



News Release

For Immediate Release

October 27, 2008

For more information, contact:

Chris Wright, 209-295-4900, or

Chris@foothillconservancy.org

Volunteers remove six truckloads of trash from Mokelumne River's banks in 2008 Mokelumne River Cleanup

On Saturday, October 25, nearly 50 volunteers working in three areas along the Mokelumne River removed six truckloads of trash and recyclables from the river's banks. The Mokelumne River Cleanup was cosponsored by Foothill Conservancy, New York Fitness, and the East Bay Municipal Utility District. The Conservancy has been primary sponsor of the event since the first cleanup in May 1991.

"It was a gorgeous fall day by the river, and people worked very hard," said Cleanup Coordinator Karen Friis, a retired teacher and Conservancy member. "We'd like to thank everyone who came and donated all or part of their Saturday to clean up the Mokelumne and help our community."

The six truckloads of trash and recyclables removed this year included beer and soda cans, bottles, broken glass, paper, fast-food trash, tires, car parts and batteries, large furniture items, household garbage, disposable diapers, fencing, pallets, CDs, computer accessories, clothing, and countless cigarette butts.

"It's great to see people come out to clean up the river every year," said Foothill Conservancy Vice President Pete Bell. "But it's a shame we have to do the cleanup at all. Maybe one day everyone will understand that leaving their picnic trash or dumping garbage along the river hurts fish, wildlife, water quality and other people."

Some parts of the river were cleaner this year than in the past, though. "We can tell that some of the people who regularly visit the river are picking up other people's trash," said Friis.

This year's volunteers included kayakers and other river lovers; members of the Foothill Conservancy, Mokelumne Trailbusters, and Mother Lode Rockcrawlers; and teams from New York Fitness in Jackson and Rites of Passage in Calaveras County. They worked near Middle Bar, along Electra Road, and at the North Fork, Middle Fork and South Fork Mokelumne crossings of State Highway 26. Participants ranged in age from 4 months to 72 years.

For the six young men from Rites of Passage, this was an introduction not only to river cleanups but to the source of some of their families' drinking water. "The guys from Rites of Passage in Calaveras County did an incredible job along Electra Road," Friis said. "They were tireless."

This year, the Conservancy provided participants with delicious snacks baked by the Mother Lode Market, Sutter Creek Ice Cream Emporium and the Amador S Club, and coffee from the Martell Safeway Starbucks and Sanghera's Market. Volunteers received a discount coupon for ice cream from Munneryn's Ice Creamery in Pine Grove.

Two individuals and the Rites of Passage team also won \$25 gift certificates for the "weird trash finds" at each site:

- A laptop computer cable (in a place with no power), found by Art Joly in the upcountry cleanup
- A salsa dip and chip platter, found by Art Cook in the Middle Bar area
- A trundle bed, found by the Rites of Passage team near Electra

"I never expected to make a profit on a river cleanup!" exclaimed Joly.

ACES of Pine Grove handled trash disposal and recycling for free.

"We'd like to thank everyone who helped out," said Foothill Conservancy Executive Director Chris Wright, "especially Cleanup Coordinator Karen Friis, Steve Diers of East Bay MUD, and our office assistant Randy Berg. We really appreciate the support from local businesses, too. That helps us make this a good experience for the volunteers. ACES deserves special recognition for taking the cleanup trash for free every year since 1991."

"There are places we didn't get to Saturday, including the area just downstream of the Highway 49 Bridge," Bell said. "We just ran out of time. We hope we can get back there with a crew before long."

"There are also steep areas with large furniture, appliances and car bodies that we can't clean up safely with volunteers, including the River Road Tiger Creek Dam. Next year, we hope to work with East Bay MUD, PG&E and others on a river-long cleanup so we can take care of those areas, too." end