



Accomplishments for 2011

Science

Beach Report Card®

In 1998, Heal the Bay launched the Beach Report Card (BRC) in Los Angeles County, the first-ever grading system for beaches in the country. We expanded the BRC into Oregon and Washington in 2010 and introduced a mobile app for iPhones and Android smartphones in October 2011. Now beachgoers can get their beach water quality grades on the go for more than 650 West Coast beaches.

MPA Watch

Nearly a decade of work paid off this year, as marine protected areas (MPAs), areas designated for conservation, become effective beginning Jan. 1, 2012. To help gauge the impact of MPAs, Heal the Bay worked closely with environmental partners throughout Southern California to launch a citizen science program, MPA Watch. By walking along the beach in Malibu and Palos Verdes surveying ocean users, volunteers combine their love of the beach and ocean while collecting valuable scientific data to understand how people are using our newly-established MPAs.

Malibu Creek Watershed

In partnership with the Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission, Heal the Bay completed the State of the Malibu Creek Watershed Report in 2011. This report provides an analysis of 10-years of water quality and habitat assessment data collected through our Stream Team Program. We also developed a Stream Health Index, which debuts in the report, as a gauge to calculate the overall health of each Stream Team monitoring site in the watershed.

Education

Creek Education Program

Heal the Bay's inaugural Creek Education program focused on local neighborhood, storm drain, and fresh-waterway issues and how they affect the overall health of the watershed and environment. Creek 101, the school-year component of the program, saw members of the Heal the Bay staff teach lessons in various science and social science classes as part of the classroom curriculum. During the summer, Heal the Bay educators led two sessions, taking 56 high school students through the L.A. River and its tributary creeks, allowing them to explore an environment many had never seen.

Marine Education in Public Schools

This winter season Heal the Bay bridged our education programs with those of reDiscover Arts Center, the L.A. Neighborhood Trust and the Children's Nature Institute. We are trying to close the gap for L.A. schoolchildren in low-income communities who now have fewer field trips and workshops, which are proven to enliven their academic experience.



Through this initiative, Magnolia Elementary School and Carson-Gore Academy of Environmental Studies will receive coordinated environmental education programming including field trips, gardens, speakers, and creative project-based activities directly linked to academic science standards.

Santa Monica Pier Aquarium

Heal the Bay's popular marine education facility under the world-famous Santa Monica Pier continued to attract locals and tourists. This year marked more than a half a million visitors to the facility since Heal the Bay began managing the Aquarium in 2003. In addition, 121,347 students have streamed through via field trips between 2003 and the close of the 2011 school year. We successfully installed a backup generator giving staff the security of providing the safest conditions for our animals, visitors, staff and volunteers. We also set up a new water pump and filtration system.

Community Action

Beyond Local

Beyond Local is a neighborhood workshop program designed to guide future Heal the Bay volunteers to be leaders in their own communities. Once trained, these Heal the Bay ambassadors advocate for greater public resources and improved implementation of public services in their neighborhood and for greater community involvement on issues and projects affecting neighborhoods. They also organize local community members for collective action. This program has fortified our presence in the East San Fernando Valley. Pilot workshops will continue in January 2012 in Pico Union.

En Español

Heal the Bay unveiled its new Spanish language web site in December 2011. Flush with engaging content, the site promises to be an essential link to the 40 percent of L.A. County residents who speak Spanish. Heal the Bay bloggers will not only offer essential information about protecting our ocean, but also to how to keep our families and environment healthy.

Advocacy

Plastic Bag Bans

Heal the Bay helped to generate momentum throughout the state of California for a ban on single-use bags. We aimed a public awareness campaign about the economic and ecological benefits of reusable bags to L.A. county residents, who use more than 6 billion disposable plastic shopping bags each year. Among the municipalities that moved forward their own bag ordinances in 2011: Long Beach, Santa Monica, the County of Los Angeles, Pasadena, Glendale, West Hollywood, Malibu, Culver City, Manhattan Beach and the city of L.A. Spurred by the success of previous Heal the Bay events, community groups throughout the state launched their own *A Day Without a Bag* campaigns.



Low Impact Development

Development in L.A. will be now be greener thanks to progress we achieved on the low impact development (LID) ordinance, after two years of advocacy work. On Oct. 12, L.A. mayor Antonio Villaraigosa signed the ordinance into law, effectively reducing runoff pollution and flood control risks. Practically, this means that all new and redevelopment must capture and reuse or infiltrate 100% of the runoff generated by a three-quarter-inch rain. Heal the Bay also worked closely with the city of Long Beach adopt their own strong LID policies this year.

Shark Fin Win

Heal the Bay continues to address the challenges facing ocean animals and the ocean itself. This fall, Heal the Bay actively fought for a California ban on the sale of shark fins, holding rallies, writing op-eds and encouraging our supporters to send emails and make phone calls to California Governor Jerry Brown, who eventually signed AB376 into law, officially declaring it illegal to sell or possess shark fin as of Jan. 1, 2012.