



Heal the Bay

For Immediate Release

## **HEAL THE BAY COLLECTS MILLIONTH POUND OF TRASH** *12,000 citizens mobilize at 71 L.A. sites for Coastal Cleanup Day*

SANTA MONICA, Calif. (September 20, 2008) – Coastal Cleanup Day volunteers in Los Angeles County today collected their cumulative 1 millionth pound of ocean-bound debris since 1990's inaugural event.

Some 12,262 community members scoured beaches, parks, alleys, creeks, highways and stormdrains from 9 a.m. to noon at 71 sites throughout the county. City crews, families, local businesses, faith-based organizations, schools and youth sports teams removed 181,000 pounds of debris and recyclables from L.A. County watersheds.

Urban runoff from more than 200 storm drains flowing out to Santa Monica and San Pedro bays causes the vast majority of local ocean pollution. By removing tons of debris from beaches and inland neighborhoods, cleanup participants enhance quality of life, protect marine animals and bolster the regional economy.

This year's haul more than doubled last year's total of 73,722 pounds of debris. The increased total is due to more aggressive public works efforts coordinated in concert with Coastal Cleanup Day to clear bulky, heavy items from alleyways and street corners. Heal the Bay's CCD campaigns have captured a cumulative 1.17 million pounds of trash since 1990.

Cigarette butts and Styrofoam fragments are the most frequently found items at cleanups. For example, volunteers at Echo Park today collected and counted 5,017 cigarette butts, totaling some five pounds of harmful waste.

Sites covered the entire county this year, from Tujunga to Long Beach, Compton to Malibu. SCUBA dive teams canvassed the Santa Monica and Redondo Beach piers, while a flotilla of kayakers removed trash from Marina del Rey.

Among the unusual items found this year: a home pregnancy test with a negative reading (Venice Beach), a plastic bag filled with chicken parts and images of the Virgin of Guadalupe (Ken Malloy Park), washing machine parts (Malaga Cove), shotgun shells (Zuma Beach) and a submerged Razor scooter (Redondo Beach Pier dive team)

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| <b>2008 L.A. County Cleanup Totals — California Coastal Cleanup Day</b> |
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| Volunteers | Pounds of Trash | Pounds of Recyclables |
|------------|-----------------|-----------------------|
| 12,262     | 179,144         | 2,106                 |

“The value of bringing communities together for the common goal of bettering the environment is greater than the cleanups themselves,” said Mark Gold, president of Heal the Bay. “It’s extremely gratifying to see thousands of people learn through volunteering how they can clean up environmental blight in neighborhoods, waterways and on the beach throughout the year.”

“Each year, the Los Angeles County Flood Control District captures more than 300 tons of trash before it flows out into the ocean. Yet, these efforts alone are not enough to keep our beaches or waterways free of litter and other pollutants,” said Mark Pestrella, assistant deputy director of the Los Angeles County Department of Public Works, one of the event’s main sponsors. “So we applaud the efforts of the thousands of who are making a difference.”

*Downloadable images of today’s cleanup available at [www.healthebay.org/photos/ccd](http://www.healthebay.org/photos/ccd)*

#### **About Coastal Cleanup Day**

Coastal Cleanup Day in Los Angeles is held in partnership with the California Coastal Commission and sponsored by the Los Angeles County Department of Public Works and Union Bank. Recognized by 50 states and nearly 60 countries, the day has been recognized as the world’s biggest 24-hour volunteer event.

#### **About Heal the Bay**

Heal the Bay is a nonprofit environmental organization dedicated to making Southern California coastal waters and watersheds safe, healthy and clean for people and marine life.

#### **About the Los Angeles County Flood Control District**

The Los Angeles County Flood Control District maintains approximately 500 miles of open channel, 2,800 miles of underground storm drain and 120,000 catch basins. The district’s stormwater program includes multifaceted public education efforts as well as extensive structural improvements. Visit [lawatersheds.org](http://lawatersheds.org) for information.

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