

Volunteers will pluck trash from Stanislaus-area rivers

BY JOHN HOLLAND

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River cleanups happen every year for a reason: The trash keeps piling up.

Volunteers will work the Tuolumne River on Saturday morning and the Stanislaus River a week later as part of the sixth annual Great Sierra River Cleanup. They are among numerous events happening along the mountain and flatland stretches where the streams flow.

Tires, grocery carts, clothing, furniture and plenty of other trash accumulate in the Modesto portion of the Tuolumne, said Ed Aguilar, riverside community coordinator for the Tuolumne River Trust. The environmental group is organizing Saturday's event at the Seventh Street Bridge.

"On average, our cleanups gather approximately 1.5 to 2 tons of garbage per cleanup," Aguilar said by email Monday. "Sadly, some of the places we are cleaning up this Saturday had been cleaned up during the our April 5 Love Modesto river cleanup."

The trust invites volunteers of all ages to take part. Only adults will be allowed to go into the water or to pick up drug paraphernalia and other hazardous trash.

The trust is working on the event with a group called Operation 9-2-99, which has ongoing cleanup efforts between the Ninth Street and Highway 99 bridges.

The Sept. 20 cleanup on the Stanislaus River will take place in Oakdale, Riverbank and Ripon under the direction of the East Stanislaus Resource Conservation District.

It, too, is an all-ages event, said Jessica Boone, a resource conservation technician. She urges schools, churches and other groups to take part. Participants are asked to bring their own buckets, 5 gallons or so, so they can dump the trash in a large bin and minimize the use of plastic bags.

At both events, volunteers should bring drinking water and wear sturdy boots, gloves, hats and sunscreen. They should be prepared for tricky footing along the rivers, which are low this year because of the drought, exposing more junk.

The Sierra Nevada Conservancy, a state agency, oversees the Great Sierra River Cleanup. Last year, it reported that 4,221 volunteers picked up 77,818 pounds of trash on 440 miles of stream. They recycled nearly a third of the haul.

Sept. 20 cleanups also will take place at New Melones Reservoir, Calaveras Big Trees State Park, downtown Mariposa and the Briceburg area of Mariposa County. An event in Yosemite Valley will run from Sept. 23-28. Details on all of them are at www.sierranevada.ca.gov.

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Read more here: http://www.modbee.com/2014/09/08/3528066_volunteers-will-pluck-trash-from.html?&rh=1#storylink=cpy



Trash is pictured on the road leading up to the Tuolumne River Monday afternoon on Zeff Road between the Seventh Street Bridge and Highway 99 in Modesto. Volunteers will work the Tuolumne River Saturday morning and the Stanislaus River a week later as part of the sixth annual Great Sierra River Cleanup. **JOAN BARNETT LEE — jlee@modbee.com**



- **TUOLUMNE RIVER CLEANUP**

When: 8 to 11 a.m. Saturday

Where: Meet at Seventh Street and Tuolumne Boulevard, Modesto

Registration: Email Ed Aguilar at edward@tuolumne.org.

STANISLAUS RIVER CLEANUP

When: 9 a.m. to noon Sept. 20

Where: In Oakdale, at the Highway 120 bridge near Cost Less Food Co.; in Riverbank, at Jacob Myers Park; in Ripon, between Jackson Road and the bicycle bridge next to Highway 99

Registration: For the Oakdale and Riverbank locations, contact Jessica Boone at (209) 491-9320, ext. 138, or jessica.boone@ca.nacdnet.net. For Ripon, contact Mary Shields at (209) 599-3641.

- **WHAT THEY FOUND**

A sampling of trash from last year's Great Sierra River Cleanup around Northern California:

- A wedding veil
- A ceiling fan
- A SpongeBob SquarePants action figure
- A cube of butter
- Full jars of mustard and salsa
- Easter eggs
- 2-inch heels
- An old-fashioned washing machine on wheels
- A message in a bottle (second year in a row)
- An LP record
- An iPhone
- A business card from the state Environmental Protection Agency
- Several unopened bottles of children's cold medicine

Source: Sierra Nevada Conservancy

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