

# Park cleanups precede celebration

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An estimated 150 area residents Saturday plunged into the grungy task of cleaning litter from parks and the sides of creeks and lakes.

The cleanup, organized by Keep Omaha Beautiful Inc., led up to today's World O! Water festival at Wehrspann Lake, near 154th Street and Giles Road. The festival, which will include games, food and demonstrations, will be coordinated from the Pappio-Missouri River Natural Resource District's headquarters at the lake. The event starts at noon and runs to 4 p.m.

The purpose of Saturday's cleanup and today's celebration is to promote an appreciation for pure water and litter-free natural places. Some people evidently have lacked that appreciation in the past. Volunteers at Levi Carter Park on Saturday recalled a cleanup two years ago in which they pulled a car, muffler, safe and toilet from the lake and park.

But the work to clean Levi Carter Park has paid off, said Kay Burrows of Carter Lake. They found only litter on Saturday, she said.

"We've lived all our lives down here, so this lake's real important to us," said Burrows, who participated with her husband, sister and niece.

Jeanne Eibes, president of the Carter Lake Preservation Society, said Levi Carter Park and



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Carter Lake residents Melinda DuBay and Mark Eibes are just part of the litter-collection crew working at Carter Lake on Saturday. About 150 people labored to clean up green spaces ahead of today's water festival at Wehrspann Lake.

Carter Lake are important resources. They are what people see first when they drive out of Eppley Airfield.

Eibes pulled something from the side of the lake and it dangled from her hand. "What do you think that is?" she asked her team of litter-gatherers.

"Chicken bone," responded Merl Harder.

The 20-member Levi Carter Park group placed garbage into at least 25 trash bags.

Other such efforts took place at Fontenelle Park, Standing Bear Lake, Lake Zorinsky and Benson Park.

Kendra Sullivan, program director for Keep Omaha Beautiful, said about 150 people participated in the cleanup Saturday. Sullivan's organization provided bags, gloves and tools.

The festival today will be overseen by Keep Omaha Beautiful and other organizations that are dedicated to preserving natural

resources and promoting outdoor recreation. That includes the National Park Service, the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, the Henry Doorly Zoo and Lauritzen Gardens.

Sullivan said the first 500 attendees today will receive lunch free. Among the activities will be canoe rides, kids' science experiments, animal shows, nature hikes and programs on water quality.