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For Immediate Release



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Less Than Two Weeks Until California Coastal Cleanup Day Volunteers Needed for 25th Annual Event on Both Sides of the Border

San Diego, CA – With Labor Day behind us, and hundreds of thousands of tourists gone home, it's time to clean up the mess left at San Diego County beaches and parks this summer. That's why San Diego Coastkeeper and I Love A Clean San Diego are organizing the 25th Annual California Coastal Cleanup Day, an event that is expected to draw nearly 10,000 volunteers in San Diego and Tijuana. On Saturday, September 19th, from 9am to 12 noon, local volunteers will join an international effort to combat one of the major sources of marine debris and pollution: litter. With 80 different cleanups sites, groups of all ages can participate in the largest volunteer event in the state at a site convenient to them. Corporate volunteer teams, school groups, scout troops and individuals are all encouraged to register and show their San Diego pride through volunteerism and environmental stewardship. Check out www.cleanupday.org for registration and more event details.

The San Diego Clean Beach Coalition and other groups have worked proactively to prevent litter by providing infrastructural improvements at local beaches, but litter continues to plague many communities. Litter from picnics, parties, and sheer carelessness eventually collects in and around beaches, parks and recreation areas. It's important to collect this trash before it gets washed downstream in the first big storms, which send thousands of pounds of debris into our precious coastal waters. Cigarette butts, plastic bottles and bags, discarded fishing gear, and other trash can harm marine life by entanglement or by ingestion and then starvation. Plastic also breaks down into smaller pieces, which can then be accidentally consumed by fish. While research is ongoing as to the impacts of this debris, the results are clear that Coastal Cleanup Day is an activity that greatly reduces the amount of trash that escapes our control and ends up in the ocean.

The data collected by volunteers at the cleanup informs marine debris policy makers on a local, statewide, national, and international level. Last year, nearly 8,000 volunteers collected 160,000 pounds of debris over 150 miles of coastline, canyons, parks, and waterways throughout San Diego County. But it's not just the county and state that are involved. In 2008, 104 countries participated in International Coastal Cleanup Day—and over 400,000 volunteers removed 6.8 million pounds of trash in just one day! Sites reach close to 30 miles inland from the beach, and San Diego County coordinators coordinate with Mexican organizations like Salvemos La Playa to host six cleanup sites along Playas de Tijuana. “We want Coastal Cleanup Day to be an opportunity for every Californian to feel their connection to our coast, no matter where they may live,” said Eben Schwartz, outreach manager for the California Coastal Commission, a statewide sponsor. “By pushing the Cleanup into every corner of the state, we can clean up a lot of trash before it has a chance to reach our ocean, and in doing so, bind every Californian to one another through our collective stewardship.”

The 25th Annual California Coastal Cleanup Day is presented by the San Diego County Board of Supervisors through the support of Supervisor Greg Cox and Pam Slater-Price, and Think Blue, City of San Diego Storm Water Department. Statewide support for the effort is provided by the California Coastal Commission and Whole Foods Market, with local assistance from the Sempra Energy Foundation, Allied Waste Services and many others. Site captains at all sites will be distributing reusable tote bags, complimentary ride passes at Belmont Park, and tickets to local attractions such as Sea World, the Birch & SeaLife Aquariums, and Hornblower Cruises. A complete list of San Diego County event sponsors can be found at www.cleanupday.org/sponsors.htm.

***CALIFORNIA COASTAL CLEANUP DAY** is a volunteer event 25 years in the making, with more communities, cities, and counties joining in year after year. Through a partnership with California Coastal Commission and Ocean Conservancy, volunteers track types of debris found to compile and learn the sources of marine debris worldwide. I Love A Clean San Diego and San Diego Coastkeeper co-coordinate this event in San Diego County. More details about each organization can be found online at www.cleansd.org and www.sdcoastkeeper.org.*