

I have just returned from my annual High Sierra backpacking adventure. There were seven of us this year including my mountain climbing sister, Carrie, who came down from Seattle.

Our destination was the Fernandez Trail and Lillian Lake area out of Oakhurst. Over the seven nights that we were on the trail we encountered only six other people. The lakes were full and the weather was perfect.

Since this area is quite remote we found only a few pieces of trash this year but it did include two ribbons, one with a balloon attached.

The ranger station at Clover Meadow had a sobering display with the message "Pack it out so we don't have to." Attached were hats, clothing, aluminum cans, power bar wrappers [non burnable as they are lined with foil], balloons, zip-lock plastic bags, and a cheese whiz can.

They also had a list of how long it takes for common items to biodegrade in the wilderness:

Orange and banana peels: up to 5 weeks.

Cigarette butts, wool socks, and plastic coated paper: up to 5 years.

Plastic bags: 10 to 20 years.

Nylon fabric: 30 to 40 years.

Leather: up to 50 years.

Rubber boot sole: 50 to 80 years.

Aluminum cans: 80 to 100 years.

Glass bottles: one million years.

This list is also applicable to us living at sea level. However, those cigarette butts and plastic bags seldom get a chance to biodegrade. They often blow into the nearest stream or storm drain that empties into the Napa River.

Before every free weekend disappears on next month's calendar, mark Saturday, September 20 for our Coastal Cleanup event. The cleanup starts at 9:00 a.m. and ends at noon.

Organizers in Solano County are determining the most littered and sensitive locations for volunteers to work. Log onto [www.recycle-guide.com](http://www.recycle-guide.com) and check the news feature for the email links for all city coordinators or call the following numbers:

Benicia: 707 980-1895

Dixon: 707 678-7051 ext 105

Fairfield/Suisun City/ Travis AFB: 707 428-9191

Rio Vista: 916 776-2290

Vacaville: 707 469-6400

Vallejo: 707 553-2784

Solano or Yolo County, consider volunteering at Lake Solano Park (530 795-2990) or Putah and Cache Creeks near Winters (530 795-3006). Please call at least one week ahead so coordinators will know how many people are coming.

Adults interested in signing on as beach captains should contact any of the coordinators. If you are under the age of 18, you will need to get a parent or guardian to sign a waiver before participating.

Cleanup supplies will be provided, but volunteers should wear sun screen, a hat, sturdy shoes, and gloves.

In 2007, Solano County had 2066 volunteers who sorted out more than 3900 pounds of recycling and picked up 55.475 pounds of debris.

The California Coastal Commission reminds us that marine debris does harm wildlife. Since 1985, 4,281,104 cigarette butts, 16,028 tires and 706,531 plastic forks, knives and spoons have been picked up by volunteers.

Our local cleanups are sponsored by the cities and counties of Solano and Yolo and the California Coastal Commission. For year-round cleanup opportunities, log onto [www.coastal.ca.gov](http://www.coastal.ca.gov) or call (800) COAST-4U.

Kudos to Vallejo Garbage Service for their re-purposed center pieces at their annual Chamber of Commerce mixer. They drilled holes in non recyclable items such as hard hats, 5 gallon water bottles then dropped in California native trees for participants to take home and plant when the rainy season starts in November.

E Waste Recycling Events:

August 23 and 24 from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at David Weir Elementary School located at 1975 Pennsylvania Ave in Fairfield.

September 20 and 21 from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at Benicia High School located at 1101 Military West. More Information is on [www.recycle-guide.com](http://www.recycle-guide.com)

*VALCORE Recycling Board*

*Member Jane Bogner's "A Sorted Affair" is published every other week in the Times-Herald. For recycling information call VALCORE Recycling at 645-8258 or visit [www.VALCORErecycling.org](http://www.VALCORErecycling.org).*

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