

Another Successful Coastal Cleanup in Del Norte and Around the State

By Grant Werschull October 30, 2026



South Beach

Saturday, September 19 was a cool, cloudy day Crescent City -- perfect weather for the 42nd annual Coastal Cleanup Day. Just outside the harbor on Anchor Way, volunteers helped themselves to hot coffee, freshly baked cookies and snacks before picking up gloves, buckets, vests, trash bags and grabbers. After a safety and logistics briefing, the 35 volunteers headed off to South Beach, Elk Creek, Point Saint George, and other popular access areas to spend a few hours picking up trash.

As volunteers fanned out, the same scene was playing out at over 700 sites California's 58 counties. On the third Saturday of every September, tens of thousands of California residents come together to give back to the coast by spending a few hours picking up trash along California beaches, lakes, rivers and streams. Discarded items run the gamut from micro-plastics to mattresses. Sponsored by the California Coastal Commission and supported by hundreds of non-profit organizations and public agencies, it's the largest annual volunteer event in California, and an annual reminder of the power of collective community action.

“The coast belongs to all of us,” said Grant Werschkull, Co-Executive Director of the Smith River Alliance, who sponsored the event along with Redwood Parks Conservancy. “So it’s truly inspiring when our community works as a team cleanup our beaches and creeks.”

In the 42 years since the first Coastal Cleanup Day in 1985, 1.8 million volunteers have helped remove more than 13,500 tons of trash. California’s event is part of the International Coastal Cleanup, organized by the Ocean Conservancy.

This year’s effort was particularly critical as California braces for an historic El Niño winter. The increased rainfall expected from El Niño could wash unprecedented amounts of trash and other pollutants from creeks and streams into the ocean. Coastal Cleanup Day provided an opportunity to prevent additional harm to the coast and the wildlife that calls it home.

With 40% of the sites reporting by the end of the weekend, the Coastal Commission indicated 24,835 volunteers picked up 185,003 pounds of trash and an additional 7,051 pounds of recyclable materials. The Commission estimates that over 50,000 volunteers will have participated when the final results are in.

In Crescent City, over 35 volunteers contributed more than 1,800 pounds of trash to the statewide total. It was all disposed of without charge at the Del Norte County Transfer Station.

“Coastal Cleanup Day is always a great day for our coast, but this year proved even more significant” said Executive Director Kate Huckelbridge of the Coastal Commission. “As we celebrate 50 years of the Coastal Act, it helped to highlight the volunteers and coastal advocates who will carry the legacy of the Coastal Act forward into the next 50 years of protecting and preserving our coast and ocean.”

Del Norte County’s Coastal Cleanup Day was made possible thanks to the support of the following partners: CalTrans, Del Norte Solid Waste Management Authority, Hambro Group, Hiouchi Café, Redwood Parks Conservancy, Redwood National and State Parks, Seafront Baking Company, and Smith River Alliance. Along with more than 60 nonprofit and local government organizations that help organize and run the cleanups around the state, Del Norte’s volunteers and team of partners helped make the 2026 cleanup another huge success.

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