

## **Green Up Vermont Tradition with a history.**

Green Up means clean up.  
Green Up is caring citizens cleaning up their communities,  
For the community of Vermont.

Initiated in 1969 by Governor Deane Davis,  
Vermont's first "Green Up Day" happened in 1970.

### **HISTORY**

In the 1960's and 70's, Vermont was on the cutting edge in environmental sensitivity. As U.S. Senator George Aiken's remarks reveal in the May 4, 1971 Congressional Record (excerpts):

"Mr. President, several times recently, I have advised the Senate of things going on in Vermont which have lent and can lend encouragement and inspiration to the other States.

"I now have to report another event which could have far-reaching results. Last Saturday, May 1, a successful demonstration occurred in my State. This demonstration—called Green Up Day—was put on largely by our young people and extended into every community throughout the length and breadth of Vermont....I understand about 75,000 of them began scattering over all the highways of the State—interstate, State-Federal and local roads. By 9:30 a.m., every mile of the interstate highway had been closed to the traveling public, with State police guarding the access roads....They collected virtually every glass bottle, every metal can, every scrap of paper which had been cast onto the roadsides by careless and unthinking people. The result was that by Saturday evening Vermont was undoubtedly the cleanest State in the Nation..."

The Senator from Montana, Mr. Mansfield remarked: "I want to extend to the State of Vermont congratulations for undertaking the kind of cleanup job achieved on Green Up Day last Saturday, May 1. It was a May Day expression in the finest American tradition. People of all kinds—young, old, and in between—businessmen, farmers, workers, all went out on the roads and into the towns and villages doing a remarkable job of cleaning up.

"Of course we have come to expect that the great State of Vermont would be first in everything, and once again she is first in inaugurating a Green-Up Day. I understand that the first application of this kind of May Day demonstration was on May 1, 1970—a year ago. I must say, I was tremendously impressed and pleased with the way the people of Vermont worked together to clean up their State..."

"I made a suggestion that the other 47 contiguous State might do well to follow the example of Vermont and set aside at least one day each year as 'Green-Up Day.' This is really news, because it is a return to some of the old virtues which made this Republic what it is today."

## **“THE FIRST GREEN UP DAY”**

As described in the words of Governor C. Davis, on August 30, 1984

GREEN UP DAY launched Vermont's environmental ethic and has been a strong and continuing influence in generating support for the environmental movement in Vermont.

The first Green Up Day was on April 18, 1970. The idea came from Robert S. Babcock, Jr., then a full time reporter for the Burlington Free Press. It had its genesis on a clear spring day in March 1969 when Babcock, driving to work in Montpelier from his home in Waterbury, became appalled at the devastation caused by spring snow run-off and the unsightly litter thus revealed. Upon arriving in Montpelier he came to my office in the State House and proposed the inauguration of a statewide effort, to be supported by the State Highway Department and large groups of volunteer citizens to clean up the highways of the state.

I was immediately much intrigued with his idea. At that time we were pressing vigorously for environmental legislation on several fronts. It seemed to be just what we needed to excite Vermonters and to focus attention upon and support for our whole environmental program.

I promptly set up a top caliber Steering Committee to lead and coordinate this ambitious project. The State Highway Department personnel were enthusiastic and their enthusiasm quickly spread to other State Agencies eager to be involved. As citizens about the state began hearing about the project and offering their services, it became apparent to me that we had “a bear by the tail” and that we had better make it a success. Success was indispensable. Failure would do as much harm as success would do good. Hence, we decided not to put on a hastily put together program for spring of 1969, but, rather, to take the necessary time to plan and organize, and we set the date for the first Green Up Day to be one year hence on April 18, 1970.

At my request the Burlington Free Press gave Babcock a leave of absence, and for several months he worked full time on the project. He served as chairman of the Steering Committee with Theodore (Ted) M. Riehle, Jr., and they and their committee did a masterful job of planning and executing the project. Support came from all areas of the state and from a long list of citizen groups. A few of them are: college students, high school and elementary school students, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, 4-H Clubs, teachers, school administrators and many, many others.

The more we worked and planned the more excited we all became. When the big day came we were thrilled to see over 70,000 Vermonters out on the roads picking up trash, hauling trash and supervising the action. A large number were young people whose enthusiasm was contagious and their work invaluable.

As a measure of safety we closed the Vermont Interstate Highway from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon. Each exit was manned by a Vermont State Police Officer or Deputy Sheriff or a member of a local police force, to deny access and to route travelers to alternate routes and to explain to them what was going on. Some of the traveling public were angry or annoyed but were immediately cooperative and complimentary when the project was explained to them. A Green Up litter bag and a bit of literature was given to each traveler and we received many letters from out-of-staters traveling that day complimenting the state for the program.

I flew over the state highways and some of the town roads during the day in a helicopter, touching down wherever we saw a group of workers on the highway, to talk things over with the workers and lend support in any way I could. What an exciting experience it was!

The results were far beyond our expectations. Four thousand truck loads were reported hauled by the Highway Department comprising over 20,000 cubic yards of trash removed from the Interstate and other state roads, and another 20,000 cubic yards, or more, were removed from town roads. Ninety-five percent (95%) of the 2,400 miles comprising the Interstate and other state roads were cleared and an estimated 75% of the 8,300 miles of town roads.

County Chairmen estimated that 90% of the litter consisted of beer bottles and cans. Other unusual items recovered were: \$150 in cash, a dozen dead deer, one dead cow, a stolen purse belonging to a Boston, Mass., woman, a refrigerator, one revolver, two safes, a sleeping bag, a fishing pole, a bathtub, one bed and many small dead animals such as voles, dogs, cats, and raccoons.

We believe this was the largest statewide, voluntary, unified citizens' effort ever organized in Vermont.

It greatly enhanced the pride of Vermonters in their state.

It inspired many Vermonters to refrain from thoughtless littering on our highways.

It set the stage for continuing clean up programs that have resulted in Vermont highways being known far and wide as the cleanest in the United States.

It helped pass the bottle bill and a whole long list of other environmental legislation.

It helped set the tone for what we proudly call our Vermont "Special World".

Green Up Day still survives. It has now become a private undertaking through the establishment of a private, not-for-profit corporation called Vermont Green Up, Inc., doing business as Green Up Vermont. This corporation is funded mainly by voluntary charitable contributions but aided by an appropriation by the Legislature each year. Over 160 cities and towns have also been contributing annually to Green Up Vermont. The money from the state of Vermont and Vermont's cities makes up about 26% of our overall operating budget, so it is important that these traditions continue. Any help that you can give to see that your town contributes, whether it is circulating a petition or a follow-up phone call to your town clerk, is greatly appreciated!

Green Up Day is truly "Vermont's environmental ethic."

The same year as the above writing, Governor Davis, President Emeritus of Vermont Green Up, Inc., wrote a note for the Annual Report saying: "Vermont's natural beauty needs year round attention."

Twenty years after the first Green Up Day, Vermont Green Up's president Leonard Perry noted that: Green Up is more than a day in May. It is an attitude for a lifetime—an attitude toward our environment that Vermont is a precious place deserving our care and respect. Green Up can occur at any time, at any place. "Together we share the goal of keeping Vermont a clean, safe and beautiful place to live, visit and enjoy."

Twenty-five years after the first Green Up Day, Chittenden County Chair John Niles wrote that "The Green Up ethic—Green Up Day—is valuable because it reminds Vermonters that we care how our State looks. It is also an example of communities working together." About the 66 tons of debris collected... "This material is now off roadsides or waterways, an out of parks. There are aesthetic, environmental, and economic benefits to this cleanliness." A couple of years later, Wendy McArdle (Chittenden Co. Chr.) wrote: "Organize a Green Up Day Team: we all learn the meaning of stewardship by participating in this State-wide litter cleanup."

40 years later Green Up continues for Vermont. Green Up Vermont is a not-for-profit organization assisting communities and promoting anti-litter education. Our small Green Up organization sees a large vision—all of Vermont glowing in the splendor of her natural beauty, in a healthy litter-free environment. The challenge to achieve this vision continues.

**Green Up Day is always the first Saturday in May.** Let's keep Green Up growing for Vermont.

For more information, please call the Green Up office in Montpelier at: 1-800-974-3259, or 802-229-4586 or write to us at: Green Up Vermont, P.O. Box 1191, Montpelier, VT 05601-1191. Visit our website at [www.greenupvermont.com](http://www.greenupvermont.com), or e-mail us at [greenup@greenupvermont.com](mailto:greenup@greenupvermont.com)

**TO ORGANIZE GREEN UP IN YOUR COMMUNITY,**  
**The Basics in Brief are:**

- **Determine # of bags and posters needed**
  - **Arrange details for disposal**
  - **Make bags available to volunteers**
- **Other (refreshments, incentives) by choice**

**MAKE IT A HABIT! (same time, same place)**

All of the above is to say “it’s do-able” and truly in some places it “just happens.” It can become, “the thing to do” on Green Up Day.

All of the above is not to say it is necessarily easy. Back in the 70’s, people were anxious to do something tangible about the threatened environment all around them. Today, as environmental issues shine and fade with each changing public and political focus, Green Up must remain a constant beacon—a challenge to achieve.

**Determining # of bags and posters.** Each town has a continuing history of how many bags are used on Green Up Day. The Green Up Vermont office maintains a record of bags and posters requested by towns. Town Clerks often know the usage reality, as well as previous town coordinators. Once determined, let your county coordinator or the Green Up office know **the number of bags your town would like to receive.**

**Bags** come in increments of 25, so if you think you need just 30, it would be best to be conservative and stick with the packet of 25 rather than get 20 that you don’t need. Each year we will be producing more and they will have up-dated information on them, so it’s good not to think in terms of stockpiling.

We are able to distribute these bags far and wide thanks to crucial help from the Department of Transportation, whose drivers from around the state distribute the bags and posters. The locations of all of the district garages are available on our website, or you can contact us to find out which district you are in and where your garage is located. This is to make it possible for coordinators to drive to their area’s office if they wish to pick up their bags sooner than the AOT driver would be delivering them.

**Green UP distributes over 40,000 bags made possible by support from key Partner/Sponsors from the private sector businesses.** It is important for us, all of us, to show our appreciation through public acknowledgement. Businesses need to know that their community support is known in the community. Some towns achieve clever photos for Green Up Day promotion articles, showing people (kids especially) with (or in) the bags. A key is that the front of the bag be clearly view-able to show the logos. Acknowledgement text in articles is not easy, yet possible. **Stress to reporters the importance of mentioning the businesses making the bags possible.**

**Poster** designs are selected from student entries in our annual statewide poster design contest. Any student may enter. The deadline is always January 31. To assure participation from your town, check to see if your school takes part. Printed in color, the poster should be broadly and wisely posted. Schools are a great place for the poster, one per lobby is a good target number. The number printed does somewhat limit the broadness of posting, but we have found that it is sufficient to allow each town to post them in the classic posting places. Please try to make sure that all the information on the bottom of the poster is viewable. Our corporate partners are helping us to increase the promotion of Green Up Day, so we want their logos to be seen. Thank you for helping to broadcast the message of Green Up Day and to show the support by the partners.

**Arrange details for disposal.** Coverage of the cost of disposal varies throughout the state. As of now, each town does what works for it.

In many towns, the town pays for disposal from its road maintenance budget. The State appropriates money to towns for part of their road maintenance category. Also, in many towns the local waste disposal company covers disposal cost for Green Up clean-up. Contact your hauler(s) to see if they already cover it and if not, you can ask them. In Central Vermont, the solid waste district will give a “grant” if you ask. Be sure to ask your town officials about this, as they are the ones to whom the district communicates. In Chittenden, we salute the Chittenden County Solid Waste District. They not only cover all disposal costs, they also pay the annual town appropriation requested of towns by Green Up, as well as having a staff person serve as County Coordinator. All things are possible! We thank other solid waste districts also actively involved in Green Up for Vermont. Addison, Lamoille, and North West (Franklin/Orleans) and Upper Valley dedicate staff to assist with Green Up. Lamoille also covers disposal costs.

**Make bags available to volunteers.** This can be as simple as announcing (publicity) that bags are available at the town office. Remember, make it a habit! That is key to succeeding and continuing to succeed. For example, let people know that every Green Up Day you meet at town hall, or the fire station, or the school, or wherever to get bags and road or area assignments, learn what to do with the collected litter and enjoy whatever après-clean-up-gathering.

Some towns make bags available prior to Green Up Day, asking people to clean up their road or neighborhood or special spots before, or on, Green Up Day and bring filled bags to determined drop-off points. To get businesses involved, bags could be allotted to them so they can advertise their participation and have potential customers come to their establishments for bags.

**Publicity** is integral to the seemingly simple action: “make bags available to volunteers”. Of course, you have to have volunteers! In later sections you will find more on publicity and possible sources for people to volunteer.

**OTHER** Can range all around the scale. Below is a sampling.

**Refreshments** appear to be the first most often offered beyond a meeting place, bags and a disposal plan. After some hours of dirty work, volunteers are known to welcome food and beverage. In a few cases, town officials provide this treat in recognition of the value to their town by the volunteer Green Up work. Most often, local businesses donate hot dogs, hamburgers, chips, bagels, donuts, juice, soda, cookies, coffee, etc. Sometimes an organization or service such as R.S.V.P. or Lions or Rotary or Kiwanis make sure food is provided and “home cooked”. Barbecues are popular.

**Incentives** of various sorts in some cases enhance participation. Incentives can, however, have mixed messages. As one town coordinator said, “We decided we need to encourage civic pride and concern for the environment as the priority for Green up, rather than a tangible reward system” (such as prizes).

Examples: A litter bug, hand-fashioned by a former farmer and Green Up veteran in Arlington. The bug’s body is an inch high, oblong piece of wood painted red with gold glitter accent and a black head. Pipe cleaners form limber legs. Bugs are placed near trash and prizes (including savings bonds donated by local banks) go to the child finders. Brightly colored rocks can sub for a bug. A scavenger hunt listing litter items, with the winner the finder of the most. Prizes can go to trashy category collectors: most trash, yuckiest, most unusual. Prizes can be gift certificates donated by local businesses—a great way for them to show their support!

## **VOLUNTEERS**

Volunteers come in all ages, all walks of life.

### **WHERE TO FIND THEM**

Historically, young people comprise more than half of Green Up's volunteers. "Go for the youngest children. Then you get their parents too." (a county coordinator) This rings true—"Tiger cubs and their parents," "daisies and their parents," "our preschool group and their parents,"...these remarks appear in town coordinator reports.

On counting number of volunteers to report participation—YES, count the children!  
(For analysis purposes, it doesn't hurt to know the break down on adults and young people.)

There are no secrets, that we know of, for finding untapped sources of volunteers. All organizations and special endeavors face the same need when it comes to identifying and achieving participation, and continued participation of people volunteering.

#### **Classic sources include:**

Young People—Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, and Cubs, Tigers, Brownies, and Daisies; 4-H; Future Farmers of America; Church youth groups; Teen centers; Jr. ROTC; Schools—elementary, middle and high school classes and clubs (Key Club, SADD, SAFE, Student Councils, Sports teams, eg. Little League, Swim team, etc.), and individuals (note the focus on *community service credit*...Green Up is communities for the community of Vermont).

Green Up can make a great project for experience in organizing and carrying out a community citizenship activity. Eagle Scouts for example could take on Green Up for part of their badge requirements.

Historically, the scouts have participated broadly in Green Up. We at the Green Up office encourage scout and other youth group organizers to let us know your level of participation. People like the Governor and the media like to know numbers. We'd like to tell them. We can only do this with your help.

Service Organizations—Ones reported to date as participating, if not organizing are: Rotary (Morristown, Windsor, Woodstock); Lions (Arlington, Strafford, Whitingham); Kiwanis (Montpelier). Any service organization merits invitation to participation. Conservation commissions are growing in number around the state. Check with your town officials about a local commission, or the Association of Vermont Conservation Commissions.

Businesses—Some businesses in the state actively participate, supporting employees to take part. Some come out on the traditional Green Up Day, some designate a near-by date when employees can clean up during work time. In Bennington, Hemmings Motor News inspires and rewards their own employees as well as other area businesses for greening up. Ben and Jerry's, Cabot Creamery, Green Mountain Coffee Roasters, National Life Group, and VELCO all have organized Green Up Day activities. Think of potentially interested businesses in your town; large or small, all can make a difference. Businesses could consider the green up attitude for a lifetime and take care of litter along their road frontage. They could invite town residents or groups to partner up with them, especially on Green Up Day...and then to make every day Green Up Day. In some towns, businesses donate prizes including gift certificates and have special sales on late Saturday or on Sunday with special privileges for Green Up participants.

Other sources listed in reports from the past three years—Job corps, RSVP, Police department, Home Dem Clubs, Parents Club, PTO, Land Trust, Town Road Crew, Firefighters, Modern Woodsmen, Fast Squad, Select Board, Athletic Association, Neighborhood Green Up Association.

**PUBLICITY**  
**A Must-have,**  
**Whether by word of mouth or many media methods.**

The following is every means recently reported, in random order:





- ~ Posters
- ~ Flyers
- ~ Phone Calls
- ~ Announcement at Town Meeting
  - ~ Bulletin Boards
  - ~ Selectman's Meetings
  - ~ Radio Stations
  - ~ Ads, Complimentary
  - ~ School Notes to Parents
  - ~ Town "Gazette"
- ~ Mailing to Previous Volunteers
  - ~ Sings in Area Businesses
  - ~ Word of Mouth
- ~ School Announcements
  - ~ Town Newsletter
  - ~ Church Bulletins
  - ~ Post Office
  - ~ Stores
  - ~ Offices
- ~ Letter in Town Report
  - ~ School Newsletters
- ~ Sandwich Board, Town Green
  - ~ Community Calendar
  - ~ Library
  - ~ Cable TV, Local Access
- ~ Solid Waste District Newsletters
- ~ Calendar Announcements, Radio
- ~ School Bulletin Board, Display
- ~ Select Board Chair Speak to School
- ~ Set Up "Booth" with Balloons on Green Up Day

Creative resourcefulness multiplies our message. Storm your brain and brainstorm with others, especially for possible **free advertising**. Such activity resulted in Green Up achieving continuing listing in the Vermont Life calendar. Inventory local businesses or others who distribute calendars and ask them to include Vermont's Green Up Day.









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**SAFETY**

**All Volunteers Should Be Advised Of Safety  
“RULES OF THE ROAD”**





**What to Wear,  
Dress for the Occasion**

-  Clothing light or bright colored.
-  Durable or heavy shoes, boots, pants, tops, jackets, hats. Boots are recommended, with ankle support preferable.
-  Gloves for working—to protect against sharp objects and wet weather.
-  Layers of clothing for inclement weather.

**How to Behave,  
Safely and Sensibly**

-  Team up, to Green Up. Work with partners or teams.
-  Work on the left side of the road, facing oncoming traffic.
-  Work one side of a roadway at a time. Travel by vehicle to the other side.
-  Keep vehicles on same side of roadway as the volunteers.
-  Park all vehicles well clear of roadway, 10 feet from shoulder.
-  Watch footing when working on slopes.
-  Avoid overexertion. Take breaks. Drink water.
-  Do not remove dead animals or suspected toxic or hazardous waste. Inform leaders who can then inform proper authorities, such as town or state road maintenance personnel or the State Police.

**Also...**

-  Keep a First Aid kit available.
-  For safety of children, adult supervisors should always be present.
-  The coordinator could keep a list of drivers' names and names of children going with those drivers and their destinations.
-  For safety of children working in groups—two cars should be assigned to each group. The first car would serve as the “lead/caution” car. The second would pull up the rear with the children working between the cars in a “safety zone”.