

Cleanups with Compassion

A Best Practice Guide
for planning
volunteer cleanups
near and with
unhoused neighbors

Low Impact Restoration Tools for Your Cleanup Event

*** Important note – make sure you notify the California Department of Fish and Wildlife of any alterations you plan to make to a habitat. [Here is a link](#) with info on how to navigate their systems

Intro

Habitat restoration is an important step in any landscape's healing. While conducting a cleanup, utilizing low impact land alterations can have huge impacts on habitat health while providing engaging and educational activities for participants.

To engage deeper, reach out to Adam Gelfand at Contra Costa RCD (agelfand@ccrcd.org) and/or check out [CUSP's website](#) for more resources

Invasive Removal

Invasive species are organisms that negatively impact biodiversity. They are commonly found in disturbed landscapes. Below are some of the most common invasive species found in the San Francisco Bay Area that can be removed by hand.

Materials

- Shovel(s)
- Garden loppers
- Gloves

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Common Invasives

Mustard/radish



Milk thistle



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Lactuca



Johnson's grass



Poison Hemlock

- These should be removed while using gloves, as it is known to cause rashes.



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Native Planting

Materials

- Native plants
- Flags
- Watering apparatus (bucket and creek, or piped irrigation systems)
- Shovel(s)

For a list of riparian native plants, [see this spreadsheet](#). Note: this is a palette for creeks in Pinole, CA, located in Contra Costa County. For area-specific plants, you will want to do your own research and/or call your local native plant nursery.

Standard Operating Procedure

1. Decide where to plant your plants. Lay them out and place colored flags near them to grab people's attention.
 - Consider the plants' needs (sunlight, water, soil type, etc).
2. Dig a hole slightly larger and deeper than the plant container.
3. Loosen the soil and roots in the container, and gently remove the plant.
4. Gently break up the root ball so the roots are slightly spread out.
5. Place the plant into the hole and fill in with the removed soil.
6. Water the plant thoroughly to eliminate air bubbles and ensure root contact with soil.
 - This step is crucial to the plants' survival. If any of the roots are exposed to air under ground, the plant will die. Watering the plants immediately after planting prevents this

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Willow Staking

More to come on this, see [this presentation](#) for background info.

Willow staking refers to the practice of hammering sticks gathered from willow trees into stream banks in order to stabilize them. When done correctly, willow staking is a simple yet powerful tool for preventing erosion, routing streams, and promoting biodiversity.

Special Considerations

This practice only works in the winter, when willows are sending all their energy to the roots. It may work in the dry season with supplemental watering.

Materials Needed

- 2–3 ft long rebar
- Mallets
- Willow branches
- Loppers
- Flags (optional)

Standard Operating Procedures

1. Cut a bough from a willow tree (~5 ft long, ~1 in thick at base).
2. Trim it into 1-ft+ stakes with leaves removed.
3. Cut root end at an angle (to spike), top flat (for hammering).
4. Identify creek-side location; aim for access to water table.
5. Use rebar and mallet to create guide hole, insert willow stake.
6. Saturate surrounding soil and place a flag for marking.

