

Your Watershed:
Coastal Cleanup and Pollution Prevention
by the Russian River Watershed Association

The Russian River Watershed Association would like to remind you that solving water pollution problems requires everyone's involvement.

Every day millions of Californians enjoy the state's coastline and waterways. However, many of those people are unaware how their daily activities, from driving a car, to not properly disposing of their garbage, or even throwing a cigarette butt on the ground, can impact the plants and animals in our creeks and ocean. Besides litter, other materials that can degrade beaches, creeks, and water quality include yard waste, construction materials, cleaning products, pet waste, pesticides, automobile fluids, and much more. **What is the harm from trash and pollutants in our waterways?** Besides being an eyesore, it is expensive to remove. During a recent summer, Orange County collected enough garbage from six miles of beach to fill ten garbage trucks full of trash every week, at a cost to taxpayers of \$350,000.

Almost 90 percent of floating marine debris is plastic. Due to its durability, buoyancy, and ability to absorb and concentrate toxins present in the ocean, plastic is especially harmful to marine life. Common items like fishing line, strapping bands and six-pack rings can hamper the mobility of marine animals. Once entangled, animals have trouble eating, breathing or swimming, all of which can have fatal results. Plastics takes years to breakdown and may continue to trap and kill animals year after year.

How can you help? Volunteer for the 22nd Coastal Cleanup Day (9/16/06 from 9am to noon) sponsored by the California Coastal Commission; and/or the 19th Annual Russian River Watershed Cleanup (9/23/06), a project of the Sonoma County Conservation Council. As part of Coastal Cleanup on September 16th, 50,000 volunteers clean up over 700 sites, making this one of the largest volunteer events in the state. Community members volunteering for the Russian River Watershed Cleanup on September 23rd will clean up the river between Asti and the ocean by canoe and by foot. Participants in past Russian River watershed cleanups have removed several tons of refuse from the river between Asti and Jenner, including tires, shopping carts, water heaters and car parts.

Coastal Cleanup Day and the Russian River Watershed Cleanup are great ways for families, students, service groups, and neighbors to join together, take care of our fragile environment, show community support for our shared natural resources and to have fun!

To register for the Russian River Watershed Cleanup, go to the event website: <http://www.russianrivercleanup.org> or call (707) 577-7151. Participants will meet in Cloverdale, Healdsburg, Guerneville and Mirabel. Volunteers are needed to coordinate the event. If interested, please contact Bob Clemens by phone at (707) 887-2303 or by e-mail at goldengateherb@wclynx.com, or Carroll Hirsch by e-mail at cwhirsch@sonic.net.

To participate in Mendocino County Coastal Cleanup Day, please contact Holly Newberger at hnewberger@mendocinolandtrust.org or call 707-962-0470. In 2005, 285 volunteers cleaned 25 beaches from Gualala to Westport. Volunteers found 1,200 pounds of trash and 450 pounds of recyclables.

To participate in Sonoma County Coastal Cleanup Day, please contact Willow Taraja at wtaraja@coastwalk.org or call (707) 829-6689 ext. 5. OR you can visit www.coastforyou.org and follow the online registration instructions. In 2005, at over 28 beaches and Russian River sites, 700 Sonoma County volunteers picked up 9,979 pounds of trash, over 22 cubic yards of recyclable material, 4,600 pounds of scrap metal, 184 tires, and an unbelievable amount of cigarette butts!

It is easier and cheaper to prevent pollution than cleaning it up or repairing damage to the environment. The week after Coastal Cleanup Day, September 18-24, 2006, is National Pollution Prevention Week. For information on how you can stop pollution from happening from your home, vehicles, and work place check out these websites:

<http://ci.santa-rosa.ca.us/default.aspx?PageId=328>

<http://www.sonoma-county.org/prmd/sw/sw-prevention.htm>

<http://www.epa.gov/water/citizen/pollution.html>

The Russian River Watershed Association (www.rrwatershed.org) is an association of eleven cities, counties and special districts in the watershed that are working together on programs for clean water, fisheries restoration and watershed enhancement.