

# Great way to spend a day

By Greg Fuderer

Several Los Angeles District team members were among 75 people who volunteered to remove debris and other trash from public lands near Bosque del Rio Hondo and other public areas next to Whittier Narrows Dam. The Saturday morning effort gave an increased measure of public health and safety in the area surrounding the dam.

Phil Serpa of the District's Con-Ops Division coordinated the cleanup with L.A. Parks and Rec's David Jallo, Natural Areas Superintendent for Whittier Narrows, as part of National Public Lands Day. The cleanup is an annual event that brings volunteers together to improve the country's largest natural resource - its public lands. National organizers expected more than 70,000 volunteers this year at some 500 sites in all 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. The cleanup is a unique public-private partnership involving many federal, state and local land agencies that work closely with business partners and numerous nonprofit organizations.

"This is just what we needed," said Laura Just, a ranger with the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority, which maintains the Bosque along with several other properties in the nearby area.

Serpa provided gloves, trash bags and water for the volunteers and arranged for several Operations and Maintenance workers at the nearby base yard to operate heavy equipment to assist with loading and removing large objects and debris from the area. Louie Munoz, L.C. Gillens, Harold Lesure and Taleni "T" Tialino operated loaders, dump trucks and a water truck. "I'm glad to do it," Gillens said, speaking for the rest of the Operations workers who helped.

Also helping out was District Safety Officer Susan Tienen. In addition to picking up biohazard waste and other debris, Tienen gave safety briefings to all the volunteers before they ventured out. "Stay in groups. If you find any biological wastes let me know and I will pick them up and place them in a biological waste container for disposal," she said.

Jallo viewed the cleanup as "a real positive event, real teamwork." He pointed to participation by several groups (Los Angeles Conservation Corps, the Whittier Narrow Mounted Assistance Unit and the Rio Hondo College science club) and an assortment of hikers, equestrians, youngsters and adults. Always the optimist, Jallo said, "There's more trash out there, so we still have more to do."



*Top: Preparing to load the dump truck.*

*Above: Boards were part of the trash removed.*

*Below: Tienen gives instructions to Scouts from Troop and Pack 325 before they start working.*



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