

## Great Lakes Watershed Cleanup Club Action Plan: 10 Steps in 22 Days

In concept, a Rotary club has to decide to want to do the Great Lakes Watershed Cleanup (GLWC). It starts with a quick meeting and perhaps a vote to get to #10. For a club new to this project it is entirely possible to go from step 1 to 10 in a 22 day countdown. Here is an outline of doing your first cleanup. It's a Rotary *Day of Action*, it's easy, meaningful, and it's fun! All it really takes to start is a carload of members at minimum to go out for a walk on or close to Earth Day - April 22nd - to fill up a few garbage bags.

1	Day 22	Establish a club point person for the event. Have them review the information on the District 7090 GLWC site. They can get up to speed by doing a search on Earth Day cleanups in general. Send out a heads up email to club members and grab the GLWC logo so you can make a poster. With this much time you likely have a few club meetings to talk about the GLWC and ask for volunteers. Know that when you are ready with a location, date, and time, prepare to signal your intention to do this on social media.
2	Day 21	Three weeks out. Ask for local environmental contacts within the club membership, do a search, and call the following community partners: your local municipality, waste management people, green and nature groups, parks departments, etc. With a search and a few phone calls you can establish whether there is an existing cleanup program or that you have to spin one up.
3	Day 18	Begin to identify your candidate site. It can be a park or a natural area. Everything including green spaces are part of the watershed. Existing cleanup programs make your event easier, but some groups might give you a great suggestion for a new area. Within a few days you should pick your site, time, meeting location. Are you going with your day regardless of weather or do you have a backup date? Someone may want to walk the site. Whoever has authority over the park or area may have specific conditions for you. Sometimes, if there are items that are heavy or unusual, this authority will remove those later.
4	Day 14	Two weeks away. With your poster or announcement in hand of the where and when, contact (phone and email) your current partners like schools and community groups. Get your RYLA, Rotaract, Interact, and families involved. Considering waivers is a good idea. Note that some groups may need you to provide insurance coverage or need to have their own. Your site partner may also have some kind of form for you and your club to sign. Depending on your relationships you may need to move this day's items earlier in this list.
5	Day 13	Some basic supplies are needed. Garbage bags, gloves, pickers. Sometimes your local parks department or waste management company can supply and even sponsor this event. You may have arranged a pick up prior to Day 0, or the authority will meet you at the cleanup site on the day with these supplies. It's different in different communities. For sure you need to have someone or some agency who can haul what you collect away.
6	Day 10	This is the serious part. You are going to have to have a safety discussion. No one wants to get hurt or be put at risk. Try and get this area arranged by this date. Make sure you plan for this and pick the times to communicate to all regarding supervision, water safety, people wearing the appropriate gear, etc. Note that some partners may have different safety and security requirements. Sometimes candidate sites have used needles or even have people living there. Talk to your local public health officials. Either they or a local pharmacy can give you proper disposal materials and the training you need to handle this kind of encounter. You may find that after your cleanup event that there is also an opportunity for your club to follow through on some other issues and needs in your community. Anyway, for this Day 10 focus, you might want this job led by one volunteer.
7	Day 7	Yikes! A week away! You should have a general idea as to how many people you could

		have out at your event by this time. Encourage carpooling. Still, there is time to get more folks out. Remember, a first time event does not have to be massive. Make sure you are building your list of participants and suggest that a few people bring a few garden tools to get at some of the waste. Take care though, it is springtime. You might be around some sensitive areas so you want to ensure you have some parks or nature people out to care for where you are walking.
8	Day 6	This may need a bit of planning starting around Day 22, but around this date you may want to have a club speaker on the environment. Cleanups are great, but there is so much more your club can do for the planet. Check out: <a href="https://esrag.org/every-club-climate-friendly/">https://esrag.org/every-club-climate-friendly/</a>
9	Day 3	Reminder emails to the group(s) involved are a good thing, especially as you may be picking up some important details as you are counting down to Day 0. Check to make sure you have all the permissions and insurance documents needed. Some might want to bring refreshments. Encourage people to discuss how to minimise their waste: bring a travel mug, avoid bottled water, etc. Make sure someone has packed a first aid kit. Did you book in some local media?
10	Day 0	Clean up Day. Dress for the weather. Set up your central meeting location - Rotary canopy, sandwich boards, vests, banners, etc. Have a 'day of' group leader who will provide the opening reminders and announcements when you meet. Work in pairs or in teams. Make sure non-Rotarians are engaged. Track who is showing up, your volunteer hours, and for sure actively post on social media. Make sure you have a stop time and that as people leave that they sign out.  Take the trash to a central location like a parking lot for weighing and pickup. Thank everyone for their efforts!  Some GLWC cleanup groups have an afterparty!
+	After...	Report your trash and recycling amounts to your community and your District. Do a proper debrief. Listen to the experiences of all the participants. What went well, what can improve? Talk about the role of community/public education to reduce waste. Talk to (well, brag to) your neighbouring clubs. Is signage a possibility? Did you get a bump from social media and an article in the paper? Did you put this up on Rotary Showcase? Did you position the GLWC as another way to attract and recruit members – and to attract new partners and sponsors? Who else can you learn from? Is there more your club can do in this 'green space'? Maybe you are already doing some eco projects like pollinator gardens or farm-to-fork initiatives. You may want to do a second cleanup later in the year or plan for a longer run up to the GLWC event next year.  For some clubs in the Great Lakes it is not realistic to do a cleanup on or around April 22nd. Ok, so plan for a cleanup in May or later...
Any suggestions to improve this document? Please contact Dave Alexander at <a href="mailto:econiagara@gmail.com">econiagara@gmail.com</a> or via text/phone at 905-329-6026		