

## Organizing Your Own Cleanup!

*"It's the fact that each community is taking action to protect our shared Ottawa River that will keep this mighty river healthy and vibrant for all." - Meredith Brown, Riverkeeper*

### Choosing a location for your shoreline cleanup

Your site could be a local stream or an entire lake shoreline near you. It's up to your cleanup organizing team! Find a location within your community. Looking for a suggestion? Contact Ottawa Riverkeeper and we can put you in contact with a local Riverkeeper.

### Inform your municipality of the cleanup

Your municipality may have initiatives in place to assist you in cleaning up your community during the spring and the fall seasons. They may offer cleanup supplies (such as garbage bags, gloves, etc.), prizes and BBQs (depending on the municipality). *Contact your municipality to find out what's being offered to you.*

Register online for the following municipalities for supplies.

Ottawa: [www.ottawa.ca/clean](http://www.ottawa.ca/clean)

Gatineau: [http://www.gatineau.ca/portail/default.aspx?p=environnement/grand\\_menage](http://www.gatineau.ca/portail/default.aspx?p=environnement/grand_menage)



### Register on Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup (<http://www.shorelinecleanup.ca/>)

Create your free account today and in return you will receive resources (information on importance of shoreline cleanup), liability waivers and tools to better organize a safe and successful cleanup in your community. Once you register your event, the website can also serve as a recruitment tool to get more helpers the day of the shoreline cleanup. The Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup (GCSC) website also helps you determine if there are other cleanups planned in your desired area on the chosen date.

### Getting ready for the shoreline cleanup

- Once you've informed your municipality and registered with the GCSC, send the information to a member of the Ottawa Riverkeeper team (call 613-321-1120, or email: [info@ottawariverkeeper.ca](mailto:info@ottawariverkeeper.ca)). We promote it on our website and on social media which may result in greater public participation and awareness of the event.
- Share the event information within your social network and encourage people to come out and join you!
- Get familiar with the emergency protocol for shoreline cleanups (including what to do with sharp objects and needles). The online GCSC guide will provide helpful practices based on lots of experience.
- Arrange how to dispose of the collected litter and recycling by calling your local municipality (3-1-1 within the National Capital Region and Gatineau). Organize this at least a week prior to the shoreline cleanup.

*Defending the Ottawa River. Protecting our Communities.  
À la défense de la rivière des Outaouais. Pour la protection de nos communautés.*



### Checklist (before the event)

- Do you have the supplies for the cleanup (including gloves, different coloured bags for garbage, recycling & compost, containers & tongs for sharps, etc.)?
- Have you printed the liability waivers for everyone participating in cleanup (provided by Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup or the City of Gatineau)?
- Has every participant also signed the Ottawa Riverkeeper labelled sign-up sheet and photo waiver form? (which asks if they would like to receive the newsletter)?
- Are you planning on hosting a BBQ (and all logistics related to this)?
- Aerial maps can be printed from Google Map ([www.maps.google.com](http://www.maps.google.com)) (optional)
- Send a reminder prior to the event including tips on how to dress appropriately for the weather, what to bring (snacks and water, if not provided). This is a function on the GCSC website!
- Bring a first aid kit.

### Important points to emphasize during the cleanup:

- Shorelines are wildlife habitats. Leave natural materials, like driftwood, weeds, and shells in place; prevent erosion by staying away from banks and not trampling vegetation; and never disturb breeding areas.
- Do NOT dig, collect just surface garbage – see info about archaeological digs.
- Safety first!
  - Know your limits and avoid areas with poor footing. Steep embankments and eroded shoreline can be treacherous.
  - Take care around water. Particularly in the spring, high water levels, fast-moving current and low water temperature require extra caution. Keep a safe distance from the water's edge under these conditions.
  - Keep an eye out for poison ivy. Learn to recognize it and make others aware.
  - Avoid picking up syringes and other sharp objects without the right equipment. Make sure that sharp items are picked up with tongs or heavy gloves and placed in a container (not a plastic bag).
- Keep a record of the number of volunteers, how much time they spent, the length of shoreline cleaned-up, and how much trash was collected (information requested varies by municipality, they will specify their requirements).
- TAKE PICTURES and send them to a member of the Ottawa Riverkeeper team! If participants' faces are visible in your photos make sure they have signed a photo waiver, otherwise we cannot use the photos. Take care when photographing children and make sure that you have signed consent of parents beforehand.

### Recognize your volunteers!

Remember to thank everyone involved at the end of the shoreline cleanup and if possible take a picture and send it to a member of the Ottawa Riverkeeper team. The best shot is a group photo next to all the garbage you have collected!

*Defending the Ottawa River. Protecting our Communities.  
À la défense de la rivière des Outaouais. Pour la protection de nos communautés.*

301-1960 Scott Street, Ottawa ON K1Z 8L8 t: 613-321-1120 [ottawariverkeeper.ca](http://ottawariverkeeper.ca)

