

Alliance of Partners Rely on Volunteers to Clean Beaches



Lourdes Family 2017 WCC Photo

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Washington CoastSavers is pleased to announce that registration is open for participating in the 2017 International Coastal Cleanup on Saturday, September 16th. Volunteers can select from dozens of beaches to clean along the outer coast, the Olympic Peninsula, and the Strait of Juan de Fuca. To help event organizers prepare for your participation, see www.coastsavers.org where you will find information about how and to register, when to check-in, what beaches will be cleaned and where to camp. Of special note, this year the Strait beaches will be cleaned in the morning and the outer coastal beaches will be cleaned in the afternoon due to the tides.

Washington CoastSavers is an alliance of partners and volunteers dedicated to keeping the state's beaches clean of marine debris. Founding members of CoastSavers include representatives from the Lions Club International, Discover Your Northwest, Surfrider Foundation, Grass Roots Garbage Gang, Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary, Olympic National Park, and the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission. Since 2007, their efforts have removed tens of tons of trash off the beach during the Washington Coast Cleanup which occurs in April every Earth Day weekend and the International Coastal Cleanup which is every third Saturday in September.

"Washington State Parks is pleased to be a part of this important—and effective—cleanup event," said Don Hoch, State Parks director. "Washington's ocean beaches benefit from the many different organizations and volunteers working together to make our beaches safe and clean for all to enjoy."

"The positive impact of this cleanup event is immediately visible and impressive," said Olympic National Park Acting Superintendent Lee Taylor. "Olympic National Park is proud to support the work of CoastSavers volunteers."

The International Coastal Cleanup (ICC) is a global cleanup effort organized by the Ocean Conservancy with coordinators in approximately one hundred countries and 36 states. Washington CoastSavers serve as local cleanup coordinators in

Washington State. Trash found at ICC events will be counted and included in an annual index of global marine debris to be released in 2018. Last year, nearly 800,000 volunteers collected over 18 million pounds of trash from shorelines around the world. The data gathered at ICC events provides information that can inform policy solutions and identify target areas where preventative solutions will make the biggest difference. ICC events also raise awareness of the pervasive marine debris issue and bring together people and organizations who care about the health of our waterways. Jon Schmidt, Washington CoastSavers coordinator says, "This is an opportunity to take part in a global effort to get trash off of our treasured beaches including many county parks, state parks and the Olympic National Park. Be part of the solution, to the pollution, that is marine debris."

Volunteers will have a special opportunity to recycle the hard plastics they collect in some locations. Plastics found on the beach are often too degraded to recycle normally, but CoastSavers has partnered with TerraCycle to turn some of the material collected into shampoo bottles. This unique program will reduce the amount of debris that goes from the beach to the landfill. Other material is recycled when possible but "this partnership really steps up our recycling game," according to Schmidt.

To participate in the International Coastal Cleanup on the outer coast, see www.coastsavers.org where you will find information about how to register, what beaches will be cleaned, where to camp and special offers for cleanup volunteers. Front country camping in Olympic National Park at Kalaloch, Mora and Ozette campgrounds is comped for registered volunteers Friday and Saturday night. Backcountry camping is comped Friday and Saturday night at park beaches. If people are backpacking, they will need to register with the WIC and bring their Volunteer agreement forms with them all filled out if possible. Free camping is also available at Hobuck Campground for those cleaning the beaches near Neah Bay. Surfrider Foundation chapters are providing food and refreshments at multiple locations, see website for details.

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