



Accomplishments in 2012

Science

Marine Protected Areas and Sustainable Fisheries

The Southern California marine protected areas (MPAs) became effective on Jan. 1, 2012. In an effort to monitor how people are using these areas, Heal the Bay continued to grow our MPA Watch program. We conducted trainings with new volunteers and interns and monthly MPA surveys in Malibu and Point Dume. These volunteers conducted over 450 surveys in 2012. We are also partnering with other organizations throughout the state to inspire similar programs in further regions, and develop a coordinated MPA Watch program for California.

Creek Stewards

Heal the Bay continued to build our volunteer force in the Santa Monica Mountains by training new volunteers to serve as stewards of the Malibu Creek Watershed. In 2012, we trained 40 new water chemistry monitoring volunteers, and an average of 10 volunteers participated in monthly monitoring events. We also began a partnership with Mountains Restoration Trust in February to conduct habitat restoration in Malibu Creek State Park. More than 200 volunteers have assisted with removal of non-native plants in the watershed through this program.

Education

Year-Round Educational Programs

In order to provide more comprehensive educational opportunities throughout the year to L.A County youth, Heal the Bay expanded camp program offerings during the summer of 2012. Both the Aquarium Summer Science Adventures Camp and Creek Week Summer Institute offered a greater number of sessions and served more students than ever before. Additionally, Creek Week expanded to include an entirely new watershed in its curriculum: Ballona Creek

Marine Education in Public Schools

Heal the Bay continued to enrich lives of thousands of Los Angeles County students through our field trip education programs at the Santa Monica Pier Aquarium (15,000 students), the Key to the Sea program (10,000), and our Creek 101 program (1,000 students), that teach state-mandated content through the use of hands-on, engaging marine and environmental science methods. In addition, Heal the Bay renewed our work in Los Angeles elementary schools through a partnership with the Discovery by Nature program (previously known as Digging Deeper), a collaborative between Children's Nature Institute and reDiscover Arts Center. This partnership allowed us to bridge the gap for students in low-income communities who are receiving limited science education by providing field trips and environmental educational programming that is state-standard aligned.



EI – The Education and the Environment Initiative

In 2012, Heal the Bay continued to support the implementation of the Education and the Environment Initiative, the state-mandated program to promote environmental literacy in California students, through two major achievements: the release of Environmental Literacy Guides and a pilot professional development project. Heal the Bay partnered with National Geographic Education to create teacher guides on the topics of fresh water, ocean, energy and climate change. Additionally, Heal the Bay worked with National Geographic Education and other partners to provide workshops and support to help local elementary and middle school teachers imbed environmental education into their curricula.

Santa Monica Pier Aquarium

Heal the Bay's popular marine education facility under the world-famous Santa Monica Pier chalked up another successful year and found plenty to celebrate. Birthday parties booked beyond expectations at 108% of projections and our two-hour marine biology classes for budding young scientists filled up in record numbers as well. Another record was set in February, when the Aquarium teamed up with *Cirque du Soleil* to invite the public to visit the Aquarium for free any Sunday in February. And they visited by the hundreds -- 240 people per hour on one particular Sunday. Lastly, the marine science center in May welcomed new director, Heather Doyle.

Advocacy

Plastic Bag Bans

As of 2012, over 100 cities and counties in California have adopted or are considering banning single-use bags, including the City of Los Angeles, which voted in May to move forward with a single-use bag ban. Heal the Bay also sponsored statewide legislation this year to ban plastic bags and charge for paper bags at California grocery stores, pharmacies, and convenience stores. Although the bill did not pass, we educated thousands of people about plastic pollution and the importance of using the more sustainable alternative: Reusable bags.

L.A. County Stormwater Permit

This year, Heal the Bay advocated for a strong and effective stormwater permit, which was being considered by the Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Board. We galvanized support for strong pollution limits from a broad cross-section of Angelenos, providing the board with nearly 2000 petitions signed by concerned members of the public. In addition, we were able to call upon a diverse range of people—business owners, moms from inland areas, high school students from Hollywood—to testify in front of the board strengthening this key regulatory tool.



Community Action

Beach Cleanups

In 2012, we organized Heal the Bay's single largest volunteer event: Our Earth Day beach cleanup on April 21. More than 2100 volunteers showed up that day to rid Santa Monica beach of trash. Between November 2011-September 2012, we held 632 cleanups with 36,400 volunteers, who not only got involved to clean up their local waterways, but also learned about the effects of stormwater pollution on our environment. In October, we also launched our Zero Waste Nothin' But Sand beach cleanup effort. Five hundred volunteers only used 13 garbage bags that day, versus the 200 we normally use for a Nothin' But Sand cleanup.

Pier Angler Outreach

Heal the Bay completed its 10th year of educating pier anglers about the health risks of consuming DDT and PCB contaminated fish caught from piers between Santa Monica and Seal Beach piers. Since its inception in 2003, this EPA-award winning program has reached out to over 100,000 anglers at various Los Angeles and Orange County piers. The Angler Outreach Program is part of a larger group called the Fish Contamination Education Collaborative (FCEC), which is under the auspices of the United States Environmental Protection Agency's (USEPA) Superfund Program. This group is charged with protecting vulnerable populations from consuming contaminated fish related to the Palos Verdes Shelf Superfund Site.