



*Santa Fe*  
**WATERSHED**  
ASSOCIATION

# VOLUNTEER GUIDE

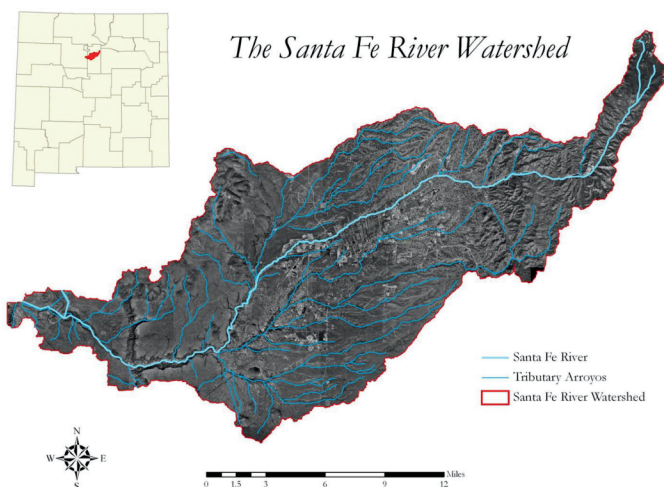
## WHY THIS WORK MATTERS

Thank you for joining our community of volunteer stewards who generously clean up the many reaches along the Santa Fe River and its tributary arroyos.

This handout provides basic information and important considerations for stewards. For more information, please visit [www.santafewatershed.org](http://www.santafewatershed.org).

## WHAT IS THE SANTA FE RIVER WATERSHED?

A watershed is all the land that drains (or “sheds”) rain and snowmelt to the lowest point. The Santa Fe River Watershed consists of 285 square miles of land from Lake Peak (our watershed’s highest point) to where the Santa Fe River meets the Rio Grande. All the rain and snowmelt from these lands drain into the Santa Fe River.



*The Santa Fe River Watershed*

- Helps prevent pollution of our water by removing plastics and other items that breakdown over time.
- Maintains a clean and beautiful river and watershed.
- Allows us to be good stewards for downstream users.
- Creates good opportunities for social connection around shared values.

## WHAT TO BRING

- Old and/or comfortable work clothes
- Gloves: Sturdy leather or rubber gardening gloves are best.
- Closed-toed shoes or waterproof boots. Sandals are discouraged
- Hat, sunglasses, sunscreen
- Water bottle and snacks

*Trash bags and gloves can be requested from SFWA*

## WHAT TO DO W/TRASH

- Stewards clean along safely accessed banks and beds of the river and arroyos.
- After collecting trash please leave the bags near City trash receptacles, along public trails, or at other designated areas.
- Stewards are encouraged to separate recyclables but are responsible for hauling them away if they do.

## SAFETY

### UNDERSTAND YOUR GROUP

- Consider age, skill and comfort level with the tasks at hand. Stewards are not asked to do more than they are able.

### CHECK THE WEATHER

- Rivers and arroyos are dynamic drainages, and water levels may change rapidly. Do not attempt to clean it if water levels are too high, if heavy rains are forecasted, or during lightning storms.

## WHO TO CALL IF YOU FIND SOMETHING SUSPICIOUS/DANGEROUS

Any emergency: 911

Non-emergency dispatch: (505) 428-3710

Drug tip hotline: (505) 428-3737

Southwest Care sharps disposal: (505) 490-1147

# SAFETY (CONTINUED)

## AVOID HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

- Volunteers need not remove needles and other bio-hazardous wastes unless they have completed the proper training.
- Wear protective gear and handle the following items with caution: broken glass, aerosol cans, gas cans, and other containers with chemical residues.
- Use common sense. If it looks or smells dangerous it probably is. Do not pick it up, but notify SFWA of its location.

## BE AWARE OF INHERENT RISKS

- Being in the outdoors exposes one to possible encounters with snakes, biting insects, poison ivy, other wildlife, and extreme weather.
- If volunteers encounter a snake, leave it alone. A cornered or threatened snake can strike in self-defense. A coiled snake will relax if it no longer feels threatened.
- Be careful when negotiating fallen logs, boulders, or rocky outcrops.

## LIFTING

- Lifting should always be done with the legs, bending at the knees and keeping the back straight. Get assistance when handling awkward or heavy objects.
- If an object is too heavy to move, please notify SFWA of its location.

# OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

## HUMAN POPULATIONS

- If you encounter someone experiencing homelessness, be kind and respectful and use common sense. If you feel it's appropriate, you can invite them to help support stewardship efforts.
- If you feel uncomfortable or even slightly unsafe, simply give the person space and move on.
- If you feel threatened, call dispatch and ask for the *Alternative Response Unit*.
- If you find what looks to be an active camp, please refrain from removing personal property (tents, clothes, blankets, etc.)
- Many individuals experiencing homelessness are suffering from mental illness, addictions, and other traumatic circumstances. If you find a person having a health emergency, please call 911.
- Please share your encounters with SFWA, so we can report them to the City of Santa Fe. If you're interested in learning more about homelessness in the Santa Fe River watershed, please reach out to SFWA to connect with local resources.

## INVASIVE SPECIES

- If you are interested in learning more about invasive species and appropriate vegetation management, please reach out — we'd love to work with you!

## FINISHING UP

The Steward Leader reports to SFWA with the following data no more than 5 days after each outing:

- Location of cleanup
- Number of bags collected (small white, or large black), and other debris of note
- Number of attending stewards
- Number of hours spent in the river or arroyo
- Any other observations and/or concerns

This important information allows SFWA to keep track of progress and the ongoing needs of the watershed, and to share our successes with the City, County, and other sources of funding support.

Please visit the SFWA website to fill out a steward report or scan the QR code:



## ABOUT SFWA

The SANTA FE WATERSHED ASSOCIATION is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization.

OUR MISSION is to build a thriving, resilient Santa Fe River Watershed through collaboration, stewardship, and education that inspires us all to care for our land, water, and each other.

GET IN TOUCH:  
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