



“Currents” July 2017

14th Annual River Clean Up

The Upper Guadalupe River Authority's (UGRA) Annual River Clean Up is just around the corner on Saturday, July 22nd. Hats off to the over 400 volunteers already registered who are willing to get their hands dirty in order to keep our river clean.

Unfortunately, soda bottles, plastic bags, old tires and other debris can be seen floating in the river or found hidden below the surface. This trash is not only unsightly, but can also be a safety hazard and it takes away from the enjoyment of water activities like swimming, fishing, and tubing. After all, who wants to swim in a river where you have to dodge garbage?

UGRA, with the help of many generous sponsors, hosts an annual River Clean Up to remove trash in order to help maintain a healthy Guadalupe River. Ultimately, we want to avoid having the trash collect in the waterways. We accomplish that by removing trash throughout the watershed in our community as well as from the river. The watershed is the area of land that drains to the river. Since the river is the lowest point in the county, almost all areas of land in Kerr County drain to the Guadalupe River and it's important to remove trash from those areas as well. If left on the ground, trash in the watershed will be windblown or washed into creeks and drainage ditches which empty into the river. To prevent that from happening, River Clean Up volunteers will pick up trash at swimming holes, parks, hillsides, water crossings, drainage ditches, dry creek beds, and roadways throughout Kerr County. Our volunteers might not be getting their toes wet as they pick up trash along SH 27, but they will be helping the river just the same. If you know of a place that needs to be cleaned up, please let UGRA know.

We invite you, your friends, or your group to join us on Saturday, July 22nd as a volunteer in this year's Clean Up. Volunteers will gather at Flat Rock Park at 8:00 am for registration and instructions. Volunteers will return to the park by 11:00 am for food, an awards ceremony, and raffle. The City of Kerrville, Republic Services, Kerrville Recycling, and Garrett Services will coordinate the removal of all trash and recyclables collected by the volunteers.

Although the River Clean Up is a lot of fun, it is also hard work and you should plan accordingly. Wear a hat and light weight clothing for protection from the heat and drink plenty of water to stay hydrated. Wear clothing and shoes that are appropriate for getting wet and dirty and wear leather work gloves. Also, protect yourself from the sun and bugs by applying sunscreen and insect repellent as needed.

Even though we are asking our volunteers to work hard in the July heat, we plan to also treat them well. Volunteers will have their chance to win numerous prizes and contests and be treated to drinks, snacks, and a free t-shirt. The River 106.1 FM will also be on site along with several exhibitors. The River Clean Up is an event that the entire family can enjoy and your efforts will help beautify the Guadalupe River from Hunt to Center Point.

UGRA's work to reduce littering and raise awareness to this issue does not end on River Clean Up day. We contract with Garrett Services of Kerrville to pick up litter at 15 low water crossings

year-round. The amount of trash these crews collect is staggering – over 38,000 pounds in 2016 alone. As a proactive measure to reduce littering, this summer UGRA is funding litter patrols with licensed peace officers at the most popular river crossings to promote the message, “pack it in...pack it out.”

Some of the trash collected during the River Clean Up will also have an extended life past the date of the event in order to continue to raise awareness of the litter problem and the need to keep our river clean. With great anticipation, UGRA, in partnership with the Kerr Arts and Cultural Center, is excited to announce a free art workshop for children. The Trash Transformed Workshop will be held at the Kerr Arts and Cultural Center August 1st – 3rd, 9 AM – 12 PM. Young artists ages 9 and up will work with items recovered during the 2017 River Clean Up. Activities will include transforming the found items into sculptures using a variety of age appropriate techniques. Space is limited, so call the KACC to register today (830-895-2911).

Let's Keep Our River Clean

Tara Bushnoe, Natural Resources Coordinator for UGRA, tbushnoe@ugra.org or (830) 896-5445