



# FOUNTAIN CREEK WATERSHED DISTRICT



## 2026 Great American Cleanup Safety Guidelines

**To be read and discussed with all GAC Crew Volunteers\*\***

**Allow ample time for questions and answers.**

**\*\*Pro Tip: Host a call or online meeting with your Crew in advance, so you can get right to work on your cleanup day!**

- No GAC Crew member may participate in the Great American Cleanup unless they have reviewed the supplied safety guidelines and **signed a Risk and Release Form (preferably on Volunteer Local, but they can sign the paper version if necessary or walk-up).**
- Crews should adhere to any COVID mandates and be conscious of others.
- Adults should have a list of contact phone numbers and access to a cell phone in case of an emergency. (*Share phone numbers for all to save in their cellphone contacts lists*)
- It is recommended that each *Crew member*, at the appropriate age recommended by their primary doctor, be up to date with his/her tetanus shot.
- Each GAC Crew member must wear sturdy footwear, long pants, and a hat or visor; bring drinking water; and wear sunscreen and insect repellent. It is recommended that sunscreen be reapplied every 2 hours.
- Everyone is encouraged to take breaks, drink fluids, and avoid overexertion. Adults must monitor youth/children for heat and other physical stress signs and symptoms.
- Carry minor first aid supplies - be aware of the location of the larger first aid kit during the cleanup event. (*Identify someone with a kit/ supplies and their phone #*)
- All youth/child volunteers aged 8 years through 17 years must be supervised by a responsible adult aged **twenty-one (21) years or older. Children under the age of 8 must be paired with one adult at all times. All adult volunteers should work in groups of at least two (2).**
- Always survey the conditions of your assigned area prior to the scheduled event and determine if the conditions are safe and appropriate for youth and children, and the abilities of the group's members. If at any time, the *Crew Leader* or a District Representative feels the adopted section of the waterway has become unsafe, the cleanup should be rescheduled or postponed.
- Be aware of high water resulting from large quantities of storm runoff from heavy rainfall, hail and/or snowmelt, and tree debris that may clog the creek bed.
- Avoid contact with the water if you have open cuts and sores, unless they are properly protected.
- Do not drink water from any waterway.

- Do not work in, on, or around spillways, dams, or other human-made diversions.
- Avoid working on steep slopes or in confined river stretches with limited access. Stream banks and/or shorelines may be slippery and/or unstable. Always proceed with caution when walking along the waterway.
- Only ADULTS are allowed in high-risk areas such as steep slopes, areas close to fast-moving water, or deep water. These areas should be avoided when possible. Take small steps and move slowly in order to avoid losing your balance and getting hurt. The following hazards may be present:
  - ***Broken glass, nails, metal, or other sharp objects.***
  - ***Wildlife such as snapping turtles, snakes, and spiders.***
  - ***Rocks, trash, or other objects could cause you to trip and lose your balance.***
- Volunteers should always get help when carrying heavy objects and abandoned tires. If the object is too heavy to move, mark the location and ***note this location on Post-Event online survey.***
- **DO NOT PICK UP and AVOID:** Syringes, condoms, masks, soiled clothing, broken glass, sharp metal, human or pet waste, food or items infested by insects, or other hazardous materials like car batteries or any unidentified questionable items and animal carcasses. **Do not approach any items that might be at a homeless campsite. This includes sleeping bags, suitcases/backpacks, shopping carts, blankets, etc.** Adults should mark, flag, or map these items and ***note this location on Post-Event online survey and/or report it on the GOCOS! App if in Colorado Springs.***
- **DO NOT PICK UP** any materials that appear hazardous or unsafe - especially weapons, ammunition, and unmarked containers. Call your local non-emergency police number to report hazardous or suspicious materials.
- Smartphone users in Colorado Springs can also access the **GOCOS!** app: (<https://coloradosprings.gov/page/citizen-request-gocosprings-app>) to report suspicious items, camps, and/or hazardous materials. (This is available year-round, not just during Great American Cleanup)

**If the weather should become threatening (high winds, rain with lightning, thunder, hail,) retreat to a safe shelter with the group, and take a head count. Communicate with the Group Leader by phone. **If an emergency arises, CALL 9-1-1..... then notify the Group Leader.****