



Photo by J Patrick Cudahy and Mark Harris

For immediate release

PRESS RELEASE: Friends of the Dunes 13th Annual Kids Ocean Day Event!

FRIENDS OF THE DUNES, P.O. BOX 186, ARCATA, CA 95518

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Loleta, CA – On the morning of June 1, nearly 1,000 students came together to help care for the coast at the Mike Thompson Wildlife Area, South Spit of the Humboldt Bay. After spending the day restoring dune habitat and picking up trash, students, teachers, and volunteers formed a giant shark and fish with the message "Come Together" as part of Kids Ocean Day. Local pilot Mark Harris flew over while photographer Patrick Cudahy captured the image.

Friends of the Dunes and the Bureau of Land Management Arcata Field Office organized the Kids Ocean Day event locally, with help from the California Conservation Corps and the Humboldt Bay National Wildlife Refuge. This event was part of the statewide Kids Ocean Day program, a series of student cleanups and aerial art displays six sites along the California Coast. Across the state, students received classroom presentations before the event focusing on the

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ocean, biodiversity, and the importance of keeping our coast clean and healthy. In Humboldt, students have the option to pick up trash or remove invasive plant species to create space for native biodiversity. Each site created an image of different animals, forming an interspecies united front with ocean conservation messages for all of us. Statewide, Kids Ocean Day Cleanups are organized by the California Coastal Commission with events throughout late May and early June, leading up to World Oceans Day on June 8, a global day of ocean celebration and collaboration for a better future.

“This is our 13th Annual Kids Ocean Day event in Humboldt County, and we are so excited to be a part of this statewide program that reaches thousands of students across California,” said Suzie Fortner, Friends of the Dunes Education Manager. “We visit participating classes ahead of time and teach students about our diverse coastal environments, and how human actions impact these places. Students brainstorm small daily actions that can help solve the problem of ocean pollution, such as bringing your own bag to the store, or refusing plastic straws. During the Kids Ocean Day event, students from all over Humboldt County came together to care for our coast by picking up trash and removing invasive plants. Our unlikely duo, a shark and a fish, are asking us to come together to protect our coast and ocean. We only have one planet and one big ocean that connects us all, so it is important that we work together to ensure a healthy ocean and a healthy planet for future generations.”

“These students have been learning about the many ways humans depend on the ocean, and about the threats to ocean health,” said Dayna Bochco, Chair of the California Coastal Commission. “And now they are all coming together to do something positive for the ocean. Through their aerial art, they hope to inspire adults to do the same, because they understand a simple truth - it will take all of us joining forces to address global problems like plastic pollution, warming seas, and overfishing.” The Coastal Commission coordinates the program statewide and provides financial support from proceeds from the Whale Tail License Plate and voluntary donations on the state tax return to the Protect Our Coast and Oceans Fund.

Participating Schools included: Alice Birney Elementary, Blue Lake Elementary, Fuente Nueva Charter School, Grant Elementary, Jacoby Creek School, Lafayette Elementary, Laurel Tree Learning Center, Loleta School, McKinleyville Middle School, Redway School, Redwood Coast Montessori, South Fortuna Elementary, Sunnybrae Middle, Trinidad School, Winship Middle School, and Zane Middle School..

Friends of the Dunes is dedicated to conserving the natural diversity of coastal environments through community supported education and stewardship programs. Projects include the Bay to Dunes school education program, Dune Ecosystem Restoration Team and the Humboldt Coastal Nature Center. For more information visit friendsofthedunes.org

The Bureau of Land Management’s Arcata Field Office is responsible for the administration of natural resources, lands, and mineral programs on approximately 200,000 acres of public land in Northwestern California. The Area includes the 60,000 acre King Range National Conservation Area and the 7,472 acre Headwaters Forest Reserve.

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This annual event was started by the Malibu Foundation for Environmental Education and the California Coastal Commission in Los Angeles in 1994. With funding from the Whale Tail License Plate, this program expanded to the North Coast in 2002. The program focuses on reaching children in underserved and inland schools.

The California Coastal Commission is the statewide coordinator of the Kids' Ocean Day program, the year-round Adopt-A-Beach program, and Coastal Cleanup Day. All of these programs are funded by the generous support of the Whale Tail License Plate Fund. Over 220,000 plates have been sold since 1996, raising more than \$22 million dollars for marine education and protection. For more information about the California Coastal Commission's programs and how to buy a Whale Tail Plate, call (800) COAST-4U or visit www.coastforyou.org.

Check out this YouTube video for more about the statewide Kids Ocean Day Program:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IX_ePbTnSDI

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