



## Great Lakes Watershed Cleanup

### Mobilizing Rotarians, Rotaractors, Interactors

The Great Lakes Watershed Cleanup initiative is an effort to focus attention to the Great Lakes and to all the great work that is being done to clean up our lakes, streams, and waterways. Through the coordination of many associated clean up events, to be held around the week of Earth Day, our goal is to make this the single largest series of linked clean up events ever planned by Rotary and held during this one period of time on the Great Lakes and surrounding watersheds.

Trash, plastics and other littered items plague oceans, lakes, and rivers. This trash poses a threat to terrestrial and aquatic life, often becomes microplastics and harmful toxins, and pollutes one of the most precious and limited natural resources.

According to a report from the Rochester Institute of Technology, more than 22 million pounds of trash and plastic pollution ends up in the Great Lakes each year. Globally, each Earth Day over a billion people worldwide work together in their communities. The Great Lakes contains almost 20% of the world's freshwater and the Great Lakes System is arguably the largest source of fresh water on the planet.

Each spring, numerous cleanup events occur in the US and Canada throughout the Great Lakes watersheds to remove accumulated debris and waste that has collected. Shopping carts, tires, furniture, trash, numerous foam cups, plastic containers and aluminum cans can be found along our waterways and greenways. These cleanup events remove thousands of pounds of garbage from the environment each year. Unfortunately, after each cleanup, this debris continues to accumulate through on-going littering and illegal dumping.

Cleanups from numerous NGOs, community groups and individual volunteers are critical to reducing the amount of garbage that collects in our watersheds each year. In order to track our success, the second goal of this effort will be to tabulate the amount of debris collected from each of the individual clean up events. And the final and most important goal of this event will be to educate the public to the importance of protecting our waterways, to instill a sense of stewardship towards our Great Lakes.

The individual Great Lakes Watershed Cleanup events will be planned to be held between Saturday April 17<sup>th</sup> and Saturday April 24<sup>th</sup>, to coincide with the celebration of Earth Day which falls on April 22<sup>nd</sup>.

### Objectives

The objectives of holding this large scale coordinated cleanup event is to:

1. Improve the aesthetics of the Great Lakes by removing garbage from public areas and roadsides

2. Reduce the amount of plastic and litter on our lands and in our waterways
3. Remove waste that could potentially be ingested by pets and other wildlife
4. Provide an opportunity for public participation in collaborative activities
5. Educate the public about the effects of littering, the importance of recycling, and instill a sense of stewardship
6. Collect and report back to organizers cleanup metrics to track the impacts of all the cleanups

#### Opportunity

- Engage as many Districts, Clubs, Rotarians, and other volunteers around the Great Lakes
- Each Club should find out what is happening in their community(s) regarding cleanups. Engage with local Conservation Authorities, Watershed groups or local NGO to see what is already planned in your area to see if there is an opportunity to coordinate or partner with an existing event.
- If there is not an event already planned in your community, look to organize your own event.
- Support will be available to each club or group to help with organizing an event
- Correspond with District contact to provide cleanup event date, locations, and lead contact person for each event.

#### Timeline

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|----------------|--|
| January        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Securing District commitments, developing of branding materials and Club/Social media campaign</li> </ul>   |
| February       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Club/Member/Rotaract recruitments (i.e., need provide a lead contact for each of the clubs/organizations that plan on participating)</li> </ul>                                 |
| February-March | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Linking with local community efforts and/or creating new local community effort (if no local effort in place)</li> <li>• Promotions, planning</li> <li>• Education</li> </ul>   |
| April          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preparation</li> <li>• Local promotion (of local efforts as part of Great Lakes)</li> </ul>   |
| April 17-24th  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Hold cleanup events</li> </ul>  |
| May 10th       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Return metrics document (event location, number of volunteers, amounts of trash collected, etc.) to District contact and Kaylee Peterson. Document will be provided.</li> </ul> |
| June           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Documenting for Rotarian Magazine article</li> <li>• Preparing for 2022</li> </ul>  |

To forward individual event contact information or for any additional questions, contact event coordinator – via [RIDistrict7010@gmail.com](mailto:RIDistrict7010@gmail.com).