

# Important Safety Information

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

Take the 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 Helen Schuler Nature Centre at 403-320-3064.

## COVID-19

Cleanups will look a little different right now. You might be doing a solo, household, or small group cleanup, but that doesn't mean you are on your own! Register your cleanup so the Helen Schuler Nature Centre can provide support. **[Review the Solo, Household, and Small Team Cleanup Guide for more information.](#)**

## General Safety Tips & Reminders

Always be safe and look out for yourself and others that are participating in your cleanup!!

- **Use the buddy system:** look out for each other, avoid working alone, advise where you are going and when you expect to return
- **Watch the weather:** stay hydrated, wear sunscreen, avoid the heat of the day
- **Prevent erosion:** stay off coulees in wet or muddy conditions to avoid causing damage
- **Beware of: ticks, rattlesnakes, spiders, mosquitoes and wasps**
- **Watch bag weight:** keep bags less than 10 lbs – rather than overfilling, start a new bag
- **Beware of sharps:** broken glass, needles or sharp-edged items should never be placed in bags as it may inadvertently cause harm to others!
- **Be visible:** safety vests and road safety signs must be used while working near roadways.

## Rough Sleeper Encampments

If you find a rough sleeper (homeless) camp while participating, do not dismantle it under any circumstances! Instead, please call the Safe Community Call Centre at 403-382-0545.

## Needles & Sharps

Never reach blindly into bushes or tall grasses to pick up litter. Always ensure you can see the entire piece of litter before picking it up. 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 needles in a plastic bag or garbage can as this puts other people at risk, especially staff responsible for picking up and changing garbage cans throughout the city.**

For needle removal, please call the Safe Community Call Centre at 403-382-0545.

## Ticks

At the end of your cleanup, remember to check for and remove any ticks! [Learn more from AHS](#)

# Organizing a Solo, Household, or Small Team Cleanup Guidelines

Helen Schuler Nature Centre is resuming River Valley Conservation Projects! This year will look a little different with groups being restricted to solo, household (*people who live within your household*), and small team cleanups. We are excited to have you back to support conservation efforts. The safety of our volunteers is our first priority.

**BEFORE** you register or participate in a cleanup, please review the information below.

## About this Guide

This Guide will help you in making your cleanup safer for you and your household. Remember, you must always also refer to the public health guidance from the Alberta government regarding COVID-19 measures in effect: [Click here for Alberta COVID-19 Information](#)

**It is essential you adhere to the guidance on appropriate group size and social distancing measures, in addition to the best practices for everyday action.**

Keep yourself safe before, during, and after your cleanup. You have an important role in limiting the spread of COVID-19 and other illnesses, so please continue to follow the every-day action advice of the [City of Lethbridge](#), [Province of Alberta](#), [Government of Canada](#), and [World Health Organization](#):

1. [Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds!](#)
2. [Avoid touching your face, eyes, nose, mouth, or ears with unwashed hands!](#)
3. [Practice physical distancing by keeping a minimum distance of 2 metres apart!](#)
4. [Avoid contact with anyone who is sick!](#)
5. [If you are feeling unwell, stay home!](#)
6. [Wear a face covering!](#)

**If you, or anyone in your household or small team, is experiencing any symptoms of COVID-19, please stay home and cancel or postpone your cleanup.**

**We appreciate your leadership! Thank you for being a community steward!!**

For more information on River Valley Conservation programs in Lethbridge:

Visit: [Lethbridge.ca/cleanshoreline](https://lethbridge.ca/cleanshoreline); Call: 403-320-3064; Email: [Curtis.Goodman@lethbridge.ca](mailto:Curtis.Goodman@lethbridge.ca)

# BEFORE YOUR CLEANUP

## 1. Get Informed!

- Review local restrictions and guidelines: [COVID-19 Information](#)
- Review provincial restrictions and guidelines: [COVID-19 Public Health Measures](#)

## 2. Register!

- Register your solo or household team cleanup: [Lethbridge.ca/cleanshoreline](http://Lethbridge.ca/cleanshoreline)
  - When planning your cleanup:
    - Avoid times when your target area may be busy
    - Choose a location close to your home
    - Use our online map to 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.

## 3. Prepare for Safety!

- Ask participants from your household or small team to come with their own personal protective equipment and supplies (mask, gloves, hand sanitizer, bags) on the day of the event OR bring sanitizing supplies for them!
- Have all participants watch the Health & Safety Video at [Lethbridge.ca/cleanshoreline](http://Lethbridge.ca/cleanshoreline)

## 4. Gather Cleanup Supplies!

- Prepare your cleanup supplies - including: gloves, bags, data card and pen
  - Look around your home for the supplies needed for your cleanup (*preferred*).
  - If you need gloves and garbage bags, a limited supply is available from the Helen Schuler Nature Centre (*please call to make arrangements: 403-320-3064*).
- Remember to dress appropriately for the weather and wear close-toed shoes, and review all Health & Safety Information & Guidelines!
- Print the [data card](#)

# DURING THE CLEANUP

## 1. Check your health!

- Keep our community safe - if you (or someone in your household) are not feeling well, stay home! It is better to postpone or cancel your cleanup to minimize any risks!
- [Remind all participants to conduct a self-assessment before they arrive!](#)

## 2. Keep 2 Metres Distance from Others!

- Be sure you and your household or small team maintain physical distancing!
- Keep 2 metre distance from anyone you may encounter!

## 3. 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 possible!
- WASH YOUR HANDS WITH SOAP & WATER!

## 4. What to do if you find Masks, Gloves, Needles, etc?

- 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 with 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 cans throughout the city.*
    - For needle removal, or to report an encampment, please call:  
**Safe Community Call Centre at 403-382-0545**

## 5. Manage your Garbage!

- Tie your garbage bags tightly and leave them next to existing City of Lethbridge garbage bins.
- Report the total number of bags of garbage collected and where you left them in your final data report!

## 6. Take a Picture!

- Before and after photos are a great way to showcase your local impact!
- 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!

- Remember: “Healthy Hands are Helping Hands!”
- With clean hands, give yourself a pat on the back, or have a team round of ‘air high fives!’ Well done!!

## 2. Complete your Data Report!

- Help us to understand the impact of your efforts by completing the data card and submitting it along with any photos or forms!
  - Please report the location and total number of bags of garbage collected by emailing: [Curtis.Goodman@lethbridge.ca](mailto:Curtis.Goodman@lethbridge.ca)

## 3. Share your impact!

- One way to effect change is to talk about it! Share your experience with friends and family - tell them what you noticed on your cleanup.

# MAKE A DIFFERENCE EVERY DAY!

Try one of our Cleanup Challenges for 2021:

- **Shoreline Saturdays!**
  - Show your shoreline some love on the first Saturday of the month (May-Sept) to see how your actions add up!
- **Join the Litterati!**
  - [Download the app](#), take a photo of each piece of litter you pick up, and contribute your data to a global movement to put an end to litter!!
- **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 run. This is a great way to incorporate squats in your cardio workout!
- **Prioritize your space!**
  - Remember: your shoreline starts at your front door. Purposefully commit to pick up every piece of litter the wind blows onto your property all year long.
- **Light up social media with your #trashtag!**
  - What better way to inspire others than leading by example?!
- **Issue a challenge to a friend...or rival!**
  - Use our [Coulee Cleanup Challenge](#) to get creative and set the stage for some friendly rivalry.

For more information on River Valley Conservation programs in Lethbridge:

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# An important note about cigarette butts

**Cigarette butts are the most commonly littered item worldwide and Lethbridge is no exception. Unfortunately, littered cigarette butts do not disappear and can result in a fine of up to \$300.**

**A little litter can do a lot of damage!**

A common myth is that cigarette butts are not harmful litter because the filter is made out of cotton that will easily decompose. **In truth, a typical cigarette butt filter is made out of a type of plastic called cellulose acetate. These filters can take up to ten years to decompose, leaving behind microplastic pollution.**

The microplastic pollution that comes from cigarette butts isn't even the worst of what happens to that little cigarette butt that gets tossed on the ground. Furthermore, cigarette butts leach toxins into the environment, get eaten by wildlife, are a primary cause of house and forest fires, and cost millions of taxpayer dollars to clean up!

**If you choose to smoke, please do your part to dispose of cigarette butts responsibly.**

## Have you heard of pocket ashtrays?

Pocket ashtrays are a convenient way to butt out on-the-go – extinguishing cigarettes while sealing the smell in!

Pocket ashtrays are the perfect addition to your everyday life (you may want one for your purse, backpack, or car), but also for your adventures. The small size is ideal for your outdoor adventures like camping or kayaking – if you can carry a pack of cigarettes and a lighter, then you can also carry a pocket ashtray.

## Ready to quit smoking?

[Learn more at Alberta Quits](#)

# Other Conservation Programs in Lethbridge

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

## Adopt a Park

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? [Click here for more information on the Adopt a Park program.](#)

## Environment Week

Environment Week is a national event taking place in June. Get involved and show your love for the environment. [Click here for more information about Environment Week.](#)

## Pitch In!

Pitch-In is a national litter picking campaign! The City of Lethbridge will provide bags and a pick up 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. [Click here for more information about the Pitch In program.](#)

## River Valley Conservation Projects

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! [Click here for more information about River Valley Conservation Projects.](#)

## Reuse Rendezvous

Reuse Rendezvous is held in the Spring (April) and Fall (September). Take part in this event and help reduce landfill waste and find yourself some free goods! [To find out more about Reuse Rendezvous click here.](#)

## Waste Reduction Week

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. [Click here for more information about Waste Reduction Week.](#)

## Yellow Fish Road

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! [To find out more about Yellow Fish Road click here.](#)

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

# Lethbridge River Valley Conservation 2021

**River Valley Conservation programs 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!

Helen Schuler Nature Centre coordinates several different initiatives that work together to keep our city looking its best while improving our natural spaces. These programs are made possible thanks to the leadership of our partners, including: B93, Country 95, Alberta Ecotrust Foundation, Alberta Conservation Association, Lethbridge Parks, Friends of the Helen Schuler Nature Centre Society, and the City of Lethbridge.

Before beginning a conservation project, please take a moment to review all safety information.

## Benefits of Participation

Participating in River Valley Conservation is a great way to build social connections and give back to your community—not to mention both the physical and mental benefits of spending time outside!

Teachers can use these programs as an opportunity to show students we are all responsible for our own actions, to foster a mindset of environmental stewardship, and to teach the safe handling and disposal of different types of waste. Certificates of participation are available upon request.

## River Valley Conservation Project Schedule at a Glance:

### Coulee Cleanup (*April & May*)

- April 22-May 31

### Shoreline Cleanup (*First Saturdays*)

- May 1
- June 5
- July 3
- August 7
- September 4

### Invasive Weed Pull (*Third Wednesdays*)

- May 19
- June 16
- July 14
- August 18

### \*\*\*IMPORTANT PROGRAM CHANGES FOR 2021\*\*\*

**COVID-19: Cleanups look different in 2021 than they have in the past but that doesn't mean you are on your own!**

1. **Solo, household, and small team cleanups.**

Traditionally the Nature Centre has encouraged and supported large group efforts; in 2021 the Nature Centre will support solo, household, and small team cleanups in accordance with public health guidelines.

2. **Encouraging participants to use their own gloves and bags.**

Traditionally the Nature Centre has provided supply kits for groups; in 2021 the Nature Centre will encourage participants to use their own gloves and bags (*limited glove and bag supply is available for individual pick up from the Nature Centre*).

For more information on River Valley Conservation programs in Lethbridge:

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