



New York State Department of  
Environmental Conservation

# LET'S PICK IT UP NEW YORK!



George E. Pataki, *Governor*

Erin M. Crotty, *Commissioner*

printed on recycled paper

## Road Side Cleanup



On 2 miles of road, our cleanup crew picked up 32 bags of garbage and 4 bags of recyclables.

The oddest garbage was:

A newspaper clipping on keeping the environment clean  
Underwear  
Hood of a car

Most frequent garbage was:

Cigarette butts  
Cup tops  
Paper cups



## LET'S PICK IT UP NEW YORK!



### DESCRIPTION

You and your group will help the environment by removing garbage from bike paths, parks, school grounds, nature trails, community centers, etc. We would like to know about your cleanup so please return the LET'S PICK IT UP NEW YORK LITTER REPORT to the address on the form. When your cleanup event is completed, and your Litter Report form is sent to us, we will send your group a "Certificate of Appreciation", a thank-you for a great job!

### OBJECTIVES

By participating in this activity, your group will:

1. Work with other volunteers within the community to clean up bike paths, parks, school grounds, nature trails, community centers, vacant lots and other locations that have been littered.
2. Record the type and amount of garbage removed from your cleanup location.
3. Work cooperatively with public works departments to coordinate garbage pickup.
4. Improve the quality of our environment.

### TIME

Planning may take several weeks; the actual cleanup will take one afternoon.



### VOLUNTEERS' AGE

Volunteers of any age can clean up a site. However, young volunteers should be accompanied by an adult. Site selection should also be determined by the age of the volunteers. Roadways can be dangerous and young children should not participate in these types of cleanups; a park or bike trail would be a better and safer location.

### COST

Most of the supplies needed for a cleanup can be found at home. However, you may have to purchase refreshments or garbage bags, gloves and other equipment. Take a look at your location and see what types of materials you will need to get the job done.



## YOU WILL NEED

- ◆ *Let's Pick It Up New York- Litter Report* (Attachment 1)
- ◆ Parent/guardian permission slips
- ◆ First aid kit
- ◆ Work gloves
- ◆ Refreshments
- ◆ Camera and film
- ◆ Rakes, shovels and/or pitchforks
- ◆ Orange cones and/or safety vests at any trash collection site along a road
- ◆ Trash bags
- ◆ Insect/Tick repellent

Note: Ask local grocery stores, soft drink distributors, or restaurants to donate snacks, lunches or a picnic after the job is done. Local hardware stores, discount stores or other businesses may be willing to donate items such as gloves and trash bags.

## BACKGROUND

When you survey your cleanup site before the actual cleanup, notice the kinds of debris around, then determine what types of materials you will need for the cleanup. Some sites will be as simple as heavy-duty garbage bags and work gloves; others may need dumpsters, shovels, rakes, trucks. It all depends on the type of garbage and amount.

During a cleanup, it's very important to record the amount and type of garbage collected. This information will help you identify the biggest pollution sources. You can use this information to educate people in your community about the kind and amount of garbage found in littered locations.

Many communities have litter cleanup campaigns each spring. Volunteers can either join an established cleanup effort or organize a new effort.



## PLANNING A CLEANUP PROJECT

1. **Pick a cleanup date.**  
Earth Day is April 22! Weekends are good for community volunteers, weekdays for school site cleanups.
2. **Choose a site.**  
The site you choose for your cleanup should reflect the size and abilities of your group. Small groups may want to focus on a park or neighborhood. A large group may want to develop a major cleanup effort. Don't forget to take into account the age of your volunteers.

- ★Contact your local parks department, NYSDEC office, or county Cooperative Extension office for information about existing cleanup projects in the area.
- ★Organizers of large-scale efforts need to plan at least *six months* in advance for fund raising, permits, safety concerns and solicitation of volunteers. Union approval from city workers may even be necessary.

3. **Get permission.**  
Before you begin the cleanup, get permission from owners of the cleanup location.
4. **Organize teams.**  
If you have a large group, organize into several teams, with team or area leaders (one for every 6-8 volunteers). Each team leader should know what section of the site to clean and where the waste pickup sites are, and have extra *Let's Pick It Up New York Litter Report* sheets and supplies.
5. **Remember safety.**  
Because volunteers will be picking up garbage and may be carrying items, safety is an important consideration. A pre-cleanup meeting is important to get all the volunteers together and discuss the goals of the cleanup and safety rules. (See Attachment 2 for safety rules.)
6. **Clothing.**  
Advise your volunteers to wear heavy gloves, thick pants, sturdy shoes and safety goggles (when appropriate). Only adults should pick up hazardous items such as broken glass or syringes.
7. **First aid.**  
Adequate first aid kits should be available at the cleanup site and someone there should know how to administer first aid. During the pre-cleanup meeting, the volunteers should be told what to do and where to go for first aid.
8. **Garbage sites along roads.**  
If needed, contact the highway department to provide orange safety vests, warning cones, signs or flags for where the volunteers will be cleaning. Be very careful when considering a cleanup of roadsides. Take into consideration the age of volunteers and type of roadside your volunteers will be cleaning.
9. **Get permission from adults.**  
Parents or guardians will need to give written permission for themselves and young volunteers to participate in a cleanup effort. A permission slip should include an emergency phone contact and permission to seek medical assistance. Contact your group's insurance agent for information on liability insurance.
10. **Arrange for garbage removal.**  
Contact the city works department to arrange for garbage removal or find out where the garbage can be taken. Local government agencies, contractors or developers may be willing to help with removal. Locate nearby recycling centers for the recyclable materials.



11. **Publicize the event.**  
Notify local newspapers, radio and television stations about your project. Point out your project's contribution to improving the site and enhancing community pride.
12. **Double-check your list.**  
Check your list of things to do one more time to make sure everything has been covered. Make copies of the *Let's Pick It Up New York Litter Report*.

## THE CLEANUP DAY

1. **Keep records.**  
Give a copy of the *Let's Pick It Up New York Litter Report* form to each team and show them how to use it. As you collect garbage and place it in bags for disposal, remember to separate the recyclable items.
2. **Take photographs.**  
Be sure to take photos of your volunteers in action! You can use "before" and "after" photographs to show people what your group has accomplished.
3. **Final pickup.**  
Arrange for volunteers to help with returning borrowed materials and disposing of garbage or recyclables.
4. **Celebrate!**  
Reward yourself and your volunteers with a picnic or party.

## AFTER THE CLEANUP

1. **Recognize your volunteers.**  
Thank everyone who participated, including property owners, merchants, local government staff, elected officials and other people who contributed to the success of your project.
2. **Inform and educate.**  
Use information from the *Let's Pick It Up New York Litter Report* to inform the community about the type and amount of garbage collected. Encourage them to be part of the future through pollution prevention.
3. **Enjoy the results!**  
Thanks to your efforts, another New York State site will be more enjoyable to view, safer, and may provide more suitable habitat for wildlife.

**Let's Pick It Up New York!**  
**Any questions, call (518) 402-8704**



ATTACHMENT 1

New York State Department of Environmental Conservation

## Let's Pick It Up New York Litter Report

Please complete this report and return it to the address below.

We will periodically report on cleanup efforts in New York State and will send your group a "Certificate of Appreciation".

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ORGANIZATION \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIPCODE \_\_\_\_\_

COUNTY \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE\_( \_\_\_\_\_ ) \_\_\_\_\_

How many people participated in this cleanup?

Youth \_\_\_\_\_ Grade:  K - 5  6 - 8  9 - 12

Adult \_\_\_\_\_

What location did you clean?

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ County \_\_\_\_\_

How many miles did you clean? \_\_\_\_\_

How many bags of garbage did you collect? \_\_\_\_\_

How many pounds/tons of garbage did you collect? \_\_\_\_\_

(please indicate if it is pounds or tons)

What was the most unusual thing you collected? \_\_\_\_\_

(use additional paper if you need more room)

Please send copies of newspaper clippings, photos and any other information  
on your event along with this report to:

NYSDEC  
Let's Pick It Up New York!  
625 Broadway  
Albany, NY 12233-7253

Thank you for your efforts to Pick It Up New York!

## Attachment 2

# Safety Checklist

- ▶ No horseplay.
- ▶ Be careful of the plants and animals. We don't want to hurt them.
- ▶ Wear orange or bright shirts.
- ▶ No vehicles should stop on roadways or roadway shoulders.
- ▶ Don't pick up anything that could be hazardous to your health including, but not limited to: needles, broken glass, animal carcasses or heavy objects.
- ▶ Wear appropriate work gloves and long pants on the job. We recommend boots and leather shoes for really bad sites.
- ▶ Make sure children are supervised.
- ▶ No horseplay or other activities that will compromise your safety.
- ▶ Groups should have a first aid kit available and transportation should be available at all times in case of an emergency. Someone should be familiar with first aid.
- ▶ Avoid overexertion and make arrangements to provide drinking water in hot weather.

### Roadway Cleanups in particular:

- ▶ Children under 16 years of age should not participate in roadway cleanups.
- ▶ No horseplay or other activities that will compromise either your safety or distract motorists.
- ▶ Always face oncoming traffic.
- ▶ Stay well away from pavement areas and traffic.
- ▶ Do not walk on guardrails.
- ▶ Do not lean over guardrails.
- ▶ Stay off the underside of overhead bridge structures.
- ▶ Do not lean over bridge railings.

**PLEASE ASSURE THAT SAFETY IS STRESSED TO ALL INVOLVED.**