



World Oceans Day

Plog for the Ocean Toolkit

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What is a plog?

Whether you live near or far from the ocean, conservation leaders like you are the reason we will beat the plastic pollution epidemic, together.

Plogging is an activity that originated in Sweden in 2016. It combines jogging with picking up litter. By intercepting the litter and plastic waste before it makes its way to our drains, waterways, and ocean, plogging is a fun and engaging way to stop the flow of plastic pollution. For World Oceans Day 2019, we are launching this "Plog for The Ocean" toolkit in conjunction with a series of plogging events and ocean celebrations around the world.

We hope that this toolkit gives you all the information needed to host a plogging event in your community. After all, every ounce of litter collected will help make your community cleaner and healthier!

Location & Timing

Location

Start by thinking of a place in your local community that needs a cleanup. It may help to get out and explore some options! When deciding on a location, think about how accessible it is for your event participants. If it is hard to get to or isn't near your community, you might have low participation. In addition, make sure the location is safe. Tips for securing an appropriate and safe location are outlined in a later section.

Timing

When thinking about timing for your event, consider what time would best suit your community. Afternoons on the weekend are often a good option as it is outside of school and work hours. Depending on the date of your event, mornings might work better to avoid the heat. In addition, do some research to determine what other events might be occurring in your community. It is best to plan your plogging event on a day when there is not much else going on.

The World Oceans Day Youth Advisory Council members are planning their "Plog for the Ocean" events around 8 June, World Oceans Day, but feel free to organize your event on a date that is convenient for you and your community.

After all, plastic pollution is a global problem that is going to require a global effort all year round





The 2019 World Oceans Day “Plog for the Ocean” event in Kent, England will take place on a running trail that is really popular, but unfortunately full of litter.

This route is free from cars and not too steep or long – perfect for ploggers of all ages!

Selecting Your Venue and Route

Choosing a safe and accessible route is one of the biggest challenges for your plogging event. Parks or beaches make better options than busy roads or sidewalks.

Depending on where you choose to do your plog event, you may require a permit from your local authority. A good place to start would be your town council or the owner of the area you’re hoping to use. Send them an email or letter outlining your plans including specific details about timing, as well as the health and safety precautions you will take.

The same goes for the venue of your post-plog celebration. Some great places include a local zoo, aquarium, school, or community center. It is important that you choose somewhere that would be able to accommodate all your participants, activities, and teammates!



Health & Safety

The health and safety of you and your fellow ploggers is extremely important! When planning your route, ensure it’s safe and far from any main roads or areas of heavy traffic. Do consider the abilities and ages of your community and try to make the route and distance as accessible as possible - the more people involved, the better.

Be prepared for the weather including heat, rain, cold, or wind. You may want to have a back-up plan in case you need to postpone due to weather. Rain can make trails slippery which could lead to injuries.

It is important to have water or other refreshments during and after your plogging event to keep people hydrated. Avoid using single-use water bottles or snacks that are packaged in plastic to stay aligned with your message of preventing plastic pollution. It’s also a good idea to have some volunteers on site with first-aid training in case any problems arise.

It is likely you will encounter a range of litter during your plog with potentially hazardous objects. It is crucial that your ploggers have access to gloves and are aware that they should not touch any sharp items or lift heavy objects.

If your post-plog celebration is indoors or in an enclosed area, be aware of blocking any potential fire exits. Any tables or stages need to be set up in areas that will not affect fire safety.



Logistics

Here's a list of things to consider in terms of logistics:

Your team

Gather a team of trusted individuals to spread the workload that comes with organizing an event of this nature. Delegating tasks to different teammates with different strengths (e.g., promoting, outreach, budgeting) will make the event planning process much smoother.

Checkpoints

The importance of checkpoints will depend on the length of your plogging route. If it is quite lengthy, checkpoints or stations for ploggers is a great idea to make sure everyone is happy and healthy throughout the event. It's best to station a volunteer at regular intervals, such as every kilometer, from start to finish.

Awareness Raising

It's important not to forget why we're doing these plogging events. The purpose of these events is to help prevent plastic pollution and to further educate and activate our communities around this problem.

Think about ways you can integrate plastic pollution prevention throughout the event (e.g. handing out educational booklets or inviting speakers).

Competitions

Adding an element of competition can make your event more fun, further motivate participants to get involved, and bring their friends and family along too! Some ideas include competitions between families, school groups, friend groups, or students vs teachers to see who can gather the most litter or best separate the collected waste.

Here are also some ideas for prizes you could award winners:

- Gift cards or memberships to local clubs, gyms, or shops
- Certificates
- Awards or recognition on social media platforms
- Canvas bags
- Steel water bottles
- Steel straws
- Bamboo cutlery sets
- Steel to-go containers

Water and Snack Stations

Refreshment stations are important to keep your ploggers energized, happy, and hydrated. It is also a great way to get local restaurants and businesses involved in your event. You can reach out to businesses in your community and invite them to provide food or snacks for your participants who are sure to be hungry after a day of plogging.

As mentioned earlier in the toolkit, it is important to ensure that all bottles, packaging, and cutlery are as sustainable or free of single-use plastic as possible.

Materials Needed

There are a couple of materials that are absolutely necessary for a plogging event:

- rubbish and recycling bags to collect the litter
- gloves to protect your hands

If you're working as an individual or with a nonprofit, sourcing enough of these for your whole event can drive costs up so consider asking for donations from your local community or holding a fundraiser to raise enough funds to run your plog and post-plog celebration.

As the aim of these events is to help prevent plastic pollution and raise awareness about the issues, it would be ideal for us all to limit the use of single-use plastic at these plogging events. This includes plastic water bottles and packaging from any food vendors or snacks. Some suggestions for alternatives include:

- Water bottle refill stations, such as a tap or drink stand with jugs of water
- Encourage participants to bring their own reusable water bottles and provide steel cups
- Provide canned or boxed water
- Think of items that can be served unwrapped by a local bakery or deli
- Provide snacks wrapped in paper or foil

In Plymouth, England, Natural England, a non-departmental public body got in touch with the event coordinators of the "Plog for the Ocean" and wanted to contribute to the event. Since then, other NGO's in contact with Natural England have been given the basic event information and have been asked if they would like a stall at the post-event celebration.

Sponsorships

Finding sponsors or partners can be time consuming but the more outreach you do, the more help you will get. Start by considering these questions: Who do you already have connections with? Who has supported other local events in your community? What do you want or need from them? Do they have the time or money to invest?

Start by making a list of all the aspects of your event that you can't fund or sort out independently. Do your research and see what potential partners/sponsors would align with the purpose of your event.

By advertising your event and gaining media coverage, as outlined in the previous section, you may get partners contacting you as well. Therefore, you should be prepared with an email template that explains what the event is and its purpose, then ask for a meeting to discuss if they would be interested in sponsoring/participating in the event.

Another way to gain sponsorships and partners is to look no further than the end of your road... or at least your town. Schools and universities, especially if you are a student, will jump at the opportunity to get involved and promote a young person doing something positive for the environment. Likewise, a place of work that is environmentally oriented will do the same. Small local businesses may be willing to contribute refreshments for the publicity of their company and advertisement.



Recording the Run

To help us keep track of all the wonderful plogging and work you're doing with your community, please make sure you [register your event](#) on the World Oceans Day website!

There are several platforms you can use to keep track of how many participants get involved, the total distance plogged, as well as the amount of litter collected. It is a good idea to put together a registration form and share it prior to the event so you have a good idea of how many people to expect. Some people may turn up on the day and want to join in so having an area or booth for them to register at is also a good idea. Creating a running group on an app such as Strava would be a great way to keep track of the distances that your participants manage to cover.

Litterati App

Litterati is an app available on all platforms, that allows you to easily snap, tag and record trash in the environment. Once you find an area covered in litter, open the app and start by clicking the camera icon at the bottom of the screen. After taking the photo of a single piece of litter, watch it automatically upload to the Digital Landfill. Now that you've taken your first photo, choose from a list of tags or type your own to label what you found. Tagging is the most important action you can take to help make a difference!

Join the World Oceans Day club by selecting the more button at the bottom of the screen and then the club button on the upper right. When given the option, select the join a club button and search for "World Oceans Day." Once you are a part of the club, you can see how well the other global members of the "World Oceans Day" club are doing!

The app is a great way to spread awareness! It allows you to document polluted areas within your community and see what other people in your local area are doing to reduce pollution.

Join the Litterati community in cleaning the planet one piece of litter at a time! It's easy – simply snap, tag and dispose! To learn more about Litterati, visit the website:

Dealing with the Waste

Another thing you must consider is what happens to the waste after the plog as there is no use in putting an effort into collecting the litter if it is going to be left mismanaged. This is a great opportunity to partner with a local nonprofit or cleanup group to weigh, analyze, and dispose or recycle everything correctly. You can even get some useful statistics and facts from your cleanup data.

TerraCycle is an innovative recycling company that has become a global leader in recycling hard-to-recycle waste. Consider signing up for one of their free programs by visiting their website at terracycle.com.

Post-plog Celebration

The second part of the "Plog for the Ocean" events will include a post-plog celebration which is meant to be a fun way for participants to celebrate our ocean and learn more about the plastic pollution issue. This event can take place in a large, open area near the start/finish line.





Post-plog Celebration (continued)

This is a great time to give out some prizes from the plogging event. As outlined in the section on competitions, you can award the person who collects the greatest amount of trash or the person who collects the fastest. You could also give out prizes for the biggest family attending the event, the most creative costume or the youngest plogger.

Depending on the venue for your post-plog celebration, you could invite local musicians or performance groups to keep spirits high after the run.

One of the organizers should also give a speech to thank the attendees and remind them of the amazing cause they are supporting by participating in your plogging event!

At the end, you could announce the total amount of trash collected and the number of people that have attended, along with introducing some ways they could continue making a difference for the ocean.

If the space at your venue allows, you should also consider inviting local nonprofits or groups working to help save our ocean to share the great work they're doing and help educate the attendees. Hearing firsthand experiences and stories is always a fantastic way to learn, and this could inspire them to continue working towards ocean conservation in their daily lives as well.

You can also have stalls to raise awareness about the causes of plastic pollution while engaging people of all ages. Games and creative activities would be great for children, while a stall with informative posters and pledges attendees could sign would increase the impact of your event.

Conclusion

We hope that this toolkit has been useful in helping you plan for your plogging event. We wish you all the best and look forward to seeing the events that you organize for this year's World Oceans Day and year-round!

It's important to remember that this is just one part of the solution. In order to achieve a plastic-free future we must go to the source of the problem and stop the production of unnecessary single-use plastic items and packaging by opting for sustainable alternatives. It is going to take all of us working together in all sectors including corporate, political, and public to see the change that's needed to stop plastic pollution for good. By downloading this toolkit, you have proven that you take this problem seriously and are ready to be part of the solution!

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