



# Habitat Restoration Volunteer Toolkit

The North Carolina Wildlife Federation (NCWF) enhances wildlife habitats by organizing trash clean-ups and native plantings in communities throughout North Carolina. Trash cleanups empower volunteers and local residents to remove trash from their communities and natural areas and replace it with native trees and plants.

You can help achieve the goal of removing at least 100,000 pounds of trash from the environment and planting 2,000 native trees and 5,000 native pollinator plants annually by participating in clean-up and planting events and reporting the results. One native tree or 10 pollinator plants will be planted for every 25 pounds of trash collected and reported.

## **How to Organize a Trash Clean up event:**

- Decide on key elements of the event
  - Date of event
  - Location for cleanup
  - How volunteers can participate
  - Designate key partners
  - How will trash be removed after it's collected (Will the municipality do a bulk pick up? Will it have to be transported elsewhere?)
- Volunteer organizer should coordinate with the community and obtain appropriate permissions for day of trash clean up
- Promote the event
  - Newsletter
  - Word of mouth
  - Social media
  - Flyers
  - Local radio
- Gather materials for the clean-up event
  - Recommended materials can be found below
- Host your clean-up day, and take lots of pictures!
- Weight trash and report your results to NCWF through the online form
  - If no handheld scale is available you may estimate. A standard 13-gallon, kitchen trash bags hold roughly 15 lbs.
  - You may estimate larger unbagged items.
- Follow up with participants via email. Be sure to include the total weight of the trash picked up and include event day pictures!

**General Day-Of Recommendations:**

- It's important that leaders give volunteers a safety briefing prior to the cleanup. Volunteers should not be expected to pick up anything that they're uncomfortable handling (ex: needles, glass, etc).
- Wear a safety vest around busy roads and intersections
- Collect trash with a buddy or in a group
- Wear closed toe shoes
- Apply sunscreen
- Bring water
- Wash/sanitize hands thoroughly after clean-up

**• Tools Needed:**

- ☐ Trash pickers
- ☐ Reusable bags, buckets or trash bags
- ☐ Gloves
- ☐ Safety vests
- ☐ Handheld scales for accurate trash weight (13 gallon trash bag = ~15 lbs of trash)
- ☐ Waders or muck boots if going in creeks

**How to Organize a Planting event:**

- Decide on key elements of the event
  - Date of event
  - Designate key partners
    - Cooperate and collaborate with public parks and cities
    - Designate a water source & plan watering schedule during establishment period (at least initial 4 weeks)
    - Establish maintenance schedules and responsible parties (ideally the partner or property owner should take this on).
  - Location for tree/plant planting
    - Receive appropriate permissions on locations
    - Call 811 and request utility markings at least a week prior to event
- Volunteer organizer should coordinate with the community and obtain appropriate permissions for day of planting
- Promote the event
  - Newsletter
  - Word of mouth
  - Social media
  - Flyers
  - Local radio
- Order trees and plants 2-4 weeks in advance and gather materials
  - Decide on the number of plants based on location
  - Coordinate with NCWF staff during the identification and purchase process.
- Host your planting day!
  - We have provided a list of recommended supplies for your event below
- Report your results via the online form.
- Follow up with participants to organize your next planting event.

**General Day-Of Recommendations:**

- Safety briefing for volunteers
- Demonstrate how to properly install a tree/plant
- Wear closed toe shoes
- Wear sunscreen
- Bring water
- Wear a safety vest around busy roads and intersections

**Tools Needed:**

- ☐ Shovels
- ☐ Pickaxe
- ☐ Trowels
- ☐ Gloves
- ☐ Mulch

# **Habitat Restoration Frequently Asked Questions**

## **What is an NCWF habitat restoration event?**

North Carolina Wildlife Federation (NCWF) is tackling critical conservation issues head-on with this habitat restoration initiative. Trash cleanups and plantings aim to mobilize thousands of volunteers across the state to remove trash from neighborhoods, waterways, and public lands and then plant native trees and pollinator plants in its place. For every 25 pounds of trash collected, one native tree or 10 pollinator plants will be planted with the goal of removing thousands of pounds of plastics and trash and planting hundreds to thousands of native trees and pollinator plants.

## **Who plans a cleanup or planting event?**

NCWF and local chapters all across the state are planning trash clean-up and planting events. NCWF and chapters may also partner with other organizations to plan a clean-up event, planting event or a combination of both.

## **What types of trees are planted?**

NCWF plants native trees, shrubs and herbaceous plants depending on the appropriate season. All selected plants are native to NC. The type of plants planted and the size depend on the planting location.

## **What size plants are planted?**

Size of trees and shrubs planted will be species and site dependent.

## **How is trash collected and recorded?**

Volunteers collect trash and either use a hand-weigher to weigh trash bags or estimate the weight of the trash collected. This trash weight is then reported via the online form.

## **Where are trees/plants planted?**

The trash collected goes towards the overall tree-planting goal. Even though trash may be collected in one area, trees or other plants may be planted in other locations across the state. Plants will be installed on public land including but not limited to: state/ national parks, local parks, municipal floodplains/ riparian corridors, greenways, and public schools. Priority will be given to areas within the natural range for Species of Greatest Conservation Need, identified by the Wildlife Resources Commission.

## **Who maintains the plants after the planting?**

The city or the property owner/groundskeepers shall maintain the plants. While NCWF chapters may volunteer to do some maintenance, the permanent party responsible for maintenance should be identified during the planning stage, see guidelines above.