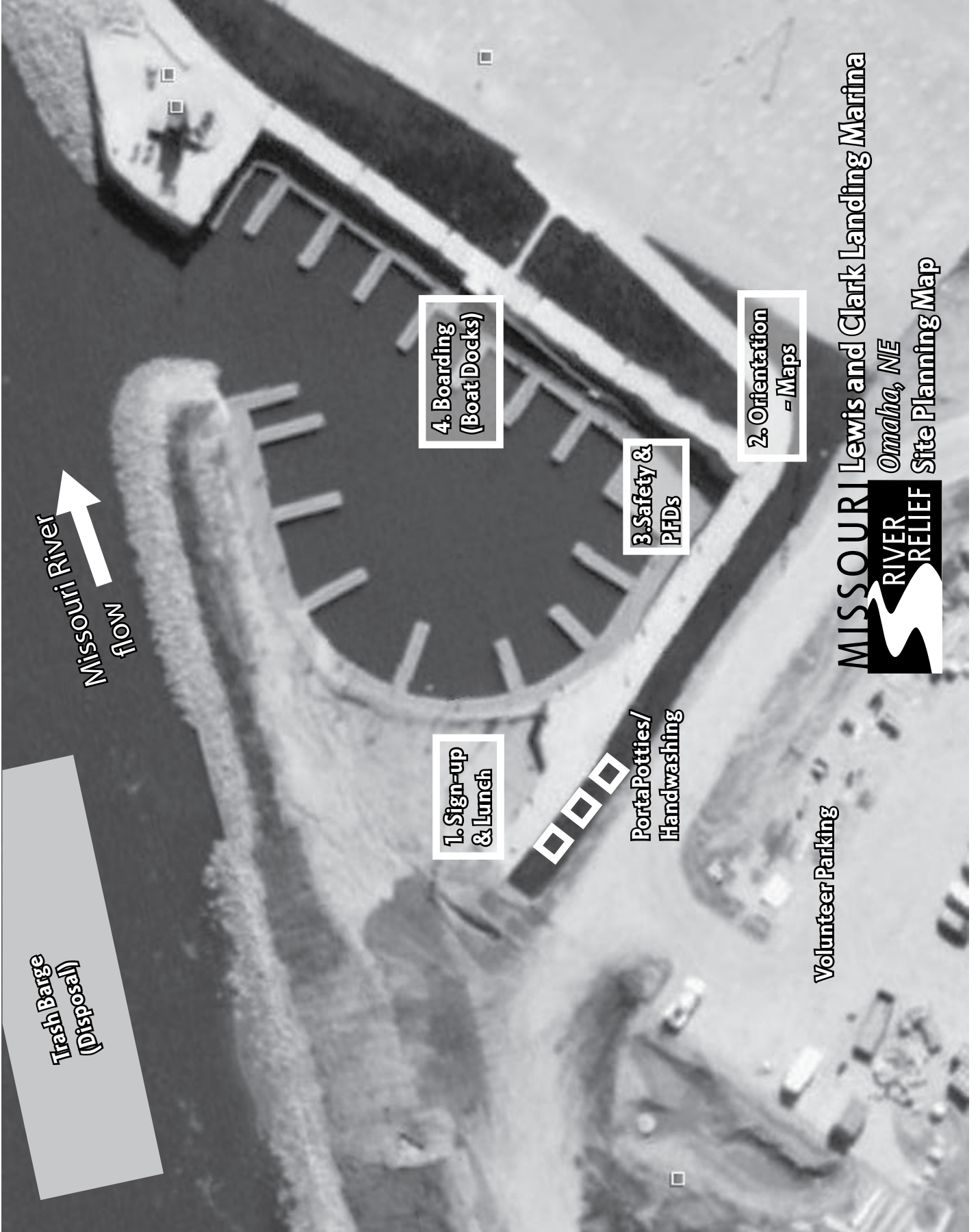
Sheet #	Reach	Boat Operator Name & Cell Phone Number	Group Name	Number on board	Time Out	Time In
1	River Left - Mile 1 - 2	George Boatoperator (123) 456-7890				
A			The Trash Pirates	7	9:14	
B			Troop 182	8	9:22	
C						
2	River Right - Mile 1 - 2	Joe Boatcaptain (123) 456-7890				
A			River Trash	8	9:15	
B			Flying Carp Crew	7	9:24	
C						
3	River Left - Mile 3	Jodi Boatskipper (123) 456-7890				
A			The River Rats	11	9:17	
B						
C						

Filling out Ramp Dispatch Log Sheet

HINT: We use legal size paper for sign-up forms in order to have more space.

Site Map Examples





**Trash Barge
(Disposal)**

**Missouri River
flow**

**1. Sign-up
& Lunch**

**4. Boarding
(Boat Docks)**

**PortaPotties/
Handwashing**

**3. Safety &
PFDs**

**2. Orientation
- Maps**

Volunteer Parking

MISSOURI RIVER RELIEF
Omaha, NE
Site Planning Map

Boat Operator Sign-up Sheet

Event: _____

Place: _____

Date: _____

Name	Agency & Address	City	State	Zip
Email	Office Phone On-the-River Cell Phone		Supervisor	
Name	Agency & Address	City	State	Zip
Email	Office Phone On-the-River Cell Phone		Supervisor	
Name	Agency & Address	City	State	Zip
Email	Office Phone On-the-River Cell Phone		Supervisor	
Name	Agency & Address	City	State	Zip
Email	Office Phone On-the-River Cell Phone		Supervisor	

Boat Operator Briefing

Here is an example of the information that should be given to boat operators before a cleanup begins.

Purpose:

Provide a safe and enjoyable experience for volunteers on the river, so they gain an appreciation of the river and assist in cleaning it up.

It is also a great opportunity to teach them about the river, our organizations and to promote resource conservation in general.

Key words are: “Safety First”, “Enjoy the Experience” and “Learn”. Cleaning trash is just a vehicle for accomplishing these things while doing a positive thing for the river.

Logistics:

- Each boat will be assigned a reach of river to bring volunteers too.
- You will be given a map showing the river and your reach.
- You will likely be given 2-3 sets of volunteers to dispatch to your reach of river. Each group will be given a name and it, along with number of folks in the group will be recorded at the ramp. It is your responsibility to get that group out and back safely.

- Each group will be out an average of 2 hours. Have them back for lunch.
- Concentrations of trash have been flagged with red or blue bags. Bring volunteers there, then be creative about where you drop off others along your reach.
- Have volunteers collect trash and bring it to central locations along the river bank where we can pick it up later. Please instruct them to fill only half way and make sure trash is visible from the river.
- Bring extra bags, gloves, buckets, water and tools and disperse as needed.
- Keep life jackets with your boat.

Safety Tips:

- Life jackets worn snugly at all times on the water.
- Hands and arms off the gunwales.
- If you take someone out on the river, only you bring them back
- Be sure kids have adult supervision.
- Have first aid kit aboard.
- Stay clear of river hazards, especially upstream of dikes and drift piles.
- No flip-flops allowed, sturdy shoes only.

Help make this cleanup an enjoyable and informative experience!



Omaha, NE Cleanup, 2007 Photo by Vicki Richmond

Group Sign-up Sheet

Event: _____

Place: _____

Date: _____

Group Name	#	Contact Person & Phone #	City, State	E-mail

Individual Sign-up Sheet

Event: _____

Place: _____

Date: _____

Name (please print)	Address	Phone	Email	Stream Team #

Contests and Awards

Cleanup organizers should consider staging a “Trash Contest.” We always have fun with this type of activity and a contest engages the cleanup volunteers as they start to look more closely at the items they find along the river banks. Any kind of contest is especially interesting to children and even adults are motivated when prizes are awarded for different categories.

The lunch break is a good opportunity to provide a trash awards ceremony and this activity encourages volunteers to hang around and mingle. Cleanup sponsors can receive recognition for their support and they often provide valuable prizes for contest winners.

The categories can be a standard variety such as Weirdest Trash and Most-Valuable Trash but we usually invent categories based on the amazing finds that volunteers bring back from the river cleanup. There are no hard and fast rules, except be sure to let people know about the trash contest before they start cleaning up and give the trash-contest judges the final authority in awarding the winners.

NOTE: A message in a bottle always deserves to win an award!

Trash Contest, Coopers Landing, MO, 2004 Photo by Dory Colbert



Mari-Osa Dump Cleanup, Loose Creek, MO, 2009 Photo by Melanie Cheney



Trash Contest, Coopers Landing, MO, 2004 Photo by Dory Colbert

Git That Garbage!

r
a
s
h



AWARD

Categories

o
n
t
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t



- Best Darned Find of the Day
- Weirdest Trash
- Oldest Trash
- Most Useful Trash
- Message in a Bottle
- Tackiest Trash
- Trash Most Resembling ...
- Biggest Piece of Trash
- The Down and Dirty Award
- *or...whatever else we come up with!*



News Releases & Community Calendars

Newspaper, Radio and Television Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE DD/MM/YYYY

Event:

Date:

Time:

Place:

Media Contact: (your group's contact person)

Phone: (Number)

E-mail: (Address)

Website: (If available)

Short blurb with event information including, who, what, where, when and how.

Online and Community Calendar Item

"Local Group Cleanup at the Place of Event"

Event:

Date:

Time:

Place:

Description: Lend your volunteer muscle to cleanup (your river here).

Register online at (www.if-available.org) or at the boat ramp the morning of the cleanup.

Questions? Contact (your contact name) at (phone number) or (email).

Hint: Follow up press releases with phone calls to media outlets. Send photos or other intriguing information.



MegaScout 340-Mile Trash Survey, 2006 Photo by Charlotte Overby

Request for Donations Letter

“Boundaries don’t protect the rivers, people do.”
–Aristotle

DD/MM/YYYY

Attn: (Business)

Your Group Name is a grassroots, volunteer based 501©3 non-profit organization headquartered in Columbia, MO.

Explain your mission and cleanup plan. This is what we use for Missouri River Relief:

Our mission is to connect people to the river through hands-on stewardship and educational activities. In the last eight years, we have brought over 10,000 volunteers to the river to pick up over 470 tons of trash from 517 miles of this precious resource.

On April 18th we are hosting the Rocheport Bend Day of Caring. Volunteers from the community will be working on planting natives, invasive species removal and cleanup activities. We would like to request a food donation to help feed our hard working volunteers lunch for these two events. A \$200 food card would be extremely helpful.

We thank our sponsors & contributors on post event write-ups and post them on our website. (Business) has generously supported our cause with these types of donations in the past, and we thank you for all your support.

For your records, our state tax identification number is 12-34567.

Thank you for your consideration,

Your name
Your Group



Washington, MO Cleanup, 2004 Photo by Mike Smith

Cleanup Assignment Check List

Task	Assignment	Check
Pre Clean Up Coordination		
Volunteer reminder		
Agency boats reminder		
Press conference and boat rides		
Tee shirts		
Crew sign up/schedule		
Prepare scouting maps		
Equipment and Supplies Mobilization		
Scout		
Lunch		
Reminder to Disposal companies		
Place Dumpsters		
Volunteer facilities (porta potties, water, etc.)		
Clean up Day		
Boats		
Launch boats		
Captains sign in		
Captains meeting		
Set up		
Signs		
Parking		
Prepare stations (sign in tent, table, etc)		
Water		
Volunteer lunch		
Task assignments		
Boat operator coordination		
Sign in		
Orientation		
Photographer		
Media ambassador		
First Aid		
Safety		
Lifejacket checks		
Ramp		
Ramp Supervisor		
Prep ramp supplies (tools, lifejackets, trashbags, etc.)		
Dispatch		
Boarding		
Return		
Trash coordinator		
Heavy equipment operator		
Loader safety officer		
Trash tally		
Post Clean Up		
Break camp		
Demobilization equipment		
Coordinate trash removal		
Post trash talley		
Thank you notes		
Request and coordinate event photographs		
Final report		

Confluence Cleanup, St. Louis MO, 2005 Photo by Dory Colbert



Trash Contest, Coopers Landing, MO, 2005 Photo by Dory Colbert

Cleanup Planning Time Line

Time Prior to Event	Task	Check
Preliminary		
12 to 18 months	Identify event location and river access	<input type="checkbox"/>
12 to 15 months	Preliminary schedule	<input type="checkbox"/>
12 months	Confirm schedule	<input type="checkbox"/>
12 months	Confirm cleanup location	<input type="checkbox"/>
12 months	Circulate event announcement	<input type="checkbox"/>
Event planning		
12 to 14 months	Budget	<input type="checkbox"/>
12 months	Press release	<input type="checkbox"/>
12 months	Publish schedule	<input type="checkbox"/>
Solicit funds		
12 months	Event fund raising and in kind services	<input type="checkbox"/>
Volunteer recruitment		
12 months	Write up for web site	<input type="checkbox"/>
12 months	Newsletters to other organizations	<input type="checkbox"/>
12 months	Press conference	<input type="checkbox"/>
9 months	Press contact and reminder	<input type="checkbox"/>
6 months	Press contact and reminder	<input type="checkbox"/>
6 months	Web update	<input type="checkbox"/>
3 months	Press contact and reminder	<input type="checkbox"/>
1 month	Press contact and boat ride	<input type="checkbox"/>
Order materials and services		
2 months	Banners	<input type="checkbox"/>
2 months	Flyer	<input type="checkbox"/>
2 months	Tee-shirts	<input type="checkbox"/>
2 months	Tables, chairs	<input type="checkbox"/>
2 months	Tents	<input type="checkbox"/>
2 months	Water	<input type="checkbox"/>
2 months	Porta-potties	<input type="checkbox"/>
2 months	Hand wash stations	<input type="checkbox"/>
Volunteer Coordination		
1 to 12 months	Volunteer signup	<input type="checkbox"/>
1 to 12 months	Thank you / confirmation	<input type="checkbox"/>
2 weeks	Send reminder	<input type="checkbox"/>
6 to 12 months	Local groups	<input type="checkbox"/>
2 months	Plan Volunteer lunch	<input type="checkbox"/>
2 to 4 months	Other	<input type="checkbox"/>
Plan Trash Disposal		
2 months	Scrap	<input type="checkbox"/>
2 months	Tires	<input type="checkbox"/>
2 months	Recycle	<input type="checkbox"/>
2 months	Landfill	<input type="checkbox"/>
Equipment - obtain commitments		
12 months	Agency boats	<input type="checkbox"/>
8 to 10 months	Agency boats - contact	<input type="checkbox"/>
6 months	Agency boats - reminder	<input type="checkbox"/>
3 months	Agency boats - reminder	<input type="checkbox"/>
1 month	Agency boats - reminder	<input type="checkbox"/>
1 month	Scouting maps	<input type="checkbox"/>

Time Prior to Event

Task

Check

Event Mobilization

Confirm services and receive materials

2 weeks	Banners	
2 weeks	Flyer	
2 weeks	Tee-shirts	
2 weeks	Tables, chairs	
2 weeks	Tents	
2 weeks	Water	
2 weeks	Porta-potties	
2 weeks	Hand wash stations	
2 weeks	Send volunteer reminder (email)	



Confluence Cleanup, St. Louis, MO, 2005 Photo by Tim Cheney

Sample Trash Tally Sheet

Note: People will ask about what is pulled from a river during a cleanup.

Bags of Trash



Tires

on rim:



w/o rim:



Bicycles

parts:

Chunks of Styrofoam



Coolers

5 gallon Plastic Buckets

55 gallon Metal Drums

55 gallon Plastic Barrels

Appliance

Refrigerators

Washers

Driers

Hot Water Heaters

Chest Freezers

Propane tanks

Other

Furniture

Mattresses



Boxsprings

Bedframes

Couches

Chairs

Folding chairs

Other (describe)

Car Parts (describe)

Construction Materials

Shingles

Carpet

Other (describe)

Personal Items (describe)

Clothes

Toys



Other

Assorted Metal (describe)

Other Odds & Ends

Electronics

Camping/Hunting Goods

Tarps

Tents

Tent poles

Other:



Cooper's Landing, MO, Cleanup, 2007 Photo by Melanie Cheney

Tonnage Estimate Guide

Missouri River Relief Tonnage Estimates

1 ton = 2,000 pounds

(if these seem high to you, that's because they're usually full of mud!)

1 small to medium trash bag	20 lbs.
1 large contractor grade bag	40 lbs.
1 car tire	30 lbs.
1 truck tire	50 lbs.
1 large tractor tire	200 lbs.
1 canoe full of trash	100-200 lbs.
1 motor boat full	200-400 lbs.
1 pickup truck load	200-400 lbs.
1 fully-loaded dump truck	1-2,000 lbs.
1 30-yard roll off dumpster	4-6,000 lbs.
1 40-yard roll off dumpster	8-10,000 lbs.
Fully-loaded Garbage Truck	16,000 lbs.

Miscellaneous but commonly found items:

55 gallon Plastic Drum	30-40 lbs.
55 gallon Metal Drum	40-50 lbs.
Navigation Buoy	300 lbs.
Car Battery	40 lbs.
White Goods (refrigerators, washing machines, water heaters, etc.)	125 lbs. per cubic yard
Small Propane Tank (2.4 gal.)	15 lbs.
Shopping Cart	50-60 lbs.
1 Bag o' Balls	5 lbs.
<i>(you will find many run away balls on a river cleanup)</i>	
1 Five-gallon Bucket	.05-1 lb.

Sign That Really Has Something To Say... Worth it's weight in gold!



Mari-Osa Dump Cleanup, Loose Creek, MO, 2008 Photo by Melanie Cheney

Liability Release

PARTICIPANT CONSENT, WAIVER AND RELEASE FROM LIABILITY YOUR EVENT NAME

I acknowledge that participating in a YOUR EVENT ORGANIZERS clean up event, a barge visitation event, related activities and other YOUR EVENT ORGANIZERS events (referred to as the "Event") involves an above average risk of personal injury to me and my property, and I knowingly and voluntarily agree to the terms and conditions outlined in this CONSENT, WAIVER AND RELEASE FROM LIABILITY. In consideration and exchange for being permitted to participate in this event, I agree to the following:

I am over eighteen (18) years of age, in good health and have no physical conditions that affect my ability to participate in the Event and have not been advised otherwise by a medical practitioner. I am covered by medical insurance, individually or as part of an organization. I agree that before I participate in any portion of the Event, I will inspect the related facilities, site, and equipment. I will immediately advise Event personnel of any unsafe condition that I observe. I will refuse to participate in the Event until all unsafe conditions have been remedied. I will abide by any safety guidelines made available to me. I consent to the use and publication of my name and image in all forms of media while participating in the Event.

I assume full responsibility for all risks associated with my participation in the Event and the risk of injury or damage caused by the condition of any property, facilities, or equipment used during the Event, which may not be foreseeable by anyone at any time. I hereby release, waive, discharge and agree not to sue the participants in the Event, YOUR EVENT ORGANIZERS (an Iowa nonprofit corporation) and other Event sponsors or organizers, along with their parent companies, affiliates, and their successors and assigns (collectively referred to as the "Companies"), their respective employees, shareholders, members, officers, directors, agents, or volunteers for and from any injuries, death, losses, damages, liabilities, or expenses that are caused or alleged to be caused by their negligent acts or omissions, or the condition of the property, facilities or equipment used for the Event.

I agree to indemnify, defend, and hold harmless all participants in the Event and the Companies and their employees, shareholders, members, officers, directors, agents, and volunteers from and against any claims, causes of action, damages, judgments, liabilities, fees (including attorney's fees), costs and expenses incurred by Companies as a result of my unlawful actions or failures to act during the Event.

I agree to wear appropriate safety equipment, as may be established by industry or community standards and common safety practices, during all activities and competitions at the Event. In connection with any injury or other medical conditions I may experience during the Event, I authorize medical treatment deemed necessary by medical personnel if I am not able to act on my own behalf. I agree not to sue any applicable medical practitioners who may provide medical treatment to me for malpractice.

This waiver and release is a legally binding agreement and will be construed broadly to provide a waiver and release to the maximum extent permissible under applicable law. Any provisions found to be void or unenforceable shall be severed from this agreement, and not affect the validity or enforceability of any other provisions. The provisions of this agreement shall apply to the current Event and to any future Event.

I hereby release, waive, discharge and agree not to sue YOUR EVENT ORGANIZERS and other Event sponsors or organizers, and their affiliates, successors, assigns, employees, shareholders, members, officers, directors, agents, for and from any injuries, death, losses, damages, liabilities, or expenses that are caused or alleged to be caused by their negligent acts or omissions, or the condition of the property, facilities or equipment, related to the Event.

I agree that if there should ever be a dispute of any kind between me and YOUR EVENT ORGANIZERS or other Event sponsors or organizers then any such dispute will be decided by binding arbitration pursuant to Iowa Code Chapter 679 and the rules of the American Arbitration Association and that any and all legal proceedings shall take place only in Davenport, Scott County, Iowa. This agreement shall be enforced and construed according to the laws of the state of Iowa.

I HAVE READ THIS DOCUMENT AND I UNDERSTAND ITS CONTENT. I UNDERSTAND THAT BY SIGNING BELOW, I HAVE GIVEN UP SUBSTANTIAL RIGHTS. I HAVE VOLUNTARILY SIGNED THIS RELEASE. I AGREE THIS DOCUMENT IS NOT ONLY BINDING ON ME BUT WILL ALSO BE BINDING UPON MY PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVES, EXECUTORS, HEIRS AND NEXT OF KIN.

Signature of Participant	Date
Printed Name	Address
Phone	Email

PARENT or GUARDIAN CONSENT (If participant is under age 18): I am the parent or legal guardian of the participant and I agree that the foregoing agreement shall be binding on me and the minor participant.

Signature of Participant's Parent of Guardian	Date
Printed Name	Address

Contact Sources & Useful Web Links

A sample of sources to assist with local cleanup efforts.

Further research will be needed to find information for your state or community.

Missouri River Relief

Website: <http://www.riverrelief.org>

See our “River Links” page for more links to organizations and information.

Columbia Office: (573) 443-0292

Email: riverrelief@riverrelief.org

Lower Reach Program Manager:

Steve Schnarr (573) 289-2077

Middle Reach Program Manager:

Vicki Richmond (816) 812-5166

Email: vicki@riverrelief.org

Living Lands & Waters

The industrial strength river cleanup crew.

17624 Route 84 North

East Moline, Illinois 61244

(309) 496-9848

<http://www.livinglandsandwaters.org/>

Missouri Stream Team

A model of public/private/volunteer stream stewardship that offers resources and training for stream stewardship groups.

Stream Team Program (voice mailbox)

1-800-781-1989

Email: streamteam@mdc.mo.gov

Website: <http://www.mostreamteam.org/>

Missouri Department of Natural Resources

Solid Waste Management Program

1-800-361-4827

Email: swmp@dnr.mo.gov

Website: <http://www.dnr.mo.gov/>

Scrap Tire Reimbursement Program:

<http://www.dnr.mo.gov/ENV/swmp/tires/tirecost.htm>

Missouri State Water Patrol

Boater Safety Information

(573) 751-3333

E-mail: boatinfo@mswp.dps.mo.gov

Website: <http://www.mswp.dps.mo.gov/>

Missouri River Charts

Missouri River charts and useful information are available from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. As of June 2009, charts are being updated & reviewed and are not yet available. Navigation charts from 1991 are currently available on their website:

<http://www.nwk.usace.army.mil/RiverCharts/>

Other Helpful Links:

National Weather Service:

Weather & River Forecasts

<http://www.weather.gov/ahps/>

Missouri River Basin Forecasts:

National Weather Service

<http://www.crh.noaa.gov/ahps2/glance.php?wfo=eax&gag e=kcdm7&riverid=203276&view=1,1,1,1,1>

United States Geological Survey:

National Water Information Systems Real-time Data

<http://waterdata.usgs.gov/nwis>

Lewis and Clark Heritage Trail Foundation:

<http://www.lewisandclark.org/>

American Rivers:

American Rivers has great resources for organizations organizing river cleanups.

<http://www.americanrivers.org/>

Missouri Watershed Information Network:

<http://www.mowin.org/>

Environmental Protection Agency:

<http://www.epa.gov/water/>

River Network: <http://www.rivernetwork.org/>

RiverKeeper: <http://www.riverkeeper.org/>



MISSOURI
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RELIEF

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