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Volunteering for the 2020 Yuba River Cleanup

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Submitted by Daniel Belshe



The South Yuba River at the Highway 49 bridge is one of the highly impacted areas of the Yuba that SYRCL officials hope will be targeted during the annual river cleanup scheduled for September 16 through 27.

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This summer the South Yuba River has seen an unprecedented number of visitors. Due to shutdowns, crowds have flooded to the Yuba River watershed to get some relief from the stress and heat of 2020. Beaches and trails are littered with shopping bags, straw cigarette butts, bottles, glass, picnic trash and more. Help “Protect Your Happy Place” by volunteering for SYRCL’s 23rd Annual Yuba River Cleanup September 16 through 27.

Over the past 20 years, the Yuba River Cleanup has removed more than 120 tons of garbage and recycling. Just last year, 900 volunteers helped remove 15 tons of trash and recycling from the Yuba watershed in four hours. Organizers at SYRCL say they are passionate about protecting the beautiful Yuba River and the river community, which is why this year a different kind of cleanup will occur.

Keeping volunteers and the community safe from the spread of COVID-19 is the number one concern. Therefore, rather than one day of fun, this year's Yuba River Cleanup will be spread across 12 days from September 16 through 27. This cleanup model will be adhering to social distancing guidelines, protecting each other while protecting the Yuba River.

"Our river community is looking for a way to give back to the Yuba and remove trash from beaches and trails, even with the risk of COVID on the rise," said Daniel Belshe, SYRCL's community engagement manager. "Social-distancing doesn't allow for large gatherings like our normal cleanup, so this year volunteers will be heading out on their own during specified times and locations to remove trash. We are not organizing volunteer groups but encouraging folks to volunteer with your family, household or 'quaren-team.' Volunteers sign up for a location and shift, then head out during their specified time over the course of 12 days."

Register to volunteer at <http://www.yubarivercleanup.org>, choose your cleanup site and choose a time to pick up trash between September 16 and 27. Volunteers can select from 16 sites over 12 days to minimize contact with visitors and fellow volunteers. Only five to 10 volunteers are allowed per cleanup site each shift to help ensure COVID-19 safety. Participants are asked to pick up as much trash and recycling as possible, then report back to SYRCL regarding what is left for the next volunteer shift. Cleanup supply pickup and trash drop-off will be available at the SYRCL office throughout the week.

To avoid large gatherings, the Volunteer Appreciation Party at Pioneer Park will be cancelled this year, however winners will still be announced for the "Best of Trash or Treasure Contest." Treasure categories will include: "Most Useful Find," "Most Historical Find," "Most Unusual Find" and "Most Fashionable Find."

Based in Nevada City SYRCL is the leading voice for the protection and restoration of the Yuba River watershed. Founded in 1983 through a grass roots campaign to defend the South Yuba River from proposed hydropower dams, SYRCL has developed into a vibrant community organization with more than 3,500 members and volunteers. For more information, visit <http://www.yubariver.org>.

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