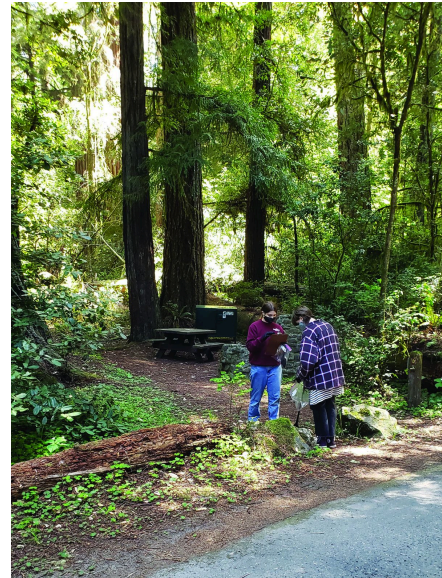


## Earth Day cleanups net over a ton of trash

May 12, 2021



Celebrate Earth Day by getting your exercise picking up trash? Over 25 community volunteers did just that during the week of April 22, and through their efforts, more than 2,500 pounds of trash was removed from multiple public access, beach and park locations around Del Norte County.

The Earth Day cleanup was organized by the Tobacco Use Prevention Program and the Smith River Alliance with help from the Del Norte Solid Waste Management Authority and Elk Valley Casino. Other partners included California State Parks, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, Tobacco Free Del Norte and the Redwood Parks Conservancy.

“A major reason for our leadership on this cleanup effort was to bring awareness to how much tobacco product waste can be found at frequented areas within of our local state parks,” said Crystal Yang, the health education coordinator for TUPP. “At our cleanup around Jedediah Smith Redwoods State Park, nearly 200 tobacco related items were collected, with 97% consisting of cigarette butts and 3% consisting of vaping materials.

“Most of the tobacco product waste was found around the Day Use Area river bar where many visitors park. What people don’t realize is that cigarette butts leach toxins into our beautiful Smith River posing a threat to people, fish and aquatic life. The Smith River is the drinking water supply for most of Del Norte County so obviously we want to encourage proper disposal of tobacco products.”

Other cleanup locations included South Beach and adjacent coastal wetlands, the Elk Creek Trailhead, multiple sites within Tolowa Dunes State Park and the Point Saint George Heritage Area near the entrance to the Regional Airport.

“We were grateful to partner with Crystal and TUPP,” said Grant Werschkull, co-executive director of the Smith River Alliance. “These are world class public resource areas around our community and it’s terrific to find new partners who are willing to work with us on cleanups and other stewardship projects. It takes a team to succeed with this work.”

To be notified about future volunteer opportunities, follow this link to the Smith River Alliance website and sign-up: <https://smithriveralliance.org/volunteer/>. You can also send an email with your contact info to [volunteer@smithriveralliance.org](mailto:volunteer@smithriveralliance.org).