# NC Creek Week Network
Top Tips for Hosting a Volunteer Event

This document will become a "top 10 tips for hosting volunteer events" or something along that line. Let's start by all adding in some bullet points of our best tips and lessons learned. It is okay if your ideas are similar to others that are already on here, once we have all contributed, we can look over and combine the points into some common themes. (This may become more than 10 points)

- Utilize a free program, such as signupgenius, to identify volunteer roles and sign ups
- Make sure event leaders are briefed on how to quickly and safely train volunteers if they need to learn a skill (i.e. how to plant a tree). Break volunteers into groups for initial training if necessary/ possible.
- If your organization requires liability waivers make sure all volunteers complete one prior to the event (especially for stream cleanups)
- Outline clear rules for children participating in the event when you are publicizing it (How old do they have to be to participate? At what age do they no longer need an adult to accompany them?)
- Send an email reminder 2-3 days before the event (unless you're using a program that generates and sends the reminders for you) and send a thank you email to participants as soon as you can
- When setting a date for your event, consider what other big events/festivals are happening in your area on that same date
- Have photo release forms available for them to sign if you plan on posting pictures
- FLOWER Power: Volunteer Management Guide
  - F: Flexibility - Things are always going to go differently than planned, be prepared to be flexible
  - L: Location - Know the site where you are volunteering (bathrooms, location to collect trash, parking, etc.)
  - O: Organization - Be able to share an overview of your organization with the volunteers, this can get them excited about your work and may encourage them to come back again
  - W: Why - Share with your volunteers why they are doing what they are doing, it's great for moral to be able to see the bigger picture
  - E: Everyone - Make sure everyone is included. Be aware of people who may be a little uncomfortable with the task or may not know others in the group and help them get excited about the project in different ways.
  - R: Risks - Know what the possible risk factors are during the event and be prepared to mitigate them (heat, poison ivy, snakes, needles, etc.)
- On the day of the event: Offer a volunteer sign-in station seperate from regular sign-in
- If you register volunteers ahead of the event, print off your registration list to have with you at check-in so you know which volunteers signed up ahead of time, who no showed, and which volunteers were 'walk-ins'
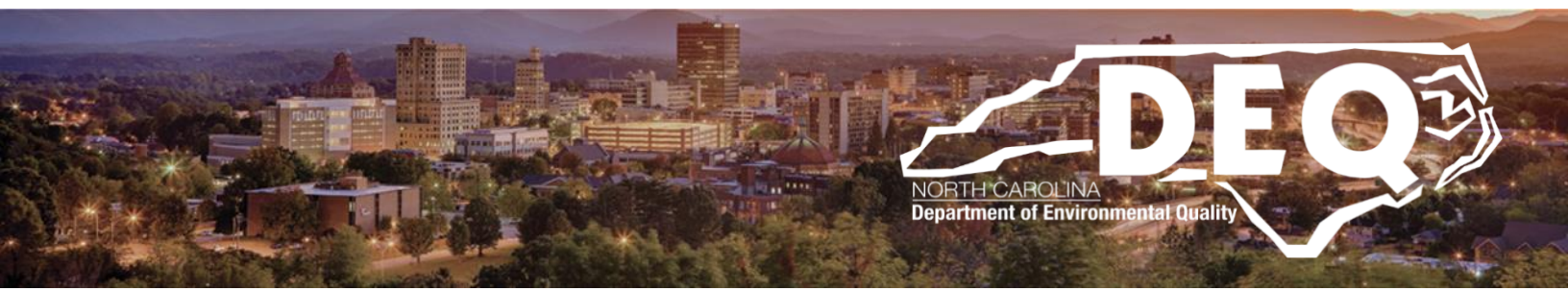
- You might want to ask volunteers how they heard about the event at check-in and mark that on your sign in sheet/spreadsheet
- At the start of the event, make sure to cover any ground rules/mention where folks might find restrooms/drinking fountains/ etc. (For stream cleanups, depending how large your site is, it's good to set a time to meet back at a specific location. Also, good to determine 1-3 spots for volunteers to pile up their trash bags)
- Take photos of your event in action, group shots are nice too!
- Provide water or other refreshments if they will be volunteering for more than a couple of hours.
- For outdoor events have bugspray, sunscreen, and hand sanitizer if sinks aren't close by.
- Make sure you introduce yourself and other leaders so the volunteers will know who to ask for directions or assistance.
- Provide name tags
- Make sure you have a first aid kit.
- Before you leave the site of your event, try to take inventory to ensure none of your supplies walked off