



## **PRESS RELEASE**

For Immediate Release  
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### **UGRA's 14th Annual River Clean Up**

UGRA hosted its 14th Annual River Clean Up on Saturday, July 22nd. A total of 12,025 pounds of garbage was collected by a record 550 participants, working along the river from Hunt all the way to Center Point. Along with the expected paper and plastic trash, participants retrieved 50 gallon barrels, two bicycles, stained glass panels, boat, bed springs, water heater, refrigerator, photograph from 1920s, two tutus, TV, stereo, electric shaver, scooter, toy toilet, road signs, sink, toilet, doll head, and 34 tires. The volunteers who recovered these items entered them into the biggest and most unusual items contest. Some of these items were pulled aside by Debbie Minns of the Kerr Arts and Cultural Center to be used during an upcoming free workshop for children. The Trash Transformed workshop will be held at the Kerr Arts and Cultural Center August 1st – 3rd, 9 AM – 12 PM. Young artists ages 9 and up will work with items recovered during the 2017 River Clean Up. Activities will include transforming the found items into sculptures using a variety of age appropriate techniques. Space is limited, so call the KACC to register today (830-895-2911).

The enthusiastic volunteers scoured the river and its banks from about 8:00 am to 11:00 am and when they returned to Flat Rock Park with their trash, they were served hot dogs from the Save Inn Restaurant, pizza from Papa John's, and homemade treats from the Kerrville Garden Club. Participants also enjoyed exhibits by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, Hill Country Master Naturalists, Hill Country Master Gardeners, Hill Country Fly Fishers, Bring Back the Monarchs to Texas, Riverside Nature Center, Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, Bob Howells on freshwater mussels, and UGRA.

The dedicated group of volunteers included many individuals, friends, and families as well as groups from Cub Scout, Boy Scout, and Girl Scout troops from Kerr County and the San Antonio area, Atmos Energy, Big Brothers Big Sisters, Christian Women's Job Corps, Crosstrail Outfitters, Hill Country Deliveries, Hill Country Master Naturalists, Kerr County Democrats, Kerr County Roller Derby, Kerr County Women's Chamber, Kerrville Board of Realtors, Kerrville Leos, Kerrville Morning Rotary, Kerrville South CAG, Martin Marietta Materials, Mayor's Youth Advisory Council, Medina River Protection Fund, Neighbor's Emergency Center, Pathways 3H Youth Ranch, Riverhills Health and Rehab, Riverside Nature Center, The First Tee/Texas 4H Golf Challenge, The Salvation Army Kroc Center, Town Creek Clean Up Team, USDA, and Wyndham Worldmark - Hunt. Hardworking employees of the City of Kerrville, Garrett Services, Kerrville Recycling, and Republic Services hauled away the trash and recyclables free of charge.

The Trash to Treasure Hunt brings a fun and competitive element to the River Clean Up. This year, the contest was sponsored by Kerrville Recycling and the Ranch Radio Group. Six milk jugs marked with the radio stations' stickers were hidden near the Guadalupe River or one of the

tributaries. This year, only three of the hidden items were found by lucky volunteers who each claimed a \$50 cash prize! The remaining three prizes were added to the free raffle.

“Many of the volunteers were deployed to dry creeks, drainages, and streets to collect trash before it has the chance to wash into the river. Nearly all the land area in Kerr County drains to the Guadalupe River and therefore trash throughout this watershed has the potential to negatively impact our river. The Guadalupe River not only provides enjoyment to us but is an economic engine for the county,” said Ray Buck, UGRA General Manager.

UGRA staff and directors distributed free t-shirts, refreshments, and raffle 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 Centennial Bank, City of Kerrville, Garrett Services, HEB, Hero Card, James Avery Jewelry, Keep Texas Beautiful, Kerr County Federal Credit Union, Kerr Screen Graphics, Kerrville Board of Realtors, Kerrville Kayak and Canoe, Kerrville Recycling, KERV 1230, Martin Marietta Materials, Neighbors Emergency Center, Republic Services, Rev FM, Riverside Nature Center, Security State Bank and Trust, The Cailloux Foundation, The Fox, The Ranch, The River, and Wheatcraft, Inc. “I am overwhelmed by the support our community shows for the River Clean Up. In addition to the participants, we have dozens of other volunteers supporting the event and ensuring the day runs smoothly. I am so thankful for their dedication of time and effort. Also, nearly all of this year’s sponsors contribute to the River Clean Up year after year, and they share in the event’s success,” said Tara Bushnoe, UGRA Natural Resources Coordinator.

Almost all volunteers received an 14<sup>th</sup> Annual River Clean Up t-shirt. The t-shirt was designed by young Kerr County artist, Bonnie Lee, whose artwork won the t-shirt design contest earlier this year.

The Annual River Clean Up is just one component of UGRA’s Trash Free Initiative. UGRA contracts with Garrett Services of Kerrville to pick up litter at 15 low water crossings year-round. The amount of trash these crews collect is staggering – over 38,000 pounds in 2016 alone. As a proactive measure to reduce littering, this summer UGRA is funding 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.

**Let’s Keep *Our* River Clean**



Vehicles line up to offload their trash at the Flat Rock boat ramp.



Volunteers help unload vehicles and sort trash.



A team of U.S. Marine Corps recruits offload part of a fiberglass boat.



The City of Kerrville hauls away trash collected during the 14<sup>th</sup> Annual River Clean Up.