

Groups issue Earth Day call for action

By AMY ZUCKERMAN

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SANTA CRUZ — Local environmental groups kicked off Earth Day weekend with a renewed call for action and awareness Friday in their "State of the Environment" addresses.

"Our environment is under serious threats and we all have to be conscious of the new environmental hazards, and we have to react as quickly as possible," said Chris Broadwell of the Sierra Club. Broadwell said that the Sierra Club is celebrating its 100th anniversary this year.

Dan Haifly of Save Our Shores said, "Two years after the Exxon Valdez oil spill, our coast is as vulnerable as ever. The Department of the Interior estimates

that there is a 95 percent chance that we will have an oil spill along our coastline," he said.

"Whether the Monterey Sanctuary will prohibit oil drilling north of Ano Nuevo is still in question, and urban runoff, oil tankers, and dumping threaten our coastal waters," he said. Haifly said that the state Legislature will begin to decide on the off-shore drilling bill, called AB 854, next week.

Haifly also called Governor Wilson's recent establishment of Cal-EPA, a state environmental board, "a very positive step." He approved of having a "one-stop environmental shop," but warned that the lack of checks and balances within the system might endanger the success of environmental issues.

Michael Arenson of Earth Day Santa Cruz and the Environmental Council said, "Earth Day is a call to action — to make changes in our personal lives, and to reform the way work is done. We need to consider Mother Earth in every action we take."

Members of the Environmental Council, the Sierra Club, Santa Cruz Greens and Ecology Action spoke about their current focuses.

Bonnie Wilson, executive director for Ecology Action, explained a state bill that calls for cutting the amount of waste generated in half by the year 2000.

"It's a significant bill, and all municipalities throughout California are working very hard to develop source reduction and recycling to meet that mandate," she said.

Among Ecology Action's current projects are working with the city of Watsonville "to promote and develop their recycling program," an ecology program for schools, and helping to promote "ecoglass," which, unlike clear glass, can be recycled. Wilson also said that the group is the local coordinator for the "Adopt-A-Beach" program to clean up local beaches.

Tom Shaver of the Santa Cruz Greens said one of last year's accomplishments was the foundation in the County of the Green Collective, a gardening cooperative. Also newly formed is Greener Alternatives, a recycling program, and the Green Party, a political party advocating nonviolence, community-based economics and ecological restoration.

Progress has been made on environmen-

tal issues both in homes and in state government, said Haifly of Save Our Shores. "We have better reception in the governor's office, better reception at the local level, and people are practicing environmentally safe practices at home much more now than they were," he said.

Information on Earth Day activities, which run today through Monday at various locations, can be obtained by calling 426-2286.

The press conference also served to announce the new Environmental Resources Office at 1319 Pacific Ave. Save Our Shores, Ecology Action, Sierra Club, the Environmental Council and the Santa Cruz Greens all have space at the office. Hours are 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.