

River Valley Conservation Projects 2023

Helen Schuler Nature Centre coordinates three primary conservation projects:

1. Coulee Cleanup
2. Shoreline Cleanups
3. Invasive Weed Pulls

Before participating review the Important Safety Information, responsibilities, and before/during/after your cleanup.

Participation certificates are available upon request – this is helpful for high school students seeking volunteer hours!

IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION

When preparing for your cleanup, make sure you are dressed appropriately for the weather and the task. Wear gloves and sturdy closed-toed shoes, and use a grabbing device or trash picker for hard-to-reach items.

Take time to review and consider health and safety information prior to your cleanup. If you are unsure about any of the health and safety tips, please contact the program coordinator.

General Safety Tips & Reminders

- **Always be safe:** look out for yourself and others who are participating in your cleanup. Carry a first aid kit.
- **Use the buddy system:** avoid working alone, advise where you are going and when you expect to return, carry a cellphone in case of emergencies.
- **Use caution:** never reach blindly into bushes or tall grasses to pick up litter. Always ensure you see the entire piece of litter before picking it up. Stay away from roads and parking lots. Do not go near the river or bridge.
- **Watch the weather:** stay hydrated, wear sunscreen, avoid the heat of the day, limit sun exposure, remember that weather conditions can change quickly, and coulee slopes can become slippery.
- **Prevent erosion:** stay off coulees in wet or muddy conditions to avoid causing damage.
- **Beware of:** ticks, rattlesnakes, spiders, mosquitoes, wasps, cactus, and other natural hazards.
- **Watch bag weight:** keep bags less than 10lbs – rather than overfilling, start a new bag.
- **Be visible:** safety vests and road safety signs must be used while working near roadways.
- **Beware of sharps:** broken glass, needles, or sharp-edged items should never be placed in bags as it may inadvertently cause harm to others. If you find a needle, please refer to the Needle Disposal Guide. For needle removal call the Safe Community Call Centre (825-399-7233).
 - o **NEVER place needles or sharp objects in a plastic bag or garbage can as this puts other people at risk, especially staff responsible for picking up and changing garbage bags.**
 - o If you find broken glass or sharp objects, use a sharps container. If you do not have a sharps container, leave the glass, or sharp object where you found it and note the hazard in the final report. Ideally, take a GPS-tagged photo of the hazard and submit to Cleanup Coordinator.
- **Encampments:** if you find an encampment while participating, do not approach or dismantle it. Instead, call the Safety Community Call Centre (825-399-7233) and report the location to the Cleanup Coordinator.
- **Ticks:** at the end of your cleanup, remember to check for and remove any ticks.

For more information on River Valley Conservation in Lethbridge:

nature.lethbridge.ca/cleanshoreline

Curtis.Goodman@lethbridge.ca

403-320-3064

General Inquiry? Call 311

IN CASE OF EMERGENCY CALL 911

VOLUNTEER RESPONSIBILITIES

- Complete registration prior to your cleanup.
- Share program information with group participants.
- Follow Important Safety Information and program guidelines.
- Report damage or vandalism to 311.
- Report any close-calls, accidents, or injuries (regardless of severity) to program coordinator.
- Leave full garbage bags, tied tightly, next to existing City of Lethbridge garbage bins and report pick-up location to 311.
- Complete final report form.
- Pick up/return borrowed supplies within 24 hours of your scheduled cleanup.

CITY OF LETHBRIDGE RESPONSIBILITIES

- ✓ Assist groups to select a suitable cleanup location.
- ✓ Provide cleanup supplies (gloves, bags, first aid kits, area map(s), report form, health and safety information) if requested in advance of cleanup.
- ✓ Provide program information and health and safety guidelines.
- ✓ Provide support in removing garbage bags collected by volunteers.
- ✓ Support and coordination of participating volunteers and groups.
- ✓ Report project results to the community.

A NOTE ABOUT INSURANCE COVERAGE

Volunteers registered with River Valley Conservation projects are considered to be an Insured under the City of Lethbridge's general liability insurance program so long as the registered volunteer is acting within the scope of duties of "volunteer employment" with the City. In the event of a claim from a third party related to activities led by or involving a volunteer, coverage applies to both the City of Lethbridge and the volunteer.

Volunteers are not covered under the City of Lethbridge Worker's Compensation plan and the City does not provide insurance coverage for volunteers to compensate for lost earnings or medical expenses in the event of an accident.

To assist group leaders plan their cleanup, please use the following guidelines (BEFORE/DURING/AFTER) to host a safe and successful cleanup!

BEFORE YOUR CLEANUP

1. *Register*

- Register your group's cleanup: nature.lethbridge.ca/cleanshoreline
 - Use our online map to review area hazards and select a location: <http://bit.ly/2qYhkqO>
- Everyone is encouraged to register so we can track areas that have been cleaned and recognize your volunteer effort. Register even if you do not require any cleaning supplies or if you have already completed a litter cleanup this year.

2. *Prepare for safety*

- All cleanups must adhere to the Important Safety Information guidelines. Share provided documents with all participants and encourage them to review them before your cleanup.
- Arrange to pick up a cleanup kit from the Nature Centre the day before your cleanup. Group Leaders will receive a Health & Safety Orientation when they pick up their cleanup kit.
 - Cleanup kits include: gloves, bags, first aid kits, area map(s), report form, and health and safety information.
- Ask participants to come with their own personal protective equipment (e.g. hand sanitizer) on the day of the event OR bring supplies for them.

3. *Gather cleanup supplies*

- Pick up your cleanup kit from the Nature Centre the day before or day of your cleanup.
- Dress appropriately for the weather and the task; plan to wear gloves and sturdy close-toed shoes.

DURING THE CLEANUP

1. *Look out for yourself & your group*

- Group Leaders must complete a Health & Safety orientation with group members and encourage participants to take personal precautions, avoid unnecessary risks, and stay connected with the group.
- Before you begin, the group should set an end-time for your cleanup and a meeting location to ensure everyone leaves together.

2. *“Healthy hands are helping hands!”*

- Wear gloves.
- Avoid touching your face, eyes, ears, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Use hand sanitizer as often as needed during the cleanup.

3. *What to do if you find broken glass, needles, or other dangerous items?*

- Safety first, always!
 - Never reach blindly into the bushes or tall grass to pick up litter.
 - Always ensure you can see the entire piece of litter before picking it up.
 - If you are not comfortable picking up an item, leave it where you found it.
- In addition to other dangerous items, such as broken glass, there is the possibility of finding discarded needles.
 - If you find a needle, please refer to the [Needle Disposal Guide](#)
 - **NEVER place dangerous items, like needles, in a plastic bag or garbage can as this puts others at risk, especially staff responsible for picking up and changing garbage bags throughout the city.**
 - For needle removal, or to report an encampment, please call:
Safe Community Call Centre at 825-399-7233

4. *Manage your garbage*

- Tie your garbage bags tightly and leave them next to existing City of Lethbridge garbage bins.
- Use the final report form to track the total number of bags of garbage collected and the location of where you left them in your final report form (mark an X on your area map).

5. *Take a picture*

- Before and after photos are a great way to showcase your local impact and motivate others.
- Share photos on social media using the following hashtags:
 - #CouleeCleanup, #CleanShoreline, #TrashTag, #yql
- Tag Helen Schuler Nature Centre in your photos:
 - Facebook & Instagram: /HelenSchulerNatureCentre
 - Twitter: @DiscoverItHere

AFTER THE CLEANUP

1. *Wash your hands!*

- Wash your hands with soap and water as soon as you can.
- With clean hands, give yourself a pat on the back or have a team round of 'high fives.' Well done!

2. *Complete your final report form & return your Cleanup Kit*

- Help us to understand the impact of your efforts, complete the report form and submit it along with any photos.
 - Please report the location and total number of bags of garbage collected by emailing: Curtis.Goodman@lethbridge.ca
- **If you borrowed a Cleanup Kit, please return it promptly to the Nature Centre.**

3. *Share your impact*

- Share your experience with friends and family - tell them what you noticed on your cleanup.
- Make a point of visiting your cleanup area throughout the summer – enjoy your park!

REMEMBER: YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE EVERY DAY!

Help us inspire others to get involved, try challenging yourself to complete all three:

- Share your photos on social media with your #trashtag**
 - What better way to inspire others than leading by example?
#CouleeCleanup, #CleanShoreline, #TrashTag, #yql
- Pick up a single piece of litter every day for a month**
 - Every bit of change makes a big difference.
- Go Plogging**
 - Once a week, bring a bag and gloves to pick up litter when you walk your dog or go for a jog. This is a great way to incorporate squats in your cardio workout.

OTHER CONSERVATION PROGRAMS IN LETHBRIDGE

Maximize your impact by getting involved with multiple conservation projects each year! There are many conservation projects ongoing throughout Southern Alberta that benefit from volunteer support.

Adopt a Park

[Anytime]

Adopt-A-Park provides opportunities for volunteers to improve the appearance of community parks by participating in light maintenance duties. Is there a green space in Lethbridge you want to focus your long-term stewardship efforts? Why not adopt it?

Yellow Fish Road

[Anytime]

Yellow Fish Road is a free storm drain painting program that promotes awareness about urban runoff pollution with various groups such as school classes, eco clubs, youth groups, neighborhood groups, or even your family/friends.

Pitch In!

[April]

Pitch-In is a national litter picking campaign. The City of Lethbridge will provide bags and a pickup for anyone who chooses to help clean up the community. Pitch In Canada will record participation across the country during the official Pitch In! Week.

River Valley Conservation Projects

[April thru August]

River Valley Conservation projects encourage residents of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds to pick up litter and “leave it better than they found it!” Your participation is an effective way to have a positive environmental impact and increase your connection to our community.

Environment Week

[June]

Environment Week is a national event taking place in June. Get involved and show your love for the environment.

Reuse Rendezvous

[September]

Reuse Rendezvous is held in the Fall (September). Take part in this event and help reduce landfill waste and find yourself some free goods.

Waste Reduction Week

[October]

Each year during the third week of October, Waste Reduction Week occurs across Canada. The event engages and empowers Canadians to reduce, reuse and recycle.

Connect with the team at [Helen Schuler Nature Centre](#) and/or [Volunteer Lethbridge](#) to learn more about how you can make a difference!