

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Pacificans Turned Out in Force for California Coastal Cleanup Day 2007

(Pacifica, CA – September 21, 2007) Pacificans turned out in force for California Coastal Cleanup Day that set records in Pacifica as well as San Mateo County for the most volunteers in the 24-year history of the annual cleanup. More than 400 volunteers canvassed beaches and streets collecting over 5,500 pounds of litter and recycles that otherwise would find its way to the ocean. For San Mateo County, a new Coastal Cleanup Day record of 2,025 volunteers collected over 24,000 pounds of litter and recycles from 53.25 miles of shoreline.

With 70% of the cleanup sites reporting, the statewide count stands at 45,443 volunteers, which should approach the California Coastal Commission's goal of 50,000 volunteers who picked up 429,890 pounds of trash and an additional 69,881 pounds of recyclable materials, for a total of 499,771 pounds. The Coastal Commission expects to exceed 800,000 pounds of trash when all the totals are in.

The gray whales and dolphins must have known what was happening in Pacifica. They swam and dove off the shore of Sharp Park beach (with dolphins reported at Esplanade too) entertaining volunteers through most of the cleanup and following celebration. Cheers could be heard every time a whale breached out of the water, and it was reported that one whale swam under the Pacifica Pier.

But it is the families, individuals and volunteer groups of all ages and sizes who made this event a huge success. Parents and 77 students from Ingrid B. Lacey Middle School collected and counted all of the litter from the streets of West Sharp Park. They plan to compare their collected litter to what was collected at the adjacent Sharp Park Beach by Ocean Shore students, parents and numerous volunteers. Terra Nova High School students and Interact Club gave the San Pedro Creek Watershed Coalition a hand at creekside within the restored wetlands. JUHSD Tobacco Prevention Peer Educators came out to Linda Mar State Beach. And with the help of 33 volunteers from the Belmont and Pacifica 4-H clubs and the Bay Area Paragliding Association, more than 1,400 pounds of trash and recycles, including a Judy Garland record album, were recovered. Family and friends of Ian Butler cleaned the stream and clandestine waterfall area on the north side of Esplanade beach. The family of Stephanie Echeverri revitalized Lakeside Way by removing 2 trucks of overgrown weeds and grass in addition to 9 bags of litter. The Environmental Network, Cub Scout Pack 9, Best Western Lighthouse Hotel, Bethel Christian Church, Girl Scout Troop 2977, San Pedro Creek Watershed, West Sharp Park Advisory Committee, and Seton Hospital traveling nurses also contributed in a big way.

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While the tally cards reported 19,803 improperly discarded cigarette butts, 3,119 bags and 2,747 food wrappers were removed before they could cause blockages in the bodies of, or otherwise kill, wildlife. In fact, the actual amounts might be much higher, as many people stop counting after a while because there are just too many to collect and they feel it is better to gather them up from our beaches and streets than take the time to count them.

The Pacifica Beach Coalition (PBC) coordinated all of the cleanup sites and provided a hot dog barbeque following the event for all volunteers. Once again, young and old joined together on the grass at Sharp Park picnic area to eat and enjoy each others' company. In addition, PBC honored Jeri Flinn as the founder of organized cleanups on Pacifica's beaches and her volunteer service as the President of both the Pacifica Beach Coalition and Pacifica's Environmental Family since 1997. Under her leadership, the PBC has pioneered and continuously led the volunteer stewardship effort in our coastal community by cleaning our beaches, providing education to schools and citizens about the harmful impacts of litter, installing cigarette butt urns and championing improvements to trash receptacle placement throughout Pacifica to reduce litter, protect wildlife and demonstrate pride in our community.

The steadfast and remarkable contributions of three very special people ~ Ana Garcia, Jim Fithian, and Paul Hurley ~ were also recognized during the celebration. Known as the "Linda Mar Beach" team, they've dedicated their spare time to clean ups at our city's famed beach every month for the past 10 years! While community members are always invited to join in on this monthly cleanup, most times, it is the 3 of them who walk the beach and put litter in its place!

As we reflect on another successful day of stewardship of our environment and the camaraderie that continues to evolve with every new and returning volunteer to our growing team, we say THANK YOU and remind the community and visitors to continue to dispose of trash and debris properly. Pick It Up Pacifica!

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

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