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## St. Monica Green Team

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# Celebrate National Clean Beaches Week

By Elizabeth Johnstone

Beaches are a beloved natural space of relaxation, spirituality, and fun. With the approaching National Clean Beaches Week, we should all remember our shared responsibility to our beaches and pitch in to take care of them, especially as summer celebrations pick up during the Independence Day weekend.

The good news is that you don't have to participate in a whole cleanup (though you certainly should if you can—visit our website to learn how to do one on your own). Below are three easy ways you can take care of our California coast from wherever you are this week.

## Keep your storm drains clean

Storm drains, more colloquially known as gutters, keep our streets from flooding during heavy rains. While they are extremely efficient at stopping flooding, they unfortunately push much more than water out into our oceans—trash, litter, solid waste, motor oil, pesticides, chemicals, and anything left behind on our streets.

When you find yourself wanting to wash something down the storm drain, consider disposing of it properly. If you have soapy or oily liquids, put them down the drain or in the garbage disposal where they will be sent to waste management. Additionally, make sure to pick up trash on the street next to storm drains before the next big rain.

## Clean up after yourself

During celebrations at the beach, leave the sand cleaner than you found it. Take the extra steps to the garbage bins, and recycle any plastics, paper, or metal that aren't contaminated.

And, although you may not have put it there, safely pick up stray pieces of trash that you find in the sand or close to the beach. If you don't have a few free hours to participate in a cleanup, this is a great alternative. The trash you dispose of adds up to make a big impact.

## Learn more

Learning something about our coastline can help you stay safe when you go to the beach. Heal the Bay has state-renowned [volunteer opportunities](#) and [educational resources](#) for you to browse through. Check out their most recent [beach report card](#), which details some of the healthiest beaches in California, and some of the most polluted.