

Michigan Cares for Tourism's Adopt-a-Forest 2020 Volunteer Program

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

What is this volunteer program?

This year, **Michigan Cares for Tourism and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources** will replace its annual volunteer workday event, previously scheduled for Sleeper and Port Crescent state parks in September, with a new opportunity to volunteer: help cleaning up our thriving forests.

Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, we realize that Michigan's tourism industry and our many friends and family want to continue to give back to Michigan tourism. Even though we're facing the most challenging moments of our careers and dealing with unprecedented industry issues, MC4T wants to continue the tradition of giving back.

Your participation will make a BIG impact on Michigan. There are near 600 illegal dumpsites, which are places people dispose of things like household trash, carpet and tires just to avoid paying fees associated with proper disposal. Not only are these locations less than desirable, but they negatively impact the environment. Once cleaned, these sites will be restored to the pristine condition nature intended.

At the same time, we're helping celebrate the 100th anniversary of the National Association of State Foresters, which placed an industry professional to care for state forests in each state a century ago. Every state was asked to do something to honor 100 years, and Michigan has set a goal to clean up 100 illegal dump sites in 100 days. And, Michigan Cares for Tourism wants to help!

When is the volunteer program scheduled?

It's up to you! Pick a dump site and bring others you are comfortable social distancing with to make an impact any day(s) between **Friday, September 4 – September 22**. This is the same timeframe we typically host our annual volunteer workday event, and thought it would be perfect to do this "together." The Adopt-a-Forest program seeks volunteers year-round, but the push for 100 sites in 100 days officially ends September 22.

We're asking our volunteers to sign up (this is a free event), so we can send all of our volunteers a care package complete with some of the materials they will need to volunteer and build their team (e.g. cool t-shirt, Smokey Bear buff/mask and a few other surprises!). Register [HERE](#).

Do I have to volunteer for a certain amount of time?

No. Your commitment is for as long as you are able. We're asking our volunteers to pick one day between September 4-22 and spend at least two hours volunteering. Some sites need a great deal of work, and others not as much. Our volunteers ultimately decide their level of participation.

How do we pick our location?

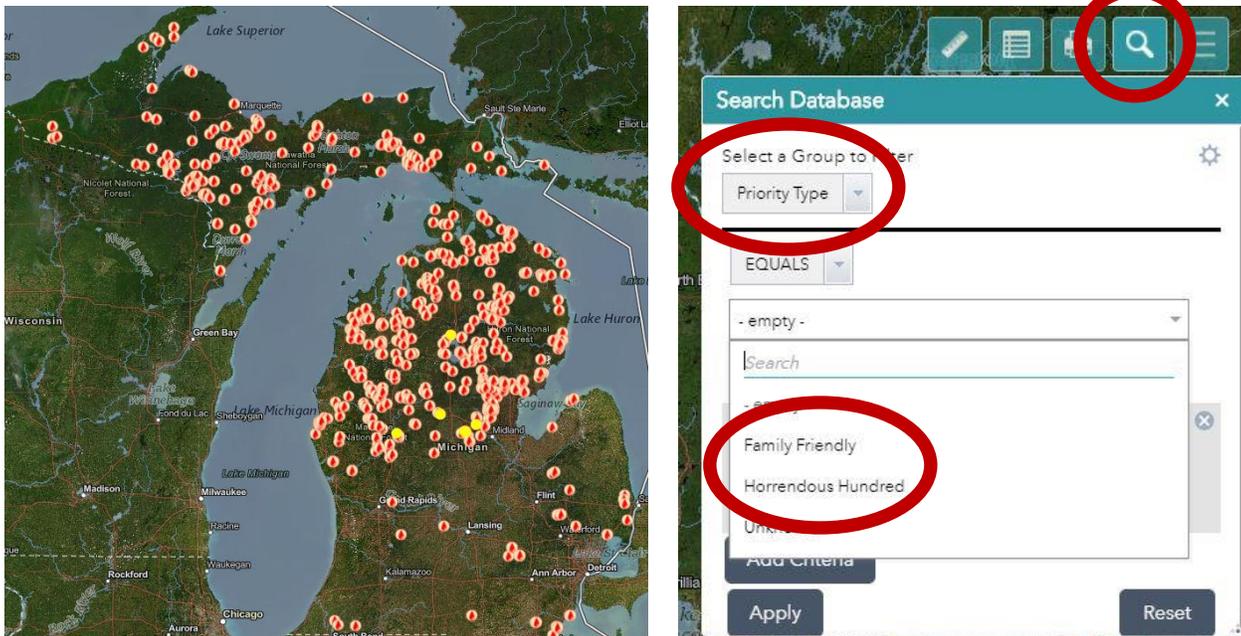
You pick your dump site location based on the [MAP](#) provided. Nearly 600 locations need help (See Figure 1). Available locations are indicated by a red icon on the map. As shown below, yellow images indicate a site being "reserved" by a volunteer. The icons change color once a volunteer commits to an area. Volunteers simply select

their location that they have an interest (or meaning)...a favorite area you vacationed, your local forest, an area you've always wanted to travel, the area your grandparents were raised or pick a location based on need. The map is sortable by the worse "horrendous 100" to the more family-friendly locations by clicking on the magnifying glass as shown in Figure 1 as well.

Once a location(s) has been identified, you simply tell us what site you picked, when you're going and who is coming with you (so we can send you the supplies). REGISTER FOR YOUR VOLUNTEER LOCATION [HERE](#).

Locations are on a first-come, first-served basis.

FIGURE 1: Nearly 600 public forest sites identified in need of cleanup



How do I find our cleanup location?

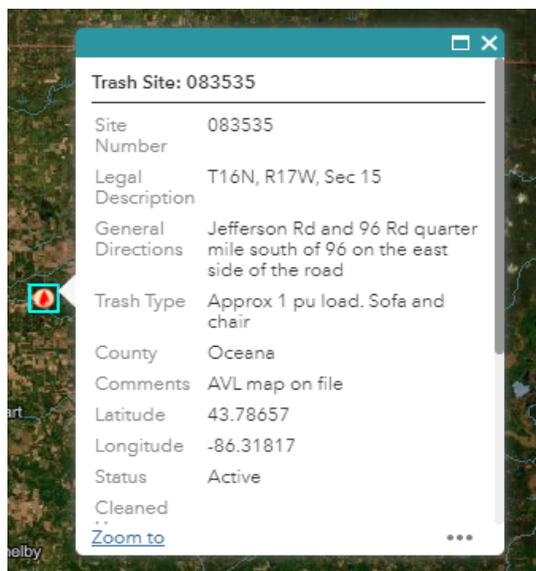
Volunteers are the backbone of the program. They identify areas of need, perform cleanups and notify the Adopt-a-Forest team when the work is done (so the master list can be properly maintained).

When you click on the map's icon, a description and latitude/longitude coordinates are provided. In addition, many (not all) locations provide a description of the trash type and general directions (see Figure 2). A progress report can be submitted once a cleanup is complete. <http://www.cleanforests.org/form-progress-report>

In addition, volunteers may know of or find new locations in need of cleaning. Report new dumpsites here: <http://www.cleanforests.org/form-report-a-dumpsite>

Many sites were reported years ago and may have already been cleaned up or attracted more trash. We suggest that you scout sites ahead of time to make sure they are still there, and that you are aware of any special needs prior to the cleanup.

FIGURE 2: Directions to one cleanup site provided by the Adopt-a-Forest map



Site selection is on a first-come first-served basis and is controlled by you identifying available sites on the [SITE MAP HERE](#), and completing the [REGISTRATION FORM HERE](#).

What if I know of a location that needs help and it's not on your list?

Feel free to clean it up! If you are unable to get to it, report the site at <http://www.cleanforests.org/form-report-a-dumpsite>, and it will be added to the list.

What happens if there are no locations that need cleaning by where I want to volunteer?

If there isn't a location where you want to go, tell us where you would like to volunteer. With 103 state parks and around 140 of state forest campgrounds and other public lands, the DNR has ensured they will find an area you have interest in helping. Contact **Patty Janes** at janesp@gvsu.edu or 989-424-0123 if there is an area you would like to volunteer and it's not on the map. You can also visit www.michigan.gov/dnrvolunteers for other opportunities.

What does the program cost?

Nothing. It's free and through generous tourism industry donations we will send you a care package to help you prepare for the volunteer work. You'll need other items as well (see check list provided below); however, to participate, it costs nothing. We can't wait for you to wear an awesome MC4T/Adopt-a-Forest t-shirt.

What do we do with the trash once we clean up the site?

It is important to have a disposal plan in place prior to the cleanup. Most volunteers can dispose of trash with their curbside pickup or have access to dumpsters at their place of work.

If you do not have a disposal option available to you, contact **Conor Haenni, Cooperative Programs Developer**, at HaenniC1@michigan.gov or 989-429-5542 and he will identify options in your area.

How do we ensure it is safe? What safety precautions should we take?

Your safety is our #1 priority! We've identified COVID-19 safe practices below. Please do not touch potentially unsafe materials or do anything that requires lifting beyond capabilities ([safe lifting practices](#)).

Those sites you do not believe are safe should be reported to **Conor Haenni, Cooperative Programs Developer, at HaenniC1@michigan.gov or 989-429-5542** immediately. Don't do anything you feel is unsafe.

What will we need?

Long pants and closed-toed shoes are a must along with some items listed below. September may be warm or cool, so layers are always recommended. We'd love pictures of you wearing the MC4T t-shirt; however, ensure you have long sleeves in heavily forested areas.

We are sending every volunteer light duty work gloves, 3 mil industrial garbage bags and a Smokey Bear social distancing mask/scarf. As long as you/your volunteers maintain [State of Michigan executive orders](#) and [MI Safe Start: Parks and Outdoor Recreation Operational Facilities](#) safe practices as outlined by the State of Michigan (see a partial list below), this volunteer experience should be safe.

"Safe behaviors • Enforce hand washing and the covering of coughs and sneezes at all times. • Ensure adequate supplies to support healthy hygiene practices for both employees and customers including soap, hand sanitizer with at least 60 percent alcohol, paper towels, and tissues. • Use gloves when removing garbage bags or handling and disposing of trash. Remove gloves properly and wash hands afterwards. • No pre or post event handshakes, hugs, fist bumps, high fives, or contact celebrations. • Participants should be discouraged from congregating before, during, or after spending time at the facility..."

Suggestions for What to Bring and Wear

Wear:

Closed-toe shoes/work boots with non-skid soles

Long-sleeved shirt and your MC4T t-shirt

Bright orange vest (near roads and during hunting seasons)

Hat (for sun protection)

Long pants

Safety glasses/hard hat if the work requires

Bring:

Heavy-duty work gloves

Trash poker (if needed)

Shovel

Bucket

Sunscreen

Hand cleanser (baby wipes work well)

First aid kit

Compass and/or GPS

Emergency telephone numbers

Extra trash bags

Rake

Wheelbarrow (if able)

Insect repellent

Water bottle/refreshments

Phone/photos

Tarp and bungee cords to secure load

Area maps

DNR Contact: Conor Haenni, Cooperative Programs Developer, HaenniC1@michigan.gov, 989-429-5542

Am I able to go by myself and/or can I take friends/family?

YES and YES. Please bring any others you are comfortable social distancing with and maintain all precautions as identified.

What does this mean to Michigan?

A healthy, safe and sustainable Michigan provides multiple benefits to residents and visitors alike. The land and environmental benefits from cleanups and less trash means safer habitat for wildlife. Plus, outdoor experiences for recreationists and pets are enhanced immensely, and clean communities can compete better for tourism.

In short, cleaning these sites helps improve our sustainability, lives/livelihood, economy, future, etc. A couple of links to the many benefits explained in more detail: [Plastic Pollution Coalition](#), [365 Give](#)

Our work doesn't stop when the week is over. We hope we all will learn to improve and enhance our environmental practices and spread the word about the importance of a cleaner Michigan through the Adopt a Forest program.

Should we take before/after pictures?

Yes! Send us your photos of you working, making a difference, building community, creating a better Michigan. We plan to send a gift to all who share with us and/or tag us in a post. It's a really nice gift too. One of our favorites.

Email us photos and/or use these social media hashtags: **#mc4t**, **#TrashTag**, **#NASF100** and **#100cleanups100days**

[MC4T Facebook](#) | [MC4T Twitter \(@MichiganCares\)](#) | [MC4T Instagram \(@MichiganCares\)](#) | [MC4T Website](#)

Once we register, what will you send us?

We send each registered volunteer a MC4T draw-string bag and it's filled with helpful volunteer materials: a MC4T Adopt-a-Forest t-shirt, Smokey Bear buff, trash bags, gloves, etc. If you are registering others in your family/friend group, just tell us how many and shirt sizes on your registration form.

What do I do when it is over? How do we report what we completed?

Fill out a progress report [HERE](#) so we can count your efforts in the statewide totals and update our database. Don't forget to share your photos/experience on social media and tell others about the program.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

For additional questions about Adopt-a-Forest, contact Conor Haenni, Cooperative Programs Developer, at HaenniC1@michigan.gov/989-429-5542 or visit www.cleanforests.org for more information on the Adopt-a-Forest program, FAQs, field tips, safety tips, etc. [Join the 100 in 100 cleanup challenge. Help our forests, gain volunteer hours](#)

For additional questions about volunteering or donating to [Michigan Cares for Tourism](#), please contact Patty Janes, janesp@gvsu.edu/989-424-0123, www.michigancaresfortourism.org. MC4T's media contact/press release information can be found [HERE](#). Check out MC4T's social sites: [MC4T Facebook](#) | [MC4T Twitter \(@MichiganCares\)](#) | [MC4T Instagram \(@MichiganCares\)](#).