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Kids spell out their love for the ocean

On May 22 over 650 elementary school students from Santa Ana, Anaheim, and Garden Grove cleaned up Huntington State Beach. After the cleanup, the students took part in an aerial art exhibition. This year students formed a design spelling out "OCEAN=LIFE" with an image of an endangered sea turtle.

The clean up was organized by Earth Resource Foundation, an environmental group dedicated to educating communities about sustainability. Earth Resource Foundation presents assemblies to area schools as part of their Kids Adopt a Beach program. The children learn about the dangers to marine wildlife from urban runoff (especially plastic), how to make environmentally friendly consumer choices, and how to organize a beach cleanup through their school. The program, funded by the Whale Tail License Plate grant, allows Earth Resource Foundation to educate over 1,500 children in underserved and urban schools.

In addition, Earth Resource Foundation partnered with Newport Harbor High School's Surf and Environmental class where students are working to find ways to stop pollution before it reaches the ocean. In February of last year students conducted a cleanup at the Santa Ana River Jetties in Newport Beach and collected thousands of pieces of plastic, particularly Styrofoam. The students took action by surveying businesses and consumers, holding a press conference and collecting over 600 signatures asking their city to ban Styrofoam (polystyrene). They are modeling their efforts after Portland, Ore., and Berkeley, Calif., which have already successfully banned Styrofoam.

The California Coastal Commission is the statewide coordinator of the Kids Adopt a Beach Cleanup, the year-round Adopt a Beach program, and Coastal Cleanup Day. All of these programs are funded by the Whale Tail License Plate Fund. Over 80,000 plates have been sold since 1996, raising more than \$4 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.

For involvement opportunities or to find out more contact Earth Resource Foundation at 949-645-5163 or www.earthresource.org.