



## Case Study: California Coastal Commission

### CALIFORNIA COASTAL CLEANUP DAY

#### BACKGROUND

The California Coastal Commission is a state agency charged with planning and regulating development and natural resource use along the coast in partnerships with local governments and in keeping with the requirements of the Coastal Act. Established in 1976, the Coastal Commission has – for 40 years - been responding to impacts to the California coastline, including development pressures and the need to promote coastal economic development while safeguarding natural coastal resources and ensuring coastal access for the public.

The **California Coastal Commission’s Public Education Program** works to increase public knowledge of coastal and marine resources and to engage the public in coastal protection and restoration activities. We offer a variety of conservation, education, and community involvement programs, the most popular being California Coastal Cleanup Day.

**California Coastal Cleanup Day** is an annual beach and shoreline cleanup event designed to engage the general public in a day of public service to remove trash that’s accumulated in our communities. The event brings together people of all different ages, races, and backgrounds all across California. Each year tens of thousands of people participate in the event (nearly 60,000 people participated in 2013).

The Coastal Commission is able to engage such a wide audience in large part by working with partners – local government agencies and non-profit organizations - around the state. This network of partners helps the Coastal Commission to conduct outreach and volunteer recruitment, while also helping to spread messages of environmental education to each organization’s local community. Our partners spread the message to their network of volunteers in all pre-event materials including at point of registration, on print material distributed, through email reminders, and through verbal word of mouth. The campaign has been a huge success, as we’ve used 50,000 less plastic bags in 2013 than we did in 2010.

#### CHALLENGE

The challenges are to communicate climate change issues within the framework of Coastal Cleanup Day, which is an event focused on marine debris, and to connect the two issues in the public’s mind without over-saturating potential volunteers with too many messages; to help leverage the popularity of the event to raise awareness about climate change impacts and solutions; to encourage community partners to distribute climate change messages when these organizations have their own potentially competing messages and priority issues; to communicate a complicated issue to a diverse public with varying concerns, values, and existing levels of understanding of climate issues; and to communicate tangible solutions to empower these individuals to act.

#### APPLICATION

The strategy developed to communicate climate disruption would be used during Coastal Cleanup Day 2014 which takes place on September 20th. Depending on the strategy itself, information could be disseminated before the event or on the day of at beaches and shorelines across California.