

September 22, 2009

Community made a day of sprucing up the confluence Great Sierra River cleanup



Courtesy

Volunteers lug out tires and other garbage from the confluence area of the American River near Auburn on Saturday during the Great Sierra Cleanup.

The inaugural Great Sierra River Cleanup took out the trash in 22 counties, including Placer.

Sponsored by the Sierra Nevada Conservancy, Saturday's garbage pickup drew an estimated 3,000 volunteers – including about 200 in the Auburn area.

Great Sierra River Cleanup participants fanned out over 140 river miles along more than 40 river and creek sites from Lassen to Yosemite.

Jim Branham, executive officer of the Auburn-based conservancy, said the cleanup was about more than picking up litter.

“This was a day for families, friends and communities throughout the Sierra region to come together to ensure that our great rivers stay healthy and clean,” Branham said.

In Auburn, Protect American River Canyons organized close to 200 volunteers to join the Sierra River Cleanup.

The group normally sets aside a day each September for its own trash pickup in the American River confluence.

Beneath and near the 730-foot-high Foresthill Bridge, volunteers took out hospital beds, jet skis, furniture, motorcycles, bikes and TVs.

A helicopter crew from the California Highway Patrol assisted with hauling out larger items.

“We can't let all these toxics remain in the river,” said Eric Peach, who coordinated the

American River Cleanup. “We’re really pleased to be able to help State Parks keep this beautiful river safe and clean.”

Volunteers filled a 40-yard dumpster with trash from the river and also participated in a nature and history walk led by the Auburn State Recreation Area Canyon Keepers.

The Great Sierra River Cleanup was held in conjunction with the 25th annual Coastal Cleanup Day.