



## **PRESS RELEASE**

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### **UGRA's 15th Annual River Clean Up**

UGRA hosted its 15th Annual River Clean Up on Saturday, July 28th. A total of 10,480 pounds of garbage was collected by 505 participants, working along the river from Hunt all the way to Center Point. Along with the expected paper and plastic trash, participants retrieved an electrical box, rattlesnake rattle in a bag, metal ice cooler, couch, headlight, keyboard, giraffe on a leash, honey bee removal sign, rotary pay phone, large rubber float, bag containing a full wardrobe of clothes, engine block, 20' piece of PVC pipe, loveseat, and 21 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 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, Be a Pollinator Champion, Riverside Nature Center, Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, 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, 4H First Tee, Aqua, Atmos Energy, Christian Women's Job Corps, First Presbyterian Church Youth, Guadalupe Bank, Hill Country Young Professionals, Kerrville Board of Realtors, Kerr County Women's Chamber, Kerrville Leos, Kerrville Morning Rotary, Kerrville South CAG, Lone Star Paddle Tribe, Martin Marietta, Rainwater Systems Inc., Salvation Army Kroc Center, Stephanie Ertel for State Representative #53, Texas State Optical, and Wyndham Worldmark - Hunt. This year 175 campers and counselors from Heart O' the Hills Summer Camp for Girls conducted their own cleanup along the South Fork of the Guadalupe River during the days leading up to the event. The project coordinators brought their trash to Flat Rock Park and added it to the pile. 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, all but one of the hidden items were found by lucky volunteers who each claimed a \$50 cash prize! The remaining prize was added to the free raffle.

“Much of the land in Kerr County drains to the Guadalupe River, so anything including paper, plastic, or metal can and will make its way to the river at some point. It’s rewarding to see so many people working together to prevent this negative impact to our river. This one-time event raises the necessary awareness so all understand the importance of protecting the Guadalupe River which not only provides enjoyment to us but is an economic engine for the county,” said Ray Buck, UGRA General Manager.

UGRA staff and board members 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 Aqua, Buckhorn Lake Resort, Centennial Bank, City of Kerrville, Garrett Services, Guadalupe Bank, HEB, James Avery Artisan Jewelry, Kerr County Soil & Water Conservation District, Kerr County Roller Derby, Kerr Screen Graphics, Keep Texas Beautiful, Kerrville Board of Relators, Kerrville Garden Club, Kerrville Kayak and Canoe, Kerrville Recycling, Martin Marietta, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Papa John’s, Ranch Radio Group, Randy & Lisa's Save Inn Restaurant, Republic Services, Riverside Nature Center, Security State Bank & Trust, The Cailloux Foundation, The Music Maker, The River 106.1, and Wheatcraft, Inc. “Each year I am blown away by the generosity of our sponsors and the enthusiasm of our volunteers. It is a privilege to live in a community where people willingly dedicate their Saturday morning to this hot and dirty job while keeping a smile on their face. 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,” said Tara Bushnoe, UGRA Natural Resources Coordinator.

All volunteers received an 15<sup>th</sup> Annual River Clean Up t-shirt. The t-shirt was designed by young Kerr County artist, Kiersten Adams, 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 43,000 pounds in 2017 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**



Volunteers picking up trash at the 15<sup>th</sup> Annual River Clean Up.  
Photo by Kayla LaMartina



Volunteers help unload vehicles and sort trash.  
Photo by Kayla LaMartina





The City of Kerrville hauls away trash collected during the 15<sup>th</sup> Annual River Clean Up.