FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 2014

Students Ask Community to Join in ZERO WASTE WEEK
March 17-21, 2014

Students in California are inviting their local communities to “Go Green. Think Blue.”, and join them in the second annual Zero Waste Week, March 17-21. During this week-long campaign, students are focusing on reducing land-based waste and in turn, helping to protect the health of local marine environments. Their goal is to raise awareness of how single-use plastic and other types of litter affect the health of the local watersheds, our national marine sanctuaries and the ocean.

Zero Waste Week was established in 2013 by eight schools in and around the Carmel River watershed in central California. These eight schools were participants in NOAA’s Ocean Guardian School program, a program funded through the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries that encourages schools to become “guardians” of the ocean by implementing a stewardship-based project on campus and in their communities.

Students for Zero Waste Week 2014 continue to lead by example in their efforts to reduce waste such as replacing single use plastic bags and bottles with reusable items, reducing the use of plastic straws and paper napkins, and stepping up their recycling and composting efforts on their campuses. In addition, many of these schools are working towards the goal of zero waste lunches. As this growing effort unfolds on the school campuses, students for Zero Waste Week hope their united efforts will inspire community members to also strive for less waste on land and in the ocean.

To kick off your ongoing involvement in reducing litter that can end up as marine debris, consider any (or all) of the following suggestions:

- Say “NO thank you” to plastic straws when you are dining out
- Replace plastic sandwich and snack bags in your lunch with reusable lunch containers
- Replace paper plates with reusable eco-friendly plates
- Use cloth napkins instead of paper napkins
- Say “NO thank you” to plastic bags at your local stores and use reusable bags instead

Sponsors urge the community to join local students in their effort to minimize waste and help keep the ocean clean. Event sponsors include NOAA’s Office of National Marine Sanctuaries and Monterey Regional Waste Management District.