

Summary of May 26-27 PSU Collection Event

As reported in 5/30 teleconference with Josh Russo

Energy and enthusiasm ranked high at Ocean Cove for the first coordinated all-volunteer PSU gathering. An even 100 volunteer divers dove, some for just one of the days, plus significant shore support and kayakers. Due to rough seas, Ocean Cove's north side was worked both days. A compressor was on-site to fill scuba tanks. As the urchins were brought to shore, whole ones were crushed placed in 40 gallon containers for transport to be used as compost. On Saturday seven 40 gallon containers of crushed urchins were collected. DFG estimated 36,000 urchins were removed.

On Sunday 800 gallons of uncrushed PSU were collected, which were then crushed to fill 4 more 40 gal containers. They weighed 2500 pounds. The number of PSU was estimated to be about 20,000.

In toto over 50,000 PSU (2200 gallons uncrushed) PSU were collected. They weighed 7,000 pounds.

A raffle was held when the collecting was over, with 200-250 people attending it. It raised \$13,600, which will be put toward more commercial effort. The work performed both volunteer days was the equivalent of 14 commercial dive days. The money raised will fund another 14 commercial dive days.

100% of the raffle attendees said they would repeat this effort every-other month, alternating between Sonoma and Mendocino Counties. So the next all-volunteer PSU collection will be held July 21-22 at Albion/Schooner Landing.

Reef Check surveyed Ocean Cove the week before this PSU effort and estimated 80 urchins/square meter. They will take another survey soon in that area. It will be interesting to see how fast the PSUs move into the cleared area.

\$120,000 total has been raised by SCAN and the Watermans Alliance in the last six months.

DFW has shown both support and hesitancy toward these efforts. Their statistician Dr. Laura Rogers Bennett attended and helped provide above estimates. Dr. Cynthia Catton, with zoology and biological oceanography specialties, currently based at Bodega Bay, has been very helpful regarding these PSU efforts and is seeking grants to support more. Josh is still talking to Dr. Craig Shuman regarding a Scientific Collection Permit for further collecting. In April, DFW did increase the sport diver limit from 35 PSUs to 20 gallons of PSUs.