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**Media Advisory**

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Coastal Cleanup Day Volunteers to Assist U.S. EPA with Tsunami Debris Assessment

Massive Volumes of Debris from Japan's Devastated Cities Expected to Hit West Coast in Next Two Years – CCD Data to Serve as Baseline.

(San Francisco) On March 11, 2011, the Great Tohoku Earthquake unleashed a tsunami that devastated large portions of the Pacific Ocean, causing enormous damage to Japan's people, economy, and environment. Just over six months later, the California Coastal Commission and U.S. EPA Region 9 will be working together around the upcoming 27th Annual California Coastal Cleanup Day to address one of the untold stories of the tsunami, the estimated 20 million tons of debris that was released to the Ocean and is now slowly making its way across the Pacific.

This coming Saturday, September 17th, from 9 am to noon, Coastal Cleanup Day volunteers will do what they have done every September since 1985: they will turn out to the state's beaches and inland waterways by the tens of thousands, removing the debris that has accumulated since the last annual Cleanup. Those volunteers will also collect data on all the debris they are collecting, providing a critical snapshot of the debris that ends up on the state's shorelines. That snapshot will be all the more important in light of the expected arrival of the tsunami debris within the next 1-2 years.

"Coastal Cleanup Day volunteers have already proven their ability to provide sound citizen science when it comes to illustrating the impact the 'disposable lifestyle' has on the health of our state's precious coastline," said Eben Schwartz, Director of California Coastal Cleanup Day. "The Coastal Commission is looking forward to the opportunity to include these fantastic volunteers in the effort to assess and address this accidental debris that is on its way to our shores."

This Coastal Cleanup Day will provide one final opportunity to evaluate what California's coast looks like in a "normal" year. While an exact timeline is difficult to provide at this point, the best estimates anticipate that debris from the tsunami will begin to reach the Hawaiian Islands around next March, with expected landfall in California to occur the following March, in 2013. Since ocean modeling is not an exact science, the data collected at this year's Cleanup will be used to provide a baseline that can help identify debris surges in the future. EPA Region 9 will be working with the Coastal Commission to turn out as many volunteers as possible for this year's cleanup, and will help emphasize just how critical data collection is, especially this year.

"Coastal Clean-Up Day takes on a new urgency this year as the inevitability of debris from the Japanese Tsunami reaching US waters sinks in. Coastal Cleanup volunteers may be asked to play a critical role in helping remove Tsunami waste from California's majestic coast," said Jared Blumenfeld, Regional Administrator of EPA Region 9. "As we fill our bags and record the waste we collect today, we are laying the groundwork for a responsive cleanup team for the future."

Administrator Blumenfeld is interested in how California Coastal Cleanup Day in 2011 can help draw a

clear link between the water quality and waste disposal work that the EPA manages and the impact that these functions have on the health of the state's shorelines. 60-80 percent of the debris that enters the ocean off California originates in land-based sources, so there is a direct connection between actions on land, from the flicking of a cigarette butt to increased use of reusable shopping bags to storm water regulations addressing trash, and the health of the ocean.

California Coastal Cleanup Day, organized by the California Coastal Commission, is the state's largest volunteer event. Over 82,500 volunteers participated in the 2010 Cleanup, an all-time record for participation and a 62 percent increase in volunteers since the 2007 event. Those volunteers removed more than 1.2 million pounds of debris from California's shorelines, over 200,000 pounds of which was recycled. Plastic debris makes up close to 80 percent, by item, with cigarette butts as the most collected item, accounting for around 40 percent of all trash removed.

Marine debris degrades ocean habitats, endangers marine and coastal wildlife, causes navigation hazards, results in economic losses to industry and governments, and threatens human health and safety. EPA Pacific Southwest (Region 9) is tapping existing programs and resources to advance the prevention, reduction and clean-up of marine debris in the North Pacific Ocean. EPA Pacific Southwest activities build upon specific recommendations of the Interagency Marine Debris Coordinating Committee by targeting threats and sources of debris and responding to debris impacts. EPA is initiating a three-pronged effort to reduce sources of marine debris, prevent trash from entering the oceans, and assess the human and ecosystem impacts and potential for cleanup.

The statewide event is presented by the California Coastal Commission with funding from the new Whale Tail® Ecoplate. Major statewide support comes from Crystal Geysler, Oracle and Whole Foods Market. Additional support comes from Natracare, See's Candies, Fairmont Hotels and Resorts, and The Phelps Group. California media support also comes from the San Francisco Department of the Environment, Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy, and Marin County Board of Supervisors.

Special thanks to our Stewards of the Coast sponsor team supporting the Whale Tail License Plate Campaign, spearheaded by Anaheim/Orange County Visitor and Convention Bureau, and including the following additional major sponsors: the City of Dana Point and its partners the County of Orange, Dana Point Harbor Association, and Dana Point Chamber of Commerce; Santa Monica Convention and Visitors Bureau and its partners Pier Restoration Corporation, Pacific Park, and Office of Sustainability and the Environment, City of Santa Monica; SeaWorld San Diego; and Waste Management WM EarthCare.

California Coastal Cleanup Day 2011 is supported by the California Coastal Commission, California State Parks Foundation, and the 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.