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May 24, 2017

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SYRCL announces opening day at the river

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WHAT: SYRCL's Annual "Opening Day at the River" Celebration

WHEN: Saturday, May 27, 10am-2pm

WHERE: Bridgeport Crossing, South Yuba River State Park

The South Yuba River Citizens League invites community members to kick-off the river season with its annual "Opening Day at the River" celebration from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Saturday at Bridgeport Crossing.

Memorial Day weekend is typically when people start flocking to the river in droves. River lovers will be greeted by SYRCL's volunteer River Ambassadors who encourage visitors to keep the

river clean and safe.

This year, River Ambassadors will be promoting a message of extreme caution. This year's high flows and cold water are a serious safety concern. SYRCL's River Ambassadors will be present reminding people to be safe and not to swim.

This event will include kid-friendly activities, responsible recreation information and an appearance from Flo — SYRCL's fish mascot.

"The River Ambassador program is about welcoming visitors to the river and reminding them to do their part to keep the river clean and safe by packing out what they pack in, for starters," said Caleb Dardick, SYRCL's Executive Director.

With State Parks experiencing budget cuts in recent years, and with an estimated 700,000-plus people visiting the South Yuba River State Park annually, the River Ambassador program was developed to prevent the river from being "loved to death."

River Ambassadors team up with California State Parks to educate the public about the impacts of trash, dog waste, broken glass, and wildfire on the South Yuba River from Memorial Day through Labor Day at three crossings: Purdon, Highway 49, and Bridgeport.

In the past five seasons, the team has had face-to-face contact with more than 28,000 visitors to the South Yuba River State Park, collected 29,594 pieces of trash and removed 4,068 piles of dog waste. The program concludes with SYRCL's Yuba River Cleanup on Sept. 16.

Since 1998, the cleanup has picked up 204,533 pounds of trash and recycling from the river. The River Ambassador program was created as an extension of the cleanup — with the goal of promoting yearlong stewardship so less litter would be left behind in the first place.

Contact Whitney Logue, Stewardship Coordinator at whitney@syrcl.org or 530-265-5961, ext. 212 for more information or go to <http://yubariver.org/our-work/river-ambassador-program/>.