



Tools for Effective Volunteer Outreach

Get the Word Out

Involving the local community is critical to the success of any volunteer stream monitoring effort, especially as the League works to expand the number of stream sites monitored across the country. It is important to not only share information about potential water quality issues but also to get feedback on why community members care about certain waterways.

- **Start with the target audience you want to reach.** For example, what age group would be likely to be interested in your project? Are there other groups locally that share the League's interest in water-related issues?
- **Reach for new volunteers.** Create flyers for public places and post requests on social media.
- **Use volunteer-focused websites to advertise your event**, such as www.idealist.org or www.volunteermatch.org. Your region, state, county, or city may have site-specific web resources to help you find volunteers.
- **Attend meetings held by potential volunteer partners** and describe the project, the impact volunteers will have, and the outcomes the project could achieve (such as a cleaner stream corridor, improved water quality, or better habitat for fish).

Empower Volunteers

Many Americans are concerned about clean water. Yet most don't know about current threats to water quality or are even aware that local streams and rivers are connected to their own water supplies.

- **Describe the local environmental concern or opportunity.** What is your clean water goal? Why is this important to the community?
- **Let participants know how they are making a difference** – in terms that everyone can understand – and provide them with materials to share that information with others.
- **Provide incentives to encourage your target audience to donate time and/or money.** Incentives could range from free food at an event to recognition of volunteers on your chapter website. Most important is for volunteers to feel valued.
- **Offer simple volunteer opportunities to start**, such as stream clean-ups or a fishing derby. Through these activities, people will start to feel a sense of ownership around protecting local streams, and they will share what they have learned with others.
- **Develop a list of volunteer “job” opportunities**, including what needs to get done and how much time you expect it to take. People are more likely to volunteer if they know exactly what they're getting into. Not every volunteer needs to be able to lift a tire out of a stream. There are many critical jobs that

make an event successful, including promotion and publicity, registration and onsite coordination, and cooking or serving food after the event.

- **Keep an updated schedule of events** on your website and/or Facebook page. People like to know exactly when and where they need to be for an event. They also like regularly scheduled activities, for example, maybe you have an event the first Saturday of every month.
- **Don't forget the fun!** Offer free food or a prize for the strangest item picked up at a stream clean-up, for example.

To expand your volunteer base, explore partnering with organizations that have common goals or would benefit from the experience. For example, local Boy and Girl Scout troops are always looking to gain service hours for badges and awards. Groups of hikers, kayaking clubs, or other outdoor sports groups share our interest in stream health and might be willing to help monitor a stream or assist with a stream clean-up.

Follow the League on social media and check our website (www.iwla.org) for webinars and other volunteer outreach tips and ideas.

Contact the Izaak Walton League at sos@iwla.org with questions specific to stream monitoring partnerships and fundraising.