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## Fishing for Fun a family affair

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A boy works to reel in a fish.

Family fishing season is almost here. Bring the whole family to Pioneer Park on May 21 for the first ever Fishing for Fun, A Family Affair, offering games, activities, an ice cream social, and important health information for families regarding fish consumption.

South Yuba River Citizens League, The Sierra Fund and Wolf Creek Community Alliance are hosting an educational event to celebrate the fun of fishing. These organizations are raising awareness around which fish are safe to eat and which might be better caught and then released.

On May 21, children can join in on several fish-themed activities and games, while teens and parents will have an opportunity to talk with experts about fishing locations, the history of mercury in our watershed, health impacts of eating mercury contaminated fish, and how families may safeguard their children by choosing safe fish to eat.

Understanding how to prevent mercury exposure through fish consumption is important because of the historical legacy of mining in the Sierra Nevada Foothills, specifically Nevada County, the birthplace of the gold rush. Mercury was first introduced for use in gold processing and of the 26 million pounds of mercury brought to this region for

### KNOW & GO

What: Fun family event to learn about eating fish safely

When: 1-4 p.m. May 21

Where: Seaman's Lodge, Pioneer Park, Nevada City

Cost: Free

introduced for use in gold processing and of the 26 million pounds of mercury brought to this region for

mining activities, between 10-30% was lost to the environment, where it still remains, affecting our ecosystems and getting into our fish.

Eating mercury-contaminated fish is the primary human exposure pathway to mercury. This is particularly relevant in the Sierra, where elevated levels of mercury have been found in mining-impacted waterways, like the Bear and Yuba watersheds.

## **AN ANNUAL VOLUNTEER EFFORT**

In order to protect anglers from eating mercury-contaminated fish from our local water bodies, South Yuba River Citizens League, The Sierra Fund and Wolf Creek Community Alliance organized a community volunteer event last July to post state-issued fish consumption advisories in the Bear and Yuba watersheds.

The advisories, issued by the California Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment, cover mercury in fish and offer "safe eating guidelines" for consuming fish from California's lakes and reservoirs. On July 11, 2015, volunteers posted nearly 100 advisories at 28 water bodies and recreational facilities from the Gold Lakes Basin to Camp Far West. The event was a huge success, and the organizers are excited to be continuing and expanding the effort this year. If you would like to volunteer May 21 to help post these advisories, contact SYRCL's Community Engagement Coordinator, Jenn Tamo at [Jenn@syrcl.org](mailto:Jenn@syrcl.org) or 530-265-5961 ext. 201.

The expansion of the project would not be possible without the support of the Nevada Irrigation District and the Yuba River Ranger District of the Tahoe National Forest. Seventy percent of the locations where volunteers posted advisories in 2015 are managed by these two agencies. This year, and into the future, NID and the Yuba River Ranger District have agreed to keep this advice posted themselves at the lakes and reservoirs they manage.

This year, the project will include posting fish consumption advisory signs at Donner Lake and certain water bodies in the Feather River watershed for the first time.

While volunteers post consumption guidelines, the public is invited to Seaman's Lodge in Pioneer Park, Nevada City, for a day of educational fun for the whole family. There will be games, snacks, trivia, art, and a broad breadth of information about local fishing resources and mercury in local lakes and reservoirs. Free ice cream sundaes will be provided from 2-3:30 p.m., while supplies last.

Project funding provided by The Sierra Fund.