



Red River Bank Clean-up Information

one time or long-term clean-ups



About River Keepers

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' mission is to advocate for the safe and sustainable use of the Red River. Projects and programming help the community learn about the Red River, to help sustain and safely enjoy it. Efforts are coordinated in conservation, safety, recreation, riparian restoration, and water quality among local agencies in Fargo, North Dakota and Moorhead, Minnesota. 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 clean-up. 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.

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Introduction to Red River Bank Clean-ups

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 of 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 Clean-ups are a collaborative effort between River Keepers, the Fargo Park District, and Moorhead Parks and Recreation. Volunteers can participate in a one-time clean-up or long-term commitment where they Adopt a Park or Adopt the Red. One-time and long-term clean-ups 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 clean-up are non-biodegradable.

This program is most successful when the community works together to tackle this issue. Working with a project partner allows other clean-ups 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. Clean-ups 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.

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.

How to Begin the Process

Reaches of the Red River and parks can be either be cleaned on a one-time basis or adopted long term by individuals, families, service groups, businesses, or other organizations. Participating in Adopt the Red or Adopt a Park shows a long-term commitment to helping protect the natural resources in the Fargo-Moorhead community.

Here are the steps to get the process started:

1. Arrange a committee or assign a group coordinator to lead the clean-up/adopt effort if there is a large group or business.
2. Contact one of the program's partners, **Fargo Park District**, **Moorhead Parks and Recreation**, or **River Keepers** for a list of parks, reaches of the riverfront, or reaches of the river which are available for cleaning/adopting. Notify the program partner if you have any reaches that you prefer. Also provide the date, time and number of people that are volunteering at this time.
 - a. Fargo Park District
 - i. Phone: 701.499.6060
 - ii. Email: anag@fargoparks.com
 - b. Moorhead Parks and Recreation
 - i. Phone: 218.299.5296
 - ii. Email: josie.gereszek@ci.moorhead.mn.us
 - c. River Keepers
 - i. Phone: 701.356.8915
 - ii. Email: kimberly@riverkeepers.org
3. Adopt a site by completing an Agreement Form with the appropriate program partner.
 - a. Examples of the agreement forms can be found starting on page 10.

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

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

Group Responsibilities

Prior to the Clean-up:

- Plan the clean-up date, time and backup date.
- Notify the program partner (Fargo Park District, Moorhead Parks and Recreation, or River Keepers) at least a week prior to the clean-up date so arrangements can be made to pick up clean-up supplies.
- Provide information about the clean-up to volunteers.
 - Dates, time, where to meet, what to wear/bring.
 - Review the safety information provided in this packet and in the agreement form you sign with your project partner with all group participants.
 - Watch the safety training video available on River Keepers YouTube channel at <https://youtu.be/RErbco5UP4>.

Promoting a Clean-Up:

- Tell friends, family, neighbors, co-workers, community groups, or organizations.
- Email, Facebook, and other social media platforms are great tools for promoting a clean-up. 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 clean-up 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 clean-up 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 Clean-Up:

Document the following on the evaluation form:

- The Group should consider items such as car batteries, partially filled farm or garden chemical containers, or any items the group suspects may be hazardous as a hazardous substance. Please leave these items alone and report their location during evaluation.
- If there is an object too big for the Group to handle, explain the location of the object (use landmarks if possible and take pictures) so arrangements can be made for its removal.
- Take note of locations of graffiti or vandalism.
- If possible, 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 Clean-up:

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

Safety Information for an Enjoyable Clean-up

Safety of the participants is the first priority during a clean-up. Participants should be in good physical condition, including sight and hearing, and have good common sense. Below is a list of safety information to prepare all volunteers participating. It is important to also read through the agreement form provided by the project partner.

A clean-up training 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:

- 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 attempt to compact (squeeze) trash sacks to gain room for more trash. Injuries from broken or jagged objects often result from this practice. Fill the sack with what goes in easily and then get another bag.
- Do not open any containers, including plastic water or soda bottles as they may contain hazardous material.
- Do NOT enter the Red River from land 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. Recognizing these plants and avoiding them can help save hours of discomfort long after a successful and fun clean-up day.
- 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 storms, 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 clean-up.

Homeless Camps:

- Leave alone but note location using as much detail as possible by taking a photo of the camp from a non-intrusive and safe distance. In addition, use a map app on your phone to screenshot a photo of your location. River Keepers works with the partners to try and work with these folks to get them connected to much needed resources such as housing, healthcare etc.

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 clean-up 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 clean-up 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 clean-up.

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 clean-up

Who: Explain the group and any partners that will be involved in the clean-up.

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.



Parks and Recreation

1300 15th Ave N | Moorhead, MN 56560 | 218.299.5340
moorheadparks.com | parkandrec@citvofmoorhead.com

Adopt-The-Red Agreement

Volunteer monthly in May-October

Adopt **One Time Group**

River Reach I would like to Adopt: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____

Please recognize my efforts as: _____
(ex: Smith Family, Bill and Sue Johnson, Arbor Park Neighbors, Neighborhood, Church Youth Group)

The City of Moorhead is allowed to recognize volunteer efforts on the City Website/publications.

What are the adopter's responsibilities?

- Bring a first aid kit.
- Encourage participants to carry a cell phone.
- Plan a car pool to clean-up site. (Park one car at the beginning and one at the end)
- Do not attempt to remove homeless sites or suspected toxic/hazardous substances, needles, sharp objects or objects too heavy or large to move – note the location and notify Public Works.
- Be prepared to move out of way of bicyclists, in-line skaters and pedestrians on any paths.
- Do NOT enter the Red River from land to pick up trash.
- Watch footing when close to river, on steep or muddy banks, or near dams.
- Avoid Poison Ivy. (Leaves of three let them be)
- Leave full garbage bags alongside the road, trail or garbage cans for park maintenance to pick up.
- Discontinue work in inclement weather, especially in times of reduced visibility, during electrical storms, and during other daylight conditions.
- Avoid over exertion, drink plenty of water especially on warm, humid days.
- Volunteers under the age of 18 must be supervised by a responsible adult.
- Recommend wearing long pants, shoes or boots (no open toes or sandals), and sunscreen/ bug repellent.
- Suggested ratio: 1 adult to 10 youth (ages 12 and under)
- The adopter or one time group shall be considered as independent contractors and not as employees of Moorhead Parks and Recreation for any purpose, such as worker's compensation, medical insurance, nor any job benefits normally provided to Moorhead Parks and Recreation employees.



Parks and Recreation

1300 15th Ave N | Moorhead, MN 56560 | 218.299.5340
moorheadparks.com | parkandrec@cityofmoorhead.com

- Each adopter or one time group does hereby agree to indemnify and hold harmless the City, River Keepers, its agents and employees from all costs, including attorney fees, as a result of any personal injury to any individual and/or group, or other person, or property damage to city property or any other person's property caused by, or as a result of his or her actions while performing the responsibilities under this Adopt-the-Red Program.
- The adopter or one time group representative shall provide a copy of the "Responsibilities" to each and every volunteer/participant performing clean-up activities.
- Emergency Numbers:
 - Moorhead Parks and Recreation 218.299.5340
 - Red River Regional Dispatch 701.451.7660
 - Emergency 911

Contact Parks and Recreation, 1300 15th Ave N, Moorhead, at 218.299.5340 to:

- Schedule your pick up time to get garbage bags, rakes and disposable gloves.
- Call when clean- up is completed so staff can promptly pick up garbage bags the following day.
- Return unused gloves, garbage bags, rakes, and pickers to Parks and Recreation.

If, in the judgment of Moorhead Parks and Recreation, it is determined that the Group had failed to perform the clean-up in a manner acceptable to Moorhead Parks and Recreation or it otherwise did not follow the spirit and intent of this agreement, Moorhead Parks and Recreation may terminate this agreement upon notice to the Group.

By your signature below you hereby agree to the terms and conditions set forth in this agreement and the Adopt-the-Red responsibilities. By your signature, you are the designated Adopt-the Red Representative to represent yourself and your group of volunteers.

Signature

Date

Josie Gereszek
Recreation Coordinator
City of Moorhead
218.299.5078
josie.gereszek@cityofmoorhead.com

Date

RED RIVER BANK CLEAN-UP EVALUATION

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

Date of clean-up: _____ 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: _____

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: _____

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 clean-up? _____

Suggestions/comments: _____

