

River Cleanup Volunteer Guide

Your group has secured your date for a service day on the water! Please review the information below to help prepare you for the day. We thank you for volunteering with Ann Arbor Parks and are looking forward to cleaning up the river with your help!



Date:

Time:

Park:

Meeting spot:

The City of Ann Arbor Canoe Livery is the largest livery in the State with 100,000 people annually paddling boats from city liveries. Argo and Gallup liveries are busy! Your service day is a partnership with the canoe livery staff, GIVE 365 and the HRWC & DEQ grant. River clean-up projects are very popular as they are a great way for groups to enjoy the Huron River while giving back to help keep our waterways clean! To best be prepared for the day, we have outlined key items below. If you have any questions or concerns prior to, please reach out to us at volunteer@a2gov.org or 734.794.6445.

What to expect

Your group will be *partnered* in boats, paddling along the river, collecting any litter you find along the way. GIVE365 & Livery staff will provide all materials needed: boats, lifejackets, oars, rubber gloves, trash pickers and bags. Once you arrive to the designated meeting spot for your clean up, you will look for the GIVE365 staff member who will facilitate the check in and will be your lead and guide throughout the entire river clean-up. We will also look to the group to provide an experienced paddler to support the trip as we like to make sure we have both a lead guide and a *last boat back* with an experienced paddler who can assist if a boat is struggling or flipped to make sure all arrive back safely. Paddling experience is recommended for all river clean up groups. The paddler in the stern of the canoe must be able to steer to avoid obstacles and navigate to the trash caught up on the edge of the river.

The length of the outing can vary based on the type of clean up, river levels, volunteer paddling skills, amount of litter, shuttle schedule/availability, group size, and livery busy-ness. If you have time restrictions, please speak to your group organizer and our staff in advance of the scheduled clean up to confirm whether we can accommodate your schedule.

Parking

Always confirm and double check the meeting point—this can change based on time of year and will be unique to your specific group. Whenever possible, please carpool, bike, walk, or bus due to limited parking at both Argo and Gallup. On nice weather days, these parks can be extremely busy, and it can be difficult to find parking. If cars are the only option, allow time (approx. 10 mins) to find parking (and a short walk). Please lock all items in car that you do not want to bring

out on the water. Lockers are also available in the livery buildings. Shuttle service is included and provided by the livery (as needed).

Boat & Paddling information

Canoes are provided and preferred as two volunteers can sit comfortably and collect the most litter, especially larger items. Depending on weight limits, a third volunteer may be able to sit in the middle of the boat if needed. Kayaks are only available *if* the river is too low to support weights of canoe *and* there are experienced paddlers volunteering.

- For Argo-to-Gallup river trips, canoes do not go through the Argo cascades. Volunteers enter the canoes at the base of the cascades.
- A max of 10 canoes are allotted for each river clean up and covered by a grant through Michigan DEQ. Any additional boats have a fee of \$27/per boat.
- Experienced paddlers should sit at the back of the boat to steer.
- The group will receive a river briefing on land prior to the trip. Basic paddling tips: paddle on opposite sides, stay seated, and keep your shoulders inside the boat edge.

Weather and River Considerations

- Volunteer safety is our number one priority. Forecasts of thunderstorms, heavy rain or other severe weather warnings will require a cancel/reschedule.
- High river flow can make a river clean up unsafe. No cleans up if river flow is too high (>600cfs)
- **If river flow is too low or too high, your pre-scheduled river trip can be cancelled or will have alternate options** (ie, kayaks only for low water conditions or pond area clean up only). GIVE365 will confirm with livery staff the day prior to event and evaluate conditions the morning of and be in communication with your group coordinator.
- Visit our website for additional weather considerations: [Preparing For Your Work Day](#).

Safety & Litter Collection

- Lifejackets must be worn at all times.
- Consider heat, hydration and weather conditions/precautions.
- Collecting litter from the river, while in a boat means you should be prepared for getting wet and messy.
- All boats can flip over! Always make sure your personal belongings are secure or better yet don't bring valuables out on the river with you. If your boat flips over, swim or walk the boat to a shallow part of the river. With a person holding each end of the boat, hold boat upside down or on its side to drain the water out. Flip the boat over and keep on paddling!

What do I bring?

Each volunteer is required to complete the [GIVE 365 volunteer waiver](#) and the **Livery waiver** (attached). We do recommend bringing a reusable water bottle and sun protection (sunscreen/hat/sunglasses). No glass containers allowed. **Waterproof shoes and protection for phone are highly recommended.** We do not provide these items. Dry bags and containers are available for purchase at the liveries.



The City of Ann Arbor and the Argo and Gallup Canoe Liveries are committed to a healthy Huron River ecosystem. The river and its publicly-owned shoreline and riparian areas create a blue and green corridor across the city that attract river enthusiasts and nature lovers. GIVE 365 coordinates the city's volunteer cleanup efforts on the river through a grant from the DEQ in partnership with the [Huron River Watershed Council](#). For more information about the Huron River Water Trail and paddling the Huron, visit <https://huronriverwatertrail.org/>