



## FISH AND WILDLIFE ENVIRONMENTAL AWARD 2023

The Stanislaus County Fish and Wildlife Committee (SCFWC) is a volunteer group that promotes and communicates matters related to the protection, conservation, and preservation of fish and wildlife issues within the county. In 2023, the committee decided to initiate an environmental award that would be presented to a worthy group that has made a positive environmental impact within the county. The committee identified the activities of 12 environmentally related groups. After an extensive review, the committee is pleased to announce that Operation 9-2-99 will be awarded the Stanislaus County's Fish and Wildlife Environmental Award for 2023.



Operation 9-2-99's founder and coordinator is Chris Guptill. Chris started his group approximately 10 years ago. His primary objective has been to focus on the restoration and rehabilitation of the area along the Tuolumne River in Modesto. This area has traditionally been neglected and abused. The dumping of trash and debris and the creation of encampments have taken a negative toll on the natural habitat of the river. To address this problem, Operation 9-2-99 volunteers meet once a month to clean a section of the river and the surrounding park areas. As a result of these efforts, the area along the river has been transformed from a blighted environment to a safe and natural place to recreate and enjoy the public spaces and riparian river habitat.



It is Chris' motivation and drive that have encouraged his group to conduct 100 clean ups to date. So far, he has recruited approximately 4600 volunteers that have removed about 1.5 million pounds of trash including several thousand shopping carts and tires.

Because Chris Guptill and his organization have made significant progress in restoring the Tuolumne River in Modesto, please join The Stanislaus County Fish and Wildlife Committee in congratulating Chris and his organization as the recipient of our Environmental Award for 2023.