



Red River Bank Cleanup Information

one time or long-term cleanups



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History Of



Established in 1990, River Keepers was created after a large community-wide assessment determined that the Red River is underutilized, underappreciated and in some cases mistreated. River Keepers is dedicated to connecting our community safely to the Red River of the North through education, stewardship and engagement. We provide opportunities for the community to *learn* about the Red River, help *sustain* it, and safely *enjoy* it. River Keepers believes in a future in which all people value the Red River as a vital part of our community.

Garbage ending up in the Red River, and in rivers globally, remains a persistent and challenging issue. One of River Keepers' early programs was Adopt-the-Red which gave our community a way to work together and clean up garbage in or near the river. This program is now a collaborative effort between River Keepers, Fargo Park District and Moorhead Parks and Recreation. With the help of hundreds of volunteers annually, tens of thousands of pounds of trash have been collected over the years with support from volunteers, sponsors, and project partners.

Thank you for including River Keepers and our partners in your cleanup. From one person to a large organization, we are grateful for all the time and resources being spent to sustain the Red River, our community's main source of drinking water, for generations to come.

Introduction about Red River Bank Cleanups

A community's natural resources are precious. These natural resources provide food, drinking water, as well as recreation opportunities. Because humans have the greatest impact on the environment, it is our responsibility to be stewards of the resources in our communities.

A precious natural resource located between Fargo and Moorhead, the Red River is the community's primary source of drinking water. The City of Fargo treats about 11 million gallons of water a day and Moorhead treats about 5 million gallons of water per day. All that water is pumped into homes, hospitals, and businesses. Protecting the quality of the water starts not only with the river itself, but also with the natural and urban environment surrounding the river.

Red River Bank Cleanups are a collaborative effort between River Keepers, the Fargo Park District, and Moorhead Parks and Recreation. Volunteers can participate in a one-time cleanup or long-term commitment where they Adopt a Park or Adopt the Red. One-time and long-term cleanups can help significantly reduce the amount of trash in and around the river which has the potential to degrade the quality of the water. National studies indicate nearly 90% of the items collected during a river cleanup are non-biodegradable.



Where is this trash coming from? Mostly what volunteers find on clean ups are smaller items like food and beverage containers, cigarette butts and plastic bags. Trash like this can find its way into the Red River by becoming stormwater pollution and entering storm drains from roads and parking lots. It could be blown in from garbage cans tipped over by the wind at residential homes or large gatherings that don't have enough trash cans. A lot of times it is unintentional, but sometimes people think one bottle cap is too insignificant and not bother to dispose of it properly. This can become an exponential problem when many people take this view.

This program is most successful when the community works together to tackle this issue. Working with a project partner allows other cleanups to be coordinated that will have the most impact. It avoids issues like duplicating efforts by sending volunteers to areas that have been cleaned recently. It also helps us track the total amount of garbage picked up in a season to evaluate the program.

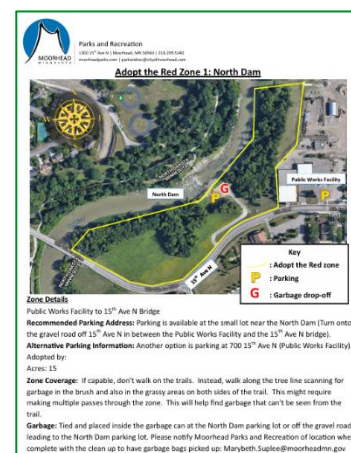
Volunteer groups, organizations, and businesses that participate in this program will expand their concept of stewardship for the Red River, gain the opportunity to protect this natural resource and help build a sense of community pride. Cleanups are also a great teambuilding experience, a way to get fresh air, get some exercise, spend time with friends and family, and enjoy the Red River.

Guide for a Successful Cleanup

By joining the program through a coordinating partner, participating groups show a strong commitment to promoting stewardship that will benefit both communities that share the Red River's banks.

Here are the steps to get the process started:

1. **Arrange a committee or assign a group coordinator** to lead the cleanup/adopt effort if there is a large group or business. Reaches of the Red River can be cleaned by individuals, families, service groups, businesses, or other organizations.
2. **Select the Type of Cleanup:** Reaches can be adopted long-term or cleaned on a one-time basis. Adopting a stretch shows a long-term commitment to helping protect the natural resources in the Fargo-Moorhead community.
3. **Determine a Date:** Cleanups can be scheduled any day of the week (Monday – Sunday). Consider planning a backup weather date.
4. **Select a Time:** Cleanups must be completed during daylight hours. Each reach takes about 1– 2 hours. Want to volunteer longer? Sign up to cover multiple reaches.
5. **Choose a Preferred Location:** There are dozens of reaches along the Red River in Fargo and Moorhead that are mapped out.
 - View maps on [River Keepers website](#) here:
6. **Contact a Project Partner:** Notify the program partner with the above information.
 - **Fargo Park District** – for Fargo reaches only.
 - Phone: 701.551.5891
 - Email: mfitzgerald@fargoparks.com
 - **Moorhead Parks and Recreation** – for Moorhead reaches only.
 - Phone: 218.299.5296
 - Email: steve.french@moorheadmn.gov
 - **River Keepers** – for Fargo and Moorhead reaches.
 - Phone: 701.356.8915
 - Email: kimberly@riverkeepers.org
7. **Sign an Agreement:** The group leader signs an agreement form on behalf of the whole group. Your project partner will provide you with the latest agreement form.
8. **Prepare Your Volunteers:**
 - Date(s), time, where to meet, what to wear/bring.
 - Review the information provided in this packet and in the agreement form you sign with your project partner with all participants.
 - Watch the safety training video available on River Keepers YouTube channel at <https://youtu.be/RErbcn05UP4>



Guide for a Successful Cleanup

Promoting a Cleanup:

- Tell friends, family, neighbors, co-workers, community groups, or organizations.
- Email and social media are great tools for promoting a cleanup. Use these tools to send last minute reminders or changes to participants. Encourage people to share the event and photos on social media with hashtags, such as #SustaintheRed and tag the project partner.
- Make a fun flyer to grab people's attention.
- For increased participation, promote the cleanup day along with a fun activity like a potluck or picnic.
- Create a media advisory to invite reporters and bloggers to attend. A template is provided in this packet.

Minimize Your Impact on the Environment:

Minimize the impact to the environment during a cleanup by following these simple rules:

- Try not to damage foliage.
- Do not break branches or twigs, bend them lightly or go around them
- Tread lightly and leave no trace.

During a Cleanup:

Document the following on the evaluation form (see following page for an example on how to document):

- The Group should consider items such as car batteries, partially filled farm or garden chemical containers, syringes or any items the group suspects may be hazardous as a hazardous substance. Please leave these items alone and report their location during evaluation.
- Report if there is an object too big for the Group to handle.
- Take note of locations of graffiti or vandalism.
- Take photos of volunteers to use for social media. The following are great shots:
 - Volunteers in action, like picking up a piece of trash or hauling a garbage bag, try to get the river in the background!
 - The weirdest or most unexpected piece of trash found with people in the picture or in the environment in which it was found.
 - A group photo with the Red River in the background. If possible, place some or all the garbage bags filled in front of group members to make for an impactful photo. If you find an interesting item, consider having it visible.

Within One Week After a Cleanup:

Return extra supplies, the completed Evaluation Form, and any photos to the program partner.

Interested in Getting More Involved:

Individuals or groups that wish to broaden their stewardship opportunities can contact River Keepers for more ideas or projects:

- Phone: 701.356.8915 or Email: kimberly@riverkeepers.org
- Volunteer Form: riverkeepers.org/volunteer



Guide for a Successful Cleanup

Documentation Example:

Use the se steps to better document hazardous items, large items, vandalism, graffiti or homeless camps. Return all information and pictures to your project partner:



1

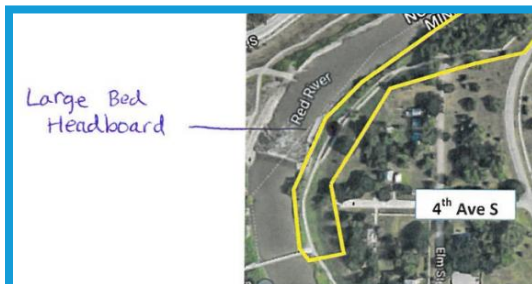
Take a wide, zoomed out, photo of the object. Try to get something recognizable in the background. In this photo, the midtown dam was included. This makes it easier for Public Works staff to find the item so it can be taken care of promptly or in the case of a homeless camp, to try and connect these individuals with services.



2

Use your phone to take a zoomed-out screen shot of your location using a navigation app like Google Maps.

AND/OR



3

Using a pen or marker, write on the cleanup map where the object is located by placing a dot on the map and labeling what the object is.

Zone Details

1st Ave N Bridge to Dike East Floating Bridge

Recommended Parking Address: Parking is avai

Alternative Parking Address: 1st Ave N Bridge to Dike East Floating Bridge

Safety Information for an Enjoyable Cleanup

Safety is our top priority. All participants should be in good physical condition and are expected to use common sense and follow the safety instructions below. It is important to also review the agreement form from the project partner.

A cleanup safety video can be watched here: <https://youtu.be/RErbcno5UP4>

What to Wear:

- Closed toed flat shoes or boots with ankle support.
- Long pants.
- Gloves – disposable or heavy leather gloves.

What to Bring/Not Bring:

- First aid kit. Inform all participants who is carrying the kit.
- A cell phone for each sub group. Provide leaders cell phone number to participants.
- Sunscreen and/or bug repellent.
- Water.
- Knives, machetes, axes, saws, etc. should not be carried by crew members.

Handling Trash:

- Use trash pickers. Check with your project partner to see if they are available for check out. Please treat them gently and remind youth they are not toys.
- Be mindful of what you are picking up and do not pick up anything you cannot clearly see. Make sure you can see your fingers and palms of your hands.
- Do not compact/squeeze trash bags to gain room. Injuries from broken or jagged objects can result from this. Fill the bag with what goes in easily and then get another.
- Do not open any containers or bottles as they may contain hazardous material.
- Do NOT enter the Red River to pick up trash.
- Be aware of where you are walking and watch your footing, especially when close to the river, on steep or muddy banks, and near the dams.

Outdoor Safety:

- Avoid Poison Ivy, Stinging Nettle and Wood Nettle. See Plants to Avoid section on the following page. Avoiding these plants can help save hours of discomfort.
- Be aware of vehicle and pedestrian traffic on the recreational paths and in the parks.
- Discontinue work in inclement weather, especially in times of reduced visibility, wet/icy roads, lightning, and when it is getting dark.
- Use the buddy system.
- Avoid overexertion. Drink plenty of water, especially on warm, humid days.
- Youth must be supervised by adults.
- Check for ticks after the cleanup.

Homeless Camps:

- Leave alone but note location using as much detail as possible from a non-intrusive and safe distance. See documentation tips for more information. River Keepers works with partners who work with these folks to get them connected to much needed resources such as housing and



Plants to Avoid

Stinging Nettle (*Urtica dioica*) Facts:

Where it grows:

Higher ground in full sunlight. It can thrive in barnyards, thickets, and roadsides.



Plant Height and Identification: 2-7 ft tall with slender, rigid stems and coarsely toothed leaves

Effect: Upon contact, the long stinging hairs break off. The sharp points of these fine hairs penetrate the skin, releasing the sap of the plant which inflames the skin. The irritation lasts for only a short time. Over-the-counter anti-itch medications may ease the irritation.



Wood Nettle Facts:

Where it grows: In deeply shaded, moist woodlands or in the shade of overhanging trees along streams or lakes.

Plant Height and Identification: 2-7 ft tall

Effect: Upon contact, the long stinging hairs break off. The sharp points of these fine hairs penetrate the skin, releasing the sap of the plant which inflames the skin. The irritation lasts for only a short time. Over-the-counter anti-itch medications may help ease the irritation.

Folk Remedy: Jewelweed can be found in moist woods, usually near poison ivy or nettles. However, this plant does not grow in direct sunlight or dry places. The remedy is to crush the leaves and stems and rub this on the irritated skin.

Poison Ivy (*Toxicodendron radicans* and *T. rydbergii*) Facts:

Where it grows: Flood plains, pastures, fence rows and wooded uplands.



Plant Height and Identification: Poison ivy can grow as a low shrub, 1 ft tall, or a vine. The leaves are typically 2-4" long, pointed at the tip, and the middle leaf stem is slightly longer than the other two. The leaves change from bright green in the spring and summer to a deep red or reddish yellow in the fall.

Common sayings: "Leaves of three let it be!" and "Hairy vine no friend of mine"

Effects: Poison ivy contains urushiol, which is the active ingredient that causes a rash. Urushiol is present in all parts of the plant, but particularly in the sap. Since the sap ducts do not open to the surface of the leaf, the plant has to be broken or crushed before the oil can move to the surface. Clothes, tools and even pets can come in contact with the oils once the sap moves to the surface of the plant. The oils then transfer to the skin. It can take as little as 10 minutes for the oils to penetrate the skin causing a rash to develop within a few hours.

Remedies: Wash the exposed skin immediately with soap and water, which may prevent a rash from developing. Be sure to shower and wash all clothing after a cleanup to prevent exposure. If a rash does develop, use over-the-counter creams and lotions that will relieve itching and dry the blisters. Home remedies such as wet compresses and soaking in cool water, stirring some salt or baking soda into a bath may relieve some of the symptoms. If the rash fails to respond to over-the-counter medications, or there is reason to suspect smoke from a fire containing poison ivy has been inhaled, seek professional medical attention.

Sample Media Advisory Release

Use the following sample media advisory release to inform the local media that a cleanup day has been scheduled by the group. The media advisory should offer contact information for comments or interviews, date, location, and information about the group participating in the cleanup.

Place on Group Letterhead if possible.

For Immediate Release: date

Media Advisory

For More Information: place names, titles and cell phone numbers here

Catchy Title: A title that will make the media interested in the cleanup

Who: Explain the group and any partners that will be involved in the cleanup.

What: Explain what the intent of the group will be such as cleaning a park, removing trash along the riverbank or doing an on-the-water cleanup. And why it is important.

When: State the date and time.

Where: Identify the location including park name and address. If it's difficult to find, include directions or landmarks near the park.

What the Cameras will See: Explain what volunteers will be doing while the media is present.

Offer information about items of interest such as:

- landmarks
- new items (example: new playground equipment donated by name organization or wood duck houses built by _____)
- animals, birds or waterfowl in the area

History: write a very short summary about your organization (example: how many years you have participated in the Adopt program), interesting statistics and whether more information can be found at the group's website.

RED RIVER BANK CLEANUP EVALUATION

Please answer the following questions and return within one week of the completion of your cleanup along with any extra supplies and any photos taken.

Date of cleanup: _____ Name of Group: _____

Name of Park: _____

How many people did you have in your group? _____

How much time did it take to clean your area? _____

Total Hours: _____ (# of volunteers x # of hours worked)

Where did you find the most garbage? _____

Number of bags of trash: _____ Number of bags of recycling: _____

About how many pounds of trash did you pick up? _____

Location of trash bags to be picked up: (If hard to describe, mark on the cleanup map):

What types of debris did you recover? ☐ rubber ☐ glass ☐ aluminum ☐ plastic ☐ metal

☐ cigarette filters ☐ paper ☐ other: _____

Location and description hazardous materials: _____

Location and description of large objects: _____

Location and description graffiti or vandalism: _____

Location and description of homeless campsites found: _____

* To ensure Public Works staff can address hazardous items, large items, vandalism, graffiti or homeless camps, please provide as much detail as possible using one or more of the following:

- Take a wide, zoomed out photo of the object from a non-intrusive and safe distance.
- Use a phone to take a zoomed-out screen shot of your location using an app like Google Maps. Mark on the cleanup map and label what and where the object is.

What interesting things did your group find? _____

Was the drop off points at good locations? YES or NO (circle one)

If NO why not? _____

Work that still needs to be completed: _____

Maintenance or security issues: _____

What did you enjoy about the cleanup? _____

Suggestions/comments: _____

