



BOULDERWISE GUIDELINES FOR STEWARDSHIP VOLUNTEER PROJECTS



If your group is planning an outdoor corporate social responsibility (CSR) or volunteering project in Boulder, first we want to say thank you! These efforts are a meaningful way to give back to nature and help restore the lands that are so beloved by our visitors and residents.

Visit Boulder and Leave No Trace have teamed up to provide some easy-to-follow guidance to help stewardship event organizers host a great event that follows responsible practices, shares the wisdom of Leave No Trace's Seven Principles, and inspires others to protect our beautiful outdoor spaces for future generations.

1. Plan Ahead and Prepare

- Obtain necessary permits and approval, and make arrangements for liability waivers and photo releases.
- Consider skill level and/or age requirements, supervision, supplies, volunteer capacity and sign-up options.
- Provide gloves and other personal-protective equipment for safety.
- Create a risk-management and safety plan, bring a first aid kit, know emergency contacts and identify nearby medical help.
- Check the weather and monitor changing conditions. Schedule projects in the morning to avoid afternoon thunderstorms common in the foothills of Boulder.
- Inform volunteers in advance about gear to bring, e.g. long pants, sturdy, closed-toed shoes, sunscreen, hat, water, etc, the types of work and physical requirements or accommodations.
- Work in groups, or at least pairs, when possible for safety.

2. Travel and Work on Durable Surfaces

- Establish staging areas on durable surfaces like pavement, gravel or grassy fields.
- Avoid damaging vegetation and sensitive habitats by choosing routes carefully, sticking to durable surfaces, and keeping group sizes small.
- Use designated trails and roads for access. Don't take shortcuts to bring tools or trash-collection bags back to the staging area.

3. Dispose of Waste Properly

- Plan for trash disposal, including waste bags, and avoid adding accidental litter to the landscape. At trash cleanups, sort recyclables whenever possible. Check out [Eco-Cycle's guide for recycling in Boulder County](#).
- Provide clear instructions on unsafe litter (e.g. hazardous materials, broken glass, sharp objects).
- Point out restroom locations, and give clear guidance on using catholes or WAG bags for more remote events.

- For cleanups, use buckets or reusable containers instead of disposable bags, and provide washable gloves instead of disposable gloves.
- Encourage participants to bring a reusable water bottle.

4. Leave What You Find

- Avoid disturbing cultural or historical sites to protect important archeological resources and preserve the story of these places.
- The Archeological Resource Protection Act prohibits removing items more than 50 years old from federal lands. If unsure, leave items that could be from 1975 or earlier.
- Only remove invasive species as part of designated projects.

5. Minimize Fire Risk

- There is a permanent ban on open burning, including campfires, fire pits, and bonfires in Boulder.
- Smoking is prohibited in public spaces in Boulder.
- Conditions are dry in Boulder, and groups working on open space can help prevent wildfires by exercising caution and promptly reporting any signs of smoke or fire.

6. Respect Wildlife

- Keep a safe distance from animals and avoid disturbing nesting and den areas.
- Store food and waste securely to deter wildlife and prevent altering their behavior.
- Educate volunteers on the impact and dangers of feeding or approaching wildlife.

7. Be Considerate of Others

- Keep noise levels down and maintain a friendly atmosphere.
- Casually inform curious bystanders what your group is working on — they may want to join in!
- Ensure volunteers park responsibly and do not block access points.
- Communicate with park officials and other user groups to minimize conflicts. A “Volunteer Event” sign can help.

Thank you for stepping up to protect and care for our outdoor spaces! Whether you're leading a litter cleanup, restoring trails or removing invasive species, your efforts make a real difference. A well-organized event ensures volunteers stay safe, have fun and leave the land better than they found it. This checklist covers the essentials — from permits to waste disposal — so your event runs smoothly and aligns with Leave No Trace principles.

Stewardship Project Checklist

- Obtain permits and permissions from land managers
- Set up liability insurance waivers and optional photo release, and plan for when/how they will be collected (e.g. electronic in advance or on-site paper forms)
- Develop and execute a communications/promotional plan for volunteer recruitment
- Review the risk management plan internally with all project leaders in advance, and deliver a safety talk for volunteers on site
- Gather necessary tools, protective gear and first aid kits
- Set up staging areas on durable surfaces
- Ensure waste disposal and recycling options are available
- Communicate with volunteers in advance about guidelines and requirements, e.g. bring water, food, long pants, sturdy shoes, rain gear, hat, sunscreen, etc.
- Provide extra water if possible
- Educate volunteers on Leave No Trace principles with a short, five-minute presentation during the project orientation
- Communicate with other park users and officials about the event
- Provide accessible pathways and applicable volunteer duties for individuals with mobility limitations
- Point out restrooms and have a human waste plan for volunteers
- Avoid disturbing natural, cultural and historical resources
- Respect wildlife by maintaining a safe distance and securing trash at all times
- Collect applicable project metrics (e.g. lbs of trash, trees planted, etc.) and take photos before, during and after the project to document and celebrate the accomplishments!