



Stream Clean-up: Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Stream Clean-up?

The Perkiomen Watershed Conservancy's annual Stream Clean-up is the area's largest organized clean-up event, drawing hundreds of volunteers from local communities. These volunteers remove trash and debris from many streams, ponds, lakes, floodplains and reservoir locations within the Perkiomen Creek Watershed. In addition, many corporate and local businesses, partner groups and individuals help coordinate or sponsor this event. In 2016, over 430 volunteers removed 75 tires, over 1,140 pounds of scrap metal, 441 bags of trash and 31 bags of recyclables from 44 different locations!

When is the Stream Clean-up?

In 2017, it is scheduled for April 8th from 9AM – 12PM. The event traditionally takes place in April each year, to coincide with National Earth Day and the Great Pennsylvania Clean-up event.

Why hold a Stream Clean-up?

An incredible amount of trash makes its way into our local waterways each year. It is tossed out of car windows, blown from yards, trash cans, and parking lots, washed away by floods or stormwater, and dumped on purpose. Not only is trash ugly, it degrades the safety and quality of the water we drink and play in, and it can be downright deadly to fish, birds and other wildlife. Our annual stream clean-up is a regional community event for anyone wishing to make a positive difference in the beauty, health and safety of their environment. It is also an education opportunity, as participants will think twice before ever tossing a soda cup or burger wrapper out of a car window.

Where does the Stream Clean-up take place?

Each year we target the most needy 40-50 locations throughout the watershed for clean-up. The locations are different every year. Some locations naturally accumulate debris from storms and flooding and require a clean-up crew every year. Other sites may just need one good cleaning (like an old dumping site), while others need to be re-visited every 2-3 years. Once the most needy locations are determined, they are posted on the map of sites, and volunteers can sign up for a site of their choosing. See the map of sites: <http://www.perkiomenwatershed.org/stream-clean-up/>.

Who can volunteer?

Everyone! Our volunteers range in age from 3 to 93, and they are students, teachers, scouts, clubs, church and service groups, local and regional businesses, birders, hikers, bikers, boaters, anglers, or couch potatoes.

Can my children participate?

We request that stream-clean up volunteers are at least 3 years old, and a responsible adult accompany all volunteers under age 12. All minors who will not have a parent to sign them in the morning of the Clean-up (like a child with a scout troop or a 17-year-old who drives themselves), must bring a signed [waiver form](#), which can be printed out from our website.

How do I volunteer for the Stream Clean-up?

Electronic registration will be available from the Stream Clean-up page of our website (<http://www.perkiomenwatershed.org/stream-clean-up/>) several weeks prior to the event.

May I register a whole family or group of volunteers?

Yes, in fact, groups make up most of our volunteers for this event. During the registration process, you will see a plus (+) sign next to the site you wish to select. You can use this to sign up as many people as you want, as long as there are enough slots left at that site. The person who signs up for the group will receive all emails about the Clean-up, and is responsible for forwarding that information to everyone in the group. If you do not wish to have one point of contact for your group, you can send more email addresses to our Volunteer Coordinator at volunteer@perkiomenwatershed.org. Or, for a small group, you can have everyone sign up individually for the same site (but hurry, before all the slots get taken!) If you are with a group of 30 or more, you may want to call us at 610-287-9383 to discuss which site or sites would be best for your group. (You may need to split into smaller groups to cover more sites so you do not run out of trash to clean.)

What happens if there's bad weather?

The Stream Clean-up takes place rain or shine. In the event of dangerous or predicted unsafe weather, such as a hurricane, icy conditions, or flooding, the clean-up event will be re-scheduled. Please check your emails before leaving if these conditions arise. In addition, if the event is cancelled, there will be a recorded phone message at the PWC office and an update posted on the PWC website.

What should I wear/bring?

First and foremost, dress appropriately for the weather! Volunteers are happiest and do their best work when they are warm and dry! Otherwise, plan to get dirty. Wear long pants or jeans and long sleeve shirts, plus heavy soled shoes or boots that can get wet. No open-toed shoes or sandals. You may wish to bring a change of socks and shoes for when you are finished. Be sure to eat breakfast and bring plenty of water.

What will be provided?

Every clean-up location will be assigned an experienced Stream Clean-up Site Leader. Your leader will have all supplies for you when you arrive at your clean-up site, including work gloves, trash bags, and if needed, shovels, scissors, waders, or safety vests.

What do I do when I get to my assigned location?

Locate your Site Leader, who will be standing near a Stream Clean-up sign and probably a pile of supplies. The Site Leader will meet you and ask you to sign in. The leader will have all supplies needed and give the volunteers a brief but important safety speech. The leader will also tell you where the trash should be piled for safe and easy access by the Pick-Up Crews.

What's a Site Leader and can I be one?

Site Leaders are highly valuable people! If you are at least 18 and have attended the Conservancy's Stream Clean-up as a volunteer before, you are eligible to be a Site Leader. Site Leaders attend an evening meeting the Thursday before the Clean-up to pick up instructions and supplies for their group. Leaders must arrive at their clean-up location by 8:45AM to meet and register their volunteers, give a short safety speech (provided) and hand out all supplies. Leaders make sure volunteers behave responsibly and safely. Leaders must have a functioning cell phone to report back to the Conservancy when their group has finished cleaning.

What's a Pick-Up Crew?

Our Pick-Up Crews are incredibly important! These are groups of 2-3 volunteers with a pick-up truck (or sometimes a trailer or dump-truck) who are responsible for arriving at the clean-up sites after the clean-up is completed to load up and bring all the trash, tires and debris to the dumpsters.

There are usually 10 Pick-Up Crews, each assigned to pick up at 3-4 clean-up sites. The more crews we have, the less work each must do. They begin working around 1PM and are usually finished by 3PM. Some Clean-up volunteers also like to double as Pick-Up Crews. We always need Pick-Up Crew volunteers!

What if I must leave early?

Volunteers are welcome to leave whenever they choose. We request that all volunteers arrive at their assigned clean-up location promptly by 9AM to receive all supplies and safety information. If you choose to leave early, please notify your Site Leader and return all unused supplies before you go.

How are the clean-up sites chosen?

We rely on our many partners, members and community residents to help us locate sites with accumulated trash, tires and debris. All locations are within the waterways of the Perkiomen Watershed. Potential clean-up sites are visited on foot and evaluated by the amount of trash, accessibility and safety factors. All sites are either publicly accessible (like a park or trail) or accessible by permission of the landowners. The location must be safely accessible by foot or canoe, and have some place nearby for volunteers to meet/park. Sites with toxic debris or dangerous conditions will *not* be entered. Sometimes among the rest of the debris, one very large or heavy item will be specifically targeted for removal.

I know a location that needs a clean-up!

We are always seeking new clean-up sites, so if you know of one, please let us know! Chosen locations should be within the waterways of the Perkiomen Watershed (not sure? [Click here for a map](#)).

I would like to help, but I'm not available the day of the Clean-up.

You can still be a big help! There is much planning and coordination that goes into making this event a success. From sponsoring the event to hanging posters in towns, there is plenty for a helpful volunteer to do. Please fill out a [volunteer form](#) on our website.