



# CITY OF HARRISONBURG PUBLIC WORKS

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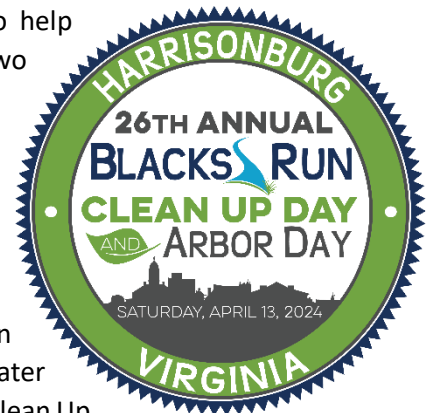
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## City gears up for Blacks Run Clean Up & Arbor Day Events

HARRISONBURG, Va. – The City of Harrisonburg is seeking community participation to help improve water quality and reduce stormwater runoff in The Friendly City through two upcoming event opportunities.

- **26<sup>th</sup> Annual Blacks Run Clean Up Day on Saturday, April 13**
- **Arbor Day (observed) on Saturday, April 13**

This year's Blacks Run Clean Up and Arbor Day events will feature information and activities with environmental organizations at the Clean Up Day Green Scene in Downtown Harrisonburg, volunteer tree planting acknowledging Arbor Day, a special Stormwater Improvement Plan Survey and enhanced participation from local businesses in this year's Clean Up Pour Tour.



The event will kick off with check-in, distribution of supplies and cleanup location assignments at the Green Scene – located in the grass lot beside Turner Pavilion, 228 S. Liberty St. The Green Scene will feature educational exhibits from local environmentally focused organizations. Once volunteers have received their supplies they will proceed to their cleanup location.



*(Above) Blacks Run Clean Up Day Team organized by local business Sage Bird Ciderworks.*

Clean Up Day volunteers may participate in the Harrisonburg Public Works annual Social Media Photo Contest for a chance to win prizes donated by local businesses. Prizes will be awarded to those who capture the best photo of the largest item discovered, weirdest object discovered, largest local business team and most enthusiastic/spirited team. To be considered, participants may do one (or all) of the following:

- Tag @harrisonburgpublicworks on Facebook
- Tag @hbgpublicworks on Instagram
- Use the hashtag #BRCD2023 on your Facebook or Instagram post.

Prizes will be announced on the Harrisonburg Public Works Facebook page after the event.

Once Clean Up Day is complete, volunteers are encouraged to return to the Green Scene for a special Pizza Party.

Last year's after-cleanup brew tour was so successful, event planners decided to bring it back this year, but even bigger. Clean Up Volunteers will be given a participant voucher to receive discounted brews and other specials at Downtown breweries/cideries/cafés, during open hours, on Clean Up Day. More information on specials will be available at the event.

**The public may pre-register to participate in Clean Up Day by visiting [www.harrisonburgva.gov/cleanstream-clean-up-day](http://www.harrisonburgva.gov/cleanstream-clean-up-day).** Day-of registration is available however pre-registration is encouraged, allowing participants to select which stream location they would like to help with and allowing staff to get supplies to participants quicker so they may begin their clean up.

“Staff is excited to have received the largest amount of pre-registered participants, at this time, in the event’s history,” Harrisonburg Public Works Environmental Specialist Wes Runion said. “We are appreciative of all community volunteers who come out to help clean our local Harrisonburg waterway that ultimately reduces the amount of trash going into the Chesapeake Bay.”

Also on April 13, Public Works Green Space staff will be welcoming volunteers to an **Arbor Day (observed) Tree Planting** event. Thirty trees will be planted by volunteers at Keister Elementary School as part of the Outdoor Learning Space Project led by local educator, Brooke Imber, in collaboration with Public Works Greenspace Manager Jeremy Harold and Landscape Supervisor, Mike Hott. The project was largely supported by a Virginia Department of Forestry Urban and Community Forestry grant.

Keister teacher Brook Imber believes collaborations like this are key to helping students learn and grow.

“The goal of these spaces is to increase accessibility to all members of our school community while still being able to learn in a natural environment that promotes collaboration, creativity, communication skills, confidence and curiosity,” Imber said. “Studies show that learning outdoors increases academic performance and has multiple mental health benefits. Because Keister students were so heavily involved in the planning process and creation of these new learning spaces, I believe this will have a lasting impact on them for the rest of their lives.”

The Virginia Department of Forestry’s Lara Johnson added, “We (the Department of Forestry) are honored to be part of helping Keister Elementary School improve its outdoor learning space. Connecting kids to nature and trees is an important part of our agency’s mission. The new trees will create shade for students and give them an opportunity to learn in a creative nature-filled environment.”

This Arbor Day event supports the City’s annual designation as a Tree City USA. Registration for the tree planting event is now full, however those wishing to volunteer may still register to help with the Blacks Run Clean Up Day activity now and morning-of the event.

The **City of Harrisonburg** is centrally located in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia. It is home to approximately 55,900 people. More information about the City of Harrisonburg is available online at [www.HarrisonburgVA.gov](http://www.HarrisonburgVA.gov).



*(Above) Keister Elementary School students plant a tree last year on campus.*

You can also follow **Harrisonburg Public Works** on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/harrisonburgpublicworks).