

Great Sierra River Cleanup Saturday, September 16

Rebecca Miller-Cripps

The Great Sierra River Cleanup is the premier volunteer event focused on removing trash and restoring the health of waterways throughout the Sierra Nevada region. This cleanup is an annual event coordinated by the Sierra Nevada Conservancy and held in conjunction with California Coastal Cleanup Day, now also International Coastal Cleanup Day. For inspiring stories and statistics, see: https://oceanconservancy.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/International-Coastal-Cleanup_2017-Report.pdf.

According to the Sierra Nevada Conservancy, “During the first eight years of the Great Sierra River Cleanup, over 30,000 volunteers have joined together to remove over 817 tons of trash and recyclables from watersheds throughout the Sierra Nevada. Hundreds of community groups have spread across 22 counties and over 2,600 river miles to pull appliances, cigarette butts, plastic caps/lids, baby diapers, tires, furniture, and more from the rivers and streams that provide more than 60 percent of California's developed water supply. This effort, in partnership with the California Coastal Cleanup Day, serves to promote good stewardship on all of our waterways, from the Sierra to the sea.” <http://www.sierranevada.ca.gov/our-work/rivercleanup>

This year, the Tuolumne County Land Trust (TCLT), the Tuolumne County Resource Conservation District (TCRCD) and Bureau of Reclamation New Melones Reservoir, in collaboration with the University of California Cooperative Extension (UCCE) Master Gardeners of Tuolumne County, will host the cleanup in Tuolumne County. **The Great Sierra River Cleanup is scheduled for Saturday, September 16, from 9 a.m. – 12 noon.**

Why is it important? The Great Sierra River Cleanup is about much more than picking up trash. It's a day for Sierra communities—and those from all over California—to demonstrate their desire for clean water and healthy rivers. It's an opportunity to learn about California's water sources and it's a time to come together with your families, your neighbors, your community, and your friends to accomplish something vital to our great Sierra Rivers.

How can you participate? Participating in the cleanup is easy. Join volunteer groups—such as Columbia College Natural Resources classes, UCCE Master Gardeners of Tuolumne County and local businesses — to demonstrate your concern for clean water in our local community. Past cleanup efforts have focused on areas along the Tuolumne River, the Natural Bridges area and downtown streams in Sonora. This year you have a choice of three different cleanup projects:

The Tuolumne County Land Trust is cleaning up a half-mile section of Sullivan Creek above and below Mono Way, including Elsey's Swimming Hole. Meet at 8:30 a.m. in the Peppery restaurant parking lot to fill out participation waivers. For more information and to get involved, call Brian Kermeen at 209-743-2033.

New Melones Reservoir will host a cleanup in conjunction with Public Lands Day. All volunteers will meet at the New Melones Visitors' Center at 8:30 a.m. to fill out volunteer forms. The event is scheduled from 9 am -12 pm. Volunteers are requested to provide their own transportation, food, water, hats, sunscreen, (dress for the heat!), sturdy shoes and trash grabbers. The cleanup areas will be Tuttle town Recreation Area, Mark Twain Recreation Area and Natural Bridges. If you have any questions, please contact the park administration office at 209-536-9094.

The Tuolumne County Resource Conservation District (TCRCD) is hosting a cleanup in the Tuolumne River watershed. Participation in this project is limited to 10 volunteers. For more information and to volunteer, contact George Croft at TCRCD at 209-984-0500.

Want more details? Go to <https://www.coastal.ca.gov/publiced/ccd/cleanup/#/map#support> to download your participation waiver form (parent or guardian signature required for participants under the age of 18). There you'll also find information on how to use a recycled container as a garbage pail for the cleanup and suggestions on items to bring with you, such as a waste-free lunch.

So, put September 16, 2017 on your calendar. Organize a group of friends, co-workers, or your club or service group. Go to the map of California at <https://www.coastal.ca.gov/publiced/ccd/cleanup/#/map> and click on the number 69 near Sacramento to find regional projects. No matter where you are on September 16, there's a cleanup event happening close to you! Come out and get involved to benefit our rivers, the coast and the planet.

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