



South Carolina's Largest One-Day Cleanup
of Our Beaches and Waterways

Site Captain Manual



This Site Captain Manual is provided to assist volunteers with planning their Beach Sweep/River Sweep cleanups. The contents address common questions about being a “site captain” a volunteer leader who organizes a local cleanup.

August 2021

Role of the Site Captain

Site captains are the key people who make Beach Sweep/River Sweep (BSRS) happen. They are the volunteer leaders who choose a place to cleanup and organize a local group of volunteers to get the cleanup job done.

Thanks to the leadership of site captains, BSRS volunteers have removed over 1,200 tons of trash from South Carolina waterways since 1988 (the year BSRS started).

Primary responsibilities of a site captain are to:

- Identify a littered water body and a particular area that needs a cleanup.
- Recruit volunteers, organize and conduct your own cleanup.
- Arrange for proper disposal of the trash you collect.
- Report the results of your own cleanup.

Where to do a cleanup

Locations commonly selected for a BSRS cleanup include public boat landings, parks, trails, and campsites that are located on public waterways, rivers, lakes, swamps, marshes, and beaches. In most cases, a cleanup can be conducted on land, without boats. Boating groups, however, will often choose to get on the water and clean extended sections of shoreline on a river or lake and sometimes an island.

If needed, staff at the S.C. Sea Grant Consortium or the S.C. Department of Natural Resources (DNR) can offer more suggestions to assist you in finding a cleanup site.

The following websites provide information about the locations of many public access sites on inland waterways of South Carolina.

- Lakes or Reservoirs and DNR's Public Lakes (DNR website) -- <http://dnr.sc.gov/lakes/search.html>
- Bank and Pier Fishing Access Sites (DNR website) -- <http://dnr.sc.gov/lakes/access.html>
- Public Boat Ramps (DNR website) -- see "visit" tab for each ramp to view location map - <https://www2.dnr.sc.gov/ManagedLands/boatramp/boatrampsearch>
- Heritage Preserves and Wildlife Management Areas (DNR website) – many of these state-owned lands are located on public waterways -- <https://www2.dnr.sc.gov/ManagedLands/>
- Paddle SC – explore waterways and related access locations using the online maps and guide -- <https://www.gopaddlesc.com/>
- SC Trails.net -- the trail maps will show public access locations to waterways and water trails -- <https://www.sctrails.net/>
- SC State Parks -- most State Parks have a lake or stream with adjacent trails -- <http://www.southcarolinaparks.com/park-finder/state-park-finder/default.aspx>

Finding volunteers

Site captains usually recruit their own volunteers from groups they are a part of, such as, civic clubs, neighborhood groups, recreation clubs, families, school groups, church groups, and youth groups. If you choose to be a site captain, the staff at DNR or Sea Grant can post your contact info on the BSRS webpages for cleanup sites. This allows volunteers to contact you directly and offer to help with your cleanup.

Plan for safety

Safety of participants should be the number-one priority in organizing a cleanup.

Site captains will want to do the following:

- Choose a site suited to the abilities of your particular group of volunteers.
- Be familiar with your cleanup site and scout the site prior to your cleanup event to identify potential safety hazards.
- Review and be familiar with the safety tips and guidelines for handling special wastes, as presented below under the heading, “Planning for Safety.”
- Plan and organize for safety and communicate safety precautions with all your volunteers.

Plan for trash disposal

Proper disposal and recycling of all the trash collected is important. Take it to your local solid waste landfill and recycling center. Call your city or county government and ask for help and direction of where to take the trash.

Receive supplies

Site captains will receive a package of supplies from the DNR or Sea Grant. The package is usually mailed in early September and includes the trash bags, a BSRS t-shirt (complementary gift to all site captains), t-shirt order form (to get additional t-shirts), and data cards to tally and report litter collections. We ask all Site Captains to report their cleanup results, as this helps South Carolina track its success each year.

Optional actions for Site Captains

To enhance a cleanup event, site captains may want to contact the local media for press coverage. Suggestions about communicating with news media and generating publicity are provided below. Site captains may also want to get local sponsors to provide donations as perks for Sweep volunteers. Examples of donations and perks include: grocery stores donating water or soft drinks, restaurants donating lunch or coupons for ice cream, parks or museums providing complementary admission passes, and local hardware stores donating gloves. These ideas regarding press coverage and sponsors are optional but many site captains enjoy doing this as part of their own Sweep event.

Recruiting Volunteers

Recruiting people to come out and join your local cleanup is a good way to spread the word about the importance of keeping our public waterways litter-free. If you have difficulty recruiting volunteers then give us a call. We might be able to help your efforts, though we cannot substitute for them. Nothing can take the place of local leadership in promotion and recruitment for a cleanup. Get as many volunteers as you can, however you can.

A possible source for volunteers could be local organizations such as Keep America Beautiful (KAB) affiliates, Adopt-A-Highway groups, or a county recycling coordinator. Palmetto Pride provides a list of contacts for most counties of the state at their website -

<https://www.palmettopride.org/enforcement/county-information/bamberg-county/>

SMILE! Take Pictures!



Photos are a great way to document your cleanup. It's always fun to take a group shot that includes all your volunteers with all the trash and junk they've hauled out that day.

You are invited to e-mail or mail your photos to your sweep coordinator and your photos will be considered for posting on the Beach Sweep/River Sweep websites of either the DNR or S.C. Sea Grant and on Facebook pages to include: www.facebook.com/pages/Beach-SweepRiver-Sweep/113804469423?ref=ts.

Supplies

Supplies to be sent (in early September) to site captains will include trash bags and data cards. If you haven't done so already, please contact the BSRS coordinator and let them know your approximate number of volunteers so we can package the appropriate number of supplies.

Planning for Safety

Be sure to emphasize safety with your volunteers. Explain the boundaries of your cleanup area, review potential safety concerns and precautions for your site, and encourage a buddy system.

Remind volunteers that they are participating at their own risk.

Every site captain station should have a first aid kit(s), emergency numbers handy, and an emergency plan. Suitable transportation should be available.

Ask volunteers to bring and wear their own gloves.

Consider these safety tips and communicate them to your volunteers:

- Wear hard sole shoes with closed toes.

- Do not go near large barrels or drums; instead, report the location to the site captain.
- Do not attempt to remove known or suspected toxic/hazardous materials.
- Stay out of protected natural areas.
- Avoid snakes, bees, fire ants, and poison oak and ivy. Wear insect repellent.
- Lookout for and avoid alligators, as they have become more common on our Coastal Plain rivers.
- Don't lift anything too heavy.
- Do not compact or stuff trash into the trash bags as sharp objects may cause injury.
- Use extreme caution when picking up biohazards.
- Drink plenty of fluids.
- Wear sunscreen, hat, or sun visor.
- For all those on the water, practice boating safety. Wear personal flotation devices, and never try to reach for something that may cause you to fall in.

The South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) suggests additional precautions, which are presented below.

DHEC Guidelines for Handling Special Wastes

Some wastes need special handling to protect your personal safety and the safety of the environment. Consider the following precautions and suggestions when dealing with special wastes:

Tell all your volunteers this...

“If you encounter any trash that you are uncomfortable handling, just leave it where it is and let the site captain know about it. *And remember, always wear your gloves.*”

Equipment for handing special wastes:

- Gloves
- Household pliers or tongs
- 2-liter soda bottle(s)
- Plastic bags with ties/clips/rubber bands for closure

Handling special wastes:

Needles and syringes: Use tongs or pliers to pick up a needle/syringe. Place in a 2-liter soda bottle (and apply to bottle a DHEC syringe warning label if you have one). Put the cap securely back on the bottle. The cap may be removed and additional needles added until the bottle is full. Bottles with caps tightly secured may be put in regular trash disposal.

If you should stick yourself with a needle found on the beach or riverbank, the risk of getting an infection is very low. If you have not had a tetanus shot in the past 10 years, or you are not sure if you have, you should get a booster from your doctor or the local health department. Report the needle stick to your personal doctor and get advice on any additional follow-up. If your doctor has questions, he/she can consult with DHEC's epidemiologists.

Used condoms, tampons, sanitary pads: Use tongs or pliers to pick these up. Place them in double bags and close them securely. Bags may be opened and additional waste added until the bag is full. There's no need to label these bags and you can add these to regular trash collection.

Partially used paint cans: If the cans are closed and paint is usable set them aside at a collection point for donation to Habitat for Humanity. If the paint is dried, put the can in regular collection bags. If the paint is not dry, but not usable, set it aside at a collection point for proper disposal.

Used oil containers: Collect these in a bag *not mixed with other trash*. Dispose of at a county recycling station.

Used tires, refrigerators, other large appliances (white goods): Report to the site captain, so that they can be collected for proper disposal. Contact your city/county public works for the pick-up of white goods.

Paint thinner, other potentially volatile chemicals: Note the location and report to the authorities so that they can arrange appropriate disposal.

If you encounter other waste materials not listed here that look dangerous to you, leave them in place and report them to authorities at the local DHEC Environmental Quality Control office for follow-up. Call the **DHEC emergency response** staff and ask for technical assistance. They can be reached at **1-888-481-0125**.

If you use your pliers/tongs to pick up special trash, soak them at the end of the day in Clorox (1:10 dilution) or Lysol (follow directions on label for dilution) for 10 minutes, or spray them thoroughly with Lysol to clean them for reuse.

Disposing of Trash and Debris

Site Captains, you are responsible for the disposal of the trash that you and your group collect on the day of the Sweep. Please make the arrangements to haul your trash collections to the appropriate facilities for recycling and disposal of solid waste.

Remember, many dumps and recycling centers are closed on weekends, and it may require special arrangements to have them open for this event. Some city/county waste collection agencies will agree to have special pickups of collected trash on the day of the Sweep. Others may ask you to pile the collected trash on the road side and agree to haul it away on a later date.

We encourage recycling. Recycling options include:

- Providing large bins for sorting at your own cleanup headquarters.
- Appointing volunteers to sort materials and take them to a recycling center.

Data Cards – Report Results

Please complete the data cards and return them to us: staff at the DNR or S.C. Sea Grant. Estimate the amounts of trash collected (i.e., about 40 glass bottles, 60 cans, 100 cigarette butts, 10 plastic containers, etc.) and write the information on the data card.

No matter how much trash you collect, please turn in the data cards. Turning in the data will help guide litter prevention efforts. The information is used to guide education and control programs to more effectively target sources and causes of litter in our waterways.

Please mail your completed data cards to your Beach Sweep/River Sweep coordinator at the S.C. Sea Grant Consortium or the S.C. Department of Natural Resources. Data summaries from past Sweeps are presented at websites of the [DNR](#), [Sea Grant](#) and the [Ocean Conservancy](#).

T-shirts

Beach Sweep/River Sweep t-shirts are usually available for about \$12, which includes the sales tax, shipping and handling. The money collected from the t-shirts serves as “seed” money to get the next year's Sweep underway. A new t-shirt design is featured each year.

We provide one free t-shirt to each site captain. This is our way of saying thank you for devoting your time and energy to the program.

Additional Beach Sweep/River Sweep t-shirts may be ordered by contacting the S.C. Sea Grant Consortium. Purchase t-shirts in advance if your group wants to wear them on the day of the Sweep event. Keep in mind that the shirts have sold out quickly in recent years.

News Media Information

The following information will be useful if your local news media contacts you.

Beach Sweep/River Sweep is a not-for-profit volunteer effort that relies on state organizers, sponsors, and volunteer participants. Please make the following distinctions when talking with the media:

- The state organizers that donate funds, staff time, and resources to the Sweep are:
 - *South Carolina Sea Grant Consortium*
 - *South Carolina Department of Natural Resources*
- Numerous businesses and organizations sponsor this effort with monetary and in-kind donations.
- Area groups or individuals volunteer on the day of the Sweep to pick up debris.

All of these entities deserve credit for their efforts. However, we especially want to recognize the generosity of the **sponsors** and let them know we appreciate their support. Sponsors who donated money may become concerned when they read a local news story that identifies a local

club or organization as “sponsoring” Beach Sweep/River Sweep. They wonder why their name has been left out.

We encourage you to do your best to give credit to those who make the Sweep possible. If credit is not given, we may lose the organizations whose contributions make future Sweeps possible. Please remember to mention the organizers and sponsors when you speak with your local media. Major sponsors for the sweep are featured on the S.C. Sea Grant website -- <https://www.scseagrant.org/bsrs-sponsorships/>

Contributions to BSRS

Area businesses may ask you about how they can make a contribution to the local cleanup. If so, we ask that all donations come through the Beach Sweep/River Sweep account (a non-profit account) for several reasons. This account ensures clear records for tax-exempt status and auditing; uses donations primarily for educational materials which can be printed at a lesser cost and more efficiently through state contracts; and makes certain that donors' names are used in promotional materials and reports, and that donors are properly thanked.

We do not want to disappoint any donor by failing to give proper credit. Please ask all potential donors with monetary or in-kind contributions to contact: Susan Ferris Hill, S.C. Sea Grant Consortium at 287 Meeting Street, Charleston, SC 29401 - phone: 843-953-2092.

Publicity

S.C. Sea Grant Consortium and S.C. Department of Natural Resources promote Beach Sweep/River Sweep on a statewide level. However, nothing is as effective as a group of local citizens voicing a concern, so we encourage local efforts to generate publicity.

We encourage you to consider the following: contact local newspapers, radio stations, and TV stations; speak to local groups; put up posters and flyers; ask your mayor to declare the third Saturday in September as the local Beach Sweep/River Sweep Day; send out a news release asking for volunteers; recruit local “celebrities” to come out and participate.

An example of a Beach Sweep/River Sweep press release is printed below. Feel free to write your own press release and contact your local media for coverage of the event. Reporters want a story with a local perspective, preferably from a local person.

SAMPLE PRESS RELEASE

Contacts: (your contact information: name, phone, email address)

Annual Beach Sweep/River Sweep set for September (date)

(Your City/Town, SC) – The annual Beach Sweep/River Sweep is scheduled for DATE & TIME. Each year thousands of people participate in the Sweep, South Carolina’s largest one-day litter cleanup of beaches and waterways.

The S.C. Sea Grant Consortium and S.C. Department of Natural Resources organize the statewide event, which is held in conjunction with The Ocean Conservancy's International Coastal Cleanup. Anyone can participate – individuals, families, schools, youth groups, civic and conservation clubs or businesses. All necessary supplies are provided. In its 30-year history, over 1200 tons of litter have been collected and/or recycled.

(Here is where you can localize the press release: mention cleanups in your area, last year's cleanup, how many volunteers participated, and, perhaps describe some "unusual" items collected in the past.)

To volunteer at (your location), contact (your contact info). For a list of additional coastal site captains and cleanup locations, visit www.scseagrant.org. For a list of site captains and cleanup locations inland, visit www.dnr.sc.gov/bsrs.

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Thanks for your service

Have a safe, fun cleanup

If you have any questions contact the South Carolina Beach Sweep/River Sweep coordinators:

S.C. Sea Grant Consortium, coastal coordinator, 843-953-2092
<https://www.scseagrant.org/bsrs/>

S.C. Department of Natural Resources, inland coordinator, 803-734-9096
<http://www.dnr.sc.gov/bsrs/>