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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Tens of Thousands of Volunteers Clean California's Coast and Inland Shorelines at the 38<sup>th</sup> Annual California Coastal Cleanup Day

*Presented by the California Coastal Commission*

Results with approximately 60% of cleanup sites reporting

San Francisco – Tens of thousands of Californians turned out this morning to take part in the 38th Annual California Coastal Cleanup Day, the state's largest annual volunteer event, organized by the California Coastal Commission. For the past two years the event was limited to self-guided cleanups because of the pandemic, but this year's cleanup saw more than 600 in-person cleanup sites taking place throughout the state – a return to near full capacity.

Volunteers gathered hundreds of tons of trash at beaches, shorelines, and inland waterways, cleaning up at locations in virtually all of California's 58 counties. Cleanups took place up and down the coast, from the Oregon to Mexico border, and as far inland as Lake Tahoe. California's event is part of the International Coastal Cleanup, the world's largest volunteer event dedicated to the marine environment, which is organized by the Ocean Conservancy.

**With 60% of the cleanup sites reporting,**

**the statewide count stands at 27,185 volunteers.**

**Those volunteers picked up 220,861 pounds of trash  
and an additional 29,702 pounds of recyclable materials,  
for a total of 250,563 pounds or 125 tons.**

"We were amazed by the response to the call for self-guided cleanups over these past two years. But it's not surprising – Californians cherish their coast and want to take care of it," said the Commission's Executive Director Jack Ainsworth. "Even so, we are so pleased about returning to in-person cleanups. These events really do more than help us capture huge amounts of trash before it enters the ocean. Coastal Cleanup Day brings us together to celebrate our precious waterways and coastal resources as a community."

Volunteers not only removed trash from the environment today, but they also kept track of all the items they removed as part of one of the world's largest and longest-running community science projects. This data, and the trends it displays over the many years in which it has been collected, has revealed a great deal about the extent and nature of the marine debris problem over time, and has provided California with crucial information needed to address the sources of the problem. Based on past cleanup data, 75 percent of the debris that volunteers removed today was composed of plastic, a material that never completely biodegrades and has numerous harmful consequences in the environment. Plastic debris can kill wildlife, leach toxic chemicals into the environment, and even introduce them into the food chain. The data has also shown that up to 80 percent of the trash on the California coast originates on land, so volunteers across the state helped prevent enormous amounts of trash from ever reaching the ocean, no matter where they participated.

### **Most Unusual Items:**

Every-day debris and plastic items weren't the only things found on Coastal Cleanup Day. Volunteers also picked up a number of "unusual" items during this year's cleanup. The Winners of the 2022 Most Unusual Item contest are:

- **Coastal California:** A volunteer along the Berkeley shoreline in Alameda County found a large, framed photo of a Jack Russell Terrier. (Photo available.)
- **Inland California:** A volunteer in Colusa County found a trophy with a plaque that read "Best Couples Skater 2006."

In addition to in-person cleanups, the Coastal Commission continues its COVID-inspired push to encourage volunteers to run self-guided cleanups throughout neighborhoods across the state. The self-guided cleanups serve the same purpose as the Cleanup Day events that took place today: to prevent trash from ever having the opportunity to reach our coast. Self-guided cleanups throughout California help to stop trash where it starts, which is primarily within urban areas most prone to stormwater runoff. To date, 522 Californians have conducted a neighborhood cleanup, removing 2,437 pounds of trash during 211 cleanups.

Coastal Cleanup Day could not happen without the support of public and corporate partners. Sponsors help to fund the event and often provide additional benefits. Lead sponsor Crystal Geyser Natural Alpine Spring Water donates water for volunteers. Long-time sponsor Oracle provides volunteer support, as do new sponsors Spirit Airlines Foundation and Kokolu. GreenPolly provides trash bags for the event. Along with 60+ non-profit and local government organizations that help organize and run the cleanups around the state, the program's strong team of partners helped make the 2022 cleanup another huge success.

If you participated in the Cleanup, go to [www.coastalcleanupday.org](http://www.coastalcleanupday.org) to fill out the Coastal Cleanup Survey and receive a free taco from Rubios. You will also be entered into a drawing for fabulous prizes. To stay involved with the cleanup efforts throughout the year, please visit the Adopt-A-Beach page on the same website.

*California Coastal Cleanup Day event is presented by the California Coastal Commission with lead sponsorship from Crystal Geyser Natural Alpine Spring Water by CG Roxane. Additional support comes from Oracle, Spirit Airlines, GreenPolly, Kokolu, the Whale Tail© Specialty License Plate, and the Protect our Coast and Oceans Fund.*

*California Coastal Cleanup Day 2022 is made possible by the hard work of hundreds of local non-profits and government agencies that organize events throughout the state and tens of thousands of volunteers annually. The event is also supported by the California State Parks Foundation and Ocean Conservancy.*

*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.*