



# Adopt-A-Waterfall

## INSTRUCTIONS FOR KEEPERS

[www.waterfallkeepersofnc.org/adopt-a-waterfall](http://www.waterfallkeepersofnc.org/adopt-a-waterfall)

We are grateful that you've chosen to be a Waterfall Keeper. Thank you!

These guidelines are provided so that you will have a safe and productive outing. Please also read the "Looking Out For Waterfalls" and "Looking Out For Waterfallers" pages of the WKNC website. Please remember that when you are picking up trash, you are working on your own as a volunteer and it is your sole responsibility to act safely and responsibly. Any representation you make to others with regards to your role with WKNC should only be that you are a volunteer "Keeper" working without supervision or direction from WKNC.

1. Please try to visit the waterfall(s) at least once every quarter. For long hikes, you can visit twice a year. The more evenly you can spread out the visits, the better. If your waterfall receives heavy visitation, you will likely find increased litter in summer and fall. Try to make additional visits during this time, but it's okay if you aren't able to.
2. Please remove all litter you find along the trail, at the waterfall, and at the trailhead. Remember, most litter is found at trailheads, so you'll need to pay particular attention there. If you find any trash that is too big or heavy to remove, let us know and we will send a crew to remove it.
3. If your waterfall is roadside or if the trailhead is located beside a paved or busy road, we recommend that you wear a safety vest while picking up trash along the road.
4. You can use plastic bags or a plastic bucket for the litter. We have found that it's easier to carry a 5-gallon plastic bucket full of trash than a plastic bag. Buckets also work much better for items that have sharp edges. It's a good idea to bring a few plastic bags in addition to the bucket in case you need more capacity. Also, hazardous items should be wrapped in a separate plastic bag before you put them in the bucket.
5. You should wear protective gloves when you pick up litter. Some litter may contain harmful bacteria or sharp edges.
6. You may find litter that has been tossed off-trail and is in a location that is unsafe or one where there is the likelihood of trampling wildflowers. In such cases, it's best to leave the trash there. When you return during the winter quarter, the wildflowers will be gone and you can retrieve the trash then. For trash in a location that's unsafe to reach, let us know about it in your report.
7. You should exercise extreme caution when handling hazardous items such as human waste, diapers, batteries, chemical substances, etc. For human or dog waste, you should bury it on site, at least six inches deep and 200 feet away from water sources. Don't bury anything other than excrement. All other hazardous items should be put in a separate trash bag (bring extras) that is placed in your bucket or main trash bag. If you can't safely remove these items or are uncomfortable with it, let us know in your report and we will send a crew to dispose of them properly.
8. Please remove small trees or branches that have fallen on the trail or at the base of the waterfall if you're able to do so safely. If it's too big, let us know and we'll send our trail crew to remove it. Don't climb on a waterfall to remove branches. Don't use a saw or any tools to aid in removing branches. We have trained crews for that type of work.
9. When you've completed your visit, please file a report using the link from the Adopt-A-Waterfall website page. We use these reports for planning assignments for trail crews, monitoring conditions, and choosing priorities. Keeping records of volunteer hours worked is also an important component of obtaining grants and donations.

### CHECKLIST FOR VISITING WATERFALL

- Trash bucket and bags
- Good hiking shoes
- Gloves
- Safety vest (For picking up near roads)
- Small shovel or trowel (For digging catholes and scooping up hazardous items)
- Trash picker (If desired)
- Pen and pad (For making notes about trail conditions and recording hours worked)