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Great Sierra River Cleanup is Saturday

Sep 13, 2016



Courtesy photo

East Bay Municipal Utility District workers clear trash from the Mokelumne River during a cleanup in 2015.

The rivers, lakes and streams of the Sierra Nevada need help and volunteers are asked to join in the Great Sierra River Cleanup from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. Saturday.

Volunteers from all over California join together to remove trash from the waterways of the Sierra Nevada during the eighth annual event. Coordinated by the Sierra Nevada Conservancy, the day focuses on keeping Sierra rivers clean and promoting community stewardship in the region where more than 60 percent of California's developed water supply originates.

Over the past seven years, volunteers have joined together to pull more than 800 tons of trash and recyclables from watersheds in the Sierra. The effort, in partnership with the California Coastal Cleanup Day, serves to promote good stewardship throughout the state's watersheds, from the source to the sea.

"Millions of visitors come to the Sierra to enjoy the many natural benefits that the region provides," says Jim Branham, executive officer for the conservancy. "Investing just a few hours can make a big difference by keeping these important waterways clean."

This year's Great Sierra River Cleanup also kicks off Sierra Nevada Watershed Protection Week, a weeklong campaign focused on highlighting the benefits the Sierra Nevada region provides and the challenges the region faces.

Would-be volunteers can visit sierranevada.ca.gov to find a cleanup near home.

Also, East Bay Municipal Utility District officials will participate from 8:30 a.m. to 12 p.m. Saturday at the Mokelumne River. Scores of volunteers have participated in this event in the past and have hauled away cigarette butts, broken bottles, refrigerators and more.

"This event really brings our community together," said Lora Sparrowk, a ranger and naturalist II at EBMUD. "We gain a sense of accomplishment and pride from working together and keeping our beautiful Mokelumne River clean. We hope to attract at least 100 volunteers for a fun and worthwhile day at the river and reservoirs."

All volunteers at the Moke River receive free admission to the Camanche South Shore Recreation Area with an optional night of free camping at the Gold Run Campground. After the cleanup, Camanche Recreation Co. hosts a barbecue at Camanche South Shore for participants.

This year there will be prizes for the oddest piece of trash collected and a drawing for prizes that include gift certificates, camping and more.

“It’s the largest volunteer effort in the state,” Sparrowk said of the Great Sierra River Cleanup. “This is an event for the whole family. We’re encouraging school, church and other groups to come and join us.”

Volunteers with the EBMUD effort must preregister by calling Sparrowk at 772-8260.