

CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Thousands Work to Make Trash Extinct on 29th Annual California Coastal Cleanup Day

Presented by the California Coastal Commission

Results with 70% of cleanup sites reporting

(San Francisco) Californians have turned out by the tens of thousands to lend their hands in support of clean beaches and inland waterways at California Coastal Cleanup Day. They scoured shorelines and inland locations, picking up trash and debris at over 850 sites in 53 of California's 58 counties, gathering hundreds of tons of trash during this morning's three-hour event. These volunteers took part in the California Coastal Commission's 29th Annual California Coastal Cleanup Day, the state's largest volunteer event. Beach, inland waterway, and community cleanups took place up and down the California coast, from Mexico to the Oregon border, around San Francisco Bay, and at sites as far inland as Lake Tahoe. California's event is part of the International Coastal Cleanup organized by Ocean Conservancy.

With 70% of the cleanup sites reporting,

the statewide count stands at 51,543 volunteers.

**Those volunteers picked up 471,218 pounds of trash
and an additional 30,530 pounds of recyclable materials,
for a total of 501,748 pounds or 251 tons.**

"Coastal Cleanup Day is always an incredible celebration of our coastal and aquatic environments," said Eben Schwartz, Marine Debris Program Manager for the California Coastal Commission. "2013 proved to be no different. These tens of thousands of volunteers have proven once again what a treasure the California coast really is, by showing their dedication to its protection and preservation."

Data from past cleanups tell us that most (between 60-80 percent) of the debris on our beaches and shorelines originates in land-based sources, traveling through storm drains, creeks, or rivers to the beaches and ocean. This year, however, coastal volunteers were on the lookout for debris from a new source: items that may have been washed into the Pacific due to the March 2011 tsunami in Japan. Volunteers at many sites carried a data card, designed by the Coastal Commission with help from the NOAA Marine Debris Program, to track potential tsunami debris.

“We’ve been on the lookout for any debris that may have come from the tsunami, but at least to date, most of the debris on our beaches is still coming from the usual sources” explained Eben Schwartz. “Coastal Cleanup Day teaches us that what we see along our coast as a result of the Japan tsunami is just a small drop in the bucket compared to what we clean up each year.”

As of the end of August, the Coastal Commission had run over 40 cleanups over an eight month period for the purpose of tracking potential tsunami debris. During those cleanups, volunteers have found barely a dozen items that were considered “suspected” tsunami debris. By contrast, volunteers on California Coastal Cleanup Day typically find upwards of 850,000 debris items in only 3 hours.

In addition to tracking down tsunami debris, volunteers picked up a number of “unusual” items during this year’s cleanup (as always!). The Winners of the **2013 Whole Foods Market Most Unusual Item contest are:**

- **Coastal California:** A volunteer in Long Beach found a stereo speaker with a live octopus inside. The speaker was opened and the octopus returned to the ocean.
- **Inland California:** A volunteer in the Sierras found a baby stroller with a demon head attached to it.

Whole Foods Market will donate \$100 gift certificates to the volunteers who found the unusual items.

Volunteers were also encouraged to snap pictures of any trash they found – unusual or not – for a chance to win Burritos for a Year from Chipotle Mexican Grill. Entries submitted via Instagram and tagged with #chipotlemexicangrill, #litterati, and #coastalcleanupday will be posted on the “Digital Landfill” on Litterati.org. The winning picture will be announced Monday, September 23 at 5PM at www.facebook.com/CaliforniaCoast.

The Coastal Commission also continued an effort, initiated during the 2010 Coastal Cleanup, to reduce the environmental footprint of the Cleanup. The Commission asked volunteers to bring their own reusable bag or bucket and reusable gloves to the event, rather than using the single-use disposable plastic items that were available at every site. Thanks to this effort, the Commission was able to order almost 50,000 fewer trash bags for this year’s event than in 2011, and early reports indicate that the popularity of the effort is growing. The latest reports show that 3,684 volunteers brought at least one reusable item from home for use during this year’s Cleanup.

Those who were unable to make it to the beach for Coastal Cleanup Day can still participate in COASTWEEKS, a three-week celebration of our coastal resources that takes place across the United States. The Coastal Commission has a calendar of COASTWEEKS events on its website. To get involved with COASTWEEKS, or to find out how you can become a Coastal Steward throughout the year, please contact the Commission at (800) COAST-4U or visit our Web site at www.coast4u.org.

The statewide event is presented by the California Coastal Commission with lead sponsorship from CG Roxane, makers of Crystal Geyser Natural Alpine Spring Water. Additional support comes from NOAA, CalOES, Whole Foods Market, Oracle, Chipotle, Clif Bar, Nature’s Path, Ocean Conservancy, Bank of America, See’s Candies, Union Bank, and Lindamar Industries.

California Coastal Cleanup Day 2013 is supported by the California Coastal Commission, California State Parks Foundation, and Ocean Conservancy. This event is made possible by the hard work of hundreds of local non-profits and government agencies throughout the state and tens of thousands of volunteers annually.

The Commission is committed to protecting and enhancing California’s coast and ocean for present and future generations. It does so through careful planning and regulation of environmentally-sustainable development, strong public participation, education, and effective intergovernmental coordination. The Coastal Cleanup Day Program is part of its effort to raise public awareness of marine and coastal resources and promote coastal stewardship.

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