



MARIN, SONOMA AND MENDOCINO COUNTY PARTNER TO CREATE A CLEANER COAST
Teaching Leave No Trace Practices to Growing Visitor Audiences in Coastal Communities

June 15, 2022 – Marin, Sonoma and Mendocino Counties are launching a coordinated campaign to provide visitor education and outreach to reduce the amount of litter and waste in coastal regions and watersheds through a three-County memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the non-profit organization [Leave No Trace](#). The ongoing partnership includes coordination with federal and state agencies, federally recognized tribes, non-federally recognized tribes, local jurisdictions and land managers, Sonoma County Tourism, and other community-based groups across all three counties.

Beginning later this month, the bilingual campaign will include a broad scope of messaging that will be used by all three counties to educate and influence visitors prior to and during the summer season. Agencies and organizations partnering with the campaign will be able to share the Leave No Trace-based messaging resources in English and Spanish and take advantage of a new stewardship education series, both of which specifically address visitation impact issues taking place along the California coastline.

California Coastal beaches and public parks are experiencing rises in visitation year over year as important outlets for mental and physical health. Over 10 million people annually visit the California coastline and adjacent communities across Marin, Sonoma, and Mendocino counties. Even more staggering, over 55,000 pounds of trash were picked up from the sensitive coastal environment across the three counties last year alone.

“COVID-19 pushed more residents outdoors and drew them to the coast as they looked for safe ways to recreate,” said [Marin County](#) Supervisor Dennis Rodoni, who initiated the three-County collaboration in 2020. “This stressed our limited visitor-serving infrastructure, creating an overflow of trash and waste like I have never seen before.”

Sonoma County Tourism, the county’s destination stewardship organization, was instrumental in bringing the Leave No Trace organization into the partnership conversation with the three counties. Sonoma County Tourism has worked with Leave No Trace since April 2021 on the Sonoma County Leave No Trace Initiative.

Through its [Seven Principles](#), Leave No Trace provides a framework of minimum impact practices for anyone visiting the outdoors. New education messaging focusing on trash and litter in coastal watersheds is highly relevant due to a surge in visitation to all three counties’ coastlines and adjacent communities.

The new education messaging serves to complement existing Leave No Trace and other trash reduction efforts promoted by state, county and local parks officials in all three counties, as well as the Sonoma County Leave No Trace Initiative.

“We had a bit of a head start with the successful launch of our Leave No Trace campaign last year, and we are happy to leverage and coordinate our efforts with our neighbors from the north and south,” said [Sonoma County](#) Supervisor Lynda Hopkins. “Visitors don’t stop at county lines, nor does the flow of trash.”

Trash causes major impacts on our enjoyment of creeks, bays and the ocean, and creates significant impacts on aquatic life and habitat in those waters; trash eventually enters the global ocean ecosystem, where plastic persists in the environment for hundreds of years – if not forever.

“We don’t have the resources to launch this effort on our own,” [Mendocino County](#) Supervisor Ted Williams noted, “But with the support from our southern neighbors and non-profit partnerships with groups like MendoParks, we are excited to launch this campaign.” Fellow Mendocino County Supervisor Dan Gjerde added, “The key to moving this effort forward was the unanimous decision for all three counties to use a shared MOU and contract with Leave No Trace. We look forward to working together for years to come.”

“Leave No Trace is thrilled to be working with Marin, Sonoma and Mendocino Counties,” said Dana Watts, executive director of Leave No Trace. “With such diverse natural and cultural resources, we look forward to addressing the key issues in the area. Consistent messaging is crucial because there is no differentiation from visitors on what county they are in when they visit the coastline.”

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About Leave No Trace: Leave No Trace is an international movement, program and nonprofit organization that uses the power of science, education and stewardship, to ensure a sustainable future for the outdoors and the planet. The organization accomplishes this mission by delivering state-of-the-art education and research to millions of people across the country each year. For more information: www.LNT.org.

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