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BUD ON THE BRANCHES: A beer can lies in a bush in the Upper Newport Bay Ecological Reserve. A bay scientist said a lot of county trash from last year's cleanup came from bays.

MARK RIGHTMIRE, THE REGISTER

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Events keep coast clean

Three events are held on the third Saturday of September each year:
International Coastal Cleanup Day

The International Coastal Cleanup Day is celebrating its 20th anniversary this year. It started in 1986 in Texas as a small beach cleanup by the Ocean Conservancy. More than 6 million volunteers have picked up about 100 million pounds of trash. About 300,000 people are expected to participate this year from nearly 100 countries. Information: www.oceanconservancy.org.

California Coastal Cleanup Day

The program started in 1985. About 700,000 Californians have removed more than 10 million pounds of trash from California's coast. In 1993, it was called the largest garbage collection by Guinness World Records, according to the California Coastal Commission Web site. Last year, about 50,000 volunteers helped at 700 cleanup sites. Information: www.coastal.ca.gov.
Inner-Coastal and Watershed Cleanup

It's the 10th year for this event, which focuses on watersheds and creeks. Last year 2,100 volunteers in Orange County showed up and collected more than 25,000 pounds of trash. More information: trails4all.org.

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Beach-goers to take out trash

Volunteers here and worldwide will pick up coastal and waterway garbage this weekend.

By LAYLAN CONNELLY
THE ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER

It's a three-hour snapshot of how much junk makes its way to the coastline.

That's how cleanup organizer Roger Butow describes Coastal Cleanup Day, set for Saturday, when hundreds of thousands of volunteers along the California coast and around the world will help clean up beaches and bays.

International Coastal Cleanup Day takes place in conjunction with California Coastal Cleanup Day and Inner-Coastal and Watershed Cleanup.

Butow, leader of the Clean Water Now! Coalition, said this day differs from regular beach cleanups because of the use of scorecards to tally every item collected.

"I think that we're getting more awareness, but we still seem to have more trash," he said.

Nearly every beach in Orange County will have a cleanup, and some cities will have more than one. Laguna Beach will have six spots to choose from – Crescent Bay, Main Beach, Thalia Street, Oak Street, Victoria Beach and Treasure Island.

Divers will go underwater at Shaw's Cove to do their part.

This year, the Laguna crew will let people weigh their own finds to make it more interactive so the severity of the situation will stay in people's minds. Butow said he hopes everyone who participates will tell a friend of the effects of trash on the beach.

"Every person we get to is someone who will spread the word," he said. "Public education has to have a domino effect."

Last year, his group picked up a real estate sign from a company that went out of business 15 years ago.

"I'm not sure how that thing rolled around the beach for 15 years," he said.

In Orange County last year, 4,300 volunteers helped pick up 31,000 pounds of trash, according to the county Watershed and Coastal Resources Division.

A large part of that was junk that had piled up in the bays, said John Scholl, environmental scientist for the 752-acre Upper Newport Bay.

And there were some strange finds.

There are the couches, old water heaters and shopping carts. One year volunteers even found a minicoffin for someone's pet rat Jack.

"This is a day of discovery. We have such an amazing variety of junk," Scholl said. "I think it builds camaraderie for all the people who come out and say, 'We have to take a stand ... because no one else is going to do it.' "

CONTACT US: 949-454-7356 or lconnelly@ocregister.com



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