

The Great Global Cleanup



**EARTH DAY 2026
ORGANIZER TOOLKIT**



**THE GREAT GLOBAL
CLEANUP™**

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What is the Great Global Cleanup?

Our Mission

The Great Global Cleanup aims to rid the environment of waste and plastic pollution for good.

The Great Global Cleanup at a Glance

The Great Global Cleanup is a worldwide campaign aimed at ridding the environment of waste and plastic pollution for good through activating the global cleanup movement. This year our theme, OUR POWER, OUR PLANET, showcases our commitment to empower communities through renewable energy and create a waste-free future.

Who we are

Our goal is to empower the global cleanup movement and provide organizations with the resources they need to effectively remove waste and ultimately create permanent solutions to end plastic pollution.

About EARTHDAY.ORG

EARTHDAY.ORG's mission is to diversify, educate and activate the environmental movement worldwide. Growing out of the first Earth Day in 1970, EARTHDAY.ORG is the world's largest recruiter to the environmental movement, working with more than 150,000 partners in over 192 countries to drive positive action for our planet.



Our Power, Our Planet™

Earth Day 2026

About Our Power Our Planet

On April 22nd, 2025, Earth Day celebrated its 55th anniversary, and 192 countries and over one billion people around the globe participated. This demonstrates how the diverse Earth Day movement remains as dedicated today, as it was back in 1970, to bringing everyone together for a better future.

As we look forward to our next milestone, we celebrate a transformative reality: we already possess the solutions we need to create clean, inexpensive, and unlimited energy for the entire planet through renewable solar, wind and other technologies.

This Earth Day 2026, let us commit to harnessing renewable energy to build a healthy, sustainable, equitable and prosperous future for us all. Let us commit to Renewable Energy Now.

Find out how to get Involved [Here](#)

By 2035 energy needs in countries such as the U.S. can be met by renewable sources, **365 days a year**, which is why we are calling for renewable energy generation, globally, to be tripled by 2030.



POWER

Triple renewable energy generation by 2030 to fully harness the potential of our planet's abundant resources: solar, wind, hydroelectric, geothermal, and tidal energy.



PEOPLE

Empower global communities with clean, affordable renewable energy — driving economic growth, creating jobs, encouraging equity, and improving the health of billions of people.



PLANET

Rapid deployment of renewable energy will combat climate change, preserve biodiversity, protect ecosystems, and eliminate our dependence on fossil fuels.

Join The Great Global Cleanup



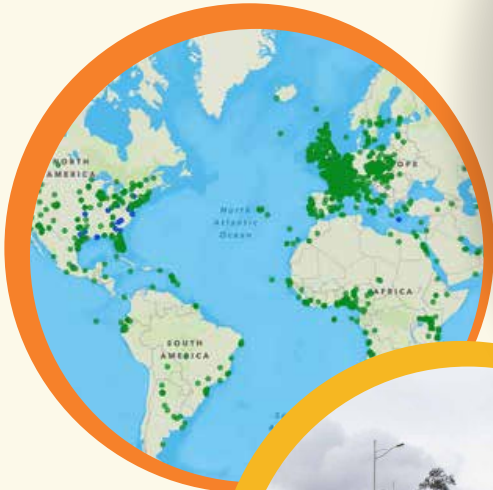
**BECOME AN OFFICIAL PARTNER
OF THE GREAT GLOBAL CLEANUP**



**ADD YOUR CLEANUP TO
THE GLOBAL CLEANUP MAP**



**SIGN OUR GLOBAL
PLASTICS
PETITION**



The Global Cleanup Map

The Global Cleanup Map highlights ongoing cleanups worldwide, serving as a dynamic tool to connect our volunteers with your cleanups.



By showcasing the movement's work on a global scale, we grow the impact we can make together.

ADD YOUR CLEANUP TO THE GLOBAL CLEANUP MAP [HERE](#)



How To Do A Cleanup

8 STEPS ON HOW TO HOST A CLEANUP

1 | ORGANIZE A
PLANNING GROUP



2 | SELECT A LOCATION,
DATE, AND TIME



3 | GATHER VOLUNTEERS



4 | SUPPLIES AND
DISPOSAL



5 | START YOUR
CLEANUP DAY



6 | ORIENTATION AND
SAFETY TALK



7 | DISPOSE OF WASTE



8 | END THE CLEANUP



1

ORGANIZE A PLANNING GROUP

- Whether it's with your friends, your organization, or just you, decide who will take the lead in organizing the cleanup!
- Invite members from local government, civic organizations, clubs, homeowner associations, churches and media to serve on a cleanup planning committee. Having a diverse coalition can help the event run well.
- Appoint site captains who will manage the event and designate roles to assure the cleanup goes smoothly.

2

SELECT AN APPROPRIATE SITE, DATE, AND TIME

- Choose a public location: a park, a river, or a similar community site that is ideally accessible by public transportation or bicycle. **TIP:** Make sure to check and see if you need any necessary local permissions.
- Select a date for your cleanup: **TIP:** Earth Day is on April 22nd, a great opportunity to take action.
- Select a time: Choose a time that allows for plenty of daylight and comfortable temperatures for volunteers. **TIP:** Most cleanups happen between 9:00am and 11:00am.

3

GATHER VOLUNTEERS

- **Register your cleanup** so it appears on the **Great Global Cleanup Map** and is connected to our global network of volunteers.
- Advertise your cleanup to your organization, family, friends, and/or community members. **TIP:** People from different organizations and associations can help turn out volunteers and bridge community members through the cleanup.
- Use Facebook or Eventbrite to create the event to share the information and manage volunteer sign up.

4

LINE UP SUPPLIES AND ARRANGE FOR DISPOSAL

- Ask for donations of trash bags, refreshments, and equipment. **TIP:** Local hardware stores are usually willing to donate these resources.
- Coordinate with local waste management through a short phone call to ensure everything is being disposed of in accordance with rules and regulations.
- Be sure that contributors get credit for their donations in cleanup promotions.
- Gather supplies (Important Items To Have: Trash Bags or Buckets, Trash Grabbers, First Aid Kit, Gloves and Hand Sanitizer, Water/ Snacks, Table and chairs, and Event Signage).

5

START YOUR CLEANUP DAY

- Closer to the date, check the weather and plan to dress appropriately. Wear something you don't mind getting dirty!
- Send a reminder the night before or day of the cleanup to all participants and key individuals you want to attend.
- Invite local media outlets to cover the event and spread awareness.
- As a leader, arrive to the event early to set up before volunteers arrive.

6

ORIENTATION AND SAFETY TALK

- Safety is key. Two people make a team! Wear gloves, and closed toe shoes. Bring a hat, sunscreen & reusable water bottle.
- Keep the environment safe — **vegetation is sensitive and wildlife is best kept wild.**
- What to remove: Trash and Litter (anything created by humans), Recyclables.
- What to leave: Nature, Homeless Encampments, Dead Animals, Syringes, needles, and other hazardous materials.

7

DISPOSE OF WASTE

- Find a location to properly dispose of all of the waste you clean up!
- Sort the waste into trash, recyclables, and hazardous waste.
- Make sure to measure the amount of waste you collected by number of bags or weight.
TIP: If you are unsure of where to dispose of any of this waste contact your local municipality's waste department for further instruction.

8

AT THE END OF THE CLEANUP

- Share your Cleanup results with us.
- Take pictures before and after your collection and share them on Twitter and Instagram.
TIP: Use handles #Great Global Cleanup, #Trash Tag, and #Plogging.
- Post your event on social media. Tag us at @earthdaynetwork on Instagram and TikTok.
- Share your images with local newspapers, magazines, and EARTHDAY.ORG.
- Write thank you emails to any cooperating government officials, businesses, and organizations.

Creating a Waste-Free World

The Impact of Cleanups

Cleanups are an essential part of the solution to creating a waste-free world. Research suggests that cleanups can remove up to **99% of microplastics** from the area surrounding the waste. But alone they are not enough. There needs to be systematic change upstream otherwise there will always be a need to do cleanups for the rest of our lives.

That is why EARTHDAY.ORG is calling for a **60% reduction in plastic production** by 2040.



To Achieve a 60% Reduction by 2040, EARTHDAY.ORG's Goals are:

1

Promoting widespread public awareness of the damage done by plastic to human, animal, and biodiversity's health and demanding more research be conducted on its health implications, including the release of any and all information regarding its effects to the public.

2

Rapidly phasing out all single use plastics by 2030 and achieving this phase out commitment in the United Nations Treaty on Plastic Pollution.

3

Demanding policies ending the scourge of fast fashion and the vast amount of plastic it produces and uses.

4

Investing in innovative technologies and materials to build a plastic-free world.



The Plastic Threat To Human Health



Bisphenol A, also known as BPA, used to make billions of plastic beverage containers, dinnerware, protective linings of food cans and toys, is considered an **endocrine disruptor**, meaning it can both decrease or increase endocrine activity in humans and cause **adverse health effects**.

BPA is able to be absorbed by fat tissue, and is associated with **increased risk of breast cancer**. Additionally, the breast milk of most women in the developed world contains dozens of compounds including BPA that have been linked to **negative health effects**.

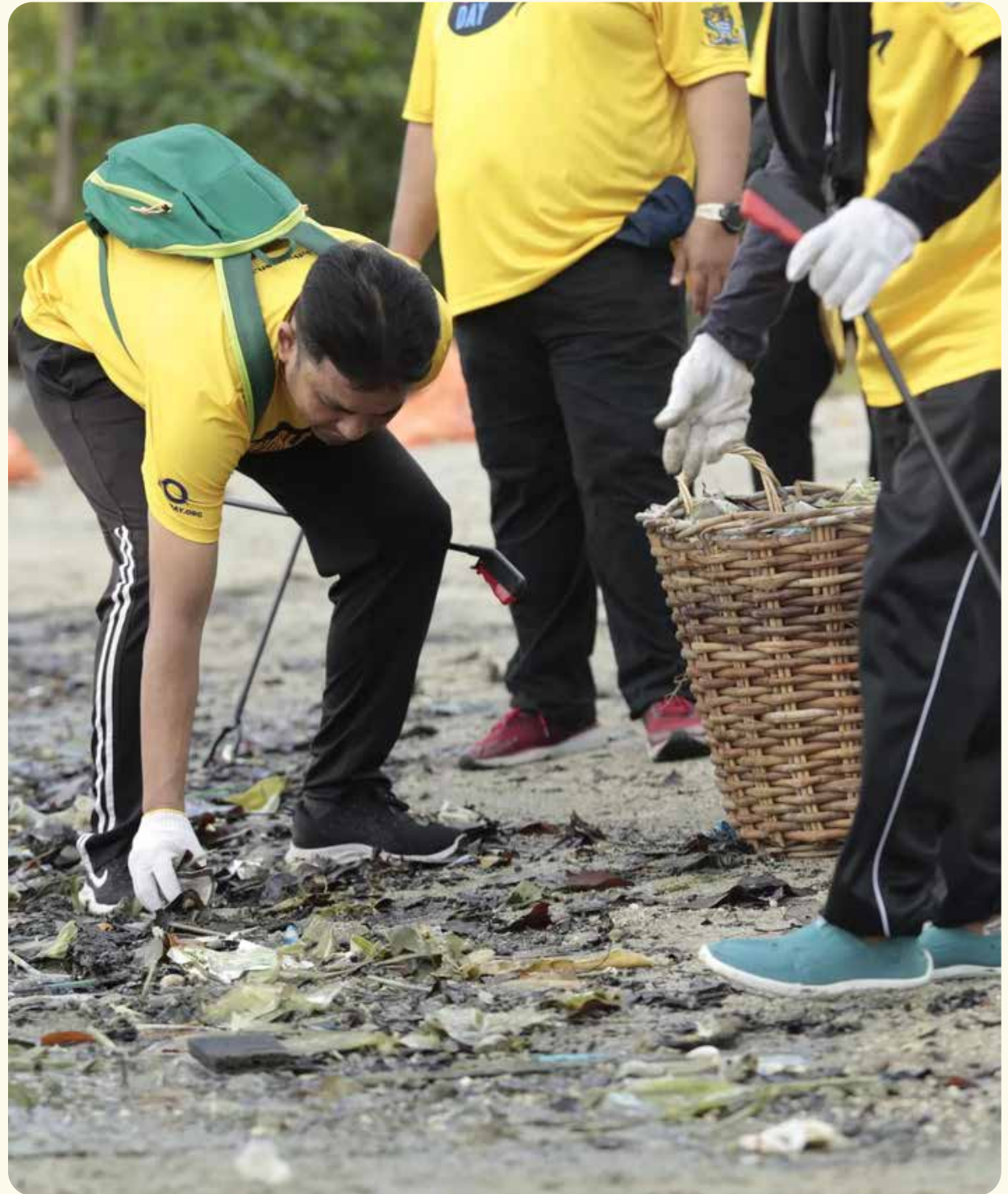
Some animal studies have indicated **adverse effects of BPA on newborns and fetuses**. Importantly, the label BPA-free in a container of a bottle doesn't mean a product is free from other harmful chemical compounds that are slightly different but **have a different name**.

Growing literature links many Phthalates, which are a group of chemicals used to make plastics more flexible and harder to break, with a variety of adverse outcomes including **weight gain and insulin resistance, decreased levels of sex hormones, and other consequences for the human reproductive system both for females and males.**

When food is wrapped in plastic containing BPA, **phthalates may leak into the food.** Any migration is likely to be greater when in contact with fatty foods such as meats and cheeses than with other foods.

In general, it is not recommended to heat food in plastic containers with the codes 3 and 7.

The USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service advises Americans not to reuse margarine tubs, take-out containers, whipped topping bowls, and other one-time use containers, which are more likely to melt and cause chemicals to **leach into food.**



Engaging The Media

Why Engage Local Media?

Inviting local media is an excellent way to raise public awareness, increase your organization's impact, and boost community engagement. Journalists can tell compelling stories that celebrate your successes and shine a light on the ongoing environmental challenges your community is addressing.

Invite the Media

Share the key details: location, date, and the number expected participants or if any special guests are attending, such as the mayor or local leaders in your community.

During the Cleanup

Be sure to capture your cleanup by snapping **BEFORE** and **AFTER** photos! Sharing these images not only highlights your hard work but also helps us spread the word and inspire others. Don't forget to send them our way and share them with local media as well. Mention and tag [EARTHDAY.ORG](https://www.earthday.org) on socials as well.

For tips on fully capturing your event, explore our [Filming Guide](#).

We'd love you to mention [EARTHDAY.ORG](https://www.earthday.org) in your interview and we can share quotes or even potentially virtual interviews too, supporting your clean up efforts.

Email steve@earthday.org for media interview requests from EARTHDAY.ORG.

Climate Education

How to Involve Climate Education with Cleanups

Cleanups are not only a tool to get people involved in the cleanup movement and to create tangible change, but also as a tool to educate students.

EARTHDAY.ORG passionately envisions a world where every student, no matter their location, is embraced by a rich education weaving together climate and environmental understanding, coupled with a strong civic engagement component.

Check out more about climate education [here](#).



How to get Students Involved

Educational Workshops: Host pre-cleanup workshops on plastic pollution and advocacy to frame the cleanup in a broader environmental context.

Leadership Roles: Offer students roles in planning and leading the cleanup, developing their leadership and organizational skills.

Social Media Campaigns: Encourage sharing the cleanup experience on social media to amplify their advocacy and allow them to activate their community.

Recognition and Rewards: Provide certificates, school credits, and volunteer hours for participation to motivate continued involvement in environmental activities.

