

SCRATCHPAD

Cleaning up the shores

By **LISSA BREWER**
COAST WEEKEND EDITOR

Last July, volunteers on the Long Beach Peninsula removed more than 40 tons of trash from the shoreline in a single day.

Its sources are as global as they are local, traveling by ocean currents and marine vessels as well as items left behind by visitors. Marine debris impacts oceans worldwide, and the Pacific Northwest Coast — even its remote stretches — are no exception.

Look closely at the sands of Crescent Beach and you'll find colorful microplastics scattered next to sprouting stems. Venture into the tide pools and you may stumble upon a plastic bottle or sandy fishing net. These discarded items pose serious health

risks to our treasured marine wildlife. Fish, crustaceans, mammals and more find themselves entangled in this debris. They also may mistake it for food, or simply find it blocking sunlight by polluting the surface waters.

If a visit to the beach or an article about the Great Pacific Garbage Patch has left you looking for a path to get involved, there are fortunately many local groups that organize regular beach cleanups on the Oregon and Washington coasts. This is a great activity for locals and tourists alike, an educational opportunity for children, and a way to give back to places you love.

SOLVE Oregon hosts beach cleanup events throughout the North Coast, including one in Seaside on the first Saturday of each month. Washington CoastSavers plans



Small pieces of plastic can be seen on the sands of Indian Beach near Ecola State Park. Many local beaches host cleanups, an opportunity for the community to remove plastic and other debris from the shores.

an annual event as Earth Day approaches, this year on Apr. 17, as well as an International Coastal Cleanup each September. Interested stewards can also participate in the organization's Adopt A Beach program. They're currently seeking couples or small groups willing to look after a desig-

nated stretch of saltwater beach within Clallam County.

Even if you can't participate in a volunteer group, take the time to pick up trash from the shore. Bring along a bag and leave the coast cleaner than you found it. Your friends in the ocean will thank you!

our coast weekend

ON THE COVER

A 1969 exterior photo of the Coaster Theatre in Cannon Beach.



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