

WEST COAST GOVERNORS ALLIANCE on OCEAN HEALTH

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West Coast Governors Alliance on Ocean Health announces release of Marine Debris Strategy

October 9, 2013

The West Coast Governors Alliance on Ocean Health (WCGA) is pleased to announce the release of its Marine Debris Strategy. The Strategy aims to reduce and prevent marine debris on a broad scale through addressing topics such as land-based debris, derelict fishing gear, and other cross-cutting issues along the West Coast. The Strategy's main objectives include: preventing marine debris from entering the ocean or littering beaches; maximizing recovery of marine debris in the ocean or on shore; reducing and preventing the negative impacts of marine debris; and enhancing existing efforts through communication and collaboration among interested parties on the West Coast. The WCGA addresses the global and regional issue of marine debris through coordination activities and its soon to be released Marine Debris Database.

"The release of this strategy is a huge step in the right direction as we continue our fight to address marine debris on the West Coast," said Cat Kuhlman, Deputy Secretary for Ocean and Coastal Policy at the California Natural Resources Agency. "By working together, sharing expertise, and using sound science, California, Oregon, and Washington have formulated a solid plan to protect the Pacific coast from the negative effects of marine debris."

To achieve the objectives, the Strategy includes a toolbox of key actions that may be implemented collaboratively or individually on a West Coast-wide basis: assessing baseline conditions for marine debris; setting measureable targets for improvements; establishing a database to ascertain baseline and future marine debris quantities and activities; monitoring progress; encouraging research to identify problems and potential solutions; implementing cost-effective methods for removal; and promoting stewardship through education in all aspects of marine debris prevention, reduction, and removal activities.

The flexible approach to carrying out proposed recommended actions of the Marine Debris Strategy allows for the successful achievement of target milestones through various means. However, methods for reaching target milestones are less critical than the need for setting and achieving the targets by whatever means chosen. This Strategy will also be a helpful blue print for the West Coast in promoting increased collaboration and partnerships to effectively prevent and reduce marine debris.

The Strategy is an integral part in moving the Marine Debris Action Coordination Team (MD ACT), the team of agency, non-profit, and industry staff that drafted the Strategy, forward as it evolves into the Marine Debris Coalition. The evolution will involve opening membership to a wider audience to promote increased participation and effectiveness as well as to undertake the Strategy objectives. The ACT is also in the final stages of releasing a [Marine Debris Database](#) that compiles data from cleanup events and derelict fishing gear removal in order to estimate a baseline of marine debris on the West Coast. The release of the Strategy is a significant step in moving these initiatives forward.

For a copy of the Strategy, visit <http://www.westcoastoceans.org>. For any questions, please contact Amanda Sackett at amanda.sackett@resources.ca.gov.



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