

# *Adopt-a-Stream*



170 Lyman Street  
Asheville, NC 28801

Office: (828) 252-8474

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*\*Thanks to ECO for their contribution with this manual.*

Dear Adopt-a-Stream partner:

Thank you for your interest in joining RiverLink's Adopt-a-Stream Program! Your Clean Stream Team will make a tremendous impact in the health and vitality of your stream, as well as the French Broad River Watershed in its entirety. RiverLink's mission is to make the French Broad a better place to live, learn, work, and play and as an Adopt-a-Stream member you will play a key role.

RiverLink's goal is to get all the tributaries and the main stem of the French Broad adopted. RiverLink is partnering with Environmental Conservation Organization (ECO) in Hendersonville to continue organizing this program in Henderson County.

This handbook is designed to give you all the information you will need to become a great steward of the river. Please fill out the Adopt-a-Stream Contract and either email or mail it back to RiverLink.

This is a flexible program that offers you and your stream team numerous ways to help clean and improve our watershed. RiverLink's minimum level of commitment asks for two cleanups a year and a short report on those activities. Once you conduct your second river cleanup, RiverLink will arrange to install your Adopt-a-Stream sign displaying your organizations name. This is a great way to publicize your commitment to cleaning up our watershed.

Please read through this short handbook to guide you with your commitment. If you have any questions about the program or need any technical assistance please don't hesitate to call or email me. I'm also available to give a presentation to your Stream Team if you are interested.

Thank you for your stewardship and commitment to cleaning up our local waterways! I look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

Dave Russell  
Volunteer Manager  
RiverLink  
170 Lyman Street  
Asheville, NC 28801  
Phone: 828-252-8474 ext. 11  
[volunteer@riverlink.org](mailto:volunteer@riverlink.org)  
[www.riverlink.org](http://www.riverlink.org)

## Overview of Adopt-a-Stream Responsibilities

This is a flexible program that allows you to match your interest and time with a level of commitment below. The Adopt-a-Stream Program is an ongoing commitment with Level I as the minimum commitment as further described below. We encourage bigger organizations that have the volunteer capacity and teams who have completed their first year in Level I to try and commit to a higher level. This will not only clean the river but also provide permanent features to ensure its protection.

### Level I (minimum commitment)

- Conduct two stream clean-up events per year. A stream clean-up involves:
  - Walking the length of your adopted stretch of stream, picking up as much trash as possible, bagging it, and delivering it to a designated disposal site or arranging for the city of Asheville or Department of Transportation to pick up the trash
  - Fill out Adopt-a-Stream Cleanup/Stream Monitoring Report

### Level II

- Conduct three or more clean-up events per year and send one Cleanup/Stream Monitoring Report per cleanup.
- Conduct and fill out River Corridor Assessment (attached)
- Implement one Best Management Practice (BMPs) such as riparian tree planting (contact RiverLink or visit <https://ncdenr.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/Water%20Quality/DWQ%20Admin/PIO/WYK%20Docs/ImproveBackyardPDF.pdf> for more information)
- Conduct education / outreach activities to encourage others to implement BMPs and recruit other Adopt-a-Stream participants.

**After the second group cleanup, contact RiverLink and we will begin the process of getting your team an Adopt-A-Stream sign placed on the road near your adopted section of creek or stream. Please note this may take a while.**

## River Cleanup Guide

### *Organizing a Successful River Cleanup with Your Clean Stream Team*

#### **Objectives:**

By participating in this cleanup your group will:

- 1) Improve the water quality of the stream, creek, or river;
- 2) Work with your *Clean Stream Team* and other member of the community to collectively cleanup your section of stream or river;
- 3) Record the amount of garbage removed from your waterway;
- 4) Work cooperatively with RiverLink's Volunteer Outreach Coordinator to arrange for trash removal and pickup of cleanup supplies (gloves, vests, trash bags) well in advance of your cleanup.

#### **Timeline:**

Planning may take several weeks, and a cleanup may take an entire morning or afternoon. Give yourself plenty of time, and pick a date that works for the majority of your team. *Remember to notify RiverLink of your cleanup dates at least 2 weeks in advance.*

- Pick up trash bags/gloves/vests/litter sticks from RiverLink.
  - RiverLink is located at 170 Lyman St. in Asheville's river district. Call the Volunteer Outreach Coordinator 828-252-8474 ext. 11 to arrange to pick up supplies before cleanup. Directions to RiverLink can be found at [www.riverlink.org](http://www.riverlink.org).
- If there is private land within adopted section, contact landowners for permission to access their land.
- What to bring for your cleanup
  - River cleanup report, Participant waivers and volunteer forms
  - First Aid Kit, Trash bags, orange vests, gloves, litter sticks
  - Refreshments and food (contact local restaurant, bakeries, and coffee shops, they will often donate food)
  - Tools to retrieve trash from trees (waders, long poles with hooks, shovels, rakes, etc.)

#### **Safety Matters:**

- Be alert to river conditions; if the water is high exercise caution while cleaning up along the river's edge.
- Be alert to traffic if you are working near a road.
- Do not lift heavy objects.
- Do not work alone-Always use the buddy system.
- Do not remove anything that looks hazardous, like a 50 gallon drum. Contact RiverLink or the division of Hazardous Waste if you locate a potentially hazardous item.

#### **Day of the Cleanup:**

- Place bags along the side of the road with the bags tied tightly, if you have arranged for trash pickup from the City of Asheville or the NCDOT. If not remove the trash and place in appropriate receptacle.
- Write down the location of any heavy or hazardous materials that you do not remove on the river cleanup report.
- Take photos and have fun!

#### **Follow Up:**

- Return all checked out supplies to RiverLink. **Team is responsible for returning same number of supplies checked out. If any supplies are lost during cleanup including gloves, vests and litter sticks; team is responsible for replacing any missing supplies which will be coordinated with RiverLink.**
- Complete the stream clean-up report
- Write a press release to send to local media outlets (include photos) - contact RiverLink for assistance
- To arrange for trash pickup in:
  - **Madison County:** 828-649-2222.
  - **Buncombe County-** DOT Maintenance: (828) 298-0390
  - Inside the city limits of **Asheville** on city roads- Asheville Public Works Department: (828) 259-5857
  - **Transylvania County-** Ralph Cannady, (828) 586-2141
- Send clean-up report, volunteer application, contract, and participant waiver to RiverLink

## Stream Monitoring

Pay attention on the way to stream cleanup what the overall picture of the land that is drained by your stream or stream segment. It will help you understand what problems to expect in your stream, and it will help you know where to look for those problems. As with all other monitoring activities, you should undertake your watershed monitoring with at least one partner. *Remember never to enter private property without permission.*

As you drive or walk the watershed, look for the following:

### **The "lay" of the land--become aware of hills, valleys, and flat terrain. Does any of this area periodically flood?**

- *Bridges, dams, and channels*--look for evidence of how the community has dealt with the stream and its flood potential over the years. Are portions of it running through concrete channels? Is it dammed, diverted, culverted, or straightened?
- Where the *road* crosses the stream, is there evidence of erosion and pollution beneath bridges? Is stream flow obstructed by debris hung up beneath bridges?
- *Activities in the watershed*--look for land use activities that might affect your stream. In particular, look for construction sites, parking lots, manicured lawns, farming, cattle crossings, mining, industrial and sewage treatment plant discharges, open dumps, and landfills. Also look for forested land, healthy riparian zones, undisturbed wetlands, wildlife, and the presence of recreational users of the stream such as swimmers or people fishing. (Note that heavy recreational use or large flocks of birds might adversely affect the quality of streams, ponds, lakes, and wetlands.)

**Water appearance and odor:** The color, clarity, and smell of the water serve as warning flags for pollutants such as oil, sediment, excessive nutrients, detergents, sewage leaks, and other substances.

**Stream Bottom:** A healthy aquatic environment requires a gravelly or rocky streambed. Rocks and gravel provide surfaces on which macro-invertebrates (bugs) colonize, and the spaces between rocks and gravel provide hiding protection and area for laying eggs. Rocks also help create riffles and pools. Riffles stir up the water and help it collect oxygen, while pools provide cool respites for fish. When silt and sand bury the stream bottom, aquatic habitat is compromised.

**Stream Bank:** A healthy stream requires protection from the land. A well-vegetated bank, with lots of dense, woody vegetation with deep roots (trees), provides the best buffering effect. Shorter, woody plants such as brush and small trees provide some good protection, and even herbaceous plants such as grass filter strips are better than bare soil. In some areas, eroding stream –banks have been temporarily stabilized using piles of rock called rip-rap. This is a band-aid solution that can cause more harm and damage to the stream by directing the scouring energy of the water farther down stream, spreading out the erosion.

**Tributaries and Pipes:** Direct discharges into the stream may or may not be detrimental. Storm systems drain to many of our creeks, the extent to which stormwater carries pollutants depends on your success in implementing pollutant and run-off controls throughout the landscape. Other direct inputs you may observe include discharges from septic or sewage drainage (a big red flag), commercial or industrial discharge, or agricultural drainage. The appearance and odor of any discharge and the location of pipes is important information for enforcing the laws, protecting water quality, and for educating land owners to help resolve problems.

## Level II RiverLink Adopt a Stream River Corridor Assessment

**Organization/Group/Team:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Team Leader Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date of assessment/cleanup:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name of your adopted stream:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Check all characteristics that apply in each category. For other category please check and describe.**

**Stream Bottom:**  Rocky  Sandy  Gravelly  Silty  
Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Channel Shape:**  Natural Meanders  Altered (i.e. straightened)

**Water Appearance:**  Clear  Milky/white  Oily (multicolored, oily sheen)  Muddy/brown  
 Foamy/Suds  Grey/Black  Green/Algae  Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Odor:**  
 None  Musky/Organic  Chemical  Gas/Oil  Rotten Eggs/Sewage  Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Algae:**  Minimal Growth  Floating in thick spots  Covers stream bottom  Thick mats

**Bank Cover:**  Large trees  Herbaceous plants  Exposed Soil  Small Trees/Brush  Rip-Rap (rock)  
 Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Percentage of Bank covered with Vegetation**  
 Up to 20%  20-50%  50-75%  75-100%

**Bank Stability:**  
 No evidence of erosion  Up to 20% of bank is eroded  20-50% of bank is eroded  
 50-75% of bank is eroded  70-100% of bank is eroded

**Land use surrounding your water body:**  
 Natural/undisturbed  
If so:  Forest  Field/meadow  Other \_\_\_\_\_

Developed  
If so:  Agricultural  Residential  Urban/Commercial  Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Problems/Concerns:**  
 Trash in the stream  Trash on the stream bank and surrounding land  
 Big items in the stream or surrounding land (need equipment to remove)  Discharge pipes entering stream

**Additional Comments, Observations, Concerns, etc:**

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## Clean up Checklist

### Prior to the Event:

- Complete Adopt-a-Stream contract and return to RiverLink
- Advertise (radio, TV, newspapers, and magazines, flyers, and word of mouth). RiverLink will be glad to send out a press release. Include date, location, meeting location, time, and backup date in case of weather.
- Recruit volunteers from friends, groups, organizations, schools, and the community at large.

Arrange to pick up trash bags, gloves, litter sticks and vests with RiverLink. Note the return on the whiteboard in the RiverLink lobby.

- Bring any other supplies you might need (first aid kit, shovel, water bottles, sunscreen, extra clothes, paperwork, etc).
- Get landowner permission if you plan to go on private property/land during the clean-up. Invite landowner to join in the effort.
- Photocopy the stream cleanup report (and River Corridor Assessment if needed) and complete when cleanup is finished.
- Photocopy the volunteer form/participant waiver and have participants fill those out.

### Day of the Event:

- Have each participant fill out a volunteer form/participant waiver.
- Place trash in by the road (if NCDOT has agreed to pick up) or deliver to appropriate receptacle.
- Be Safe!!
- Have FUN!!

### After the Event:

Return cleanup supplies to RiverLink . Note return of items on whiteboard in the RiverLink lobby.

- Complete the stream clean-up report
- Contact appropriate municipality to pick up trash

Send clean-up report and volunteer form/participant waiver to RiverLink at 170 Lyman Street, Asheville, NC 28801.



**Landowner Permission Letter**

Dear \_\_\_\_\_ Street Resident:

RiverLink is conducting a cleanup on \_\_\_\_\_ from \_\_\_\_\_ in an effort to remove the trash that has built up along \_\_\_\_\_ stream. We would like to invite you to join us when we meet at \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_ time.

RiverLink and its volunteers would also like to ask your permission to remove trash from the stream that is located on your property. If you would not like us to clean the stream on your property please let me know by using the contact information below. If we do not hear from you we will look forward to helping make our watershed a more beautiful place. Thanks for your help.

Sincerely,

Your name and contact information

# Adopt-A-Stream Team Cleanup Contract

Please completely fill out this contract and return it to:  
RiverLink, Inc.  
P.O. Box 15488  
Asheville, NC 28813-0488  
Office: (828) 252-8474 x 17  
[volunteer@riverlink.org](mailto:volunteer@riverlink.org)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of your group/community or organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing address \_\_\_\_\_

## **Contact Information**

Primary Contact: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Secondary Contact: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Stream Information**

Level of Commitment:       Level I       Level II

Name of Stream, Creek, or waterway: \_\_\_\_\_

Town/City: \_\_\_\_\_ County: \_\_\_\_\_

Upstream Limit: \_\_\_\_\_

Downstream Limit: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of closest street or intersection: \_\_\_\_\_

Tentative Cleanup Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*I understand that if any supplies are lost during my team's cleanup, we will be responsible for replacing lost supplies which will be coordinated with RiverLink. I also understand that the Adopt-a-Stream Program is an ongoing commitment and if my team chooses to terminate our contract, we will contact RiverLink so that our section may be adopted by another team.*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Primary Contact's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
RiverLink's Adopt-A-Stream Coordinator

# RiverLink Adopt-a-Stream Cleanup Report

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Team Leader Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Organization/Group/Team: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of cleanup: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of your adopted stream: \_\_\_\_\_

How many people participated: \_\_\_\_\_

Did every participant sign a waiver?  yes  no

How many hours did the volunteers work: \_\_\_\_\_

How many bags of garbage did you collect? \_\_\_\_\_ Tires? \_\_\_\_\_

What observations did you make about your stream? Include information from the stream monitoring guidelines.

**Level II teams use attached River Corridor Assessment.**

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Other Comments:

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**RiverLink Liability Waiver**  
**Mutual Agreement for Protection from Liability**  
[www.riverlink.org](http://www.riverlink.org)

**You must sign the liability waiver to participate!**

I, the undersigned, being the volunteer involved in any RiverLink river cleanup project (hereinafter referred to as the "Project") or being the parent or legal guardian of such a volunteer in the Project, in consideration of my or another's participation in the Project, I hereby, for myself and any volunteer for who I am a parent or legal guardian release, discharge, hold harmless, and forever acquit the *State of North Carolina, the County, the City, RiverLink, or any other local sponsors*, and their officers, agents, representatives and employees from any and all actions, causes of action, claims or any liabilities whatsoever, known or unknown now existing or which may arise in the future, on account of or in any way related to or arising out of participation in the Project. Further, I assume all liability of any non-participants who accompany me. I understand that my waiver has no expiration date.

This waiver is given in the interest of permitting RiverLink to exist and to serve the community at large, and to enable myself and my fellow volunteers to feel free to donate our services to the Project and to help each other without fear of liability.

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_ PARTICIPANT'S AGE: \_\_\_\_\_

PARTICIPANT  
NAME (PRINT): \_\_\_\_\_

PARTICIPANT'S  
SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT'S PARENT OR LEGAL GUARDIAN IF UNDER 18

\_\_\_\_\_

**RiverLink Right of Publicity Waiver**

I irrevocably give, grant and convey to RiverLink , its successors, agents, and assigns, without compensation to me from any party, the absolute right and unrestricted permission to copyright and/or use and/or publish: (1) my name, (2) my image or likeness on videotape, and (3) photographic pictures or portraits of me or in which I may be included, in whole or in part, on reproduction in color or black and white, made through any media, in connection with photos or videotape taken of me at RiverLink and/or any location in which I perform work as a RiverLink volunteer for any purpose, including but not limited to the promotion of RiverLink. I further waive any right that I may have to inspect or approve the finished product. The videotape, photographs, and negatives will be the property of RiverLink.

I have read the foregoing before signing below and fully understand its contents. I also understand that this gift is binding on my heirs, successors and assigns.

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_ PARTICIPANT'S AGE: \_\_\_\_\_

PARTICIPANT  
NAME (PRINT): \_\_\_\_\_

PARTICIPANT'S  
SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT'S PARENT OR LEGAL GUARDIAN IF UNDER 18

\_\_\_\_\_

**Would you like to receive our monthly e-newsletter?**

**Email (print)** \_\_\_\_\_