

20 years of Yosemite Facelift

Annual park clean-up sparks similar events around region, nation



Volunteers gather at Yosemite National Park in September 2022 for the annual Yosemite Facelift clean-up event (Photo contributed).

Staff reports

Turlock Journal

Published: Sep 5, 2023, 9:04 PM



Yosemite National Park's annual park-wide cleanup event, [Yosemite Facelift](#), is celebrating its 20th anniversary this September, with significantly expanded programming and partnerships.

Founded in 2003 by Ken Yager, President of the [Yosemite Climbing Association](#), Yosemite Facelift has grown into a transformative week-long event, bringing together volunteers from around the world to contribute to the preservation of this cherished national treasure. [Yosemite Facelift](#) was conceived as a way for climbers to give back to Yosemite after each bustling summer tourist and climbing season, instilling a sense of stewardship and environmental responsibility among participants.

The [20th anniversary event](#) is set to take place in Yosemite Valley on Sept. 20-24 with volunteer opportunities from as little as an hour to larger multi-day projects, plus daily giveaways, guest speakers, music and celebrations. This initiative has inspired similar cleanups in over 20

additional locations across America, including the 2nd annual [Groveland Facelift](#) on Saturday and Sunday. To participate in any Facelift event, interested individuals must pre-register at [yosemiteclimbing.org](#).

[Visit Tuolumne County](#) and local organizations are joining forces with the Yosemite Climbing Association and host the 2nd Annual Groveland Facelift.

“Being able to expand off of a large clean-up event is great to bring some attention to our Yosemite Gateway community, Groveland. Visit Tuolumne County is pleased to be a part of this event and support sustainability and stewardship in our County,” said President & CEO Lisa Mayo.

Some Yosemite gateway partners are even adding some incentives to volunteer and help with the clean-up. [Rush Creek Lodge & Spa](#) is offering their Facelift guests [the opportunity to trade trash for Spa services](#). Between Sept. 4 and Oct. 5, lodge guests participating in Facelift will receive a complimentary detox spa experience which includes a magnesium foot soak at [Rush Creek Spa](#). Facelift volunteers staying at [Rush Creek Lodge & Spa](#) will end their day not only satisfied with their stewardship efforts, but also with the invitation to head to the innovative [Yosemite-inspired Spa](#) for some luxurious pampering.

Over the years, Yosemite Facelift has witnessed remarkable success in its efforts to keep the park free from litter and waste. During the event's 16th year in 2019, nearly 3,000 dedicated volunteers participated, resulting in the collection of nearly 16,000 pounds of trash, a significant portion of which was recycled to keep it out of landfills. To date, the cumulative efforts of Yosemite Facelift have led to the removal of an impressive 1 million pounds of trash from Yosemite National Park, making a substantial positive impact on the environment.

Yager is dedicated to expanding cleanup initiatives to other national parks as well. Collaborating with the National Park Service and sponsors such as The North Face, 5 Gyres, Patagonia, and Leave No Trace, Yager launched similar cleanups in South Lake Tahoe, Mammoth Lakes, Rocky Mountain, Joshua Tree, and others. He hopes that Yosemite Facelift will serve as an inspiration for communities to engage in environmental stewardship not only in parks but also in their local surroundings, as they did in San Francisco's Glen Park earlier this year.

For more information and to participate in Yosemite Facelift, visit [yosemiteclimbing.org](#).