



SOLVE Volunteer Group Leader Guide

Thank you for your interest and support in SOLVE litter cleanups and other watershed enhancement activities! Groups like yours make a big difference to the health of Oregon's waterways, wildlife and communities. For Volunteer Group Leaders managing 15 or more volunteers, the following information is intended to help you lead, coordinate and encourage volunteer participation for a successful event.

- *The big picture (page 2)*
- *Step-by-step guide and timeline (pages 3-6)*

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The Big Picture:

SOLVE is a statewide non-profit organization that engages volunteers in stewardship of the environment across Oregon. SOLVE, best known for our spring and fall beach cleanups, has several programs to protect and restore Oregon through volunteer opportunities. We support community litter cleanups, removal of invasive plants, planting of native trees and shrubs, and enhancement of watershed restoration sites throughout the year.

The first fall Beach & Riverside Cleanup began in 1984 through the leadership and vision of two Oregonian women, Judie Hansen and Eleanor Dye. The Spring Oregon Beach Cleanup was added in 1986 to address the issue of debris washing in after winter storms. In the last 33 years, over **247,000 volunteers** have joined forces every fall and spring to remove over **3.3 million pounds of trash** from our beautiful beaches and waterways. Today, the Spring Oregon Beach Cleanup is a family-friendly Oregon tradition. Over 5,000 volunteers come out each spring to pick up an average of 50,000 pounds of trash in one day along all 363 miles of our coastline.

Spring Oregon Beach Cleanup sites are organized into 14 Zones and led by volunteer “Zone Captains”. Within each Zone, each cleanup site is run by a “Beach Captain”, volunteer leaders who set up registration on the event day and provide volunteers with waiver forms, cleanup supplies and safety information. Zone and Beach Captains are local to the area and are often an excellent resource for specific information like parking, accommodation and directions. Hauling and disposal is donated by local haulers, public works departments, and state parks.

SOLVE beach cleanup volunteers serve as a powerful force against the ongoing issue of marine debris on the Oregon coast. Common items found, such as cigarette butts, Styrofoam, six-pack yokes, fishing line, and netting are often ingested, and entangle and kill hundreds of seabirds, fish, and mammals each year. Litter fouls boat propellers, clogs engines, and contributes to the degradation of our beaches. It also puts a damper on coastal tourism and the local economy. If you have participated in a SOLVE litter cleanup in the past, either on the beach or in your own neighborhood, you are part of the solution and we cannot thank you enough for your dedication to keep our state beautiful!





It's easy to get involved! Step by step guide and timeline:

Preparation, December - February:

- 1) **Volunteer interest & support:** Request support from leaders within your organization for a team activity for the Spring Oregon Beach Cleanup.
- 2) **Select a site:** Visit the [Spring Oregon Beach Cleanup](https://www.solveoregon.org/spring-oregon-beach-cleanup) page to find a map of registration sites. Contact SOLVE with your preferred beach cleanup site(s) and an estimate of your group's size. We can assist in determining the best site to meet your group's needs, such as parking, picnic areas, or where trash "hotspots" in need of big groups may be this year. <https://www.solveoregon.org/spring-oregon-beach-cleanup>

**Special note regarding Seaside and Cannon Beach: These are very busy and popular cleanup destinations from the Portland area. If your group is looking for an area with an off-the-beaten-path feel, we recommend you consider having your group work on a beach north or south of these two cities.*

- 3) **Volunteer recruitment:** Create a unique promotion plan, specific to your organization's communication pathways and members' interests to keep the excitement level high! Brochures and posters will be available in early February. Contact SOLVE if you would like some sent to you. Consider some of these ideas:
 - Plan a fun competition between departments – who can recruit the most volunteers?
 - Create a chance to win a special prize.
 - Regularly schedule announcements and updates using internet, newsletters, bulletin boards, staff meetings and other venues.
- 4) **Group activities:** Identify what, if any, pre- or post-event activities will be undertaken for your team. For example, will you provide lunch following the cleanup?
- 5) **Transportation:** Address transportation needs and make recommendations such as car-pooling or scheduling a bus.
- 6) **Online registration:** After you've found a site appropriate for your group's needs and size, you may pre-register and sign your group up for the cleanup online. General online registration opens on **February 5th**.

Once registration opens, you can sign up your "**Volunteer Team**". When asked, name your team and enter the total numbers of people in your team. If you don't know, an estimate is fine. You're team members would then sign up individually by selecting, "I am a **member of an existing volunteer team**".

- Before SOLVE online registration opens, you are welcome to create an internal process for tracking volunteer interest through sign-up sheets or other methods to help you gauge the number of participants to plan for.



- Team members that do not pre-register online and sign an e-waiver will need to sign a printed waiver before participating on the day of the event.

7) **Sponsor Groups:** If you are a sponsor team and plan to set up your own table, please let SOLVE know as a city permit may be required for pop-up tents and tables.

Spring Oregon Beach Cleanup Day!

We recommend you bring:

- Sturdy closed-toed shoes
- Clothing suitable for the quickly changing coastal weather – rain and shine.
- A reusable container for drinking water and a snack or lunch.
- Reusable bag or buckets to reduce the number of trash bags we use.
- An old colander and small shovel to sift the tide lines for small pieces of plastic harmful to wildlife. These are the #1 items we find during beach cleanups!

Some tips to make it a fun and safe experience:

- Don't touch medical waste (needles, bandages, etc.) or hazardous debris (oil drums, gas cans, etc.). Mark the spot and tell the local Beach Captain at each registration site.
- Watch for sneaker waves, be aware of incoming tides and avoid logs in the surf.
- Be careful on rocks or cliffs.
- Keep dogs leashed and away from any seals, sea lions and [Snowy Plover nesting areas](#) (a threatened coastal bird).
- If you find tsunami-related debris, alert your Beach Captain. If it is large or an item of cultural significance, please also contact SOLVE and call 211 (Oregon's tsunami debris hotline) while you are still on the beach to report it.
- Be aware of the nearest tsunami evacuation route and head to high ground if you feel an earthquake.

What to expect on the day of the event:

- **Registration and Waiver Forms:** All volunteers age 18 and older are required to complete the SOLVE Volunteer Registration and Waiver Form. It is recommended that groups of 10 or more ask individuals in the group to complete the form prior to arrival either online or en-route to the registration. Groups will find that using this option allows them to register quickly since one representative can drop off all of the forms. Forms are available at solveoregon.org or <https://www.solveoregon.org/sbcu-volunteer-group-guide>
 - **Children and youth groups:** Organizations that have previously attained the written permission of the participants parents or legal guardians for all activities while in their care, may register once, in the name of the organization, with a total number of children listed.
 - **Youth under the supervision of parents or legal guardians:** Families with children under 18 in their party may register as a group with one parent or

guardian signing for all family members under the age of 18. Anyone over 18 should complete a separate registration and waiver form.

- **Check-in with Event Coordinators:** Upon arrival at your registration site, as Volunteer Group Leader, you will need to check in with the local Beach Captain and provide any printed waiver forms you have for your group - verify that all other members signed e-waivers prior to event day.
- **Off to the beach!** Your Beach Captain will then give you and/or your group a safety orientation (if your group is large you may choose to present the safety orientation to the group yourself). Your Beach Captain will also provide you with supplies and direct you where to go and where to dispose of your bags after the cleanup.
- **What you will find:** The type and amount of debris on Oregon's beaches varies greatly throughout the year and in different locations. The amount of debris on a given beach is directly linked to the strength and direction of offshore currents, storms, winds, and recent recreational usage. Volunteers report finding the most debris following a winter storm as it is washed in from the sea and downstream from inland sources, such as rivers and streams. Volunteers also find more debris after major holiday weekends (ex: 4th of July, Spring Break) when the beach becomes highly littered.

During the Spring Oregon Beach Cleanup, you may fill 5 bags, or just one, depending on your location. At some beaches you may find very large items washed in from the ocean, some with organisms attached. At other beaches, you may find very little. At these beaches, look closely at the tide lines and between the rocks where thousands of tiny plastics tend to accumulate. The small stuff is just as harmful to marine life as the big debris. Bring an old kitchen colander to sift the sand to help remove these tiny pieces.

See Oregon's most common litter here - <https://www.solveoregon.org/oregons-most-common-litter>



Post Event:

- 1) Check the SOLVE website for statistics on event accomplishments.
- 2) Send a follow-up communication to all participants thanking them for their involvement and letting them know the date of the next SOLVE event.
- 3) SOLVE will also send an *e*-thank you out to participants who signed waivers and wish to receive e-mails, with final event-day accomplishments.

Thank you and have fun!

