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Nevada County Funds Expansion of River Ambassadors

Nevada City, CA – Nevada County Office of Emergency Services is helping the South Yuba River Citizens League (SYRCL) to expand the River Ambassador program to Purdon crossing through additional funding as part of its work with the Yuba River Cohort, a collaboration comprised of County Supervisors and staff, state and federal agencies, local NGOs, and community representatives, and co-chaired by Supervisors Heidi Hall and Sue Hoek.

The County of Nevada is funding the expansion because it recognizes the urgency of addressing unprecedented visitation levels. With the high level of fire danger combined with a drought, interventions to educate visitors about fire safety, packing out trash, and picking up after pets are desperately needed.

“The River Ambassador program is the primary way SYRCL seeks to address the increase in visitors at the river and we are grateful the Cohort and the County are supporting an expansion with increased funding,” said Melinda Booth, SYRCL’s Executive Director. “In addition to picking up hundreds of pounds of trash and dog waste, River Ambassadors have kept BBQs out of the river canyon by educating visitors about the dangers associated with any kind of fire.”

The expansion to Purdon is one SYRCL has wanted to implement, but a lack of funding has prevented it to date. “Given the number of people who visit Purdon, getting out the message about the fire ban to river-goers is exceptionally important,” said Daniel Belshe, Community Engagement Manager. “In order to make this expansion successful, we now need even more volunteers and we are hoping people will sign up.”

The increased funding will also allow the River Ambassador program, which is hosted in collaboration with State Parks, to extend its hours from 10am to 2pm to 9am to 3pm. With unseasonably hot temperatures plaguing Nevada County and the surrounding areas, people have been arriving earlier than usual to beat the heat and secure a spot on the river. Starting the program earlier will allow River Ambassadors to reach the early bird visitors.

“River Ambassadors are critical to educating visitors on how to take care of our river and keep our community safe,” said District 4 Supervisor Sue Hoek. The expansion begins this weekend.

“The Cohort formed five years ago to address public safety issues within the South Yuba River canyon such as access, fire prevention, stewardship, and responsible use,” added District 1 Supervisor Heidi Hall. “The collaborative effort has helped get the message about river safety out to more people.”

If you want to get involved, you can find information about how to apply or sign up for a volunteer shift at www.yubariver.org or contact Daniel Belshe at (530) 265-5961 ext. 201.

About SYRCL: The South Yuba River Citizens League (SYRCL, pronounced “circle”), based in Nevada City, CA, 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 over 3,500 members and volunteers. See: www.yubariver.org.