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Communities Unite for a Cleaner Future: Results from the Annual Beach & Riverside Cleanup

Portland, Ore., September 30, 2024 – From **September 20 through September 28**, families, community organizations, and individuals across Oregon and SW Washington participated in the **2024 SOLVE Beach & Riverside Cleanup**, celebrating several significant environmental dates: **International Coastal Cleanup Day**, September 21, **World Rivers Day**, September 22, and **National Public Lands Day**, September 28. This year, around 1,300 volunteers in 12 counties came together to collect litter, restore habitats, and engage in educational activities at nearly **80 event sites** with a focus on the **urban Portland and Vancouver area, beaches along the Oregon Coast from Seaside to Brookings, as well as inland lakes and riversides.**

The dates for the *Beach & Riverside Cleanup* were strategically chosen to include these important international environmental efforts, allowing **participants to be part of a global movement.** September 21 is **International Coastal Cleanup Day, uniting millions of volunteers worldwide** to protect our coasts and waterways from harmful trash and debris. This global movement amplifies the impact of local efforts, uniting communities for cleaner environments. World Rivers Day on September 22 highlighted the essential role rivers play in this journey from source to sea, reminding us that clean waterways are crucial for the health of our oceans. The **cleanup culminated on September 28 with National Public Lands Day, the nation's largest single-day volunteer event**, focusing on trail maintenance, habitat restoration, and native tree planting.

During this week-long initiative, volunteers collected an estimated **11,200 pounds of litter and marine debris** (which is the weight of 4 cars), amplifying the ongoing effort to protect our waterways and ecosystems. **28 coastal cleanups** were conducted this year. Since the event's inception in 1986, SOLVE has mobilized communities to collect more than 2.5 million pounds of trash from Oregon's natural spaces. SOLVE's dedication to environmental restoration was evident as **volunteers participated in more than a dozen habitat restoration projects**, where **1,205 sq feet of invasive species like English ivy and Himalayan blackberry** (equivalent to three car garages) were removed, 27 trees cleared, and 1,010 plants mulched.

"This year's *Beach & Riverside Cleanup* not only highlights the importance of protecting our environment but also **fosters a sense of community and engagement**, especially as families return to their routines after summer," says Kris Carico, CEO of SOLVE. "The **participation of** organizations such as Surfrider Foundation, Friends of Netarts Bay, and various watersheds councils, shows a collaborative commitment to conservation at the coast and beyond." At Siltcoos Beach, volunteers celebrated International Coastal Cleanup by removing marine debris near **protected western snowy plover sites**, a critical nesting area for these vulnerable birds. The Rockaway Lions Club invited volunteers to **welcome fall**. "We are proud to engage them for the *Beach & Riverside Cleanup 2024*, where the focus on family-friendly events made this year especially memorable," continues Carico.

The *Beach & Riverside Cleanup* also served as a **perfect back-to-school activity for families looking to bond over meaningful environmental work**. Engaging children in outdoor activities and educational programs promotes a lifelong commitment to protecting the planet.

SOLVE's annual cleanup not only addresses the immediate threat of litter but also **emphasizes the connection between inland sources of pollution and the health of our coastlines**. With approximately 80% of marine debris originating from these inland areas, the collective efforts of Oregonians are imperative as we approach the rainy season.

SOLVE expresses **gratitude to all volunteers, organizations, and partners who contributed to the success of this year's *Beach & Riverside Cleanup***. Special thanks to our sponsors: Chevron, Clean Water Services, Daimler Truck North America, Fred Meyer, Harper Houf Peterson Righellis Inc., Here is Oregon, Keen Footwear, Knife River, KOIN, Metro, NEEF, Oregon Parks and Recreation, and Owens Corning.

About SOLVE

SOLVE brings communities together to take care of our environment and enhance our waterways. Since 1969, the organization has grown from a small, grassroots initiative to a national model of volunteer action. Today, SOLVE mobilizes and trains thousands of volunteers of all ages across Oregon, and SW Washington, to clean and restore our neighborhoods and natural areas, while empowering a community of environmental stewards for our state. Visit solveoregon.org for more information.

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