Environmental Advocacy is Our Mission

Community Spotlight: Get moving!

Runners- and walkers- fear not! This month, join in one or more of these socially-spaced running events in the community. Many of these events allow participants to run on a range of dates, and some even on any course you choose. Here are some of the local races you can participate in this November:

**Spooky Sprint 5K**
*November 2 - 13*
This race benefits the West End Center for Youth and can be run anywhere at any time between now and November 13. It is the third event in the “Love Where You Live” 5k series for 2020, so show some love for your city and sign up below!

[Spooky Sprint Sign-Up](#)

**Star City Half Marathon & 10K**
*November 1 - 29*
This half marathon has two course options: the original street course, and a course along the Greenway. Along with the course options, there are some fun extras related to this year’s race, including a photo contest for the best shot along the trail.

[Register here](#)
November 1 - 30

A Roanoke mainstay on Thanksgiving morning, usually with thousands of eager runners and walkers gathering downtown, is now virtual and lasts all month long! If you look forward to running on Thanksgiving morning each year, you can continue the tradition and MOVE YOUR FEET SO OTHERS CAN EAT!

Register here

Director's Message

Happy fall Everyone!

I am the new Executive Director with Clean Valley Council and so excited to be part of this wonderful 42-year-old non-profit that promotes environmental stewardship. The best part is that I have been preparing for this my entire life without even realizing it!

I grew up playing outside in the southern portion of Virginia’s Piedmont region catching frogs and bugs and learning to love nature. As my love of the environment grew, volunteering at a local natural history museum allowed me to surround myself with scientists and the collections that they studied. Pursuing the field of biology seemed only natural, which led me to a professional career of 31 years working in non-profit organizations with a focus on science and education. It only seems fitting that I lead an organization with the same aligned values as my own.

I hope that you have been doing your part to keep our Valley clean and green, as you enjoy the great outdoors! With these lovely colorful leaves falling to the ground, help us make sure that is the only colorful item on the ground. I urge you to help keep litter from our beautiful greenways and blueways by participating in Anytime Clean Ups, Adopt-A-Street program or Adopt-A-Highway program. Together we make the changes to protect the environment that we love!

Environmentally Yours,

Courtney Carter Plaster
Executive Director

You can also get involved to keep our city streets beautiful! The City of Roanoke’s Adopt-A-Street Program is facilitated by Clean Valley Council. All that is required of you is a 2-year
Environmental Education is Our Passion

Educator's Corner

Food Waste

No matter the size of your Thanksgiving gathering, there are plenty of ways to create less waste at home. Some simple but effective moves to make are composting scraps and freezing leftovers.

Who else has their Halloween pumpkins still sitting outside, looking sadder by the day? Here’s a simple way to take care of them: COMPOST! How to do it?

First, choose a spot. If you don't have an established compost pile, this is a great opportunity to start one. Your jack-o-lanterns can be the first items you've kept out of the landfill with this new compost pile.

Next, smash the pumpkin a bit to speed up the decomposition.

Finally, cover with leaves and leave it! You might even have some volunteer pumpkins pop up in this spot next year if any seeds were left inside.
Food scraps from holiday meals— or any meal— can be composted as well!
Some simple guidelines to keep in mind:
1. Don't compost animal products (meat, bones, dairy) if you don't want unwanted visitors in your compost pile.
2. Don’t compost pet waste.
3. Turn your compost to introduce necessary oxygen.
4. Layer green materials like vegetables and grass with brown material like leaves.
5. Make sure your pile gets HOT!

One final holiday waste-reducing tip: freeze extra food before it goes bad!
It is estimated that between 30 and 40 percent of food in the United States is wasted every year. We can all play a part in reducing that number, with actions as simple as freezing food rather than letting it go bad in the refrigerator. Frozen food can stay good for months, rather than just days in the refrigerator. If you end up with plenty of Thanksgiving leftovers, keep the freezer in mind!

Together We Can Build a Clean Water Legacy

Water Corner
Stormwater and Thanksgiving Water-Saving Tips

We LOVE Roanoke City's Stormwater division. They have been invaluable partners in many of our endeavors, and the work they do for the City of Roanoke is extremely important.
Sign up for their newsletter here, and check out the Upper Roanoke River Roundtable, which we partner with them on as well. Thank you, Roanoke Stormwater!

This month, here are some practices to save water while cooking a holiday meal:

1. **Defrost turkey in the fridge** rather than in water. When you use water to defrost a turkey, it is recommended to change the water every 30 minutes to 1 hour. This can add up to a lot of water! Instead, take the turkey out of the freezer a bit earlier, and let it defrost in the refrigerator instead.
2. Steam vegetables above boiling pot to **make use of the same water**. If you have a pot boiling something like potatoes, you can save stovetop space and reuse that water! Use a steamer basket over the pot to steam vegetables while you boil something else.
3. Consider **plant-based proteins and sides**. Animal products require more water to produce over their lifetime than plants, so consider using items like vegetable broth rather than chicken broth, or even a plant-based turkey alternative if you're feeling really adventurous!
4. Buy **local produce**. Vegetables that come from somewhere nearby require less energy and fewer resources (including water) to transport. You can also feel good supporting local farmers.
5. **Don't throw away leftovers**! Wasted food is wasted water. Package and freeze leftovers to keep them fresh and enjoy them for a long time in the future. Consider composting scraps rather than throwing them in the landfill as well! See the Educator's Corner above for more details, and check out the article below for more tips.

Source: https://www.nrdc.org/experts/tracy-quinn/thanksgiving-water-saving-tips

How do you live sustainably in the Fall and Winter months? We want to hear from you! You and your eco-friendly tip could be featured in our next newsletter! Email us your tips and any accompanying pictures, and check back next month to see if you made it in the Community Spotlight.
A special thanks to the municipalities helping us continue our mission by going into classrooms and hosting workshops that encourage environmental stewardship.

Thank you to our media sponsor WFXR for all they do to help us reach the whole community!