

Making our print beautiful in the town in which we live – PBC's Earth Day 2013

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On Saturday, April 20, at 9 am, the Pacifica Beach Coalition's Action event for Earth Day begins. All over Pacifica people as young as 4, all the way up through those who have seen 90 in the rear view mirror, join in habitat restoration or gardening projects, and street, school and business cleanups. The Pacifica Beach Coalition has 50 project/cleanup sites, all defined online, and it is estimated that 9,000 volunteers will be out and working at these locations which include — Mussel Rock Park, upper Manor Drive, streets lining the Golf Course, Beach Boulevard, San Pedro Creek, Higgins Way, Hickey near Skyline, the Community Center and Skate Park, the Mildred Owen Gardens, St. Edmund's Church, the Linda Mar Park & Ride, Rockaway Beach and the shopping districts at Manor. In 2012, 8,100 volunteers in Pacifica picked up 16,200 pounds of trash and recycle.



This year, PBC has dedicated its Earth Day of Action and Environmental Festival to "The Sharks of the Sea." But sharks are not just the topic on the 20th. All week leading up to Earth Day, Pacifica schools, and several neighboring schools are having "shark" assemblies.

"The teachers are incorporating shark studies in their lessons," said Lynn Adams, president of PBC. "We have gotten grants to bring shark experts to speak in the schools. We will talk to 300 to 600 kids per school about sharks, to educate them, to empower them, to teach them how to help

the ocean. And all the kids are taking action by picking up school yard litter at their school, as well as involving themselves in a multitude of Earth Day events."

Every student will receive a bookmark of the "Shark Hero Pledge."

"I pledge to conserve the natural resources of the Earth and Ocean, to learn more about sharks, pick up litter and reduce my use of plastics. I pledge to show respect for nature and all living things and to use my voice to speak up for the environment."

Since 1998, Pacifica has recognized an Earth Day mascot. The first was Pacifica's imperiled shorebird, the Western Snowy Plover, and in the years that followed the mascots have included Pacifica's endangered Steelhead Trout, the California Brown Pelican, the recovering Gray Whale and the Leatherback Sea Turtle. Sharks can be traced back to more than 400 million years ago, and/or 100 million years before dinosaurs walked on land. They have few natural predators and are paramount to maintaining the health and the balance of the oceans. They are severely threatened by human consumption.

"Studies have shown that approximately 100 million sharks are being hunted each year for their fin," Adams noted. "Finning means their fins are cut off and they are thrown overboard, alive. It is the equivalent of us being discarded into the ocean, after having our arms and legs amputated."

Humans are finning sharks for the popular shark fin soup dish, which as it turns out, offers no nutritional value from the shark fin, or even taste. The flavor comes from the broth.

"We are honoring the shark this year, but every piece of litter you pick up saves a fish, a bird, or a wild life, and in many cases, it saves a person," Adams said.

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Following the "action" event, PBC's Environmental Festival begins at 11:30 am, in the South Lot at Linda Mar Beach. Along with speakers and entertainment — musicians Celia Malheiros, Drifting Sand, Matt Joffe & the Distractions, as well as the Sardine Family Circus — there are 38 booths at the Festival. These booths will be peopled by members of — Shark Stewards, Pacifica Land Trust, Shorebird Alliance, Surfrider Foundation, Marine Mammal Center, American Cetacean Society, Sea Shepherd Conservation Society, 4-H Million Trees Project, Pacifica Garden Club, the Tuolumne River Trust, the Sanchez Art Center, among a host of other educators and celebrants of sharks, sea turtles, wildlife, marine life, ecosystems, climate, people, earth. A shark stroll will be hosted by Skyline College, and for the third year, the festival has a whale walk.

"The whale walk brings tears to my eyes," Adams said. "It was there I learned that the heart of a Blue Whale is the size of a Volkswagen Bug."

Six food booths will sell hamburgers, hot dogs, nachos, lemonade, pizza and other delectables. Kid activities include face painting, gardening, a petting zoo and art projects. There is a cake provided by the Pacifica Beach Coalition, Starbucks is providing water and coffee, and there is a banner for writing Earth Day thoughts.

People are encouraged to bike or ride the Devil's Slide Ride (a free weekend shuttle) to the Festival.

Adams also noted the Pacifica plastic bag ban ordinance will be implemented April 22, Earth Day all over the world, and that the Beach Coalition is collecting clean, unused tote bags at their collection box at the Community Center, now until April 18. See the Coalition's website for more details.

"We have so much awareness and environmental action in our city," Adams said. "And every year, people come from miles around, including famous environmentalists, to help us all make change. There is nothing like the power of working together to make things happen."

Sign up on PBC's website <http://www.pacificabeachcoalition.org/> (<http://www.pacificabeachcoalition.org/>), email lynn4promos@aol.com (<mailto:lynn4promos@aol.com>), or call 650-355-1668 to find out how you can participate in Pacifica's Earth Day Action event.

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