

TIPS FOR THE CLEAN UP



Cleaning up our natural areas is about more than just removing garbage: it's about protecting & restoring habitat.

Please consider the following as you work today:

- **Stay on the trails whenever possible.**

Trails are designed to lead you past at-risk species, breeding and hunting grounds, and so much more. Given a choice, the best one is to stay on trail.

- **Don't trample plants.**

Many plants are fragile and won't survive being stepped on. Please, avoid stepping on plant life.

- **Don't lean stuff against trees.**

While convenient, the trees will not appreciate it.

- **Not everything that looks like garbage is garbage.**

In particular, avoid touching sheets of plywood covering the ground, and little orange or yellow pin flags. More often than not these indicate someone's research project. Touching them could disrupt or invalidate years of research.

- **Listen to the birds.**

A sudden increase in bird vocalization, especially when accompanied by birds approaching you or swooping at you, likely suggests that you are near a nest. Too much nearby activity can cause the bird to flee the area or abandon their nest altogether.

- **See a nest?**

The residents might be out hunting. If you see a nest, let the garbage stay where it is.

- **Avoid clambering up steep slopes.**

Find another way around, one that disrupts the soil as little as possible. Your footfalls could tear soil loose, making it more inviting to invasive species like dog-strangling vine and garlic mustard. Rule of thumb? The more gradual the slope, the less damaging your steps are.

- **Step where the garbage was.**

When clearing a "garbage landslide", start at one edge. Remove the garbage methodically in one direction rather than attacking it from all sides. Walk only on places where garbage once was.

- **Leave it buried.** Sadly, many of our natural areas were, at one point in history, municipal garbage dumps. Large, partially buried objects are often a sign of this. Digging them up may actually reveal layers of additional garbage, release damaging gases, and amount to a battle you cannot possibly win.