

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 2, 2008

**Fresno Students To Take Action
for a Healthy Marine Environment
at Monterey Beach Cleanup Event
Friday, June 6th**

FRESNO, CA – Over 8,000 kids throughout the state will commemorate World Ocean Day during the 15th Annual Kids' Adopt-A-Beach Cleanup event taking place at seven locations all along the California coast, stretching from Humboldt County to San Diego. Locally, approximately 200 fourth and fifth grade students from Yokomi Elementary School will travel over 150 miles all the way from Fresno to the edge of Monterey Bay. They will be removing litter, and enjoying the rare opportunity to play on the sand. Some of these children will be visiting the ocean for the very first time. World Ocean Day is June 8th.

Times: Organizers and kids will be available for interviews between 10:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m.

Location: Municipal Beach in Monterey, just south of the Municipal Wharf, off of Del Monte Avenue.

This event is being organized locally by Lesley Gates of the Education Department at Fresno Chaffee Zoo. "It's so important that students in Fresno understand their connection with the ocean. I want the students to know that they can make a difference in protecting our precious planet by something as simple as picking up trash and recycling. And, I hope that students will take this experience and apply it to their daily lives by helping keep their school and neighborhood clean," she said.

Patrick Kruer, Chair of the California Coastal Commission, said, "I am inspired by this event and the children who participate in it, all taking action today to prevent debris from getting into the ocean and harming marine animals. The children learned about marine debris and other ocean threats in school, and understand that each of us can and need to be part of the solution to these problems. I would like to thank and congratulate them for being stewards of our beautiful coast and role models for the rest of us." The Coastal Commission coordinates the program statewide and provides financial support from the Whale Tail License Plate Fund.

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Fresno Chaffee Zoo provides environmental education programs to students from the Central San Joaquin Valley. The Zoo's mission statement is "to provide a fun, unique, and up-close experience that strengthens the bond between people and wildlife."

The Malibu Foundation for Environmental Education and the California Coastal Commission started the annual event in Los Angeles in 1994. With funding from the Whale Tail License Plate, this program expanded to serving Central Valley children in 2001. The program focuses on reaching children in underserved and inland schools. Prior to the cleanup, the program includes a series of school presentations providing information about the importance of the ocean and how the students' actions affect it.

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 generous support of the Whale Tail License Plate Fund. Over 170,000 plates have been sold since 1996, raising \$12.5 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.

Fresno Chaffee Zoo is open every day of the year from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. General admission during regular Zoo hours is \$7 for adults, \$3.50 for children 2-11 and seniors 62+, and children under 2 and Fresno Chaffee Zoo members are free. The mission of Fresno Chaffee Zoo is to provide a fun, unique and up-close experience that strengthens the bond between people and wildlife. The Zoo is accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA).

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