**GREAT LAKES WATERSHED CLEANUP 2024**

Hey Rotarians - Earth Day is Monday, April 22, 2024, and it is not too early to do some long-range planning for the Great Lakes Watershed Cleanup (GLWC) 2024. As part of the Environment being the new and growing area of focus within Rotary, cleanups are easy, meaningful, and fun ways to involve friends of Rotary, engage in new relationships, and help Clubs have conversations around environmental issues. Your Club can participate along with all other Rotary Clubs in the Great Lakes basin to help clean up a natural area, communicate environmental values, and partner with other groups in your area. Here are some helpful planning tips:

Steps to take now:

* Discuss this community service project opportunity within your Club. Reach out to a neighboring Club for input if this is the first time your Club is doing a Cleanup. Appoint a point person to chair the event. Some Clubs have even formed an environmental committee.
* Review previous Cleanups and identify possible partners in your community. Review and check in on the GLWC page on the [District site](https://rotary7090.org/page/great-lakes-watershed-cleanup-1#:~:text=The%20Great%20Lakes%20Watershed%20Cleanup,streams%20and%20waterways%20feeding%20them.) from time to time for updates. If you have any suggestions or changes please reach out. For example, we want to improve the District and Zone reporting system so we can state our collective success.
* Ideally the project work can be done on April 22nd, but your Club is welcome to have some flexibility with that date. Ensure you are coordinating your dates and commitments across the Rotary calendar. Also, as a backup, discuss how to handle inclement weather – light rain, deal with it – snowstorm, well you may want to have a reserve date.
* Communicate with your local municipality and/or planned site partner(s) to identify sites that can be cleaned up. If your Club has a great deal of experience, you may want to pick a more challenging site. It is also not too early to communicate anti-littering messages as well as make other earth-friendly choices and initiatives.
* Begin thinking of the ‘day of’ noting such issues as if you are going to want signage, social media, news releases, local press, and representation from local officials.

Steps to take around springtime:

* Ramping up commitments from your Club members’ participation as well as involvement from partners and supporters. This project is a good opportunity to showcase all your work to prospective members and convene an open house to discuss community health and environmental issues, etc.
* Make sure you have considered a process whereby the Club is ready to have appropriate release forms signed (some partners may need this or have their own) and insurance-related coverage.
* Attend and/or help arrange a Zoom webinar for organizers and group leaders.
* Check in with key partners on any material donations such as bags and gloves plus logistics of the day like carpooling, parking, refreshments, and public image opportunities.
* Considering post-event activities including your club going beyond a Cleanup activity towards other environmentally-related community service projects, booking speakers, and reviewing your club operations from an environmental impact point of view.

You should also know that efforts are under way to develop and enhance the Rotary experience across the Clubs and Districts in the Great Lakes. These points include:

* Coordinating broader communications issues.
* Development of basin-wide supports including partnerships and resources.
* Creating a portal to log your clean-up results (garbage weight, number of bags, images, etc.). We also want to create a space where you can share your Club’s project with others, showcase any new ideas or wrinkles you have created, and note any plans or expectations for the future. Help in developing this scale of the GLWC is welcome.

For further information please refer to the [District 7090 GLWC](https://rotary7090.org/page/great-lakes-watershed-cleanup-1#:~:text=The%20Great%20Lakes%20Watershed%20Cleanup,streams%20and%20waterways%20feeding%20them.) page or contact Dave Alexander, DGE, at [econiagara@gmail.com](mailto:econiagara@gmail.com) or via text/voice to 905-329-6026.