



SOUND RIVERS

PROTECTING THE NEUSE & TAR-PAMLICO

LITTER-FREE RIVERS AND ME

A Guide to Cleaning and Maintaining Your Adopted Trash Trap



About Sound Rivers

Sound Rivers, a dedicated water and public health advocate since 1980 works to improve the quality of life for 2.5 million residents and protect water resources in approximately one-quarter of the state. Sound Rivers' mission is to monitor, protect and enhance water quality and related ecosystems in the Neuse and Tar- Pamlico River basins while supporting environmental justice. The core purpose of Sound Rivers is to advocate for fishable, swimmable, and drinkable waters in our river basins.

About Litter-Free Rivers

Every waterway in North Carolina is impacted by plastic pollution. These plastics break down over time into microplastics, which are an ecosystem and public health issue. To tackle this problem, in 2022 Sound Rivers began the Litter-Free Rivers program to battle the growing problem of trash in our urban waterways. This unique program combines education with community engagement as we explore ways to stop trash pollution at its source.

The following guide was adapted from the “[American Rivers National Cleanup Organizer's Handbook](#).” They are an amazing organization with an amazing handbook. Click the title to check it out for yourself!

Sound Rivers Volunteer Code of Conduct

From its founding in 1980-81, volunteerism has been an integral part of Sound Rivers work and mission. Today, Sound Rivers volunteers donate more than a thousand hours annually and are part of the collective ecosystem of partners and people, working together for a healthy Neuse and Tar-Pamlico Rivers and communities.

Sound Rivers strives to create and maintain a safe environment that is inclusive, just, fair and consistent in which all people are treated with dignity, decency and respect. By sharing common standards of acceptable behavior, Sound Rivers can offer a respectful experience for those donating their time and talent as volunteers.

The purpose of this Code of Conduct is to convey expectations of acceptable behavior of Sound Rivers volunteers and to define the roles, responsibilities, and processes related to reporting, investigation, and mitigation of reported misconduct.

By participating in Sound Rivers' volunteer activities, you agree to follow these guidelines for the duration of your time spent volunteering in any capacity, including in your communications prior to or after your participation in any event or activity.

All Sound Rivers Volunteers are expected to represent the following Standards of Conduct:

- Treat every person you encounter with respect and courtesy, including the use of others' chosen names and preferred pronouns.
- Assume the best intentions of Sound Rivers staff and fellow volunteers.
- Conduct yourself with professionalism, humility, and restraint.
- Avoid comments or behaviors which might cause another person to become uncomfortable or offended. What constitutes offensive language or behavior is subjective. Please be sensitive to the fact that those with different life experiences may find actions or language offensive that might not seem so to you.

- Model 'Leave No Trace' principles in everything you do.
- Conduct and participate in activities with safety as the highest priority, while minimizing risk and impacts.
- Conduct and participate in activities without the influence of alcohol or illicit drugs.* Tobacco use is prohibited at volunteer activities and events and inside our buildings and vehicles.
- Respect our natural and cultural resources and the ways that other people connect with one another and our natural environment.
- Avoid conflicts of interest. A conflict of interest arises when a personal interest conflicts with a responsibility to act in the best interests of Sound Rivers and Sound Rivers' mission.
- Stay informed of Sound Rivers guidance and recommendations.

* If Alcohol is served during a volunteer event or business function, volunteers are expected to conduct themselves in an appropriate and professional manner.

Violations of Rights, Responsibilities, and the Code of Conduct

The following is not an exhaustive list, but provides examples of misconduct:

- Willful disregard of safety rules and expectations which create unsafe situations.
- Harassment of any sort. Harassment can be sexual, psychological, or physical. Harassment can be verbal, digital, deliberate, unsolicited, or unwelcome.**
- Violence, threats of violence, or disruption
- Offensive or hate speech directed at any group, person or nationality based on their perceived race, religion, gender, gender-identity, nationality, or sexual orientation
- Bullying of another person
- Illegal behavior
- Misuse of Sound Rivers assets, facilities or equipment

****Harassment:** These behaviors include but are not limited to: offensive physical actions such as lewd gestures; statements meant to humiliate a person publicly or individually; the use of racial slurs or "jokes"; sexually explicit communication that is either written or spoken; any unwelcome physical contact with other volunteers, staff, or clients; any unsolicited comments regarding a person's physical appearance, any unwanted sexual attention; harassment due to a person's race, color, gender, identity, religion, language, medical condition, age, culture, national origin, gender expression, disability, marital status, or sexual orientation.

What to do in the Event of a Violation

If you believe that the Code of Conduct has been violated, please report the violation using one of the following methods:

Report the violation through the Sound Rivers online [incident report tool](#). Or contact the Sound Rivers Executive Director at 252-402-5644 or heather@soundrivers.org


Investigation

If Sound Rivers receives a complaint through the online incident report tool or other means, it will be investigated and a decision will be made in a timely manner and with discretion and respect.

Breaches of the Volunteer Code of Conduct

By failing to uphold the ethical considerations in this document, volunteers should expect disciplinary action. It is at Sound Rivers discretion whether to issue a warning or to terminate services as a volunteer. Sound Rivers has the right to release or terminate volunteers at its discretion. Sound Rivers is not responsible for any monetary losses accrued as a result of breaches of conduct.

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WASHINGTON

108 Gladden St.
Washington, NC 27889
252.946.7211

NEW BERN

2207 Trent Road
New Bern, NC 28560
252.637.7972

RALEIGH

19 Hargett St.
Raleigh, NC 27601
919.856.1180



WASHINGTONJack's Creek

GREENVILLE.....Green Mill's Run

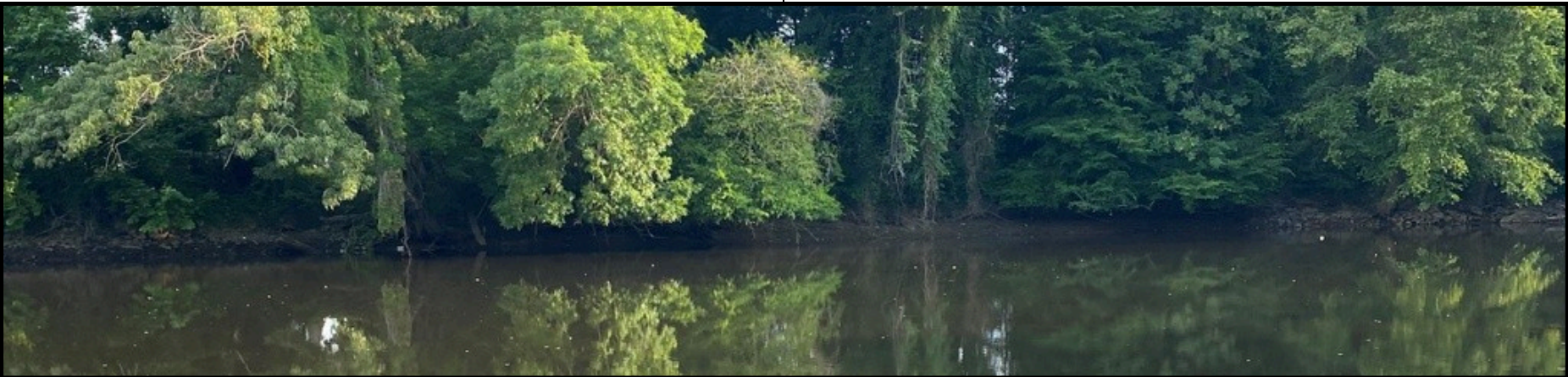
KINSTON.....Adkin Branch

RALEIGH.....Little Rock Creek

NEW BERN.....Henderson Park

TARBORO.....East Tarboro Canal

And more to come...



Step 1: **ADOPT A TRASH TRAP**



Step 1: ADOPT A TRASH TRAP



Thank you for standing up for your river and taking the initiative to adopt a trash trap.

Adopting a trap means that you and your group are maintaining it by regularly cleaning the trap out, reporting problems, and responding to cleanout emergencies as they happen. Just taking this step is helping in numerous ways. For one, you are taking an active role in maintaining the waterways in your own backyard. People swim, fish, and drink from these waters and by taking the time to get out and get your feet wet (pun absolutely intended) you are ensuring the safety and health of you, your family, and the people around you. By volunteering your time and energy, you are also increasing Sound Rivers ability to investigate pollution, advocate for stronger laws and be a trusted resource for local communities.

We thank you so much for taking the time and volunteering the human power to ensure everything mentioned above and more. But, as with any journey this one starts with a single step, and your first step will be to understand your responsibilities as the adoptee and our responsibility as the organization helping you.

What you are agreeing to...

- Visit the trap every week AND after any storm greater than 1 inch of rain.
- Do a cleanout at least once during the month, but be willing to do so as much as needed per weather.
- Be open to doing a wider clean-up depending on group size.
- Get pre and post photos.
- Weigh the trash and properly dispose of it.
- Report your data to Sound Rivers.

What we will do for you...

- Promote the group on our social media posts.
- Provide up to 5 t-shirts for volunteers.
- Provide all necessary equipment (chest waders, trash pickers, bags, gloves, and safety instructions) before your adopted month starts. (waders and pickers must be returned to Sound Rivers.).

ADDITIONAL INFO

- All sites are wadeable
- Volunteering is only available for people 13 years or older
- Safety waivers must be signed before first adopted month
- All volunteers are expected to follow Sound Rivers' Volunteer Code of Conduct

HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE?


The amount of time varies from event to event and depends on the number of participants, the amount of trash, and the amount of woody debris or other natural vegetation. We generally estimate that with 3-4 volunteers, a trap that is full of trash and woody debris may take 2- 3 hours. That time is less with more hands.

Step 2: KNOW YOUR SUPPLIES



Step 2: KNOW YOUR SUPPLIES

Given here is a list of supplies that you will need in two categories. The first is a list of supplies that Sound Rivers will give your group to clean out your trap. The second is a list of supplies that we require or strongly encourage the volunteer group to provide. **Please note that in order to maintain program costs and ensure we can continue this work well into the future we ask that if your group does not use any of the supplies provided to please return them at the end of your adoption timeline.**

 You can view a fillable PDF of this checklist by [clicking here](#), then downloading the document to your device.



Items supplied by Sound Rivers

(PLEASE RETURN UNUSED ITEMS TO REDUCE PROGRAM COSTS)



- ☐ DATA RESULTS FORM (DOWNLOAD HERE, PDF IS FILLABLE)
- ☐ SHARPS CONTAINER
- ☐ FIRST AID KIT
- ☐ GLOVES
- ☐ HAND SANITIZER
- ☐ LIABILITY WAIVERS (ONLINE)
- ☐ SAFETY VESTS (OPTIONAL): ONLY REQUIRED WHEN THE SITE IS NEAR OR ALONG A BUSY ROAD
- ☐ TRASH BAGS
- ☐ TRASH PICKERS
- ☐ CHEST AND HIP WADERS
- ☐ SOUND RIVERS VOLUNTEER T-SHIRTS AND COOLING TOWELS (WHEN AVAILABLE)

Items supplied by Volunteer Group

- ☐ CAMERA: FOR GROUP AND BEFORE / AFTER PICTURES
- ☐ INSECT REPELLANT
- ☐ SUNSCREEN
- ☐ PERSONAL CHEST, HIP WADERS, WATERPROOF BOOTS OR CREEK SNEAKERS
- ☐ WATER COOLER WITH WATER AND ICE

Step 3: UNDERSTAND SAFETY

TIPS AND REQUIRED SAFETY MEASURES



Step 3: UNDERSTAND SAFETY

INTRODUCTION TO SAFETY

Safety has to be your main priority whenever you are working near a body of water. This is the same for volunteering as it would be for recreation. We have outlined everything you will need from clothing to how to speak to your group each time you wade into your creek to clean out your trap.

Please follow these steps and guidelines to ensure the safety of you and your group.



REMEMBER TO PREPARE YOUR VOLUNTEERS

LET THEM KNOW...



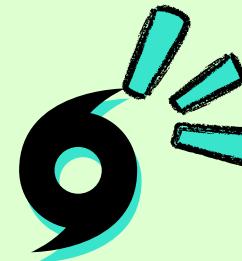
WHEN TO MEET



WHERE TO GO



WHAT TO WEAR



ALSO, DO NOT FORGET TO MAKE A PLAN FOR WHAT TO WEAR, AND/OR WHAT TO DO IN THE CASE OF INCLEMENT WEATHER.

Step 3: UNDERSTAND SAFETY

TIPS ABOUT CLOTHING



- Wear clothing that can get dirty or wet
- Sturdy, closed toed shoes (no sandals or flip-flops)
- Long pants or high boots to avoid scratches
- Hat with a brim to protect you from the sun

Volunteers can bring some of their own supplies. Some things you should consider asking your group to bring for themselves are...

- Sunscreen
- Sunglasses
- Snacks
- Hand Sanitizer
- A reusable Water Bottle

TIPS ABOUT INCLEMENT WEATHER



In the case of inclement weather, include a rain date or cancellation information, such as a phone number to call.



Our Group's Rain Date



Our Group's Emergency Number

Be weather wise: Know the signs of changing weather conditions. Cancel event if there is a high probability of lightning or extreme weather in the area.

- Pay attention for outdoor risks: snakes, insects, poisonous plants, other wildlife, etc.
- Use the buddy system.
- Remember to stay hydrated and take breaks.
- Sound Rivers staff will alert your group leader(s) if the water levels in the creek are too high to safely enter.

Step 3: UNDERSTAND SAFETY

CLEANUP SAFETY TIPS

It is important to prepare your volunteers for hazards they might encounter at the cleanup site.

Below are tips and best practices for your crew both on and off the water, as well as how to handle various types of materials in your cleanup area. Instruct volunteers that when in doubt notify the team leaders instead of handling materials themselves.

CLEANUP SAFETY TIPS

Garbage can be dirty, rusty, slimy, and sometimes sharp. **Use caution when handling trash to avoid cuts and abrasions.**

Emphasize to everyone on your crew:

- **Don't** be afraid to ask for help.
- **Don't** try to lift heavy objects alone.
- **Do not** open any containers, including plastic water or soda bottles as they may contain hazardous material.

PROTECTIVE GEAR

Protect your group from hazards by encouraging everyone to use:

WORK GLOVES



STURDY SHOES WITH
HARD SOLES



SUN GLASSES



BUG SPRAY



SUNSCREEN



HAND SANITIZER



Step 3: UNDERSTAND SAFETY

AVOID HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

If you discover hazardous materials, immediately contact your state's department of environmental and public health, pollution control or like agency, the event organizer should keep a copy of that contact information on-hand.

Do not attempt to handle or dispose of hazardous materials on your own. Hazardous materials need to be taken to special processing facilities.

EXAMPLES OF POTENTIALLY HAZARDOUS MATERIALS



- Drums or containers that may contain toxic waste



- Needles and other biohazard waste



- Weapons, ammunition or explosives.

Do not handle! Immediately alert the authorities if these items are discovered during your cleanup.

NUMBERS TO REMEMBER

SEE NUMBERS FOR YOUR CITY ON PAGE 13

HANDLE THESE ITEMS WITH CAUTION



- Broken Glass



- Aerosol Cans



- Gas Cans



- And other containers with chemical residues or traces of volatile materials

Step 3: UNDERSTAND SAFETY

SAMPLE SAFETY SPEACH

“ Today is going to be a fun day; however, **we need to take a moment to talk about safety.**

Please be very careful with sharp items. Needles and pieces of glass can cut through your bag and therefore **should be placed in our ‘sharps’ container. (You can use an empty detergent bottle.)**

Please do not empty out containers that are sealed tight. We understand that this might weigh down your bags however it is better that the contained liquid stays out of the water.

Use common sense when picking up items. Remember, **you do not have to pick up anything you do not want to.** Let me or a team leader know, and we’ll come remove it. **Keep your gloves and shoes on until the end.** If anyone finds any type of hazardous materials like batteries, gas cans and ammunition please **let one of the main organizers know immediately.**

Thank you. ”



REMEMBER

Be sure that all participating volunteers have signed Sound Rivers liability waivers.



Online waivers are here.
Be sure to fill any highlighted portion before printing and signing)

Waivers must be signed in order to do trash trap cleanouts, and must be signed prior to the first scheduled cleanout.

Step 4: WASTE DISPOSAL

KNOW YOUR PLAN OF ACTION!



Step 4: WASTE DISPOSAL

INTRODUCTION

All of Sound Rivers trash trap sites are located on or near public property and have approved public access.

All trash is to be bagged and removed from the site at the end of the cleanup.

Volunteer organizers agree to properly dispose of all trash.

Trash can be sorted for recyclable materials; this is optional and up to the discretion of volunteers and team leader(s).

General recycling that is widely accepted includes newspaper, cardboard, glass and #1 and #2 plastic.

HAZARDOUS MATERIAL

TIRES, WHITE GOODS AND ANIMAL CARCASSES



During your cleanup, you may come across hazardous material, large items such as tires or white goods and/ or dead animal carcasses.

You should immediately contact your city's local public works department (see page 13 or the numbers written on page 9 by group leader).

Hazardous materials need to be taken to special processing facilities. Examples of hazardous material are included on page 9.

SHARPS



For any sharps found (needles, syringes, lancets or other contaminated sharp items), please take the following steps:

1. **Place them in the provided and labeled sharps container (empty detergent bottle)**
2. **Inform Sound Rivers sharps were found and disposed of; return the sharps container to Sound Rivers at the end of the event / adopted month**
3. **Sound Rivers will dispose of all sharps**

SUSPICIOUS MATERIAL

If you come across any material that you deem to be suspicious, please contact the non-emergency line of your local police department (numbers on page 13)

Appendix: KEY CONTACTS



EMERGENCY CONTACT



Sound Rivers' Main Office: (252) 946-7211
Monday - Friday 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.

**IN THE EVENT OF AN
EMERGENCY IN ANY CITY
CALL 911.**

If you find anything suspicious (like a gun, backpack with suspicious material in it, drug paraphernalia, etc.) please contact the non-emergency line of your local police department.

CITY CONTACTS



Police (252) 329-4315
Non-emergency number
Public Works (252) 329-4522
Parks (252) 329-4554
For large and hazardous materials
Greenville Animal Protective Services (252) 329-4387
GAPS Emergency Phone: (252) 329-4300
For dead animals



Police (919) 996-3335
Non-emergency number, Southeast District (Little Rock Creek)
Solid Waste Services* (919) 996-3245
For large and hazardous materials during business hours
Solid Waste Services* (919) 996-6311
For large and hazardous materials outside business hours

*Solid Waste Services will collect dead animals placed curbside at a residence, in the public right of way, and/or on a city street. Dead animals left curbside should be placed in a bag or box for collection.



Police (252) 559-6119
Non-emergency dispatch number
Public Services (252) 939-3282
For large and hazardous materials



Police (252) 946-1444
Non-emergency number
Public Works (252) 975-9302
For large and hazardous materials during business hours
City Operations Center (919) 996-6311
For large and hazardous materials outside business hours



Police (252) 633-2020
Non-emergency number
David Cox (252) 639-7501
For large and hazardous materials

Appendix: FORMS




Online Waiver

The Liability and Photo Release waiver must be filled out by everyone participating in the cleanout.



Email Photos

 You can email your photos to info@soundrivers.org.



Sound Rivers Volunteer Code of Conduct

A PDF version you can print.



Data Report Form

A form to be filled out and returned to Sound Rivers after each cleanout.



Supplies Checklist

A printable PDF of the supplies checklist found in this book.