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tons of waste each year, many participating in events like the annual Washington Coast Cleanup.

Held each April as Earth Day approaches, the event is a signature project of the Washington Clean Coast Alliance, a dedicated group of volunteers, civic organizations and nonprofits working alongside tribal, state and federal agencies.

The alliance, now in its 15th year, launched the CoastSavers program to coordinate existing cleanup efforts by regional organizations, some stewarding the coast for more than 50 years. "Some of the members like the (Pacific Northwest) Four Wheel Drive Association and Grass-Roots Garbage Gang have been cleaning up the Long Beach Peninsula since the 1970s," CoastSavers coordinator Megan Juran said. The alliance also draws on the work of hiker Jan Klippert, who organized the Olympic Coast Cleanup in the 1990s. "CoastSavers brought that all together under an umbrella to organize cleanups on specific dates to amplify the effort," Juran added.

The Washington Coast Cleanup is a series of events that take place over the course of one day from Cape Disappointment State Park to Cape Flattery and along the Strait of Juan de Fuca. Juran is hope-



Volunteers carry trash bags along the Washington coast to clean up marine debris.

ful that this year's coastal cleanup events will draw both new and returning volun-

teers. "Typically by April, winter storms have gone through and it's nice to have that change of weather coincide with Earth Day because then we get that fresh spring cleanup going," Juran said.

Recent volunteers have primarily found plastic waste. "We've seen a change throughout the years as far as what people are picking up," Juran said. She noted that the presence of plastic has grown in recent years.

Now, funded by a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Marine Debris grant, the alliance plans to pilot a circular disposal program for plastics. Partnering with Net Your Problem, a business that provides recycling services for fishing industry items like plastic buoys, netting and rope, the alliance will begin a two year recycling effort at scheduled cleanups. "We are excited to partner with Net Your Problem to expand their efforts and increase the amount and types of plastics we can divert from the landfill into its next life," Juran said.

Community volunteers, called coast savers, are invited to steward a beloved beach by picking up trash from the shore on April 23. Volunteers can also help to run check-in tables and transport collected waste to dumping sites. "There will be sign in coordinators stationed at 9 a.m. along each of the major beach approaches that lead out onto the open beach," volunteer and Grass-Roots Garbage Gang leader Russ Lewis

**COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS, CALLED COAST SAVERS, ARE INVITED TO STEWARD A BELOVED BEACH BY PICKING UP TRASH FROM THE SHORE ON APRIL 23. VOLUNTEERS CAN ALSO HELP TO RUN CHECK-IN TABLES AND TRANSPORT COLLECTED WASTE TO DUMPING SITES.**

said. Lewis organizes cleanup events on the Long Beach Peninsula, where shoreline trash often collects as the weather warms up.

For those heading to remote stretches, spaces are available at Kalaloch campground on a limited, first come, first serve basis for registered volunteers on April 22 and 23. Aside from organized events, the alliance urges community members to clean up neighborhoods and shores whenever possible. "There are a lot of unsung heroes who do beach cleanups, not just people who come out during these events, but people who are out every day," Juran said. "We do encourage people to clean up trash anytime, anywhere. No matter where you live, trash can make it out to the ocean," she added.

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