



PRESS RELEASE

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UGRA's 19th Annual River Clean Up

UGRA hosted its 19th Annual River Clean Up on Saturday, July 23rd. A total of 6,125 pounds of garbage was collected by 403 participants, working along the river from Hunt all the way to Comfort. Along with the expected paper and plastic trash, participants retrieved a vehicle running board, water heater, fridge door, cassette tapes, toaster oven, chainsaw, movie theater seat, bowling ball, lawn mower deck, pliers, part of a dock, personal check dated 1982, purple toilet, and 33 tires. The volunteers who recovered these items entered them into the biggest and most unusual items contest.

The enthusiastic volunteers scoured the river and its banks from about 8:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. and when they returned to Flat Rock Park with their trash, they were served hot dogs from the Munchy Machine, pizza from Little Caesars, and homemade treats from the Kerrville Garden Club. Participants also enjoyed exhibits by the Hill Country Master Naturalists, Texas A&M Forest Service, Hill Country Master Gardeners, Keep West Kerr Beautiful, RA Aggregates, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, Native Plant Society of Texas, Riverside Nature Center, Kerrville Fire Department, and UGRA. All volunteers received a 19th Annual River Clean Up t-shirt. The t-shirt was designed by young Kerr County artist, Leighton Hale, whose artwork won the t-shirt design contest earlier this year.

The Trash to Treasure Hunt brings a fun and competitive element to the River Clean Up. This year, the contest was sponsored by Scrap Solutions. Three milk jugs marked with The River 106.1 stickers were hidden near the Guadalupe River or one of the tributaries. Chad Hill of The River 106.1 was on hand to award the \$100 cash prize to the lucky volunteers who found the hidden items.

UGRA staff and board members distributed free t-shirts, refreshments, and prizes to participants, as well as a prize to the first pre-registered volunteer. These items were made possible due to the generous donations from Atmos Energy, City of Kerrville, First United Methodist Church Kerrville, Five Star Rentals, HEB, JAM Broadcasting, James Avery Artisan Jewelry, Kerr County, Kerr County Soil & Water Conservation District, Kerr Screen Graphics, Kerrville Garden Club, Kerrville Kayak and Canoe, Ladies Auxiliary #6409, League of Women Voters – Hill Country Texas, Little Caesars, Martin Marietta, McDonald's, Natural Resources Conservation Service, RA Nursery and Aggregates, Scrap Solutions, Texas Hill Country Bank, The Cailloux Foundation, The Music Maker, The Ranch 92.3, The River 106.1, The Yoga Space, and Unitarian Universalist Church of the Hill Country.

The over 400 volunteers, presenters, and staff gathered in the shade to hear UGRA General Manager Ray Buck close out the event one final time before he retires from the helm of UGRA on September 30th. Not only has Buck been the annual voice of the post River Clean Up presentation, he has supported the growth of the event and encouraged the involvement of the many community partners. Always focused on the importance of a healthy Guadalupe River to our community, Buck reminded those gathered how we can all play our part to protect the watershed from pollution. “Our goal with the cleanup is to raise awareness of how trash and garbage negatively impact our river, which not only provides enjoyment to us, but is an economic engine for the county. An added bonus is seeing coworkers, families, and friends working together and having fun while being stewards of the community,” said Ray Buck, UGRA General Manager.

The dedicated volunteers included many individuals and families as well as groups from Cub Scout, Boy Scout, and Girl Scout troops from Kerr County and the San Antonio area, 4H First Tee, Atmos Energy, Center Point Garden Club, City of Kerrville, Ironclad Auto Glass, Keep West Kerr Beautiful, City of Ingram, Kerr County Democrats, Kerr County Women’s Chamber, Kerrville Chamber Ambassadors, Kerrville Fire Department, Kerrville Morning Rotary, Kerrville Noon Rotary, Knights of Columbus Ladies Auxiliary #6409, KPUB, Martin Marietta, RA Nursery and Aggregates, Randolph Federal Credit Union, Texas Hill Country Bank, Texas Master Naturalists – Hill Country Chapter, Texas Outdoors Woman Network, and The Yoga Space. Hardworking employees of the City of Kerrville and Scrap Solutions hauled away the over 3 tons of trash free of charge.

“Thank you to all the volunteers, sponsors, and community partners for recognizing the need to take care of OUR river. The River Clean Up would not be possible without your support and participation,” said Matthew Wilkinson, UGRA Natural Resources Specialist.

The Annual River Clean Up is just one component of UGRA’s Trash Free Initiative. UGRA staff routinely picks up litter at 14 low water crossings year-round. This trash consists of litter left behind by river recreators, items carelessly discarded at roadsides, or trash from elsewhere in the watershed that washed toward the creeks and river during rainfall. As a proactive measure to reduce littering, UGRA is continuing to fund summertime litter patrols with licensed peace officers at the most popular river crossings to promote the message, “Pack it in, Pack it out.” In addition, UGRA’s environmental education programs focus on preserving the water quality of the Guadalupe River.

If you were unable to participate in the River Clean Up on July 23rd or would like to do more to keep our watershed healthy, join us this fall for the On Your Own cleanup. Register now to conduct a cleanup anytime September – October at a time convenient to you and at your own pace. UGRA will support your cleanup by coordinating locations, providing supplies, and establishing trash drop off areas. For more information and to register, visit www.ugra.org/major-initiatives/river-clean-up

Let’s Keep *Our* River Clean



Volunteers helped unload the over 6,000 pounds of trash which included 33 tires.



The City of Kerrville hauls away trash collected during the 19th Annual River Clean Up.



Volunteers from Atmos Energy pose with their haul from the Indian Creek Road area.



Volunteers from The Yoga Space used standup paddleboards to remove trash from Flat Rock Lake.