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RIVER EFFORT SEES QUICK CLEAN UP



Volunteers helped collect trash and debris along the Stanislaus River on Saturday as part of a coordinator statewide clean-up effort.

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Volunteers that turned out on Saturday morning to help with the annual river clean up found themselves working a much shorter shift than anticipated.

Organized by the East Stanislaus Resource Conservation District, the ninth annual Stanislaus River Cleanup was scheduled from 9 a.m. to noon on Saturday, Sept. 16 as part of the statewide Great Sierra River Clean Up.

The Stanislaus River near the Cost Less shopping center in Oakdale was one of two local sites for a cleanup of the river this weekend; the other was at Jacob Myers Park in Riverbank.

Alexandria Miranda of the East Stanislaus Resource Conservation District said there wasn't as much to clean up as there has been in past years and the volunteer crew had finished at the Cost Less site in Oakdale well ahead of the scheduled noontime completion.

Much of that, she said, can be attributed to a regularly scheduled clean up, typically once a month, by volunteers that work to keep the rivers clean. Fewer people along the river due to the extremely fast moving and cold Stanislaus this spring and on in to summer may also have contributed to the decline in trash.

Regardless of the reason, officials were pleased that there is a reduction in the litter.

And it wasn't just in Oakdale where the work was light; Riverbank volunteers at Jacob Myers Park collected much less trash than they have in the past as well.

In both locations, however, the volunteer efforts definitely helped with the big picture, said officials.

"More than 60 percent of California's drinking and irrigation water originates in the Sierra Nevada Region," said Jim Branham, Executive Officer for the Sierra Nevada Conservancy. "We want to thank the volunteers who came out to help keep California's primary water source clean."

The event was part of the Great Sierra River Cleanup taking place on rivers throughout the Sierra region, which in turn was part of the California-wide Coastal Cleanup Day on Saturday. The Coastal Cleanup is the largest volunteer effort in the state. The local event was a coordinated effort between the East Stanislaus Resource Conservation District, California Coastal Commission and Sierra Nevada Conservancy.

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