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Opening day at the Yuba River



SYRCL's river ambassador kick-off party took place Saturday at the old bridge, the South Fork of the Yuba River, on Highway 49. Flo, SYRCL's mascot, is shown with kids Bolf, Bailee and Kaiden Johnson and river ambassador Brettin White.



SYRCL celebrated opening day at the Yuba River Saturday, at the old bridge, South Fork Yuba River, Highway 49. Kimberly Foree, right, an ambassador for SYRCL shows species from the river to Will Namba, 4, and Rosaly Santos, both of Sacramento.



Flo, SYRCL's mascot, is shown at the river during opening day celebrations at the Yuba River.



Skyuah and Micah Higelin coloring at the opening day event of the Yuba River.

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Scores of Yuba River fans celebrated opening day on the river Saturday at the Highway 49 crossing area at Yuba River State Park.

“It was a phenomenal day,” said Jenn Tamo, stewardship coordinator for the South Yuba River Citizens League, which sponsored the event.

“It was a lot of fun — a great kickoff.”

During the event, which ran from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., SYRCL staff talked with more than 300 people about the River Ambassadors program, which had its official launch during the celebration.

The River Ambassadors program, which is still open for those interested in participating, calls for trained volunteers to be stationed at four Yuba River crossings on summer weekends through Sept. 1.

The volunteers help educate the public and raise awareness about picking up litter, dog waste and broken glass and reducing wildfire risk.

Volunteers also help with litter control, last year removing 5,582 pieces of trash that included 1,175 cigarette butts and 950 piles of dog waste.

“Since there is such a concentration of people out there, pet owners need to pack out their dog waste,” Tamo said.

“Otherwise, it contaminates the water and degrades water quality.”

In addition to the Highway 49 crossing, volunteers will be at Purdon, Edwards and Bridgeport crossings.

“We’ll be at Bridgeport crossing on Memorial Day,” Tamo said.

A free training for the River Ambassadors volunteer program will be 5 to 8 p.m., June 4, at the SYRCL office, 313 Railroad Ave., Ste. 101, in Nevada City. To RSVP, email jenn@syrcl.org.

Saturday’s opening day featured a popular Yuba River celebrity, Flo the steelhead fish. Kids at the event flocked around Flo and also participated in a salmon lifecycle educational game.

“Several people came up to us and said, ‘Thank you for being here,’” Tamo said.

“It was really nice to hear.”

The celebration was in cooperation with California State Parks and with World Fish Migration Day run by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

The River Ambassadors program started in 2012 as an outgrowth of the annual Yuba River cleanup run by SYRCL in the fall. The cleanup is now in its 17th year.

“We realized that one day of cleanup really wasn’t enough to address the impact of litter,” Tamo said of the creation of the River Ambassadors program.

“We needed to stretch out our stewardship.”

For more information on the River Ambassadors program, see the SYRCL website, www.yubariver.org.

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