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On May 21 Fishing for Fun: A Family Affair!

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By: South Yuba River Citizens League (SYRCL)

NEVADA CITY, Calif. May 10, 2016 - Family fishing season is almost here! Bring the whole family to Pioneer Park on Saturday, May 21st for the first ever Fishing for Fun: A Family Affair, offering games, activities, an ice cream social, and important health information for families about eating fish.

South Yuba River Citizens League, The Sierra Fund and Wolf Creek Community Alliance are hosting this exciting and educational event to celebrate the fun of fishing with kids of all ages, while raising awareness around which fish are safe to eat and which might be better caught and then released.

On May 21st, kids can join in on several fish-themed activities and games, while teens and parents will have an opportunity to talk with experts about fishing locations, the history of mercury in our watershed, health impacts of eating mercury contaminated fish, and how families can safeguard their children by choosing fish that are safe to eat.

Mercury and Fish

Understanding how to prevent mercury exposure through fish consumption is important because of the legacy of mining in the Sierra Nevada. Mercury was first introduced to this area during the Gold Rush for use in gold processing. Of the 26 million pounds of mercury brought here, between 10-30% was lost to the environment, where it still remains, affecting our ecosystems and getting into our fish.

Eating mercury contaminated fish is the primary human exposure pathway to mercury. This is particularly relevant in the Sierra, where elevated levels of mercury have been found in mining-impacted waterways, like the Bear and Yuba watersheds.

An Annual Volunteer Effort

In order to protect anglers and their families from eating mercury contaminated fish, South Yuba River Citizens League, The Sierra Fund and Wolf Creek Community Alliance organized a community volunteer event last July to post state-issued fish consumption advisories in the Bear and Yuba watersheds.

The advisories, issued by the California Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment, cover mercury in fish and offer "safe eating guidelines" for consuming fish from California's lakes and reservoirs. On July 11, 2015, volunteers posted nearly 100 advisories at 28 water bodies and recreational facilities from the Gold Lakes Basin to Camp Far West.

The event was a huge success, and the organizers are excited to continue and expand the effort this year, including posting fish consumption advisories in the American, Feather, and Truckee River watersheds. If you would like to volunteer May 21 to help post these advisories, please contact SYRCL's Community Engagement Coordinator, Jenn Tamo at Jenn@syrc.org or 530-265-5961 ext. 201.

While volunteers are out posting fish consumption advisories, the public is invited to Seaman's Lodge in Pioneer Park, Nevada City, for a day of educational fun for the whole family. There will be games, trivia, art, and a broad breadth of information about the best choices for eating locally caught fish. Free ice cream sundaes will be provided from 2-3:30pm, while supplies last!

Project funding provided by The Sierra Fund.

WHAT: Fun family event to celebrate fishing and learn about eating fish safely

WHEN: Saturday, May 21, 1-4pm

WHERE: Seaman's Lodge, Pioneer Park, Nevada City

COST: Free

FOOD & DRINK: Ice Cream Social (free)

