

Heal the Bay

For Immediate Release

BIG CROWDS REV UP COASTAL CLEANUP DAY IN L.A.

Nearly 11,000 volunteers cover 86 miles to remove 44,000 lbs. of debris

SANTA MONICA, Calif. (Sept. 17, 2011) – Southland residents banded together today to pick up 22 tons of debris from beaches, parks, creeks, lakes, highways and alleys, removing marine-bound pollution and beautifying neighborhoods as part of the annual Coastal Cleanup Day, which Heal the Bay has coordinated in Los Angeles County for 22 years.

From 9 a.m. to noon at 65 sites throughout L.A. County, 10,964 volunteers showed how much they care about their communities by ridding their neighborhoods and waterways of 44,038 pounds of trash. Volunteers came from a diverse range of families, community groups, schools, faith-based groups, sports teams and businesses.

Participants hailed from Arleta to Zuma, learning first-hand the importance of keeping trash out of waterways and improving their own community environments. Beyond being unsightly, an estimated 80% of the litter that ends up in the ocean starts out on land, poisoning marine life, spoiling water quality and public health as it wreaks havoc on our ecosystem and our local economies.

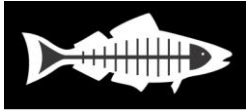
Coastal Cleanup Day volunteers in Los Angeles County have collected more than 1.5 million pounds of debris since 1990's inaugural event. Cigarette butts consistently top the list of items found at cleanups, with plastic bags and Styrofoam also ranking high.

The most noteworthy item found this year: a water-damaged but fully intact wallet found resting on the sea-floor by SCUBA divers scouring the ocean near the Santa Monica Pier. The black billfold contained credit cards and a driver's license with 2004 expiration dates. The wallet apparently belonged to an Encino resident. Heal the Bay staffers are attempting to return the wallet to its rightful owner.

Among the other unusual objects recovered Saturday: a World War I-era, khaki-green gas mask (Santa Monica Pier dive site); the front panel of a small safe (Toes Beach in Playa del Rey) and a carefully enameled, 8-inch human fingernail (Compton Creek).

This year saw an expansion of the SCUBA and kayak sites, with dive teams hunting for trash below the surface at Leo Carrillo State Beach, Malibu Pier, Redondo Beach and the Santa Monica Pier; and kayakers gliding through Marina del Rey and Ballona Creek waters, removing trash along the way.

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In an effort to make the event itself even greener, volunteers were encouraged this year to “BYO”-- bring their own water bottles, as well as buckets, reusable bags and gloves to pick up trash,-- and four sites were designated as “Zero Waste.”

Among this year’s “Code Red” sites -- urban locations in need of special attention because of especially large amounts of harmful trash and debris: Dominguez Channel, Ken Malloy Harbor Regional Park and the Los Angeles River Confluence.

“Coastal Cleanup Day 2011 volunteers collected a record amount of trash today,” said Eveline Bravo, Heal the Bay’s beach programs manager. “It’s a remarkable day of action but we hope that the experience provides a lifetime of education about how to protect our oceans and neighborhoods.”

Downloadable images of today’s cleanup available [here](#).

As a bonus, Coastal Cleanup Day sponsor Ford Motor Co. offered volunteers at the Dockweiler site test drives of its 2011 models and donated \$50 to Heal the Bay for every test drive taken. Volunteers who had participated in cleanups this summer competed in drawing to win an all-new Ford Escape hybrid, with Cindy Kent of Long Beach taking home the vehicle.

Additional “extras” included a sunrise yoga session in Santa Monica, and two electronic waste drop-off/recycling collection sites run by California Electronic Waste Recycling Co.

About Coastal Cleanup Day

Heal the Bay organizes Coastal Cleanup Day in Los Angeles County in partnership with the California Coastal Commission. The L.A. campaign is part of a global international event led by the Ocean Conservancy. The day has been recognized by the Guinness Book of World Records as the world’s biggest 24-hour volunteer event.

This year’s sponsors included Los Angeles County Department of Public Works, KTLA5, Mattel, Ford Motor Co., Union Bank of California, Ralphs and the City of Santa Monica.

About Heal the Bay

Heal the Bay is a nonprofit environmental organization making Southern California coastal waters and watersheds, including Santa Monica Bay, safe, healthy and clean.

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