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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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40th annual California Coastal Cleanup Day draws huge volunteer effort

Presented by the California Coastal Commission

Results with 100% of cleanup sites reporting

San Francisco – Tens of thousands of Californians turned out Saturday to take part in the 40th annual California Coastal Cleanup Day — the state's largest annual volunteer event. Participants scoured more than 750 cleanup sites, removing hundreds of thousands of pounds of trash before it could be washed out to sea during the rainy season.

With 100% of the cleanup sites reporting,

the statewide count stands at 46,201 volunteers.

Those volunteers picked up 332,861 pounds of trash
and an additional 65,793 pounds of recyclable materials,
for a total of 398,654 pounds or 199 tons.

Volunteers gathered at beaches, shorelines and inland waterways, cleaning up locations in nearly all of California's 58 counties, across the state's entire coastline and as far inland as Lake Tahoe. California's event is part of the International Coastal Cleanup, organized by the Ocean Conservancy.

"Californians really turned out for our coast today," said the Commission's Executive Director Dr. Kate Huckelbridge. "All across the state volunteers rolled up their sleeves to protect our beautiful beaches, estuaries and waterways, just as they have for the past 40 years. They inspire all of us to remain vigilant in our work of protecting our coast and ocean for generations to come."

Volunteers kept track of all the items they removed as part Coastal Cleanup Day, one of the world's largest and longest-running community science projects. This data has over the last 40 years revealed a great deal about the extent and nature of the marine debris problem.

About 75 percent of the trash that volunteers have removed is plastic, a material that never completely biodegrades and has numerous harmful environmental consequences. For example, plastic debris can kill wildlife and leach toxic chemicals into the food chain.

The data has also shown that up to 80% of the trash collected on the California coast originates on land. Almost all water in California eventually drains to the sea, so volunteers, even in inland communities, help prevent enormous amounts of trash from fouling ocean waters.

Most Unusual Items:

Everyday debris and plastic items weren't the only things found on Coastal Cleanup Day. Volunteers also picked up a number of "unusual" items during this year's cleanup. The Winners of the 2024 Most Unusual Item contest are:

- **Coastal California:** In Los Angeles County, a volunteer found cashier's checks worth $68,000.
- **Inland California**: In Contra Costa County, a volunteer found life-like, matching cowboy and cowgirl figurines.

Photos of each of the winning items are available. The winning volunteers will each win a $100 prize from the Coastal Cleanup Day Program.

In addition to in-person cleanups, the Coastal Commission continues to encourage volunteers to run self-guided cleanups throughout neighborhoods across the state. These cleanups serve the same purpose as the Cleanup Day events that took place Saturday, preventing trash from ever having the opportunity to reach our coast. To date, over 3,000 Californians have conducted a 881 neighborhood cleanup.

Coastal Cleanup Day could not happen without the support of public and corporate partners that help fund the event and often provide additional benefits. Longtime sponsor Oracle provides volunteer support. Crystal Geyser Natural Alpine Spring Water donates water for volunteers. New sponsor Nordic Naturals helped promote the cleanup and even ran a nationwide contest to help bring volunteers out. Along with more than 60 nonprofit and local government organizations that help organize and run the cleanups around the state, the program's strong team of partners helped make the 2024 cleanup another huge success.

Volunteers can go to www.coastalcleanupday.org to fill out the Coastal Cleanup Survey and receive a coupon for free chips and guacamole from Rubios. You will also be entered into a drawing for a fabulous Coastal Cleanup Day prize package. To stay involved with the cleanup efforts throughout the year, please visit the Adopt-A-Beach page on the same website.

California Coastal Cleanup Day event is presented with support from Oracle, Crystal Geyser Alpine Spring Water by CG Roxane, the Whale Tail© Specialty License Plate, the Protect our Coast and Oceans Fund, Nordic Naturals, and GreenPolly. This year's artwork was created and generously donated by Barrett Hofherr.

California Coastal Cleanup Day 2024 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 Coastal 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.