

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES



Water Quality Monitoring

What: Bacteria monitoring - collect and test water samples for *Escherichia coli* (*E. coli*) and turbidity; Biological monitoring - collect and identify benthic macroinvertebrates (bottom-dwelling bugs) in the field, and use microscopes to identify specimens in the lab.

Why: Data is used to evaluate water safety, identify pollution problems, and evaluate long-term stream health.

When: Bacteria monitoring occurs weekly or monthly (depending on the site) from March to November and takes <1 hour per site. Biological monitoring occurs in the spring and fall and usually takes 4-5 hours. Biological lab work is ongoing.

Where: Bacteria monitoring occurs at 19 sites in and around Charlottesville. Biological monitoring occurs at 50 sites throughout the Rivanna River watershed. Volunteers can choose the number of sites and work in teams.

Training/Skills Needed: Field and lab training provided.



Water Quality & Habitat Restoration

What: Help RCA plant native trees, shrubs, and meadow plants; remove/cut back invasive plant species; install rain gardens and other water quality restoration projects; and maintain previously installed projects.

Why: To protect water quality and promote healthy streamside forests; to improve wildlife habitat, promote carbon sequestration, and improve floodplain resilience.

When: Work takes place year-round, depending on the activity.

Where: Locations throughout the watershed, including public properties like schools and parks and private properties along streams and rivers.

Training/Skills Needed: Some knowledge of plants or gardening is helpful, but not required. Onsite training is provided.



River Guardians

What: Paddle with RCA's River Steward and/or adopt a section of the river to visually inspect the water, remove trash, record wildlife sightings, and share information with river users. Guardians can also adopt riverside parks or gathering areas to scout for trash or any other water concerns.

Why: To encourage the public to engage with the Rivanna and create a sense of ownership and pride in our river. This work will also inform future RCA restoration efforts.

When: Paddles with River Stewards run every other week from May to September and take 4-6 hours. Guardians who adopt a stream section or riverside park may volunteer on their own time.

Where: Rivanna River, main stem, North Fork, and South Fork.

Training/Skills Needed: Volunteers will ideally have some experience being on the water. RCA will provide further training and can provide gear.



Education

What: Assist with watershed education programs, pop-up education activities in parks and at community events, and other community education activities.

Why: To raise our community's awareness and understanding of water quality, river health, and watershed ecology; and promote watershed stewardship.

When: Spring, summer, and fall. Most programs are offered in spring.

Where: Schools, parks, and other community spaces throughout the Rivanna watershed.

Training/Skills Needed: Basic knowledge of water/river issues or a willingness to learn; interest and experience working with a diversity of children and families is helpful.

Additional volunteer opportunities include:

- Participating in and/or organizing trash cleanups
- Staffing RCA tables at community events
- Assisting with administrative activities
- Photography
- Providing technical and website support
- Board service, and more!