

Coastal Cleanup Day Today & A River Friend Tomorrow

By Candice Meneghin, Friends of the Santa Clara River

This Saturday, International Coastal Cleanup Day is likely to once again break records as the world's largest volunteer event. Last year Ventura County saw a 21% increase in volunteerism, with 3,313 people volunteering their time to clean up our county's waterways and beaches. Data collected from past cleanups has changed public policy related to plastic consumerism, reduction, and recycling.

California, where the event began, has already passed a statewide ban on single use plastic bags, and many cities are phasing out plastic straws. The next target may be plastic food wrappers and cigarette butts – the top two most frequently collected plastic items during Coastal Cleanup Day.

This day of volunteerism provides an opportunity to show our care for the natural environment and its wildlife. We acknowledge our actions are the problem, but we too are the solution. In June 2018 the Ocean Protection Council released its [Final Ocean Litter Prevention Strategy](#), outlining ways to address problems with plastic. Working with manufacturers to streamline packaging and reduce plastic is key, but our consumer choices and behaviors are also part of the solutions.

The mission of Friends of the Santa Clara River, a non-profit public interest organization formed in 1993, is to protect and preserve biological and cultural resources of the Santa Clara River Watershed, one of Southern California's last free-flowing and unchannelized rivers. We engage in a number of outreach, education and community volunteer opportunities with youth groups and our local community throughout the year.

For Coastal Cleanup Day, in partnership with the Camarillo branch of the California Conservation Corps and [Ventura County Coalition for Coastal & Inland Waterways](#), we will host a cleanup site at McGrath State Park. Our site will award prizes for the top three most interesting trash treasures. You can win additional prizes by participating in a countywide photo competition using the hashtag #vccoastcleanup2018.

The cleanup will happen at over 20 sites simultaneously in Ventura County on September 15 from 9:00 am to noon. Walk-ins are welcome at all sites. You can find a list and map of the sites at Ventura County Coalition for Coastal & Inland Waterways website: <http://www.vccoastcleanup.org/>.

Prepare by wearing closed shoes and sunscreen, bringing your own bucket and gloves to reduce waste, and filling out a waiver (<http://www.vccoastcleanup.org/get-involved/>). Waivers are available online in both [English](#) and [Spanish](#).

More information on Friends of the Santa Clara River can be found at www.fscr.org or at our 25th anniversary Silver Streams Gala Celebration held on September 16, 2018 3:30-6:30pm at Rancho Cumulos in Piru. Tickets are available at <https://fscr.org/25th-anniversary/>.

[On the net:](#)

<https://www.coastal.ca.gov/publiced/ccd/ccd.html>

www.vccoastcleanup.org

[Final Ocean Litter Prevention Strategy](#)

www.fscr.org

Notes:

For the past 25 years, Friends of the Santa Clara River has promoted all aspects of river health, including public outreach, water quality monitoring, wetland restoration, opposition to floodplain development, and advocating for endangered species.

Most of us have fond summer memories of being at the beach or a river, enjoying the outdoors with family and friends. Coastal Cleanup Day is an opportunity to link our happy memories with a call to action to protect and restore the nature and backdrop to our lives. 80% of waste collected on Coastal Cleanup Day originates on land.

Activities include planting native plants propagated in our nursery and establishing trails and information kiosks to introduce visitors to riverine environment.