



PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
November 25, 2020

Contact: Upper Guadalupe River Authority
(830) 896-5445

Successful UGRA 2020 River Clean Up - Reimagined

Earlier this year, UGRA made the decision to cancel the one-day Annual River Clean Up event for the first time in 16 years. Since there are many people in our community dedicated to keeping the watershed clean, UGRA still wanted to honor that enthusiasm by offering a modified cleanup format. The result was the UGRA River Clean Up – Reimagined that allowed volunteers to cleanup anytime from July - October in small groups, at their own pace, while maintaining social distancing. The response was tremendous and exceeded expectations. In all, 442 volunteers spent 1,061 hours collecting 9,189 pounds of trash from the Guadalupe River watershed in Kerr County.

UGRA supported the volunteers by providing supplies and coordinating trash drop off areas. The volunteers reported the amount of trash they collected and submitted photos of their group and the unusual items they found. Along with the expected paper and plastic trash, participants retrieved a folding worktable, can of tomato sauce, vacuum, steam cleaner, siding from a greenhouse, deer feeder timer, classic car bumper, Buc-ee's baseball, bicycle, antique iron, oil change drain pan, swim floats, bamboo chair, pair of flamingos, dinosaur toy, large foam block, and a mini Bible keychain. The volunteers who recovered these items entered them into the most unusual items contest.

UGRA released a video that summarized the success of the cleanup and included a message to the volunteers from UGRA General Manager Ray Buck applauding their efforts. "This is an amazing accomplishment and on behalf of the UGRA Board of Directors and staff, I thank you for your dedication to the health of the Guadalupe River watershed. We focus on the watershed because it is the area of land that drains to the river and has a direct influence on the river. Keeping the river clean does not just happen at the water's edge. It starts on the land – the watershed. We hope that your efforts during the last few months will encourage the entire community to be mindful of the impact of litter every day and throughout the year," said Buck.

The dedicated groups of volunteers included many coworkers, friends, and families as well as groups from Cub Scout, Boy Scout, and Girl Scout troops from Kerr County and the San Antonio area, AYSO United, City of Kerrville Make a Difference Committee, Community First National Bank, First Presbyterian Church, Guadalupe Ranch Estates, Kerr County Women's Chamber, Kerrville Fire Department, Kerrville Morning Rotary, Kerrville Rotaract, Ladies Auxiliary #6409, Riverside Nature Center, Schreiner University Purposeful Lives Initiative, Texas Hill Country Advisors, Texas Master Naturalist Hill Country Chapter, Tivy High School Air Force Junior ROTC, Unitarian Universalist Church of the Hill Country, and Zion Lutheran Church Youth.

Disposal of the trash collected by these hardworking volunteers was made possible through contributions from Republic Services, City of Kerrville, Garrett Services, and Kerr County.

All volunteers received a 2020 River Clean Up - Reimagined t-shirt. The t-shirt was designed by young Kerr County artist, Belia Gomez, whose artwork won the t-shirt design contest earlier this year.

In addition to the t-shirt, volunteers received snacks, bottled water, McDonald's meal cards, and were eligible for the raffle prize drawing. These items were made possible due to the generous donations from Atmos Energy, The Cailloux Foundation, City of Kerrville, Garrett Services, HEB, Hewitt Engineering, Inc., James Avery Artisan Jewelry, Kerr County Soil & Water Conservation District, Kerr County, Kerr Screen Graphics, Kerrville Board of Realtors, Kerrville Garden Club, Kerrville Kayak and Canoe, Ladies Auxiliary #6409, Martin Marietta, McDonald's, Natural Resources Conservation Service, The Ranch 92.3, Republic Services, The River 106.1, Scrap Solutions, Texas Hill Country Bank, Unitarian Universalists Church of the Hill Country, and Wheatcraft Materials, Inc.

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 27,000 pounds in 2019 alone. As a proactive measure to reduce littering, UGRA annually funds 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.

For more information about the Annual River Clean Up and to view the recap video, visit www.ugra.org/major-initiatives/river-clean-up

Let's Keep Our River Clean



Volunteer from Guadalupe Ranch Estates removed a large foam block from the North Fork.



Texas Master Naturalist volunteer removed trash from the Guadalupe River in Kerrville.



Belia Gomez and family pose with their River Clean Up t-shirts and pile of trash.

Volunteers from Community First National Bank cleaned up along the Guadalupe River in Kerrville.



Volunteers from Riverside Nature Center with trash collected in Town Creek.