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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Tens of Thousands of Volunteers Help
Remove Trash and Protect Wildlife
at the 33rd Annual California Coastal Cleanup Day**

Presented by the California Coastal Commission

Results with 65% of cleanup sites reporting

San Francisco - Tens of thousands of Californians turned out to take part in the 33rd California Coastal Cleanup Day, the state's largest annual volunteer event, organized by the California Coastal Commission.

They gathered hundreds of tons of trash at beaches, shorelines and inland waterways, cleaning up close to 1,000 sites in 55 of California's 58 counties, the largest collection of sites in the cleanup's history. 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 organized by Ocean Conservancy.

With 65% of the cleanup sites reporting,

the statewide count stands at 42,036 volunteers.

**Those volunteers picked up 293,727 pounds of trash
and an additional 23,126 pounds of recyclable materials,
for a total of 316,853 pounds or 158 tons.**

"It was a remarkable day along the California coast and hundreds of miles of inland waterways," said Jack Ainsworth, Executive Director of the California Coastal Commission. "Trash in our environment and in our ocean can cause enormous damage, and plastic fragments are known to travel up the food chain and potentially end up on our dinner plates. Californians turned out by the tens of thousands to help us combat this tide of trash."

The Coastal Commission has continued to highlight to damage that trash, especially single-use disposable plastics, can cause to California's wildlife, economy, and even human health. According to past cleanup data, 75 percent of the debris that volunteers removed today was composed of plastic, a material that never truly biodegrades and has numerous harmful consequences in the environment. Plastic debris can kill wildlife, leach toxins into the environment, and even introduce them into the food chain, for years. Since up to 80 percent of the trash on the California coast originates on

land and travels to the ocean through storm drains and creeks, volunteers across the state today contributed to the health of the California coast and ocean wherever 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 **2017 Most Unusual Item contest are:**

- **Northern California:** A volunteer in Contra Costa County found a severed house-arrest bracelet.
- **Southern California:** A volunteer in Los Angeles County found a package of unopened business shirts in a ziplock bag.

The Coastal Commission also continued its effort to reduce the event's environmental footprint by urging volunteers to bring their own reusable bag or bucket and reusable gloves to the event, rather than using the disposable plastic items available at every site. In addition, reusable buckets were available at a number of cleanup sites. As a result, the commission has been able to order almost 200,000 fewer trash bags over the past four years. The latest reports show that 8,136 volunteers brought at least one reusable item from home for use during this year's cleanup. .

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 Geysers Natural Alpine Spring Water donated water for volunteers. Long-time sponsors like Oracle and Union Bank, and first-time sponsors Amcor and Salesforce provided volunteer support. Along with the 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 2017 cleanup another huge success.

If you participated in the Cleanup, the Coastal Commission wants to hear from you! Just go to www.coast4u.org, fill out our Post-Cleanup Survey, and be entered into a drawing for fabulous prizes.

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](http://www.coast4u.org). 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 website at www.coast4u.org.

California Coastal Cleanup Day event is presented by the California Coastal Commission with lead sponsorship from Crystal Geysers Natural Alpine Spring Water by CG Roxane. Additional support comes from Oracle, Amcor, Union Bank, Salesforce, the Whale Tail[®] Specialty License Plate, and the Protect our Coast and Oceans Fund.

California Coastal Cleanup Day 2017 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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