

Yuba River Cleanup Hauls out 18,000 Pounds of Trash and Recyclables

By South Yuba River Citizens League (SYRCL) - September 24, 2019, 08:34:20 AM

Nevada City, CA September 24, 2019 – Nevada City, CA – From the headwaters along Donner Summit to the confluence of the Yuba and Feather Rivers, hundreds of people turned out for the South Yuba River Citizens League's (SYRCL's) annual Yuba River Cleanup on Saturday, September 21, 2019. The numbers are still rolling in from 36 sites. So far at least 900 volunteers removed more than 18,000 pounds of garbage and recyclables from 82 miles of rivers, creeks and lakes. Volunteers also assisted Nevada County by posting "No Swimming" advisory signs as a response to a yellow-colored plume of water that appeared along the South Yuba River the previous day.

"SYRCL's Cleanup happened to take place during a critical NO SWIM ADVISORY that was issued by Nevada County's Environmental Health Department," said Melinda Booth. "Thankfully we were able to use our dedicated volunteer corps to help the County post signs for the public and get the word out."

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On Friday afternoon, September 20, SYRCL received photos from one of its members that showed yellowish, discolored water in the South Yuba River. SYRCL advised the public, Nevada County, State Parks and the California Office of Emergency Services. All relevant agencies began coordinating a response. To support this collaborative effort, SYRCL and partners conducted water quality testing throughout the South Fork of the Yuba. These data are still being analyzed.

Currently Nevada County Environmental Health Department's "NO SWIM" advisory remains in effect, from the town of Washington to Englebright reservoir.

To ensure volunteer safety during the Cleanup, SYRCL asked volunteers to not swim and to stay at least 50 feet away from the edge of the river during their hours of cleaning and trash hauling.

"The yellow plume of discolored water was heartbreaking to see on Friday afternoon," said Booth. "We knew we had to act right away by posting a video advisory and contacting our partners. Local and state government are taking this incident very seriously and are leading the investigation."

Water sample tests revealed dangerous levels of E. coli bacteria at Highway 49 Crossing on Saturday, September 21. By Sunday, tests showed dramatically reduced levels. The cause of the plume is still under investigation.

The yellow sediment plume did not keep the community from pitching in to remove a summer's worth of trash during the Yuba River Cleanup on Saturday. Dozens of families, school groups and businesses got their hands dirty for the betterment of trails, beaches and public areas surrounding our local waterways, including Gold Run Creek, Deer Creek, Wolf Creek, the Bear River, Englebright Lake, and Kentucky Ravine. Volunteers ranged from nine-months old to 80 years old and they removed an array of items out of the river including scooters, roofing shingles, a pink flamingo in camouflage, tires, couches, fence parts and more.

Volunteer Party at Pioneer Park

After the Cleanup, SYRCL volunteers gathered at Pioneer Park to celebrate their morning of service. They enjoyed a complimentary lunch, sponsored by Emily's Catering, the BriarPatch Coop, Diego's, SPD Market and Flour Garden Bakery. They heard from Nevada County Supervisor Sue Hoek and SYRCL Executive Director Melinda Booth, who expressed their appreciation to all volunteers.

Clean-a-thon Nearing Goal

The Cleanup and the River Ambassador programs keep the Yuba healthy, clean and safe year-round, and they have real costs. SYRCL needs the community's help to keep them going. So far, \$8,500 has been raised to fund these vital programs.

"We've had an outpouring of support, and we hope to close our \$6,500 fundraising gap in the next two weeks," said Julie Pokrandt, SYRCL's Development Director. The Clean-a-thon Campaign will stay open until October 1. "Please visit <https://yubariver.org/annual-events/cleanup/clean-a-thon/> or stop by the SYRCL office to make a donation to support these stewardship efforts."

The Yuba River Cleanup and River Ambassador program are made possible thanks to these generous sponsors and partners. SYRCL would like to express our gratitude to:

The Tahoe National Forest, Yuba Water Agency, and California Solar Electric Company.

AJA Video Systems, Balance Hydrologics, Body Logic Physical Therapy, BriarPatch Food Coop., Caseywood Lumber, Donner Summit Public Utilities District, Grass Valley, A Belden Brand, TYSA, and Western Aggregates LLC.

Teichert & Sons, A-One Bookkeeping, CBEC Eco Engineering, Cranmer Engineering, Fit for Life Physical Therapy, 49er Rotary Club of Nevada City, Gold Country Kiwanis Club, Grass Valley HydroGarden, Janet Peake, Financial Planning, SCO Planning & Engineering, Sierra Sungrown, South Yuba River Park Association & Friends of Malakoff Diggins, Stantec Consulting Services, and the Truckee Tahoe Airport District.

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All Phase Heating & Air, Economy Pest Control, Nevada City Engineering, Nevada City Self Storage, Peaceful Valley Farm Supply, Plaza Tire & Auto Service, SRC Party Rentals, Yuba River Organics.

SYRCL also thanks the Cleanup's in-kind contributors: Emily's Catering, Diego's, Sierra Theaters, Three Forks Bakery and Brewing Company, Grass Valley Brewing Company, Jernigan's Tap House, the Flour Garden, Caroline's Coffee, and Waste Management.

SYRCL also deeply appreciates the cooperation and support of these community and agency partners: California State Parks, the U.S. Forest Service & Tahoe National Forest, Waste Management, the Bureau of Land Management, the Army Corps of Engineers, Gold Country Flyfishers, Grass Valley Public Works, Hospitality House, Caltrans, Nevada City, Nevada County, Placer County, Yuba County, Sierra Nevada Conservancy, American Rivers, Soda Springs General Store, Wolf Creek Community Alliance, Nevada County Historical Society and many others.

About SYRCL

The South Yuba River Citizens League (SYRCL) is the leading voice for the protection and restoration of the Yuba River watershed. Founded in 1983 through a rural, grassroots campaign to defend the South Yuba River from proposed hydropower dams, SYRCL has developed into a vibrant community organization with more than 3,500 members and volunteers. See: www.yubariver.org.