



McClellan Fall Creek Cleanup volunteers working to remove and bag litter for removal. More than 20 volunteers gathered to work at assigned creeks throughout the former base. Photo by Dante Gulle, AFCEC Contractor

Volunteers gather for fall creek cleanup event at former McClellan Air Force Base

By Dante Gulle

AFCEC/CIBW Contract Support

McCLELLAN, Calif. – Armed with orange trash bags and trash pickers, more than 20 volunteers gathered for the first Fall Creeks Cleanup event Oct. 10 at the former McClellan Air Force Base, California. The long-standing annual Creek Week event, sponsored by the Sacramento Urban Creeks Council, would have happened back in April but was canceled because of COVID-19.

Fortunately, a fall cleanup event was organized in its place. Along with practicing safety protocols, the former base's wide-open natural areas made it easy to maintain social distancing and continue on with the creek cleanup.

“Unfortunately, the litter and debris that gets washed into our creeks doesn’t take a break during a pandemic, so there’s cleanup work to be done before the rainy season returns,” said Steve Mayer, Air Force Civil Engineer Center, McClellan BRAC Environmental Coordinator, who spearheaded McClellan’s effort.



Steve Mayer, McClellan BRAC Environmental Coordinator, in yellow vest, provides safety briefing to creek cleanup volunteers at the former McClellan Air Force Base in Sacramento, CA. Photo by: Dante Gulle, AFCEC Contractor

After a morning safety briefing, volunteers formed into teams headed by veteran cleanup leaders, some with more than 20 years of creek cleanup experience. The teams fanned out to their assigned areas and picked up and placed litter in trash bags. Volunteers walked along creek beds and banks looking for trash, sometimes getting a little muddy to get at that half-buried plastic bag. One team-leader put on waders to get into waist high water to remove hard to

reach litter with a pool net. Volunteers removed pens, gum wrappers and larger items such as coolers and mattresses that were bagged and loaded on to a trailer.

“It’s amazing sometimes what you’ll find out here and removing those items from these creeks is critical to restoring and maintaining the natural habitat. The creek cleanup events help preserve the areas for local wildlife,” said Molly Enloe, AFCEC Environmental Scientist at McClellan.



More than 40 jumbo trash bags of litter and larger debris were collected from several cleanup sites and grouped in a central location for pick-up. Photo by: Steve Mayer, AFCEC BRAC Environmental Coordinator, McClellan.

More than 40 jumbo trash bags and numerous large items were removed from creeks and grouped in a central location for disposal. After the event, volunteers were treated to a barbecue lunch and given event T-shirts for their hard work in helping to clean the creeks at McClellan.

Mayer added: “It was great to see the community come out and volunteer to cleanup. We’re glad we were able to work with our cleanup partners to adapt during the pandemic and continue this important work.”