



PRESS RELEASE

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UGRA's 21st Annual River Clean Up

UGRA hosted its 21st Annual River Clean Up on Saturday, September 7th. A total of 4,825 pounds of household garbage, tires, and scrap metal was collected by 373 volunteers working in the Guadalupe River watershed throughout Kerr County. Along with the expected paper and plastic trash, participants retrieved several large and unusual items like a giant homemade sprinkler tree, sunflower seeds display plastic baseball helmet, animal spine dried into the shape of a seahorse, heron decoy, stroller, old dryer, microwave, typewriter, and a canoe safety rules sign. The volunteers who recovered these items entered them into the biggest and most unusual items contest.

This year's River Clean Up encountered a unique challenge when the Guadalupe River flooded on July 23rd, just four days before the originally planned date. Since there was no way to predict how river and weather conditions would be by that Saturday, the event was rescheduled to ensure the safety of the volunteers. The majority of volunteers were able to attend the rescheduled event and all enjoyed the beautiful, cool weather!

The enthusiastic volunteers scoured the river and its banks from about 8:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. and when they returned to Flat Rock Park with their trash, they were served hot dogs provided by the Kerr County Women's Chamber, pizza from Little Caesars, and homemade treats from the Kerrville Garden Club. Participants also enjoyed Ecological Fair exhibits by Bird City, Hill Country Master Naturalists, Hill Country Master Gardeners, Keep West Kerr Beautiful, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, and UGRA. All volunteers received a 21st Annual River Clean Up t-shirt. The t-shirt was designed by young Kerr County artist, Madelilyn Fiedler, whose artwork won the t-shirt design contest earlier this year.

The Trash to Treasure Hunt brings a fun and competitive element to the River Clean Up. Once again, the contest was sponsored by Scrap Solutions. Three milk jugs marked with Ranch Radio Marketing Group stickers were hidden near the Guadalupe River or one of the tributaries. Chad Hill of The River 106.1 was on hand to award the \$100 cash prize to the lucky volunteers who found the hidden items.

UGRA staff, board members, and volunteers distributed free t-shirts, refreshments, and prizes to participants, as well as a prize to the first pre-registered volunteer. These items as well as other crucial components of the River Clean Up were made possible due to the generous donations from Atmos Energy, Chick-fil-a, City of Kerrville, H-E-B, Ingram Garden Club, James Avery Artisan Jewelry, Keep Texas Waterways Clean, Kerr County, Kerr Screen Graphics, Kerrville Garden Club, Kerrville Kayak and Canoe, Ladies Auxiliary #6409, Little Caesars, Martin Marietta, McDonald's, The Music Maker, Natural Grocers, RA Texas Nursery Gravel and Stone, Ranch Radio Marketing Group, The River 106.1, Riverside Nature Center, Scrap Solutions, and Unitarian Universalist Church of the Hill Country.

During the post-clean up gathering, UGRA General Manager Tara Bushnoe applauded the volunteers, presenters, and staff who participated, “Thank you for dedicating your time to be part of this amazing effort! You are continuing the commitment of our community to the stewardship of the Guadalupe River. Since the first River Clean Up in 2004, over 7,000 volunteers have removed a staggering 139,296 pounds of trash from the watershed,” said Bushnoe.

The dedicated volunteers included many individuals and families as well as groups from Cub Scout, Boy Scout, and Girl Scout troops from Kerr County and the San Antonio area, Atmos Energy, Blue Sky Ranch, Bumble Bee Hills HOA, CENTURY 21 the Hills Realty, Christian Women's Job Corps, City of Kerrville, Hill Country MHDD Center, Keep West Kerr Beautiful, Kerrville Chamber of Commerce, Kerr County Women’s Chamber, Chamber Ambassadors, KPUB, Kerrville Sand and Gravel, Martin Marietta, RA Texas Nursery, Rotary Club of Kerrville, Texas Hill Country Advisors, and Texas Master Naturalists Hill Country Chapter. Hardworking employees of the City of Kerrville and Scrap Solutions hauled away over 2 tons of trash free of charge.

“We love organizing the River Clean Up to give the community an opportunity to come together and help keep our Guadalupe River beautiful as well as learn the importance of taking care of it for future generations.” said Matthew Wilkinson, UGRA Natural Resources Specialist.

The Annual River Clean Up is just one component of UGRA’s Trash Free Initiative. UGRA staff routinely picks up litter at 13 low water crossings year-round. This trash consists of litter left behind by river recreators, items carelessly discarded at roadsides, or trash from elsewhere in the watershed that ended up in the creeks and river during rainfall. As a proactive measure to reduce littering, UGRA is continuing to fund summertime litter patrols with licensed peace officers at the most popular river crossings to promote the message, “Pack it in, Pack it out.” In addition, UGRA’s environmental education programs focus on preserving the water quality of the Guadalupe River.

If you were unable to participate in this year’s River Clean Up or would like to do more to keep our watershed healthy, let us know and we can support your efforts with cleanup supplies throughout the year. Keep your eyes open for the 2024 wrap up video and information on next year’s River Clean Up at www.ugra.org/major-initiatives/river-clean-up.

Let’s Keep *Our* River Clean



Volunteers helped unload the over 4,000 pounds of trash which included 43 tires.



The City of Kerrville hauled away trash collected during the 21st Annual River Clean Up.



A Boy Scout poses proudly with a tractor tire he recovered.



Group of Girl Scouts cleaning up Louise Hays Park.



Volunteers from the KPUB team were happy to help out.