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California Coastal Commission Seeks to Get Rid of Trash and Protect Wildlife at 33rd Annual California Coastal Cleanup Day

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San Francisco, Calif. – Californians will have the opportunity next month to help stem the tide of cigarette butts, plastic bags, food wrappers, and plastic pollution of all types flowing into our ocean.

The California Coastal Commission is proud to announce that the 33rd Annual California Coastal Cleanup Day will take place on Saturday, September 16th from 9 a.m. to 12 noon at more than 1,000 locations throughout the state. The Cleanup is expected to draw tens of thousands of volunteers to help remove the tons of trash that have accumulated on California's beaches and inland shorelines.

The Coastal Commission announced this year's cleanup with the release of new promotional artwork designed to highlight the importance of the effort. This campaign highlights some of the animals most impacted by debris and implores the public to "get rid of trash, not wildlife." Trash in our environment is a hazard to wildlife, causing injury and death to thousands of marine mammals, fish, and birds each year. The campaign was created pro-bono for Coastal Cleanup Day by San Francisco-based advertising agency Argonaut.

"The harm that we are causing to marine wildlife through our careless overuse of disposable plastic is truly staggering," said Eben Schwartz, the Commission's Marine Debris Program Manager. "Coastal Cleanup Day is our opportunity each year to ask everyone in California to help us get rid of all this trash before it has a chance to wash out to the ocean. We can make our state even more beautiful and save wildlife at the same time."

A recent study published in *Science* magazine estimated that an average of 8.4 million metric tons – more than 18 billion pounds – of plastic enters the world's ocean every day. That is the equivalent of a garbage truck filled with plastic dumped into the ocean every minute. Such an enormous amount of waste entering our oceans each year harms marine wildlife and humans as well. Both plastic and the toxins used in the manufacturing of plastic migrate into fish and, ultimately, end up on our dinner plates. Multiple scientific studies have shown that humans are ingesting plastic fragments as they consume many different forms of fish and shellfish. For example, researchers from the Ghent University in Belgium calculated that shellfish lovers are consuming up to 11,000 plastic fragments each year.

"Plastic in our environment and in our food chain has become an enormous problem," said Commission Chair Dayna Bochco. "The Coastal Commission is proud to have more than three decades of

experience involving the public on this issue, but we still need more help because there is so much to be done to reduce the amount of trash entering our ocean. Coastal Cleanup Day is a great start for people who want to help protect our coast and ocean.”

Californians continue to show their willingness to support the cleanup each year. In 2016, close to 60,000 volunteers turned out for the event, ridding California of over 700,000 pounds of trash. In the 32 year history of the Cleanup, over 1.4 million volunteers have removed more than 23 million pounds of trash – all during the annual three-hour event.

There are over 1,000 cleanup locations this year, making it the largest cleanup the Commission has ever organized. And Californians have a new tool that will make it easy to find a cleanup site close to home: an interactive map of cleanup locations in every corner of the state. This map is available at www.coastalcleanupday.org.

For those who cannot attend Coastal Cleanup Day on September 16th, the Coastal Commission maintains a calendar of events taking place during the three weeks following the Cleanup, known as COASTWEEKS. For more information on the Cleanup, please visit www.coastalcleanupday.org. Follow us at facebook.com/CaliforniaCoast on Facebook on twitter.com/TheCACoast Twitter and instagram.com/thecaliforniacoast on Instagram.

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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