

Cleaning a creek can be a wonderful and rewarding experience. These areas are small pockets of amazing natural beauty. As in any “nature experience” you must remember that this is a place where a variety of animals, insects and unusual plants live. **Review the following tips with your volunteers prior to your cleanup date to insure that it is an enjoyable experience for all.**

Day of Project

- Meet at pre-arranged spot before cleanup
- Sign liability waivers (**every volunteer must sign**)
- Distribute cleanup supplies
- Go over safety tips and project instructions
- Complete cleanup project
- Return to meeting place for debriefing
- Complete post-cleanup checklist

What to Wear/Bring

- ✓ Wear sturdy garden gloves
- ✓ Wear thick-soled, closed-toe shoes
- ✓ Wear a hat and light-colored shirt
- ✓ Wear safety vests at all times
- ✓ Wear sunscreen and bug repellent
- ✓ Bring cleanup supplies (provided)
- ✓ Bring a reusable water bottle
- ✓ Bring a snack (with minimal packaging)
- ✓ Bring a camera to take photos
- ✓ Bring a backpack to carry water bottle, snacks, camera, and supplies

Autumn Dillon, Community Cleanup Coordinator
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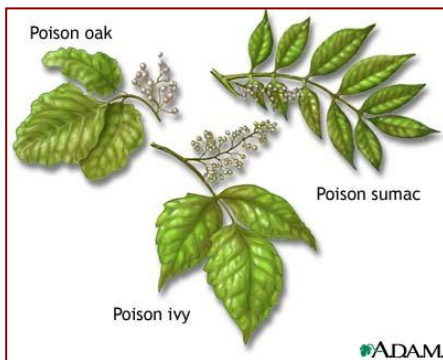
Important Tips for Creek Cleanups

- ✓ **Plan a meeting location!** Meet up at a specific location beforehand to hand out supplies and go over basic safety guidelines & cleanup procedure.
- ✓ **Represent Plano!** Remember, as volunteers, you represent the city of Plano. Please be respectful to the natural creek environment and the wildlife that live there.
- ✓ **Know emergency procedures!** Prepare for any unexpected emergencies (medical or police) that might occur during a cleanup. You should know the location of the nearest emergency facility/hospital and dial 911 to quickly summon an ambulance or the police.
- ✓ **Locate the nearest restrooms and water stations!** Not all creeks/parks have nearby public restrooms and water fountains. Remember this important detail when planning.
- ✓ **Wear appropriate creek gear!** Wear garden gloves or the provided disposable gloves. Oftentimes, there are broken bottles stuck at the bottoms of creek beds. Wear boots or sturdy close-toe shoes that can get wet. Creeks usually contain water ☺. Be prepared to get a little wet (or a lot wet if you want!)
- ✓ **Slip! Slop! Slap! & Wrap!** The American Cancer Society recommends you SLIP on a shirt, SLOP on sunscreen, SLAP on a hat and WRAP on sunglasses to protect yourself from ultraviolet light whenever you are outdoors.
- ✓ **Repel pests!** Keep them away by lightly applying bug repellent to your ankles, legs, arms and waist.
- ✓ **Be aware of your surroundings!** Wear long sleeves and long pants to avoid any contact with poison ivy, poison oak or poison sumac. These plants can be identified by their leaves of three and reddish stem (see pictures below.) It is best to avoid any contact with animal wildlife. They are not interested in you as long as you are not interested in them!
- ✓ **Avoid hazardous items!** Do not pick up dangerous items (guns, knives, etc.) or hazardous materials such as hypodermic needles, sharp objects, old car batteries, animal carcasses or other unidentified, questionable objects; contact Autumn Dillon at (972) 769-4369 to report such items.
- ✓ **Use the buddy system!** Always work in groups of two or more and exchange contact numbers if your group decides to separate.

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- ✓ **Watch your step!** The terrain of a creek is oftentimes uneven and a bit slippery. Watch your step and use solid branches or stones to support yourself when walking.
- ✓ **Hydrate & Energize!** Bring a reusable water bottle and drink plenty of fluids (especially during extreme temperatures.) Single-use plastic bottles are some of the most commonly littered items. Pack a snack to re-energize. “Zero waste” snacks include little or no packaging, which often ends up as litter.
- ✓ **Wash your hands!** Always wash your hands before eating after being in a creek. The water is not safe to drink and your hands should be considered “dirty” after working in the creek.
- ✓ **Take a camera!** Shoot “before” and “after” photos of the creeks & send them to cleanup coordinator!
- ✓ **Have fun!** A creek cleanup can be hard work, but still fun at the same time! Have a contest to see who can find the strangest littered item, or who can collect the most bags. Remember to take a moment and really see the beauty of the creeks. You might be surprised at what you get to see!

Poison ivy, oak and sumac



Poison oak



Poison ivy



Poison sumac

