Photo documentation tips

We encourage you to take photos and videos at your volunteer projects. Before & after, and action photos are a great way to document and share the hard work of you and the volunteers. We collect photos from all the projects for photo slideshows for city-wide cleanups (like this one from Earth Day), volunteer appreciation, and promotion of future volunteer events.

Share photos and videos

- Email your photos and videos to adoptaspot@oaklandnet.com
- If posting to social media, please include hashtags provided by Public Works (ex: #oaklandearthday, #oaklandcreektobay, #oaklandadoptaspot, etc.)

Logistics

- Is there a volunteer who likes to take photographs and can do a good job? Consider asking someone to be the photographer for the day if you cannot. You will likely have a lot of other responsibilities, so you will be glad you delegated this task to a volunteer.
- Use a camera instead of a phone camera for higher resolution photos.
- Let people know that you will be taking photos and provide instruction for those not wanting their pictures taken.

Photo content

- Try to capture images that tell the story of your volunteer project and show smiles, sense of place, and accomplishment.
- Will the site look dramatically improved after your cleanup? Take before and after photos of the site from the same location, angle, and vantage point. If this is a long term effort, you may consider setting up locations and shots to repeat at subsequent events. Record photo point locations using notes, GPS, field markings, or associations with permanent markers (fence posts, or other easily-located spots).
- Take both candid shots and quasi-candid photos of volunteers in action (these are action photos where you ask volunteers to look up and smile at the camera as they are working).
- Avoid butt shots, anything inappropriate, and unflattering photos.
- Consider angle, perspective, sun exposure, background, and other factors when framing your shot

Photo filing and organizing

- Record volunteers' names for each photo. If minors are in the photo, obtain written permission from a parent or guardian to share the photo (for adults, the photo waiver is included in the liability waiver).
- Record other photo attributes: location, date, photographer, subject(s). It may help to record this information as you are taking photos and associated with the photo numbers.
- File and organize photos from the event as soon as you can, as it's easy to forget details.
- Back up photos on a flash drive, portable hard drive, or in the cloud.

Photo examples

Before and after photos from the same photo point (same location and same angle) tell powerful stories of transformation

Action shots clearly showing the volunteer activity, appropriate activities and safety gear (gloves, vests, tools), sense of place, and group effort.

Flattering photos of individuals that show smiles, sense of place, and accomplishment.
Group photos at the end of the work day showing accomplishment, context, and sense of place.