



World Cleanup Day

EVENT ORGANIZER KIT





September 20, 2026 is World Cleanup Day – an officially recognized date on the United Nations calendar of events. Please support Ducks Unlimited Canada as we join the international effort to keep our wildlife habitat pristine.

Unfortunately litter including single-use plastics and cigarette butts pose a threat for wildlife in terrestrial and marine habitats. Debris being ingested by animals like ducks can potentially have negative effects on their health by creating choking hazards, puncturing or obstructing their digestive tract, or causing illness. If left untouched, plastics can break down and cause a much less obvious threat. Microplastics are being found in the digestive system and even tissue of various species and more research is required to understand how this may be impacting the health and population status of our wildlife.

We are looking for volunteer organizers in communities across Canada to join this effort. To support our effort, we've created this guide on how to set up a successful cleanup event.

- STEP 1 Choose your location and time.** Pick a location and time for your cleanup between Friday September 18 and Sunday October 18, 2026.
- STEP 2 Register your event.** Visit ducks.ca/worldcleanupday to register your event so others can join and your impact can be counted.
- STEP 3 Promote your event.** Share your team registration with friends, family, colleagues and your community inviting them to get involved (*promotional materials can be [found here](#)*).
- STEP 4 Plan for a safe, successful cleanup.** Review this guide for tips and information to help make your event safe, organized and impactful.
- STEP 5 Share your impact.** Tell us how your cleanup went by completing the post-event survey that you will receive following your event. Share your results and inspire others to take action for cleaner communities and healthier habitats.

Picking your location and time

- + Most cleanups happen in public areas and it is best to contact the party responsible for the maintenance or management of the property (often a municipality or conservation authority) to seek permission, a permit if needed, and any additional guidance. As a bonus, this may result in additional resources or support for your cleanup event. If the event is happening on private property, it is clearly necessary to seek permission for the cleanup from the property owner.
- + Determine a “meeting point” for volunteers.
- + It is best to assess the site first to understand size, accessibility, parking, safety considerations, and the amount of debris needing to be cleared.
- + Picking a day and time that is convenient for your volunteers will improve turn out. A cleanup typically takes 1-2 hours depending on the size of the area and the number of volunteers, so make sure you pick a time that allows for successful completion during daylight hours.

Checklist for event day

- ☐ Gloves and/or litter grabbers. We recommend avoiding single-use plastic if possible.
- ☐ Garbage bags and clear recycling bags as well as a plan for how to dispose of the garbage after the event (*see next page*)
- ☐ Scale for weighing the waste collected
- ☐ Hand sanitizer
- ☐ Waivers for participants (*DUC can provide a template*)
- ☐ List of volunteers that includes a box for ‘check in’ and ‘check out’ to ensure no one is left behind
- ☐ First aid kit
- ☐ Camera – to inspire others. Consider a before-and-after photo of your cleanup. When posting photos on social media, be sure to tag Ducks Unlimited Canada and WorldCleanupDay.org
- ☐ Safety brief – review basic safety tips, cleanup boundaries, and process for end meeting point and time with volunteers

Safety tips

- + Use personal protective equipment (PPE) or a litter grabber when picking up litter. Advise volunteers what you're able to provide and what they need to bring (this could include gloves, boots, reusable water bottles for hydration, etc)
- + Make sure that volunteers do not handle hazardous materials including broken glass or debris with sharp rusty edges or potentially biohazardous materials like syringes, chemicals and dead animals. Instead record the location and advise the municipality's waste management department.
- + Be careful around bee hives, wasp nests, and noxious weeds such as poison ivy and giant hogweed.
- + Make sure cleanups take place during daylight hours.
- + Be mindful of safety hazards including unstable or uneven ground and fast-moving water.
- + If collecting litter near a roadway or parking area, consider using safety pylons and bright coloured clothing.
- + Make sure all volunteers 'check in' and 'check out' to ensure no one is left behind.
- + Know the phone number for emergency services.

Waste disposal tips

- + Volunteers with trucks might be willing to take waste and recycling bags to a disposal facility after the event.
- + Some municipalities might be willing to help with waste disposal if notified in advance.
- + Some dumpster rental companies have a complimentary program for non-profit work and volunteer cleanups.

Social media accounts and tags



- + Website: ducks.ca
- + Hashtag: #DucksUnlimitedCanada
- + [Facebook](#)
- + [Instagram](#)
- + [YouTube](#)



- + Website: worldcleanupday.org
- + Hashtag: #WorldCleanupDay
- + [Facebook](#)
- + [Instagram](#)
- + [YouTube](#)

Get involved with Ducks Unlimited Canada!

- + [Become a partner](#)
- + [Become a donor](#)
- + [Become a volunteer](#)
- + [Attend an event](#)