



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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PHOTOS AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST**

**PACIFICA BEACH COALITION WILL LEAD SECOND CONSECUTIVE YEAR OF
ORGANIZED JAPANESE TSUNAMI MARINE DEBRIS CLEANUPS ALONG
THE SAN MATEO COUNTY COAST IN 2015**

**The PBC Will Serve as Liaison with California Coastal Commission & Other Agencies to Lead
Tsunami Debris Cleanups - Volunteers Are Encouraged to Sign Up to Participate**

(Pacifica, CA – January 28, 2015) — For a second consecutive year, the Pacifica Beach Coalition (PBC) has been selected by the California Coastal Commission (CCC) to lead the 2014-2015 Japanese Tsunami Marine Debris (JTMD) Program in San Mateo County. The program's funding will be dispersed by the California State Parks Foundation, the CCC's fiscal agent, and is aimed at supporting local JTMD Cleanup programs from a grant established by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) through the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services provided by the Government of Japan as both a thank you for the U.S.'s efforts to assist Japan in the wake of the tsunami, and to help offset the costs associated with removing the tsunami debris from our shores. The PBC will serve as the liaison with the CCC to lead cleanups, and report any findings on possible tsunami-related debris.

2014-2015 TSUNAMI DEBRIS CLEANUP SCHEDULE

Continuing throughout year, volunteers are invited to join PBC site captains from 9:00-11:00 am during six JTMD-organized cleanups at two designated sites; 1) Linda Mar State Beach situated at the extreme south of Pacifica, and 2) Mussel Rock, Daly City's protected coastal area, situated below Mussel Rock Car Park, at the extreme north, just beyond the city limit of Pacifica. The dates and times of the Saturday morning cleanups are:

February 2015

- Linda Mar - Saturday, February 21, 2015
- Mussel Rock – Saturday, February 28, 2015

April 2015

- Linda Mar & Mussel Rock – Saturday, April 18, 2015 (Earth Day)

During cleanups, any potential tsunami debris will be documented and findings reported to the

California Coastal Commission and NOAA. Cleanups are open to the public. Registration is encouraged by completing a form and waiver at <http://www.pacificabeachcoalition.org/tsunami-cleanup>. Members of the public who may discover potential tsunami debris outside of the organized cleanups, should contact the PBC at pickituppacifica@gmail.com before picking up or disposing of any item. For further information about sponsoring these vitally important cleanups, log onto www.pacificabeachcoalition.org, or call (650) 355-1668.

RECENT 2014 DISCOVERY

As recent as August 2014, a fiberglass skiff possibly from Japan, which may or may not be from the 2011 tsunami disaster, washed ashore at Mussel Rock (near Avalon Canyon in Daly City). The PBC site team discovered the skiff and went the extra mile to alert proper authorities to begin to identify and arrange for its removal. It is yet to be determined if the skiff displaying Japanese writing originates from the 2011 tsunami. Although, anything coming from waters with foreign organisms (aquatic invasive species) growing on it would be a similar risk to our fragile coastal environment. It is the third boat to come to shore in California since 2011, and is an example of how the PBC and authorities are reacting as they would to any tsunami-related debris. It was evaluated for radiation, although the risk is unlikely given that the debris entered the ocean days or even weeks before the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear plant went into meltdown and subsequent leakage occurred after the tsunami spread debris far and wide. It is expected the Japanese consulate will receive information on the findings to reach out to the government of Japan to try to identify an original owner and determine whether the boat was lost during the tsunami.

2013 JTMD CLEANUP PROGRAM RESULTS

During the first year of the JTMD Cleanup Program led locally by the PBC in 2013, more than 575 volunteers participated at Linda Mar State Beach and Mussel Rock. PBC Site Captains Helen Nicely, Jim and Ana Fithian, Tom Whittaker and Debbie Kane led a volunteer crew who included Pacifica residents Liz Murtagh and Tim Sutton, 4-H Club, Boy Scout Troop 74, Genentech employees and Good Shepherd School. Their total collection amounted to 1,749 lbs of trash and 194 lbs of recyclables. While Linda Mar did not report any findings of possible tsunami debris, the Mussel Rock crew discovered a large styrofoam-type float, lumber that could have been part of a dock, and a bait trap with Japanese inscription. All reports on the findings followed a protocol to the CCC and NOAA.

TSUNAMI DEBRIS BACKGROUND

On March 11, 2011, a 9.0 magnitude earthquake struck off the coast of Japan. That earthquake produced powerful tsunami waves that reached 133 feet in height and devastated an area of close to 220 square miles on Japan. The tsunami resulted in massive damage, including close to 25 million tons of debris, of which 5 million tons was washed out to sea.

Out of that 5 million tons, the Japanese Government has estimated that 1.5 million tons was buoyant

enough to enter the Pacific Ocean currents. At least some portion of that debris is still afloat, and has started to make landfall on the California coast. Due to these factors, NOAA has determined greater quantities of debris are expected to hit California's shores over the next two years, and the additional need for increasing the number and frequency of cleanups taking place along the California coast to gather relevant data to provide a better idea of where and when the tsunami debris is arriving on our coast.

While some of this debris may be hazardous, similar to household hazardous waste found every year on our shores, the agency does not anticipate elevated levels of radiation because the nuclear power station meltdown occurred several days after the debris was generated and floated away from Japan on ocean currents. The tsunami debris is not expected to be any more hazardous than debris regularly picked up on California's beaches.

About the Pacifica Beach Coalition: The Pacifica Beach Coalition is dedicated to preserving the ocean, coastal habitat and wildlife, and ending litter, through advocacy, education, community building, and citizen action. For more information, visit www.pacificabeachcoalition.org

About the California Coastal Commission Japanese Tsunami Marine Debris Program: The California Coastal Commission is the official supporter of the San Mateo County JTMD Cleanups. Major statewide sponsors include Crystal Geyser, California Office of Emergency Services, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Oracle, Orrick, Protect Our Coast and Ocean Fund, Rubio's Mexican Restaurant, and the California Coastal Commission's WHALE TAIL® Grants Program. For more information, visit <http://www.coastal.ca.gov/publiced/jtmd/jtmd.html>

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