



**CATAWBA  
RIVERKEEPER®**

## **VOLUNTEER-LED CLEANUP GUIDE**



# ABOUT CATAWBA RIVERKEEPER

## Mission

The Catawba Riverkeeper preserves, protects, and restores the waters of the Catawba-Wateree River Basin for all through education, advocacy, and engagement.

## Vision

Our vision is a river that can sustain plentiful, clean water for generations to come.

## Structure

The Catawba Riverkeeper Foundation is a member supported 501(c)(3) non-profit organization founded and given license from the Waterkeeper Alliance, Inc. in 1997. In 1998, the Board of Directors hired its first Riverkeeper. Since its beginning, the focus of this organization has been to directly improve water quality through monitoring and conservation advocacy, increase public awareness through education, and develop strong partnerships. Catawba Riverkeeper operates in 26 counties of the Catawba-Wateree River watershed in North and South Carolina with administrative headquarters located in McAdenville, NC.

The three main pillars of our organization: Educate, Engage, Protect.

## River Geography

The Catawba-Wateree River begins in the Blue Ridge Mountains of western North Carolina and hits the first lake in our Basin, Lake James. From there, it continues and flows through the Charlotte metropolitan area, down into Lake Wateree in South Carolina. The name of the river changes to the Wateree River in Lake Wateree and eventually joins with the Congaree River above Lake Marion. The river passes through or near major cities like Charlotte and Rock Hill, and smaller cities like Hickory, Denver, Gastonia, and Great Falls. Many of these communities get their drinking water and electricity from the river, so it is incredibly important to keep it healthy and clean! The main stem of the River is 300 miles long and the entire Basin encompasses 11 man-made lakes for a total of 8,900 miles of waterway!



# BEFORE YOUR CLEANUP

## Choose the Where

- Locate a site, preferably one near a creek. Your neighborhood, parks, and public access sites work well for cleanups. Keep in mind access to trash and/or the water. You will want to scout the site prior to your cleanup to assess the trash amount and site conditions.
- Note how many people would be needed to cleanup that site based on the trash amount and site conditions including access, parking, etc. Groups of 15 or less work well for most cleanup sites.

## Choose the When

- Choose a preferred day of the week. Consider the time of year and if you may want a backup rain date. This is a good thing to set out ahead of time.
- While cleanup time depends on a lot of factors (and can be anything you want), most cleanups take 1-2 hours.
- Consider weather and temperature when choosing morning vs. afternoon.
  - For ex. in February, the later in the afternoon you choose, the warmer it is likely to be. Whereas in July, you want it as early as possible to avoid the heat.
- Confirm your date with the Catawba Riverkeeper **AT LEAST 2 WEEKS** prior to the event.

## Supplies

- Catawba Riverkeeper provides all necessary supplies for your cleanup. Please see the checklist on the next page for provided and recommended supplies.
- Contact Volunteer & Community Science Manager, Kaity D'Angelo, at [kaity.d@catawbariverkeeper.org](mailto:kaity.d@catawbariverkeeper.org) **AT LEAST 2 WEEKS IN ADVANCE** of your cleanup with the following information.
  - Proposed date of your cleanup
  - Maximum number of cleanup participants expected
  - Site location address
  - Will you need waders to access a stream?
- You will work with Kaity to coordinate a pick up option and/or time to get your supplies. You are responsible for picking up and returning supplies within a timely manner.

## Disposal Plan

- You will want to create a plan for trash pickup. If you are at a park or other public access, locate the closest dumpster for disposal.
- You may need to contact your local municipality or waste department to schedule pickup if you are not at a site with a public dumpster.
- Make sure your disposal plan is in place before the day of your cleanup.

# CLEANUP SUPPLY CHECKLIST

Make sure you have all of the following items before beginning the cleanup. Catawba Riverkeeper provides all of the supplies listed unless marked otherwise. Please ensure that ALL supplies given are returned following your cleanup.

- ☐ Gloves (assortment of sizes)
- ☐ Trash Bags
- ☐ Trash Grabbers
- ☐ Waders (limited amount)\*
- ☐ Reflective Vests
- ☐ Riverkeeper Waivers
- ☐ Trash Tracker Data Form
- ☐ Hand Sanitizer
- ☐ First Aid Kit
- ☐ Bug Spray/Sunscreen\*\*
- ☐ Water/Snacks\*\*
- ☐ Wagon (to help move trash)\*\*
- ☐ Tent and Table\*\*

\*Waders only come in whole sizes and fit over socks not shoes.

\*\*We do not provide these items but recommend you have them onsite.

# GLOVE SIZING GUIDE



## Small Gloves

White and blue with a **yellow** wrist ring.  
Grey and blue with a **red** wrist ring.

## Medium Gloves

White and blue with a **blue** wrist ring.  
Grey and blue with a **green** wrist ring.



## Large Gloves

White and blue with a **black** wrist ring.  
Grey and blue with a **blue** wrist ring.



## Extra-Large Gloves

Grey and blue with a **yellow** wrist ring.



# DURING YOUR CLEANUP

## Instructions

- Before starting the cleanup, make sure all participants have signed the provided volunteer waiver. **These must be returned with your supplies.**
- Set clear boundaries for your cleanup.
  - This could be physical boundaries that your group should stay within, if there are things you don't want people picking up (such as chemical bottles with unknown liquid), whether people should stay on land or wade into the water for trash, etc.
- Create cleanup teams to disperse and conquer the litter or stay as a group and work your way to the end of the site.
  - If your group splits up, set a time to meet back together. **Never work alone, always have a cleanup partner.**
- Volunteers that don't want to or can't pick up much trash can still help by taking photos, helping to move trash bags, logging the trash collected, etc.
- Ensure that your Trash Tally document is properly filled out prior to throwing out trash bags and other items.
- At the end of your cleanup, make sure all bags of trash and any bulky items are placed properly inside the public dumpster. If arranging separate pickup, place all items in one easily accessible but out of the way location for waste pickup. Follow the instructions provided by your waste department to make sure your items are picked up successfully.

## Safety & Risk Management

- Check the weather leading up to your cleanup.
  - Rising water levels can be extremely dangerous and are not suitable to host a cleanup.
  - Watch out for extreme temperatures,
- Wear closed toed shoes, long sleeves, and long pants to prevent injury. Dress and prepare for the weather: wear layers in the winter and hydrate as much as possible in the summer.
- Volunteers should never be alone on a cleanup. You should always have a partner and/or be within eye sight of multiple people in the group.
- Check the site upon arrival for any hazards (slippery rocks, hazardous trash, poisonous plants and animals, etc.) and inform your group in the beginning.
- Wear bright safety vests when roadside and use extreme caution.
- Use trash grabbers as much as possible and wear gloves at all times during the cleanup.
- If children under 18 are participating, make sure they stay with their guardian and are monitored when picking up trash. Children must be at least 12 years of age to cleanup in the stream.
- Always keep a first aid kit with the group.
- Know where the closest hospital or emergency care center is located.

# AFTER YOUR CLEANUP

## After the Cleanup

- Please return the Trash Tracker Data Sheet provided with your supplies. This allows us to track and share the impact you are making for our basin. We will also add your group cleanup to the Volunteer Cleanup Map we are working on compiling in hopes to one day make public. It will also be shared on our social media platforms.
- Please take a few minutes after your cleanup to fill out the new data form we're testing out.
- Use this QR Code.
- The link will also be emailed.



## Photos!

- Send any photos from your cleanup (unique items found, your group having fun picking up trash, participants in the creek, etc.) to Kaity, so we can feature you on our social media pages to highlight your volunteerism. Send a group photo and provide a before and after photo of the site or your trash pile at the end of the cleanup.



## Return Supplies

- How supplies should be returned:
  - Please place the paperwork in the folder provided.
  - All clean/unused supplies can be left in the storage bins.
  - Please place any used waders, gloves, and vests into a trash bag. This keeps the dirty gear from mixing with the clean gear.
    - You do not need to wash gloves or vests.
  - All supplies (including the trash bag of dirty gear) should be returned to the Volunteer Bin at The Boathouse - which should happen within the week following your cleanup.
  - Communicate with Kaity once all supplies have been returned so supplies can be cleaned and prepped for another cleanup.

Volunteers like you ensure clean water for all. Thank you for your valuable time and willingness to keep our waterways healthy!

*Thank You!*