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# Cash-starved state parks go better with Coke

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**Story Highlights**

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Register photo of trash piled up at Huntington State Beach after January storm by Ken Steinhardt.

Coca Cola and Stater Bros. Markets are taking part in the new campaign, called “Care for Our Coast.” Coca Cola Bottling Co. will donate $1 to State Parks for every $10 purchase of the company’s products through April 25. During the same period, State Bros. will ask customers to make a $1 or $5 tax-deductible donation.

Donations also can be made online at the campaign’s Web site.

The campaign begins today.

The money collected -- they’re aming to match last year’s total of about $600,000 -- will be used for cleanups not only at Bolsa Chica and Huntington, but San Onofre State Beach, South Carlsbad State Beach and Malibu Lagoon State Beach. State Parks also will hold a cleanup at Huntington Beach on April 17, from 9-11 a.m., with Coke and Stater Bros. employees. The cleanup is also open to volunteers from the public.

And cleanups, including beach grooming, aren’t the only focus of the campaign. Solar-powered trash compactors will be installed to reduce the frequency of trash pickup, a money-saving measure, and coastal dune habitat also will be restored, said California State Parks director Ruth Coleman.

“This gives us the ability to do things we wouldn’t otherwise have the opportunity to do,” Coleman said.

The two companies took part in a similar campaign last year to plant trees in fire-ravaged state parks.

State Parks saw $14 million in budget cuts last year. Parks officials had initially proposed closing a number of parks, placing them in mothballs until funds were found to reopen them, but they instead met budgeting targets in part by slashing park hours and services.

Teaming with private companies for funding is helping State Parks with habitat restoration and other needed programs, Coleman said.

“These are challenging times,” she said. “And public-private partnerships help us make it happen.”