

National Public Lands Day

Site Manager Guide



How to Use this Guide

Welcome to the NPLD Site Manager Guide!

The National Environmental Education Foundation (NEEF) has developed this manual to support new and returning site managers in planning and executing successful National Public Lands Day (NPLD) events. It is packed with tools, templates, worksheets, and best practices that have been collected over the years from experienced NPLD site managers. Whether this is your first NPLD or your 25th, we hope this manual will help you get the most out of your National Public Lands Day celebration.

This guide is broken into five main sections:

- 1 Planning: From Idea to Action**

This first step to hosting a successful National Public Lands Day event is good planning. This section is designed to help site managers develop an achievable action plan. It includes suggestions for selecting an NPLD event site, acquiring necessary permits, drafting an event budget, and building an event team to help execute the action plan.
- 2 Organizing: Engaging the Community and Partners**

Engaging local partners from the community is a key strategy in hosting a successful NPLD event. This section includes recommendations for engaging the surrounding community and local partners in your NPLD event.
- 3 Promoting: Spreading the Word and Recruiting Volunteers**

Recruiting and retaining volunteers is essential for the success of your National Public Lands Day event. This section has tools and resources to help you promote your NPLD event and recruit volunteers. This section also includes detailed instructions on how to register your NPLD event on the official National Public Lands Day Event Locator.
- 4 Hosting: Successfully Executing Your NPLD Event**

After weeks of planning, National Public Lands Day is here! This section is designed to assist site managers with 'day-of event' logistics. It includes detailed information on creating an event agenda, developing an inclement weather plan, managing risk, and more.
- 5 Wrap-Up: Post NPLD Event Activities**

There are three major post-event activities: following-up with partners, thanking volunteers, and submitting NPLD post-event survey to NEEF. This section will walk you through each of these activities.

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PROMOTING: Spreading the Word and Recruiting Volunteers

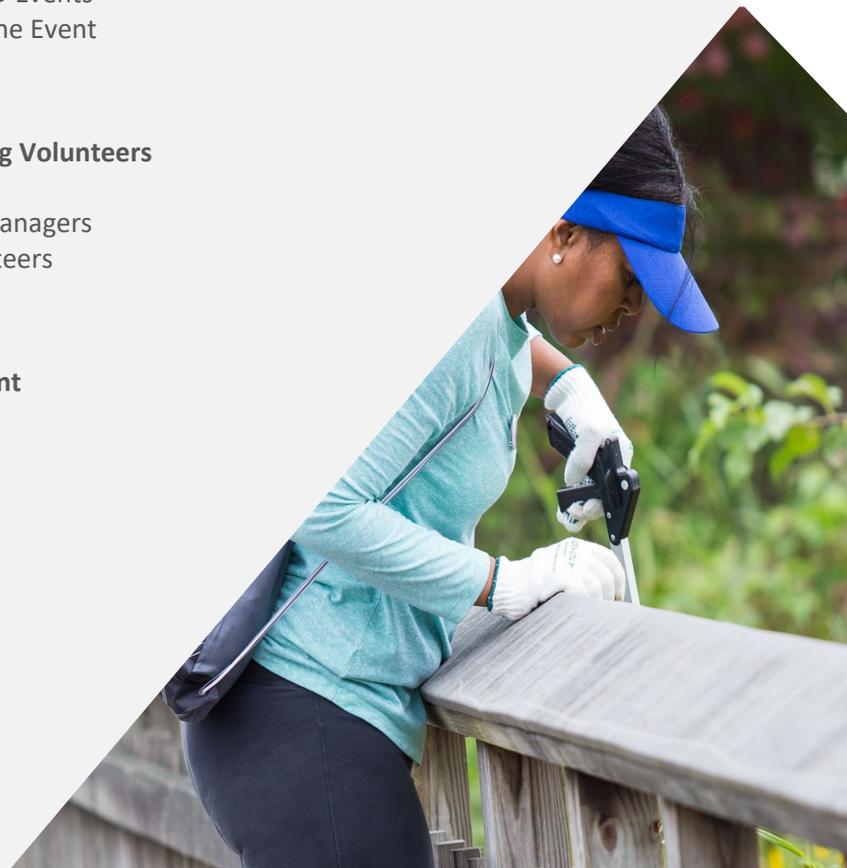
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National Public Lands Day



A Signature Event of the National Environmental Education Foundation

National Public Lands Day (NPLD) is the nation's largest, single-day volunteer event for public lands. Held annually on the fourth Saturday in September, NPLD is also a "fee-free day" — meaning entrance fees are waived at national parks, national forests and other federal lands.

Every year, NPLD brings together hundreds of thousands of individual and organizational volunteers to help restore the country's public lands. Our public lands are special places Americans use for outdoor recreation, education, and relaxation, and they encompass national parks, monuments, wildlife refuges, forests, grasslands, marine sanctuaries, lakes, and reservoirs, as well as state, county, and city parks that are managed by public agencies.

Volunteers work with land managers to complete various service projects such as building bridges and trails, planting native species, collecting trash, and removing invasive species. These service projects also give volunteers the opportunity to learn more about public lands and understand the environmental, economic and health benefits that they provide.

Questions?

Please contact us at NPLD@NEEFusa.org

Over a Quarter Century of Service

The National Environmental Education Foundation (NEEF) has been the official coordinator of NPLD for 30 years. In 1994, NEEF helped coordinate the very first National Public Lands Day project at three sites in Oregon with a total of 700 volunteers. Since then, the program has grown to include thousands of sites and volunteers throughout the country.

In 2023, we celebrate the 30th annual National Public Lands Day celebration.

Here are some collective impacts from over the last decade.



1.1

Million

Volunteers



\$133

Million

Value of
Volunteer
Work



5.1

Million

Volunteer
Hours



Thousands

Of Sites
throughout
the 50 US
states and
territories

The National Environmental Education Foundation

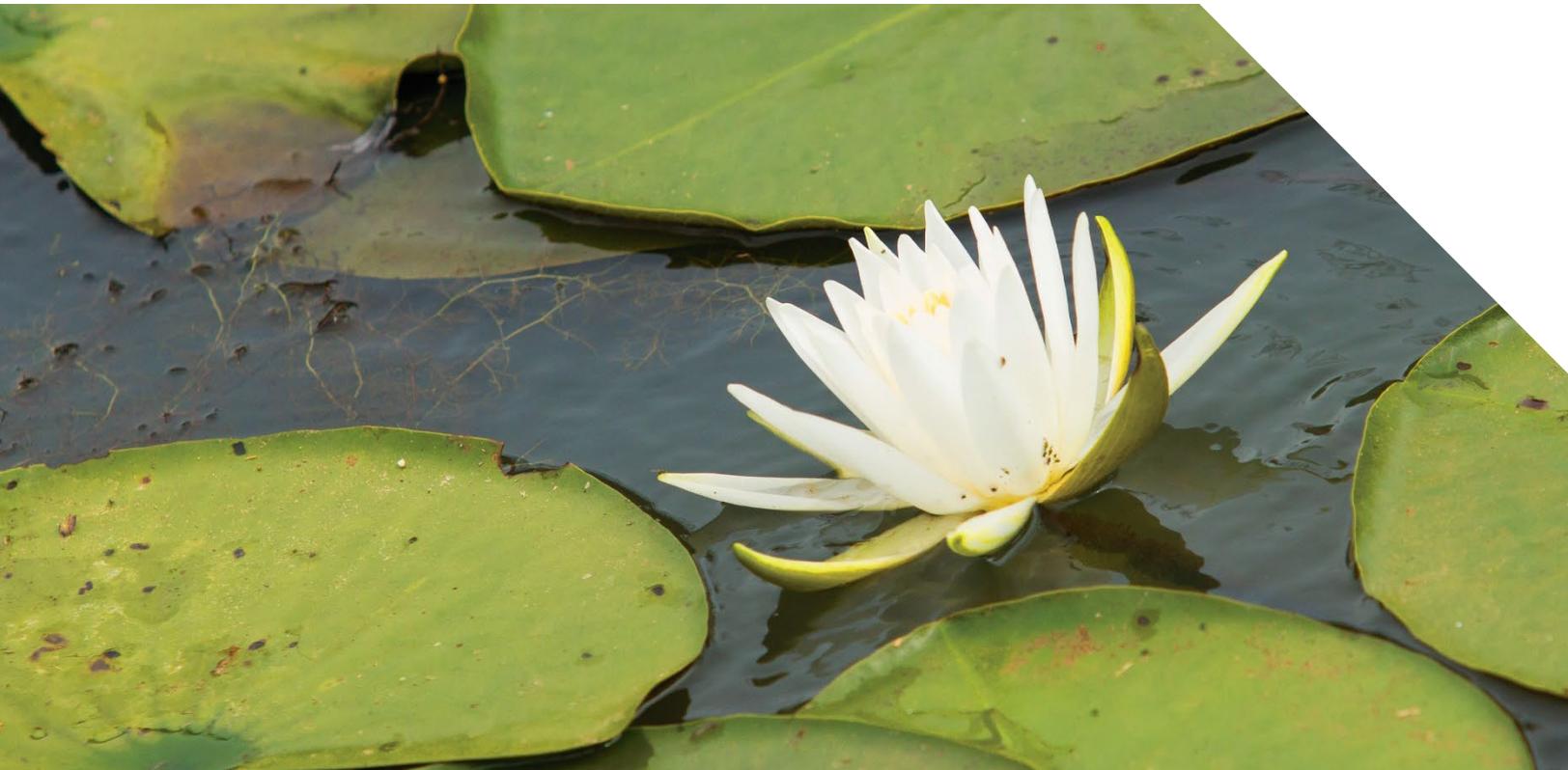


The National Environmental Education Foundation (NEEF) was chartered by Congress in 1990 to partner with the EPA to advance environmental literacy nationwide. NEEF offers scientific, unbiased, factual information through its own communications platforms, as well as a network of trusted professionals and affinity communities that, with their relationships and credibility, amplify environmental messages to national audiences.

As the official coordinator for National Public Lands Day, The National Environmental Education Foundation:

- Works with federal, state, and local land Management agencies to host NPLD events across the country
- Leads national media efforts to promote NPLD messaging about the importance of connecting with the outdoors and caring for the environment
- Assists NPLD site managers in promoting and executing successful events
- Develops marketing and promotional resources designed to help NPLD site managers promote their events and recruit volunteers
- Provides educational materials and activity guides designed to help NPLD site managers incorporate environmental education and health and wellness into their events
- Provides sponsorship and funding opportunities to support NPLD events
- Manages Department of Defense Legacy Resource Management Program
- Maintains the official National Public Lands Day landing page

Planning: From Idea to Action



Holding a National Public Lands Day event is incredibly rewarding!

To ensure your success, we've compiled a step-by-step guide to making it all come together. In the next few pages, we'll walk you through:

Selecting a Site

Building an Event Team

Building an Event Budget

The NPLD Planning Calendar

Selecting a Site

The first step in hosting a National Public Lands Day event is to select a site to serve as the event location.

National Public Lands Day is a celebration of America's public lands, so we encourage you to work with a local federal, state, or municipal land management agency to select an appropriate public lands site for your event.

There are many factors to consider when selecting a site for your event. Before selecting a site, think about the goals of your NPLD event. Do you plan on highlighting a special VIP speaker at your event? If so, capacity may be the most important factors. Do you want to recruit an underserved segment of the population? If so, then accessibility may take priority.

Accessibility

- Is the site accessible by public transit? What is the nearest subway stop? The nearest bus stop?
- How far is the site from the nearest major city or town? How long of a drive? Is there parking available?
- Is the site family friendly? Are there activities for children? Are the service projects appropriate for kids?

Capacity

- How many volunteers can the site accommodate?
- What is the minimum number of volunteers needed to complete the project?
- How many, at a maximum, can be kept busy throughout the event?
- Are there restrooms available on site? Running water? Picnic tables or open areas to accommodate lunch?
- Is there a staging area, podium, and/or sound system to support guest VIP speakers?

Service Project

- Is there a legitimate need at the site?
- Can the project realistically be completed in the set amount of time?
- What prior expertise does the project require from staff? From volunteer leaders? From volunteer participants?
- Are there special tools or supplies required to complete the project?
- What types of conservation outputs could you report on?

Partnership Opportunities

- Does the site provide an opportunity to work with a local partner, such as a community who can offer enthusiastic support of the event?
- Does the site provide an opportunity to work with a new key partner that may lead to relationship-building opportunities? Is there a partner who could supply tools or equipment for the work?

Building an Event Team

Organizing and executing a successful NPLD event can take a single determined site manager or an entire event team with each member responsible for a different component of the event. It all depends on the size and scope of your National Public Lands Day Event.

Suggested roles and responsibilities for NPLD event staff:

NPLD Site Manager This individual leads the overall management of the National Public Lands Day event. This person should be listed as the main point of contact on all event communications.

Project Leader(s) Project leaders act as volunteer supervisors during the event. They are responsible for leading groups of volunteers in project work, coordinating tools, keeping track of time, answering questions, and remaining with that group throughout the course of the event. The person(s) in this role should have experience leading volunteer groups and should be intimately familiar with the type of project they're leading (trail maintenance, tree planting, invasive removal, etc.) Risk Management best practices require that volunteer events have experienced leaders to support volunteers at a minimum 1:20 ratio (one project leader for every 20 volunteers).

Marketing Coordinator This individual coordinates marketing and promotional activities for the event. The person in this role should be listed as the main point of contact for any media inquiries related to the NPLD event. Specific responsibilities may include: drafting press releases, inviting local elected officials, and posting event information to social media platforms (Facebook, twitter, Instagram).

Outreach Coordinator This individual coordinates of community engagement efforts for the event. The person in this role should act as the liaison between internal event staff and external partners in the community such as schools, universities, local businesses and community-based nonprofits. Specific responsibilities may include: designing and executing an outreach strategy, cultivating and maintaining relationships with local partners; and building an outreach databases of individual volunteers. This person can also assist with day-of event logistics such as managing the volunteer sign-in table and welcoming partners.

Building an Event Budget

The cost to hold an NPLD event varies depending on the size of the event, number of leaders, and project materials. Determine the fixed and variable costs to hold your event. Fixed costs are costs that do not change based on the number of attendees. These costs are calculated as a total amount. Variable costs are costs that change based on the number of attendees. Determining what is essential and what is “nice-to-have,” helps you make any necessary alterations to meet your budget.

High-cost items such as t-shirt and water bottle giveaways are not always needed, but many variable items can significantly impact the success of the event. For example, providing lunch for volunteers helps make your event accessible to underserved youth, hiring leaders to meet risk management ratios keeps safety at the forefront, and supplying equipment supports agency partners and makes more types of projects possible.

Refer to the sample events budget below to get an idea of items to consider including in your budget.

Fixed Costs

ITEM	QUANTITY	UNIT COST	TOTAL
Emergency Medical Kit	1	\$30.00	\$30.00
Portable Microphone/Speaker (for opening ceremony)	1	\$110.00	\$110.00
Printing Event Flyers	1	\$20.00	\$20.00
Printing Event Signage (parking, bathroom, etc.)	1	\$40.00	\$40.00

Variable Costs

ITEM	QUANTITY	UNIT COST	TOTAL
Work Gloves for Volunteers	75	\$2.00	\$150.00
Wheelbarrows	5	\$17.00	\$85.00
Mulch (cubic feet)	10	\$4.00	\$40.00
Seedlings (10-pack)	3	\$30.00	\$90.00
Breakfast: Granola Bars and Fruit	75	\$2.00	\$150.00
Water Station	3	\$15.00	\$75.00
Lunch: PB&J Sandwiches	75	\$2.00	\$150.00

TOTAL **\$940.00**



[Download NPLD Budget Template](#)

The NPLD Planning Calendar

Organizing an event can seem like an incredibly overwhelming task. With so many things to plan, it is helpful to have a guide to the timeframe to complete each. The NPLD Planning Calendar can help you align your work with some of the most common milestones.

MONTH	ACTIVITIES
May-September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Register your National Public Lands Day Event on NEEF’s official NPLD event map.
June-July	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish roles & responsibilities (project leaders, outreach coordinator, marketing coordinator, etc.) • Develop an event budget • Secure any necessary permits • Identify local partners to support event • Send “save the date” emails to potential NPLD volunteers and event partners • Invite VIP guest speakers • Decide if you would like to obtain a Gubernatorial Proclamation for your event
July-September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruit volunteers (event flyers, social media, social media) • Download NEEF’s Public Lands Engagement Activity Guides • Engage local media outlets; send press release/media alerts
Early September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare site for event • Conduct site visits with project leaders • Develop event documents: safety briefing, emergency response plan, and run of show
National Public Lands Day (Fourth Saturday in September)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have a great NPLD event! • Take photos, collect quotes and share them with NEEF • Post photos to your social media and make sure to tag: @neefusa and #NPLD • Collect conservation impacts (acres of land restored, pounds of trash collected, etc.)
Early October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete NEEF’s NPLD post-event survey (sent via email to all site managers registered on NEEF’s official NPLD event map.) • Thank volunteers and partners

Organizing: Engaging the Community and Partners



Engaging local partners from the community is a key strategy in hosting a successful NPLD event.

This section includes recommendations for engaging the surrounding community and local partners in your NPLD event.

Engaging the Community in NPLD Events

Communicating the Benefits

Listening to the Community

Incorporating Community Ideas

Engaging Local Partners

Engaging the Community in NPLD Events

Involving local community members and partners in your event can cultivate their interest in your public lands site, encourage a greater sense of ownership, and increase the time and resources they invest there.

National Public Lands Day offers volunteers a unique opportunity for participants to learn about the importance of public lands in their community.

When community members come together to correct environmental damage or rehabilitate and redesign parks, they are able to actively participate in the decision-making process and gain a voice in improving the local environment and community livability.

Organizers can highlight and communicate the economic and health benefits that public lands provide to the community through intentional and meaningful engagement at an NPLD event.

A key objective of your NPLD event should be building local understanding and support for public lands. Ideally, participants should leave your event feeling:

- More comfortable in the outdoors
- More connected to the nature in their communities
- More knowledgeable about how nature helps keep them healthy and happy

Communicating the Benefits of NPLD Events

America's public lands aren't the only ones that benefit from National Public Lands Day. Nature offers one of the most reliable boosts to mental and physical well-being. Spending time in the outdoors has been found to improve short-term memory, concentration, and creativity—while reducing the effects of stress and anxiety. Volunteering on NPLD is a great opportunity to spend time with family and friends and enjoy the many benefits that come from connecting with nature.

These benefits can be particularly significant for economically disadvantaged communities with less access to public green space.

Tips for communicating the benefits of NPLD events to the community:

- Seek outside expertise and take advantage of online tools like the USDA Forest Service's iTree Tools to calculate the ecological benefits of your NPLD event.
- Explain the benefits and the perceived and real drawbacks of the intended program or project in a way that the community understands so that informed decisions can be made.

Listen to the Community

Site Managers should seek to engage community members in the planning and execution of NPLD events. Involving stakeholders and incorporating their ideas at the beginning is a great way to secure long-term support for your NPLD event and future community engagement events.

Tips for listening to the community:

- Send a community wide survey asking potential participants what type of activities they would like to see at the NPLD event.
- Engage the community through staff who interact with them daily (on-the-ground staff such as outreach coordinators, interpretative rangers, etc.).
- Ensure there are open lines of communication available for community members to answer questions and provide feedback.
- Identify an individual or group of individuals who are trusted within the community to assist with the event.
- These individuals should focus on engaging local audiences that you may not have experience working with.
- Host meetings or conference calls to keep stakeholders engaged in the event planning process.

Incorporate Community Ideas into the Event

Show your community that you have listened to them by incorporating their ideas into your NPLD event. Maybe the community has indicated an interest in learning more about local air or water quality issues. You could offer environmental education opportunities during your NPLD event examining these subjects. Or perhaps the community has expressed an interest in learning more about local outdoor recreational opportunities? You could partner with a local outdoor outfitter, such as REI, to conduct a demonstration of hiking or climbing gear. Look for ways to incorporate ideas from the community because it will make your event relevant to them.

Also, showing the community that their ideas were heard and incorporated gives local stakeholders a sense of ownership in the NPLD event.

Tips for incorporating ideas from the community into your NPLD event:

- Once you have collected ideas from the community, group them by theme. For example, ideas regarding regional air and water quality issues, or local wildlife interactions could all be group under the theme “local environmental issues.” Community concerns that touch on local homeless populations in the park or drug use in the park could be grouped under the theme “local safety concerns.”
- Once you have your thematic categories, look for local experts or partners that can meaningfully support each theme. For example, if your community has issues with the security of the park at night, you might think about asking the local police department to participate in the event and speak briefly about their efforts to address these safety concerns.



Engaging Local Partners in NPLD Events

Engaging local partners from the community is a key strategy in hosting successful NPLD events. Community-based organizations such as schools, universities, local business, and nonprofits can assist you with key elements of your event including event marketing and promotion, volunteer recruitment, and more.

Identifying, approaching, and establishing relationships with appropriate partners may be challenging, but local experts from community-based organizations (e.g., local environmental or education groups) can be extremely valuable event partners. They can help create links between community priorities and on-the-ground work to be completed during your NPLD event.

Here are some tips for developing strong NPLD event partnership:

- **Create buy-in:** Before doing outreach to any potential event partners, Site Managers should discuss the benefits of partnering with their internal NPLD event team. This will ensure that the event staff understands the value of partnering with a particular group.
- **Decide what level of partnership is best:** There are four partnership levels: **communication**, **coordination**, **cooperation**, and **collaboration**. Each level reflects progressively greater interaction, sharing of resources, and interconnectedness among partners. Decide on the level at which you want to engage with those in your community around National Public Lands Day.
- **Identify experienced organizations:** Find other organizations in the community that have been conducting activities on public lands, even if their events do not traditionally include volunteer projects. Then, find ways to link these existing efforts with your NPLD event. For example, if there is a local sports league that hosts recreational activities on public lands, they may be a great partner for engaging youth participants.
- **Define goals and desired outcomes:** Work with your partners to clearly define shared goals and outcomes so everyone is moving in the same direction. You should also outline clear roles and responsibilities for each partner. Make sure to establish the most effective means to communicate with your partners to complete tasks and convey important messages. This will help ensure mutual understanding as you plan and execute your event.

Remember! Partnerships build community. The partnerships that you develop in support of your NPLD event can form the basis of ongoing, long-term relationships that extend beyond a single event.

Promoting: Spreading the Word and Recruiting Volunteers



Plan for volunteer recruitment early to ensure your event is successful!

This section includes recommendations for spreading the word about and getting people interested in your NPLD event.

Recruiting Volunteers

NPLD Promotional Toolkits

NPLD Volunteer Fee-Free Coupons

Recruiting Volunteers

Veteran Site Managers have many recommendations for how to run a successful National Public Lands Day event, but one of the most important is to plan for volunteer recruitment early..

There are many things to think about:

- How many volunteers can your site accommodate?
- Based on the number of projects planned, what is the ideal number of volunteers?
- How will volunteers sign-up for your event (phone, website, email, bulletin boards)?
- Will you accept walk-ins on the day of the event?
- Should you target groups or businesses (such as scout troops or corporate volunteer programs)?

Most sites have found that pre-registration of volunteers prevents having too many people show up on the day of the event with nothing to do. Pre-registration also allows you to collect names and emails of volunteers before the event, making day-of registration easier. It is also helpful to send orientation emails to volunteers prior to your event.

Volunteer.gov

Federal, state, and local government agencies can post their public land volunteer opportunities at volunteer.gov. The website is free to use and post events and is maintained by federal agencies supporting natural and cultural volunteerism around the country. If your government agency is not already a partner, visit volunteer.gov and post your NPLD event.

Other Groups that Provide for National Public Lands Day May Include:

- Civic groups
- Schools and universities
- High school environmental or science clubs
- Local religious groups
- Staffs of elected officials
- Local conservation and fishing/hunting organizations
- Local businesses such as hotels or utility companies (some employers emphasize volunteer activities and will help recruit volunteers)

Volunteer Websites

- VolunteerMatch
- Idealist
- Create the Good

NPLD Promotional Toolkits

NPLD Promotional Toolkit for Site Managers

Once you have registered your NPLD event with NEEF, it is time to start promoting your event and recruiting volunteers! The NPLD Promotional Toolkit for Site Managers contains materials, tools, and resources to help spread the word, recruit community volunteers, and engage local media. Also, showing the community that their ideas were heard and incorporated gives local stakeholders a sense of ownership in the NPLD event.

The [NPLD Promotional Toolkit for Site Managers](#) contains the following:

- **NPLD Logos**
Downloadable versions of the official NPLD logo to help promote volunteer efforts. The NPLD logo is available in multiple formats and colors.
- **Social Media Tools**
Sample language for promoting NPLD events through social media channels such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.
- **Stay Connected**
List of official NPLD social media channels to provide up-to-date information about all things related to NPLD.
- **Media Outreach Tools**
Tools and resources to assist you with contacting local media outlets about your event.



Recruiting Volunteers

NPLD Promotional Toolkit for Volunteers

Create opportunities for volunteers to share their experience at your NPLD events by giving them the tools to do so—this includes social media hashtags (#NPLD), on-site signage, and photo opportunities.

By encouraging social media participation through these methods, NPLD volunteers are more likely to engage with each other during the event and to encourage further online interactions sparked by follows, likes, shares, and reposting. This will also help NPLD volunteers connect with fellow event participants, while simultaneously increasing your online presence!

The NPLD Promotional [Toolkit for Volunteers](#) contains the following:

- **Stay Connected**
List of official NPLD social media channels to help keep you up-to-date about all things related to NPLD.
- **Promotional Tools**
Fun and interactive tools to help volunteers share their NPLD experience through social media channels.
- **Proclaim the Day**
Tools to help participants secure mayoral and gubernatorial proclamations designated support for NPLD in their city or state.

NPLD Volunteer Fee-Free Coupons

Participating federal land management agencies (Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service, US Fish & Wildlife Service, US Forest Service, US Army Corps of Engineers, and Department of Defense), in conjunction with the National Environmental Education Foundation, will present “fee-free coupons” to NPLD volunteers in recognition of their invaluable service to our nation’s public lands. Each coupon will entitle the recipient and their family or vehicle companions to one “fee-free” day at any participating federal recreation or visitor site within one calendar year from NPLD.

Coupons will be issued to volunteers 16 years of age or older participating in a registered NPLD event.

Federal Site Managers should distribute the Fee-Free Coupons as follows:

- Print the volunteer’s name on the coupon
- Inform them that the coupon is valid for use at **any** of the participating agencies’ recreation fee sites
 - If the volunteer intends to use the coupon at an unstaffed US Forest Service recreation fee site (e.g., trailhead, day-use site), the volunteer should use the coupon as one would cash, and exchange it for a daily pass using the established self-registration process at the site
 - If there is no alternative, the volunteer may fill in the date and place the coupon on the dashboard of their vehicle.
- The coupons are non-transferable and, if lost, will not be replaced.





Coupon Distribution and Presentation

Coupons will be distributed directly to federal Site Managers by NEEF. Site Managers should note in their records the number of coupons received, as well as the number distributed to NPLD volunteers.

The coupon supply must be requested and managed by a federal NPLD Site Manager or their designee, as non-monetary recognition items must be accurately accounted for and secured. After completion of an NPLD event, any surplus fee-free coupons should be shredded and disposed of properly.

Coupon Redemptions

At the time of redemption, the holder of the coupon must surrender it to the appropriate recreation or visitor site staff member, who must then record it as “one coupon redeemed.”

Note: This opportunity is ONLY available to NPLD Site Managers hosting service events on participating federal public lands.

Hosting: Successfully Executing Your NPLD Event



Creating an event agenda is always a good idea to help you stay on schedule!

This section includes recommendations for hosting a successful NPLD event.

Opening Ceremony at NPLD Events

Managing Risk

Creating an Inclement Weather Plan

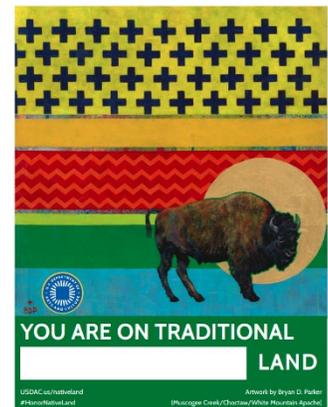
Day of Event Documents

Opening Ceremony at NPLD Events

All NPLD events should try to incorporate an opening ceremony designed to welcome volunteers and kick off the event. The opening ceremony is a great time to share information about the event location and help volunteers understand the impact of the work that they will be doing.

Things to Consider During Your Opening Ceremony:

- **What is National Public Lands Day:** For many volunteers, this may be their first interaction with NPLD. Give an overview of NPLD and provide a few words about the importance of giving back to our nation's public lands. Also, let volunteers know that they are a part of something bigger—let them know that they are part of a force of hundreds of thousands that will serve during NPLD!
- **Why are we here today?** Emphasize why the work project and location are significant to the local community and ecosystem. Acknowledge and thank any local event partners.
- **Want to include a land acknowledgement?** Visit the [Guide to Indigenous Land Acknowledgment](#) that covers preparing and conducting an indigenous land acknowledgement at your NPLD event (Guide presented in partnership with USDAC).
- **Define goals and desired outcomes:** Work with your partners to clearly define shared goals and outcomes so everyone is moving in the same direction. You should also outline clear roles and responsibilities for each partner. Make sure to establish the most effective means to communicate with your partners to complete tasks and convey important messages. This will help ensure mutual understanding as you plan and execute your event.
- **Keep it brief and meaningful:** Aim to keep the speaking portion of the day under 20 minutes. While speaking remarks are a great way to communicate the importance of public lands and environmental stewardship, remember that volunteers came to your NPLD event to get their hands dirty, and they are anxious to get to work!
- **Keep it local:** No one tells the story of local public lands better than local residents. If possible, include a community member in the speaking agenda. Give them guidance to help keep the message brief, appropriate, and organized. Ask them to share what the park, forest, or green space means to the local community.
- **Health and Nature:** Make the connection between improved health and increased time in nature.
- **Make it Loud!** Ask your agency contact if they have sound equipment you can borrow (wireless mic, podium, even a megaphone can work).



Managing Risk at NPLD Events

NPLD Site Managers should aim to provide a meaningful experience for NPLD volunteers as well as complete important work for the parks. To do both successfully, people need to be kept safe.

As you plan your NPLD event, start to think about potential risks that your volunteers might encounter while completing the day's work. Assess whether the project is appropriate for the skills and experience of the anticipated volunteers and if it will feel meaningful to them. In most cases, you should offer a project appropriate for volunteers of all ages and skill levels and one in which they can see the visible effects of their work. If the activity is above the ability of your group, NEEF recommends trying to identify an additional project(s) or site with your event partners.

Also consider the available tools in relation to the number of volunteers. All volunteers should be actively engaged throughout the event. If the number of tools required is prohibitive, seek out additional tool-free activities (picking up trash, pulling invasive plants) or move to a different project altogether.

Other factors to consider when choosing a project include:

- Anticipated weather conditions,
- Proximity to restrooms and water
- Skill level of leaders
- Park staff availability to support project
- Long-term impacts of the project



Creating an Inclement Weather Plan

As weather continues to become less predictable and increasingly severe, it's important to have a severe weather plan. In addition to planning for a range of "typical" weather in your area during the time of your event, you should also have a contingency plan since severe weather can completely shut down an NPLD event.

Here are five factors to consider when creating an inclement weather plan for your NPLD event:

- **Define "severe weather" for your location:** Every event, every venue, every crowd, and every storm is different. What is considered severe weather in one location may not be considered severe weather at another. List every type of weather that could impact your event and then how severe it needs to be before you do something about it. Then determine exactly what you will do. It could be to bring everyone inside for a few minutes, or possibly you will cancel the event altogether.
As general rule, anything involving **thunder or lightning** is an immediate evacuation for outdoor events. Additionally, while you should heed warning from officials, you shouldn't wait for the National Weather Service to declare severe weather before you evacuate. If you think you see a storm brewing, play it safe, use good judgement, and get people out of there.
- **Determine how you will handle evacuations:** Define what occurrences would warrant an evacuation. What will you do with NPLD volunteers? What about equipment or tools? You need to know where to direct people during an emergency and how long it takes to get there. You should also know the stability of every structure in use at your event, so you know what extent of wind, hail, etc. it can handle. Once you have a plan for the people, you can draft a plan for what to do with your equipment.
- **Establish a communication plan:** How will people know what to do in the event of severe weather? Have several messages scripted and ready to go for different situations, but also be prepared to write incident-specific messaging on the fly. Have multiple means for communication, including audio, visual, and digital (i.e. text alerts).
- **Train your NPLD event team:** Everyone involved in the planning and execution of the event needs to know and practice what to do in the event of severe weather or another emergency. With more practice, everyone will be calmer and faster if an actual emergency occurs. Try to run at least one practice exercise in which you time how long it takes to prepare for severe weather. Remember, it will always take longer than you expect when volunteers are involved.
- **Decide if, and when, the event will resume:** How will you determine if and when the event will resume? Was anything damaged? Do safety inspections need to be performed? Can you postpone? Do you have an alternate venue? How will you let attendees know whether the event will resume? Knowing the answers to these questions ahead of time will make these decisions easier when you're under pressure and everyone's waiting on you to make the call.

Day of Event Documents

Sample NPLD Event Agenda

Hour	ACTIVITIES
7:50 a.m.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Event staff arrive to get project instructions and help set up the volunteer welcome table.
8:30 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants arrive • Volunteer registration opens
8:45 a.m.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VIP guests and speakers arrive
9:00 a.m. – 9:25 a.m.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opening Ceremony (each speaker will have approximately 3-5 minutes) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Introductions - CEO, NEEF ○ Welcome to the Park! <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Park Superintendent, National Park Service</i> ○ Welcome to Our Community! <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Local Resident</i>
9:25 a.m. – 9:30 a.m.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safety briefing & project instructions for volunteers
9:30 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project work begins! Volunteers break into groups and head to their project sites. • Project leaders will greet and brief the volunteers on the work plan & safety for their project.
12:15 p.m. – 12:30 p.m.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • End of volunteer service • Projects wrap-up

Day of Event Documents

Sample Event Day Checklist

- Arrive on site and check in with park partners
- Set up registration tables with tablecloths, signage, etc.
- Select and set up staging area for remarks and group photo
- Assemble banners and place signage as necessary to direct volunteers to check-in
- Assign leaders as needed to direct volunteers to check-in
- Assign staff and leaders as needed at registration table (ideally one person to check in registered volunteers and one person to handle any new registrations)
- Check your registration system to make sure everything is ready for check-in
- Lay out hard-copy waivers if needed for new registrations
- Lay out colored stickers to designate work groups (Giving each volunteer a colored sticker as they check in makes it MUCH easier to break up the groups quickly to start the projects—no count-offs or shuffling required!)
- Fill and place water coolers
- Lay out snacks, gloves, and any other NPLD materials
- Make sure all leaders understand their on-site assignments and work tasks
- Work with park partners to make sure all tools and supplies are staged at each work site
- Make sure all leaders have stocked medical kits with updated Emergency Response Plans (ERPs)
- Make sure all leaders are prepared to give brief safety talks covering tool use and any potential hazards on site
- Send initial photos/messages to NPLD social media team for real-time event coverage throughout the day. Make sure all volunteers featured in each photo have signed NEEF's Media Release Form:
 - [Media Release Form](#)
 - [Online Google Form](#)
 - [Downloadable QR Code](#)

Sample Talking Points

Here are some talking points that you can incorporate into the opening ceremony for your NPLD Event:

- National Public Lands Day is the nation's largest single-day volunteer effort on public lands.
- 2023 Marks the 30th annual National Public Lands Day
- NEEF is the national coordinator of NPLD and collaborates with federal agencies, hundreds of state and local partners, and dozens of nonprofit organizations, and NPLD national corporate sponsor Toyota to make the day happen.
- National Public Lands Day promotes the connection between people and the environment by inviting everyone to get outside and spend the day caring for and enjoying the outdoors. Volunteers at sites throughout the country will roll up their sleeves and dig in to trail maintenance and planting projects, trash pick-ups, river clean-ups, and other refurbishing activities aimed at restoring public lands and making them more resilient. The day will also feature a variety of education, health, and recreation activities—all set on the backdrop of the country's public lands and waterways.

Sample Talking Points, continued

- Through volunteer service on National Public Lands Day as well as grant support to local organizations, NEEF helps people of all ages and abilities connect with public lands for recreation, hands-on learning, and community-building now and in the future.
- America's public lands aren't the only ones that benefit from National Public Lands Day. Nature offers one of the most reliable boosts to mental and physical wellbeing. Spending time in the outdoors has been found to improve short-term memory, concentration and creativity—while reducing the effects of stress and anxiety.
- Volunteering on NPLD is a great opportunity to spend time with family and friends and enjoy the many benefits that come from connecting with nature.

Sample Emergency Response Plan

NPLD Event Details

Event Description

This is a 200-person volunteer event with Friends of Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens. Volunteers will be thinning water lilies, removing invasive plants and picking up trash. Volunteers have signed up online and will check in as they arrive and will receive gloves, t-shirts, and work assignments. Snacks will be provided in the registration area. A short program of remarks will begin at 9:00 a.m. There will be colored flags designated for each project and, after the remarks, people will meet their groups at the flags to get direction from their team leaders. Work will happen between 9:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. and pre-packaged sandwich lunches will be provided in the picnic area at the end of the work period, along with music from the East of the River Steel Band.

Date and Time

Saturday, September 24, 2022, 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Event Location

Kenilworth Park & Aquatic Gardens, 1550 Anacostia Ave NE, Washington, DC 20019

Estimated Number of Participants

200

Primary Event Leader

John Smith
Park Ranger, Big Fun State Park
jsmith@neefusa.org
202-261-6474

Other Leaders

10 additional project leaders on-site

Leader to participant ratio met?

Yes (1 leader for every 20 volunteers)

IN AN EMERGENCY, THE FOLLOWING STEPS WILL BE TAKEN:

When applicable, remember to review this with participants and other leaders!

- Check the scene of the incident to ensure it is safe and stable
- Call 9-1-1
- Call the Primary Event Leader(s) listed above ASAP
- Care for patient until medics arrive (if necessary, send a leader with patient to hospital)

ADDITIONAL EMERGENCY INFORMATION

Location of nearest public phone

Kenilworth Park & Aquatic Gardens Visitor's Center

Location of nearest first-aid kit

There should be one first-aid kit with each project leader at all times.

Location of nearest Automated External Defibrillator (AED)

Kenilworth Park & Aquatic Gardens Visitor's Center.

Location of nearest hospital

Prince George's Hospital Center

3001 Hospital Drive

Cheverly, Maryland 20785

Phone: (301) 618-2000

Wrap-Up: Post NPLD Event Activities



A little thanks goes a long way!

This section will walk you through wrapping up your NPLD event and recording the impact of your work.

Thank Volunteers and Partners
Submit Your Results
Amplify Your Impact

NPLD Post-Event Survey

BE COUNTED! NPLD makes a big impact on our public lands, so make sure your event is included in the overall impact numbers.

Use this document to record the outcomes in the field and help you keep track of your volunteer successes. Then submit your results with our NPLD Post-Event Survey online.

Your input allows us to log your event outcomes and incorporate your successes into the broader story of national service during the annual NPLD celebration. The survey takes less than ten minutes and helps compile conservation data about your event to include in the overall impact report. Please make sure to fill it out!

The survey is available in two formats (Google Docs and Survey Monkey). If you have registered your event on the NEEF's NPLD map, you will receive links to fill out the survey.

Amplify Your Impact

We want to see how you NPLD. The photos of your event are also essential! They tell the full story of the day and NEEF includes them in the NPLD final report, and for future event promotion. Don't worry about editing or culling the best photos, sharing too much is always better than sharing too little! Please email a link to your photos to npld@neefusa.org or share on social media and tag **#NPLD @NEEFusa**.

When you share outcomes promptly with NEEF, we include your event story in media coverage highlighting the impacts and successes of National Public Lands Day.



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