

# The Drop

FALL 2023





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The Surfrider Foundation is committed to fostering a just, equitable, diverse and inclusive organization for all people who protect and enjoy the world's ocean, waves and beaches.

Our success and impact depend on learning from our community, standing in solidarity with our allies and working toward a more just future, both for our organization and the environmental movement as a whole.



# All Hands on Deck

The summer of 2023 has been one for the record books for all the wrong reasons. We've witnessed the hottest temperatures ever recorded in the ocean (101° in Florida) and on land. Stifling heat waves not only continue to threaten the health and well-being of the most vulnerable, but impact everything from the health of our oceans to our economy.

The consequences of climate change are happening at a pace that is exceeding expectations and even surprising the scientific community.

It is clear that climate change is here. We are the cause. Immediate action is required. As climate expert, and recent Wave Maker awardee, Dr. Ayana Elizabeth Johnson says, "This is an all hands on deck moment."

The good news is that our coasts and ocean can also be part of the solution. Coastal ecosystems such as wetlands, mangroves, seagrass and kelp not only provide important habitat and can buffer the impacts of storms, they also have an incredible ability to sequester carbon.

At Surfrider, we are harnessing nature-based solutions to combat the effects of climate

change through living shorelines, dune and mangrove forest restoration, which can mitigate the impacts of climate change.

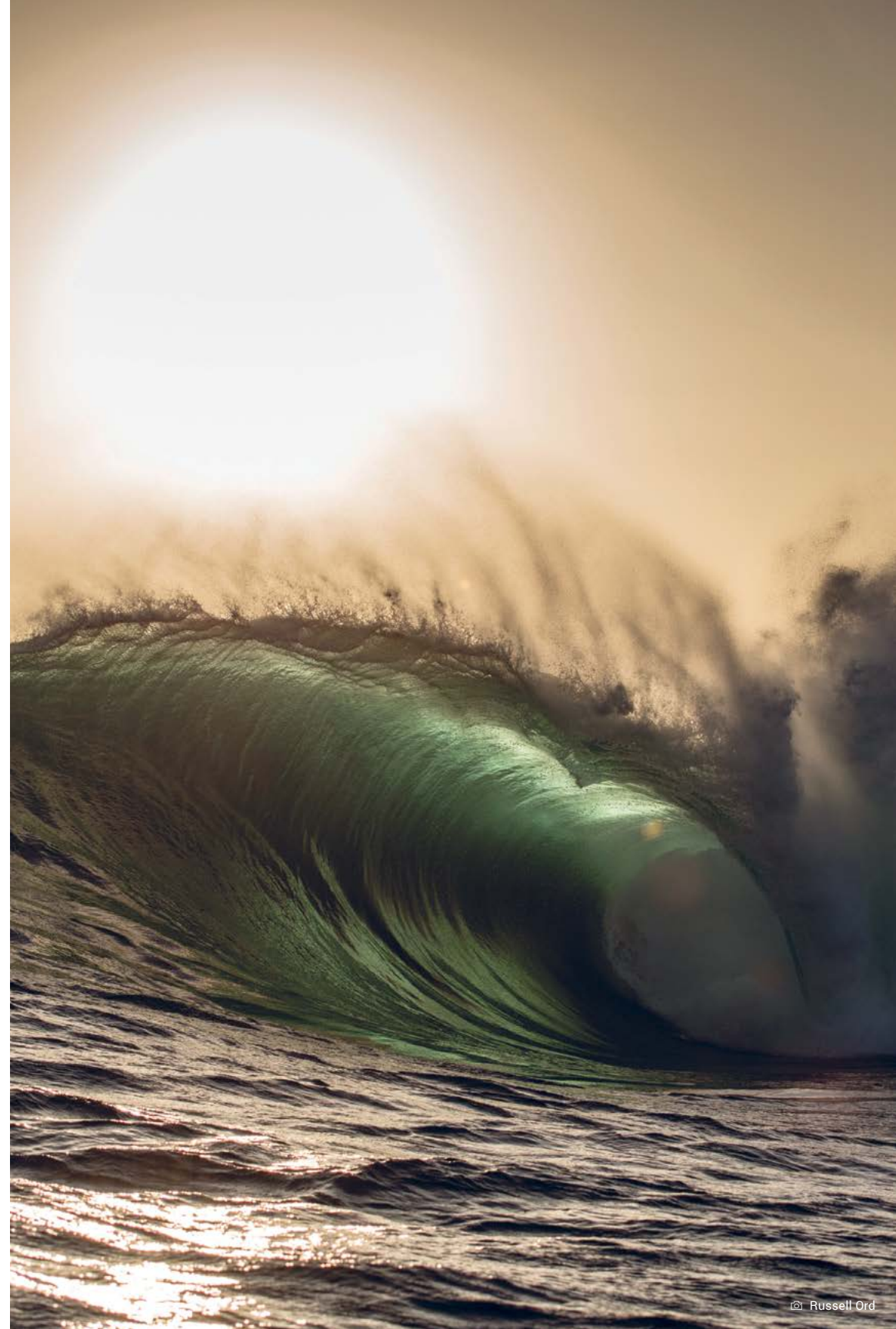
We are also harnessing the power of our people by continuing to grow our base of ocean activists through community building, making our network not only more inclusive and diverse, but also stronger and more resilient to ensure that our ocean, waves, and beaches are protected for all people. Everybody has a right to enjoy and a role to play in protecting the places we love.

Let the summer of 2023 be the turning point, where we don't wilt in the face of climate change, but we rally together and redouble our commitment to our ocean, and each other. The ocean needs more friends, now more than ever. Can we continue to count on you?

For Clean Water and Healthy Beaches,



Dr. Chad Nelsen  
Chief Executive Officer



# Climate Change is Upon Us, The Time to Adapt is Now

By: Zach Plopper, Senior Environmental Director

The ocean, for many, provides a place of wonder, fun, sport, and reprieve. For even more, it offers a primary food source. For all of us, it regulates the Earth's climate and makes our planet habitable.

Unfortunately, climate change is disrupting natural processes that make our ocean work the way it is intended to.

This past summer, the entire northern hemisphere experienced heat on land and water that had not occurred in 125,000 years. Ocean waters in the Florida Keys hit an unprecedented 101.1° F while wildfires raged across southern Europe, Canada, the Pacific Northwest, and even Hawai'i. We learned that the Atlantic Meridional Overturning Circulation (AMOC), a system of ocean currents within the Atlantic Ocean, is slowing due to rapidly melting glaciers and

warming waters, affecting everything from fisheries to atmospheric temperatures. Last winter in California, a series of winter storms replenished perilously low reservoirs, but also wreaked havoc on infrastructure and communities. It became apparent that California is not equipped for the waves and storm surge associated with such tempests.

These events are the symptoms of a rapidly changing climate. They are exactly what climate scientists, including the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), have been publicly anticipating for a quarter of a century. According to the IPCC, "it is unequivocal that human influence has warmed the atmosphere, ocean and land" and that "human-caused climate change is already affecting many weather and climate extremes in every region across the globe." What we've seen this year should not be a surprise.

If we decarbonize the global economy tomorrow, the sad truth is that the climate will continue to warm and seas will continue to rise – but phasing out of fossil fuels will slow the pace of change. While Surfrider is working hard to stop new offshore oil drilling in the U.S. and expedite the decommissioning of existing drilling, we know that we also must adapt our coasts to a future that looks very different from the past.

Through nature-based solutions, like protecting and restoring blue carbon ecosystems such as mangroves, salt marsh and seagrass meadows, we can adapt to a changing climate and even mitigate some of its effects. Mangroves sequester five times more carbon than tropical forests and store exponentially more in their surrounding sediment for millennia if left undisturbed. Meanwhile, they, along with other coastal ecosystems, buffer coastlines against storm surge as well as sea level rise. In Puerto Rico, Surfrider is restoring hundreds of acres of mangrove forests and our local network has planted more than 15,000 seeds.

Surfrider's chapters in San Diego, Milwaukee, Cape Fear, Miami and other areas are restoring coastal dunes that

are a first line of defense against the impacts of a changing climate.

In addition to protecting and restoring what's already there, we must retrofit our coasts to meet future challenges. This year, the California Coastal Conservancy approved more than \$16 million for phase two of the Surfers' Point managed retreat and living shoreline project in Ventura, California. This nature-based approach to coastal adaptation moves a parking lot and bike path inland, allowing for restored dunes and native vegetation to take root. This is part of a multi-decadal project to improve the resilience of an iconic stretch of Southern California coastline. Similar work is being launched by Surfrider in Cannon Beach, Oregon this year.

The major polluting nations of the world have to start to consume less and emit fewer greenhouse gas emissions. We also need to plan for the inevitable: a warmer climate, more severe storms, higher seas, and disproportionate effects across coastlines and communities. If we want accessible beaches so we can surf, swim and play in the future, we must act now and double down on climate-smart adaptation.



The West Coast experienced unprecedented rain and more intense storms in 2023 as a result of climate change.



Right: Volunteers in Florida restore sand dunes to protect the coast from climate change impacts. Left: Miami Beach, FL.





# Brick Howze: Ebony Beach Club

## Can you tell us a bit about yourself and your background?

I'm Brick Howze, a multi-platinum music producer, DJ, average Joe surfer, community organizer and "Re-Founder" of Ebony Beach Club.

## Can you tell us about Ebony Beach Club, its origin, and why you founded the organization?

In 2020, I was teaching myself to surf in LA. Between localism, prejudice, the eggy attitude that comes with surfing in LA, and the general "anti-kook" culture... learning to surf will deter most newcomers, and especially people of color, from wanting to continue on their journey. What is now known as Ebony Beach Club was formed to act as a beacon for the "others" and black surfers out there that felt like me, or perhaps had a similar experience. We wanted to surf, feel welcomed, and have a safe space and community to build and grow with. Surfers could have a sense of camaraderie, like skateboarding, if we all shared that unspoken code of ethics.

We decided to just ignore surf culture, and create a new intersection of surf and OUR culture – a Black American surf culture that we've never seen on display. We also wanted to shine light on the history of the original Ebony Beach Club, which was born in Santa

Monica back in 1957 by a black entrepreneur named Silas White, but shut down prior to its official opening due to eminent domain. So today's Ebony Beach Club is a reimagining, a rejoicing, and a rebirth of the work of those who tried before us, but were DENIED ACCESS at the hands of Jim Crow era rulings here in Los Angeles, CA.

## How does Ebony Beach Club work to create a beach and surf culture that is welcoming to all people?

We're organizing these epic, celebratory gatherings on the beach at Dockweiler, and giving free surf lessons to all black, indigenous, and people of color who are interested. It's like putting medicine in the candy. We knew we needed to carve out space to serve the needs of Black beach-goers in Los Angeles. We're a statistical minority in this city (less than 9% of the population is black) and it's easy to feel alone in the lineup when you don't see others who look like you. There's a lot of restorative justice that needs to happen, and is actively happening at our beaches, and we're blessed to be a piece of that justice in a way that's fun and palatable for the community. The beach is supposed to be fun, safe and welcoming for all. We're actively dismantling the barriers of entry for our community, which will inherently evolve a more inclusive beach environment.

**We're actively dismantling the barriers of entry for our community, which will inherently evolve a more inclusive beach environment.**



**What are some of the most pressing issues that are affecting your local beaches, your community, and your organization?**

Permits for our gatherings and dealing with Los Angeles' beach jurisdiction has been the core of our struggle. We brought a crowd of about 5,000 people to the beach, peacefully, respectfully, and hosted a community beach clean-up that night and the next morning. Ever since then, the legal bureaucracy of Los Angeles has put a target on our back. There's like four agencies (The County, The City, The Beaches and Harbors Dept, and the Coastal Commission) that create a cluster of overlapping, unclear, and outdated regulations, and selective enforcement, that has made it difficult for us to continue to build community as we did during our first year.

I believe this is all a part of an antiquated system that was designed to minimize the social impact and liability that our communities may pose to the city and county. Our events have been issued cease and desist orders because there is "no amplified sound" allowed at the beaches, which is an unclear regulation that is selectively enforced along the LA County coast. It has placed our beach community's social events on hold for the entirety of the summer of 2023. I see it as a contemporary iteration of the "eminent domain" policies that have affected black beach enterprises across the last century, such as Bruce's

**I see a beachfront physical space manifesting, much like the dream of the original Ebony Beach Club. A place where we can convene, store our boards, share stories, and practice wellness as a community – a space that we can call ours.**

Beach and Ebony Beach Club from 1957 in Santa Monica. We're currently working with the Board of Supervisors to create sustainable solutions. Progress is on the horizon, but will be slow.

**Where do you see Ebony Beach Club in the future? What's on the horizon for you and the organization?**

I see a beachfront physical space manifesting, much like the dream of the original Ebony Beach Club. A place where we can convene, store our boards, share stories, and practice wellness as a community – a space that we can call ours. I see more integration of surf teams and programs at the inner city schools that don't have the geographical advantage of proximity. I see a soul music festival on the beach to celebrate the essence of music as the connective tissue that has inspired us to gather at the ocean. I see us working with kids more. I see international travel camps to build community, share the gift of surfing, and open the eyes of our community to the beauty of the world, while being with people that make us feel at home. I see leisure being a priority in people's lives, as we break away from workaholic culture. The ocean naturally did that for me, and I hope that it can do that for others.

**Anything else you'd like to share?**

EVERYBODY IS WELCOME AT EBONY BEACH CLUB.



Sofly Surf School leading the free surf lessons at Ebony Beach Club.



# Solidarity in the Struggle for Clean Border Water Now

By: Sarah Davidson, Clean Border Water Now Manager

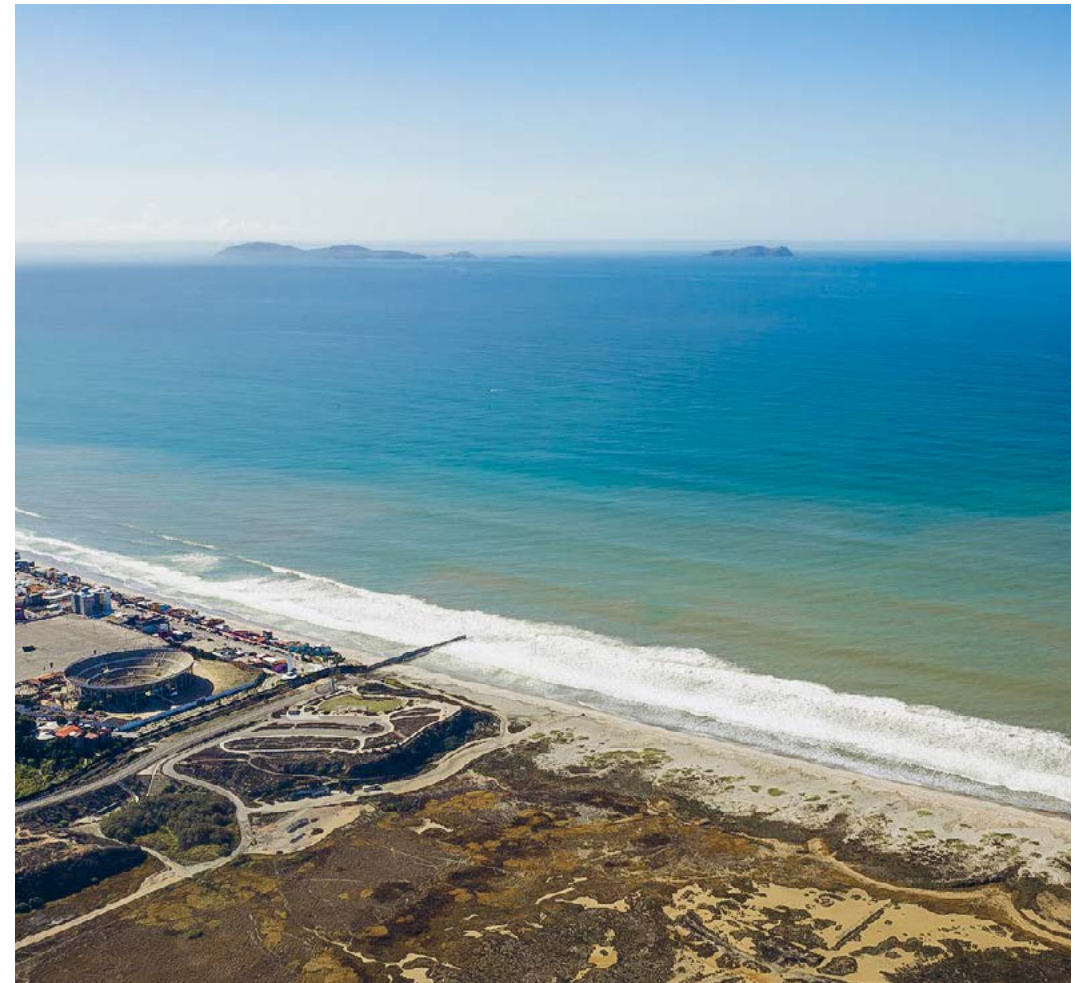
The U.S./Mexico border region is steeped in rich multicultural identities that date back thousands of years. Those of us who call this region home are aware of the immense biodiversity it hosts, the ephemeral streams and rivers that appear after a rain and run dry the rest of the year, and the world class surf breaks that draw people from all corners of the globe. This region also contains the Tijuana Estuary – the largest coastal wetland in Southern California, one of the few remaining salt marshes, and home to over 370 bird species.

Yet, despite its cultural, ecological, and geopolitical importance, this complex and beautiful region is plagued with severe transboundary pollution that forces beach closures throughout South San Diego County and causes wide-spread illnesses on both sides of the border. Every day millions of gallons of toxic waste carrying raw sewage, harmful chemicals, heavy metals, trash, and debris flow across the U.S./Mexico border through the Tijuana River Watershed and out into the Pacific Ocean. Additionally, the San Antonio de los Buenos Wastewater Treatment Plant just south of the border discharges approximately 35 million gallons of untreated sewage into the Pacific Ocean each day. Currents carry this pollution up the coast during the summer, posing

further public health risks at San Diego beaches. Recent research from the Scripps Institute of Oceanography linked 34,000 illnesses in 2017 to water quality pollution along the Imperial Beach coastline.

Free trade agreements with the U.S. have incentivized large-scale industrialization in Tijuana and spurred decades of practically unregulated development and rapid population growth to supply a requisite workforce. Unfortunately, this growth has not been matched by adequate infrastructure, and deteriorating wastewater treatment systems on both sides of the border have conflated the problem, resulting in the large flows of toxic pollution.

In this border region, where many families live near or below the poverty line, the toxic flows are destroying critical ecosystems, crippling local economies, and threatening our national security. These impacts are also being disproportionately felt by Latinx families that live in communities throughout South San Diego County. With increasing impacts from climate change causing severe weather events, this decades-old public health and environmental justice crisis has indeed become a national emergency that can no longer be ignored.



Sewage pollution flows through the Tijuana River watershed and the San Antonio de los Buenos Wastewater Treatment Plant into the ocean at the U.S./Mexico border.

For over ten years the San Diego County Surfrider Chapter has worked alongside community partners to advocate for solutions through the Clean Border Water Now campaign. Significant progress was made last year with the successful settlement of a lawsuit brought by Surfrider and various aligned entities in litigation that include the San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board, City of Imperial Beach, City of Chula Vista, Port of San Diego, City of San Diego, and California State Lands Commission to

force the International Boundary and Water Commission to resolve one of the most egregious Clean Water Act violations in the nation. The outcomes of the settlement, as well as the planned Environmental Protection Agency infrastructure projects at the border, are expected to reduce over 75% of contaminated flows year-round and 95% of beach closures due to water quality impairments in summer months. But without the financial investment needed to implement these solutions, the pollution flows continue unabated.



This year alone, more than 35 billion gallons of pollution have flowed across the border (as of August 1st). This threatens not only people who enjoy recreating in the ocean and visiting the beach, but also the livelihoods of those whose jobs depend on clean water and beaches. Even worse, the safety of lifeguards and first responders is imperiled by the toxic waste during rescues and dives.

U.S. Border Patrol and Navy personnel also conduct activities and training in contaminated environments in South San Diego County. Several Border Patrol agents have reported getting sick from entering toxic water, even contracting flesh-eating bacteria. Some beaches in South San Diego County have been closed for over 630 consecutive days and counting due to toxic flows.

“An entire generation of children is growing up in South San Diego County, having only experienced polluted beaches”, wrote Imperial Beach Mayor Aguirre in her June 6 letter to the Biden-Harris administration. Can you imagine your local beach being closed for that long? What would you do if your children got sick after playing in the ocean on a hot summer day?

Through the San Diego Chapter’s Clean Border Water Now campaign, the Surfrider Foundation is standing in solidarity with community groups, local officials, and residents who are fed up with these conditions and are demanding clean water, safe beaches, and healthy outdoor spaces for all to enjoy.

## Some beaches in South San Diego County have been closed for over 630 consecutive days and counting due to toxic flows.



Over the summer, Surfrider joined more than 40 community organizations to send a letter to CA Governor Newsom and President Biden. The letter calls for a state-wide and federal emergency declaration, which would expedite access to federal resources for repairing, expanding, and building new infrastructure to significantly decrease the flow of toxic transboundary pollution.

Surfrider will continue to work alongside impacted communities and apply pressure until an emergency is declared and the transboundary pollution is addressed.

Visit [Surfrider.org/action](https://www.surfrider.org/action) to sign our petition and add your voice to help secure the federal intervention and leadership our border region needs to protect clean water and restore safe and healthy communities.



Top Left: Signs posted at the beach to warn of contaminated water. Top Right: Surfrider volunteers march in solidarity with community groups, local officials, and residents who are fed up with poor water quality conditions. Bottom Right: Imperial Beach in San Diego, CA.



# Restoring Puerto Rico's Mangroves

By: Hector Varela-Valez, Organizador Comunitario de Puerto Rico

An estimated two-thirds of Puerto Rico's mangroves have disappeared from deforestation and climate change. In precolonial times, mangroves were critical ecosystems for the archipelago's indigenous inhabitants, providing habitat for fish, crustaceans, birds and turtles – all important sources of protein. Even the seeds of red mangroves were a food source.

With the arrival of Spanish colonizers and the establishment of monoculture, mangroves were seen as places of scarce agricultural production, associated with vermin, mosquitoes and disease. Mangrove wood was used for the construction of houses and boats, and also to make charcoal and firewood.

Thus, little by little, mangrove forests were cut down due to a lack of knowledge of the importance of this ecosystem for the future. Under these circumstances, the Spanish government proclaimed a law for the protection and conservation of mangroves in the Puerto Rican archipelago. However, this law was not sufficiently respected enough to slow the decline of the ecosystem.

With the arrival of the second colonization by the United States, monoculture continued and mangrove forests continued to be cut down. Over time, the agrarian era evolved into an industrial economy. This change mobilized communities from farms in the center of the

island to the industrializing coastal areas. This interest in land adjacent to the sea continued the deforestation of the mangroves, with the intention of constructing houses and buildings. This development also caused the destruction of sand dunes, which became an essential raw material for construction.

Consequently, the natural barriers that today would protect Puerto Rico from hurricanes, erosion and climate change continued to be destroyed.

In spite of the laws and agencies established to protect Puerto Rico's natural resources, tourism and other speculative interests have traditionally targeted mangrove forested areas and other coastal ecosystems for development.

After Hurricane Maria hit Puerto Rico in 2017, one of the strongest hurricanes to hit the archipelago in recorded history, coastal communities began to understand the importance of natural barriers such as mangroves. Now there is more education about these blue carbon ecosystems, and a new movement dedicated to their protection.

Surfrider is restoring four mangrove forests on the Puerto Rican coastline. One of these areas lost 95% of its mangroves after Hurricane Maria. We are currently working with surrounding communities, local students, other NGOs and the local university to reforest this ecosystem.



Surfrider volunteers restoring mangrove forests on the Coast of Puerto Rico.

**We have planted more than 10,000 mangroves in the area and are helping communities understand the importance of mangroves, and engaging them in their conservation.**

We have planted more than 10,000 mangroves in the area and are helping communities understand the importance of mangroves, and engaging them in their conservation. According to a local volunteer, "to see how children and parents, the young and old, get involved in each activity, brings the greatest satisfaction. To see the growing interest in learning and being part of the solution is encouraging."

We are developing a mangrove and coastal plant nursery in Isabela to continue the

efforts of this project. This facility has been made possible thanks to the support of our members and donors. The nursery will be 100% rainwater and solar powered.

While the past has been challenging for Puerto Rico's coastal mangroves, the future looks much more promising. The conservation and restoration of the islands' mangroves are critical for the protection of its coastal communities, ecosystems, and future vitality.

# The Power of Monthly Giving: Becoming the Ocean's Friend Year-Round

By: Chris Casey, Membership Manager

The Surfrider Foundation stands as a tireless advocate for the protection of our ocean, waves, and beaches. For nearly four decades, members and supporters like YOU have worked to safeguard these precious resources and fight against the numerous threats they face, including climate change, plastic pollution, offshore drilling, and water contamination.

Donations from our supporters is what makes it all possible. And while annual contributions have been the norm for many years, monthly donations have become essential to sustaining Surfrider's growth and success.

As the year draws to a close, nonprofits traditionally witness a surge in donations during the "year-end giving season." This period, typically from late November to December, is when many donors make their annual contributions to causes and charities that they support. While this seasonal giving is undoubtedly valuable, it presents certain challenges for organizations like Surfrider. The influx of donations may lead to funding peaks, followed by leaner months during the rest of the year. Consequently, this fluctuation can make it difficult for an organization to plan and allocate resources effectively to tackle ongoing issues throughout the year.

In contrast, monthly donations offer a consistent and reliable stream of resources for Surfrider that can be allocated strategically throughout the year. By pledging a small amount each month, donors become instrumental in empowering Surfrider's mission on an ongoing basis. Monthly donations not only help with immediate conservation efforts, but also enable the organization to plan ahead, take on long-term initiatives, and respond quickly to any crisis, such as an oil spill or a hurricane.

You might wonder how a modest monthly donation can surpass a larger annual contribution? The key lies in the cumulative effect of consistent support. Monthly donors, even with seemingly small contributions, collectively provide the resources necessary to make a significant impact. With a dedicated group of monthly supporters, Surfrider can continue to grow, increasing our reach to all coastlines, increasing our impact, and having the flexibility to address urgent matters as they arise.

These monthly donors demonstrate their commitment to the cause by providing dependable resources that allow Surfrider to focus more on impactful projects and less on constant fundraising efforts.



Surfrider activists, surf industry leaders and ocean enthusiasts join together in Washington, D.C. to advocate for stronger protections for our coasts and ocean at Surfrider's seventh annual Coastal Recreation Hill Day.

Monthly giving is a commitment, but it need not be a burden. It demonstrates commitment to our mission and builds our community that is the Surfrider Foundation. The Surfrider Foundation's mission to protect the ocean, waves, and beaches for all people requires unwavering dedication and resources. While annual contributions have been the traditional method of supporting the cause, monthly donations offer a more sustainable and impactful approach.

By contributing regularly, donors become essential to empowering Surfrider's efforts year-round, providing a steady stream of resources to tackle pressing challenges. Small monthly donations, when combined, have the power to make a significant impact and demonstrate the strength of unity among the ocean's friends. So, let's stand together and be the consistent and reliable friends the ocean needs - not just during the year-end giving season, but every month of the year.

**So, let's stand together and be the consistent and reliable friends the ocean needs – not just during the year-end giving season, but every month of the year.**



**FRIENDS  
DON'T LET  
FRIENDS  
FILL UP WITH  
PLASTIC**



**THE OCEAN NEEDS MORE FRIENDS**



**SURFRIDER  
FOUNDATION**



# Don't Mess With Texas Beaches

By: Sarah Damron, Senior Regional Manager - Southeast, Texas & Great Lakes

Texans of all stripes love their beaches. The Texas Gulf Coast has 367 miles of coastline, much of which is wide, sandy beaches and dunes, flanked by warm ocean water. There are abundant recreational opportunities both in the water and onshore, providing something for everyone.

This broad-based affinity for the Texas coast is both evidenced and protected by law, with Texas having some of the strongest protections of public beach access in the country. In 1959, the groundbreaking Texas Open Beaches Act was passed into law, providing to the public free and unrestricted access to the area between the mean high tide line and the vegetation line. Subsequently, in 2009, Texans voted overwhelmingly to amend the state constitution, solidifying beach access as a constitutional right under Article I Section 33.

Despite Texans' strong love for their beaches and an equally strong legal basis that protects beach access, beach access rights are persistently threatened. As beaches become increasingly encroached upon by development on one side and the sea on the other, particularly in light of severe storm events and sea level rise, short-sighted reactions to protect landward private development have taken place. Private landowners and local governments pursue actions and policies that infringe

upon the public's rights, such as allowing private structures to be built too close to the beach, deterring public access with signage, and relocating public parking.

During years that the Texas state legislature is in session, which occurs every odd-numbered year, local efforts to erode beach access rights are often incorporated into statewide bills. If passed into law, the provisions of these bills would impact beach access across the state.

This year's state legislative session was a doozy, with eight bills filed that would have adversely impacted beach access. These bills included provisions ranging from seemingly innocuous efforts to allow the Texas General Land Office to grant partial approval of Beach Access and Use Plans (which, effectively, could allow municipalities to be partially non-compliant as well), to more egregious attempts to redefine the public beach area.

Across a span of five months, Surfrider's Texas chapter leaders were able to leverage their savvy, experience, and connections to generate a formidable wave of press coverage, raise awareness, and mobilize Texans to contact their state legislators. At the close of session, all eight bills failed to pass, leaving existing beach access laws intact and beach access supporters victorious.



Boardwalk leading to East Beach on Galveston Island, Texas

The outcome of the chapters' efforts, and this huge win, means that Texans and visitors who love Texas beaches will continue to be afforded the unrestricted right to use and access them ... until the next time threats arise. It will be important for Texans and those visiting

Texas to remain vigilant, keeping an eye on city council agendas and tuning in to the 2025 state legislative session. But rest assured that our Texas chapters, along with your support, will be there to convey the message: Don't Mess with Texas Beaches.



# Defending the Coast with Rip Curl

By: Mary Herbranson, Senior Partnerships Manager

Established in 2015, Surfrider's Surf Industry Coastal Defender program seeks to engage and learn from industry leaders who represent a core segment of our community: surfers and ocean recreation enthusiasts. We were honored in 2019, when Rip Curl elevated their support to align with their core values.

Born in 1969 out of Torquay, Australia, Rip Curl was a vehicle for the never-ending search for perfect waves of two surfing mates, Doug 'Claw' Warbrick and Brian Singer, and the adventures and enjoyment that inevitably followed. This is where the mantra "Living the Search" comes from – it's been the soul of the company since its inception.

Today, Rip Curl's core values guide their focus to exceed customer expectations through a deep-rooted commitment to creatively innovate the best products possible. Rip Curl's emphasis on the environment drives their active participation in protecting our ocean and coastlines.

In our partnership, Rip Curl engages with the Surfrider mission, co-hosting and engaging professional athletes in the annual Coastal Defender beach cleanup tour across the

U.S., in addition to their Planet Day event for company employees that includes education, volunteerism and surfing. In 2023, Rip Curl offered Surfrider access to Rip Curl watch data collected from surfers in San Diego, California. This project enables Surfrider to assess baseline conditions of surfability in an area subject to beach nourishment projects. Results will inform future nourishment practices and will serve as a case study for surf monitoring efforts with the goal of protecting the quality of surf breaks.

Surfrider applauds Rip Curl's recent certification as a B Corp, joining a global community of businesses committed to balancing profit with accountability for their impact on people and the planet. The independent certification requires stringent standards for positive social and environmental impact, and is a reflection of Rip Curl's passion for preserving the ocean and beaches that are central to surfing's way of life and the future of "The Search."

Surfrider's ability to achieve and grow our mission is made possible through the financial and hands-on contributions from companies such as Rip Curl, along with the dedicated coastal defenders who work there.

**Surfrider applauds Rip Curl's recent certification as a B Corp, joining a global community of businesses committed to balancing profit with accountability for their impact on people and the planet.**



Top: Surfrider CEO Chad Nelsen, professional surfer and Rip Curl athlete Mason Ho with Noah Cohen of Rip Curl. Bottom: Annual Coastal Defender beach cleanup co-hosted by Rip Curl and Surfrider in O'ahu.

Erik Kabik



## AMBASSADOR PROFILE

# Shelly Simon

### Why and when did you get involved with the Surfrider Foundation?

In winter 2020, I was new to California and had just established an inclusive surf community focused on LGBTQ+ surfers. I had heard of Surfrider and got involved when the LA chapter was looking for a volunteer social media manager.

### What inspires you to be active in ocean conservation?

Photography, like the ocean, has gifted me the permission to express myself how I want to. I love it and it loves me back without expectation. It's been the place I can go to and be my full self without any restrictions, critiques or complaints. So I want to give back to the ocean in ways that she can't. She can't pick up trash out of her waves, or on her sands or in her rocks. That being said, something that really inspired me was the phrase, "If you see it – it's yours." Meaning, if you see trash along the beach or in the water, it's your duty to pick it up and put it in its right place.

### How did you get involved with photography?

I have been photographing for as long as I can remember, even some of my tattoos are from film photos I took of my cats as a kid. In 2015 I moved to New York City to give it a go, and fell into music photography – going to shows nightly, photographing bands, sharing the images, and that cycle would bring me to festivals, tours, events, editorial, nature and wedding photography. From the streets to the studio, I continue to challenge myself behind the lens. If it gets easy, time to make it hard.

### What has been the highlight of your experiences as a professional photographer?

I've gotten to travel to some of the coolest locations, photograph some of the prettiest products and people, but all that aside, being able to be considered professional and be respected for my creative craft. To be a minority in regards to sexual orientation and gender fluidity in a male-dominated space, it's just nice to be noticed and highlighted. To answer your question: probably visibility.





## BOARD MEMBER PROFILE

# Tom Garcia

### What is your current job and what is your role with the Surfrider Foundation?

I have worked at Deckers Brands for nearly 15 years. Deckers is a global footwear and apparel company best known for the HOKA, UGG, Sanuk and Teva brands. My current role at Deckers is Chief Administrative Officer, where I oversee strategy and business development, ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance), as well as legal and corporate communications. At Surfrider, I am a member of the board of directors and treasurer.

### Why and when did you get involved with the Surfrider Foundation?

I joined the Board of Directors of Surfrider in 2020. Having called Santa Barbara home for the last 22 years, the ocean, beaches and coastlines are a huge part of my life and family, and I was looking for an opportunity to give back and contribute to an organization that is focused on affecting real change. Surfrider was a perfect fit, and I'm honored to be a part of the team.

### What are some local issues that are affecting your local ocean, waves, and beaches?

Well, that's a long list. The Santa Barbara area experiences plastic pollution, coastal erosion, kelp deforestation, oil spills, wildfires, mudslides, flooding, and beyond. The work to be done to address these issues is only growing, and time is of the essence.

### What has been the highlight of your Surfrider experience?

The highlight of my experience has been meeting the people that comprise the Surfrider family: members of chapters, staff, partners and board are all simply incredible. Working together, we are powerful, and it's amazing to see the positive impact that the people of Surfrider, with their passion, are making across the globe.

### What is the most important thing you tell others about Surfrider?

Surfrider is a powerhouse environmental organization that is truly making a difference. The team is vast, skilled, passionate, and it's managed very well.



**Surfrider is a powerhouse environmental organization that is truly making a difference. The team is vast, skilled, passionate, and it's managed very well.**



# FRIENDS LOOK OUT FOR ONE ANOTHER

Wear your support for our friend, the ocean.  
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**THE OCEAN NEEDS MORE FRIENDS**





# Lalitha Muttulingam

## What is your current role with the Surfrider Foundation?

I am currently the President and Founder of the Surfrider Foundation Redondo Union High School Club, the Assistant Student Lab Director at Surfrider's South Bay Blue Water Task Force Teach and Test Program, a member of the Surfrider South Bay Beach Cleanup Committee, and a new member of the Surfrider Student Club Leadership Council.

## Why and when did you get involved with the Surfrider Foundation?

In 2019, when I was just 12, I went to a Surfrider beach cleanup with my family, where we met Mary Simun who introduced us to the Teach and Test program. Ever since then, I've been going to Teach and Test regularly and getting more involved. In my sophomore year, I founded my school's Surfrider Foundation Club.

## Are there any specific project(s) that you have worked on which benefited your community?

I have focused on Surfrider South Bay's Blue Water Task Force Teach and Test Program, where students collect ocean water samples from our local beaches and run tests to

determine the amount of enterococcus bacteria (fecal matter) in the water. Our results from the Teach and Test program are posted on Instagram and the Surfrider South Bay website, helping members of our community avoid unsafe beaches. My school's newspaper recently featured an article on members of the surf team falling sick from the bacteria in the water and cited Teach and Test's previous results at that beach to back their statements and raise awareness about the unsafe conditions the surfers were facing.

## What has been the highlight of your Surfrider experience?

Establishing my school's Surfrider Foundation Club has been my highlight. I established the club so I could introduce other students to Surfrider volunteering opportunities. We have involved many students from diverse backgrounds, people you wouldn't otherwise expect to be involved with ocean protection. Surfrider allows people to help their community and protect the ocean in an accessible way – even if someone can't fully commit, they can still do what they can when they can, and it will benefit their community and ocean.

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ARTIST PROFILE

# Alex Weinstein

**When was the first time you went surfing and what was it like?**

I went surfing alone on a stormy day, taking out a D-fin log from the 1960s that a neighbor had sold to me for 12 dollars. It was 1982 and I was 12 years old. I nearly drowned. That day changed my entire life.

**What inspires you and the art you create?**

Almost everything I make is drawn in some way from the landscapes I have inhabited: New England, Brittany, France and Los Angeles are all key players in my work. Time spent in the ocean; watching the light move across the water and the color spray of the evening sky over the Pacific are all over my work.

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Installation views at Greenfield Sacks Gallery, Santa Monica, 2011.





**How did you come up with the concept for our recent collaboration and what does it represent?**

I made a group of paintings for Surfrider that celebrate the interplay of light on the sea-horizon. It's where we set our gaze as surfers but also where we collectively, as a species, set our attention in remembrance, in expectation and hope, in solace and in rapture. It's the grand potential vista of the human experience.

**What is the most important thing you tell others about protecting the ocean, waves and beaches?**

When I leave the water after surfing or swimming, I collect every piece of trash I walk by. That's my method, and I have seen others taking up their version of it. Small but consistent acts have grand potential.

Top: Untitled for Surfrider, oil on canvas, 39 x 57 inches.  
Bottom Left: Swell Model, 2018, cast polyester resin, concrete, oil paint, 7 x 7 x 19 inches. Bottom Middle: Mentawai 2022. Bottom Left: Ocean State detail.



# Coastal Victories Update

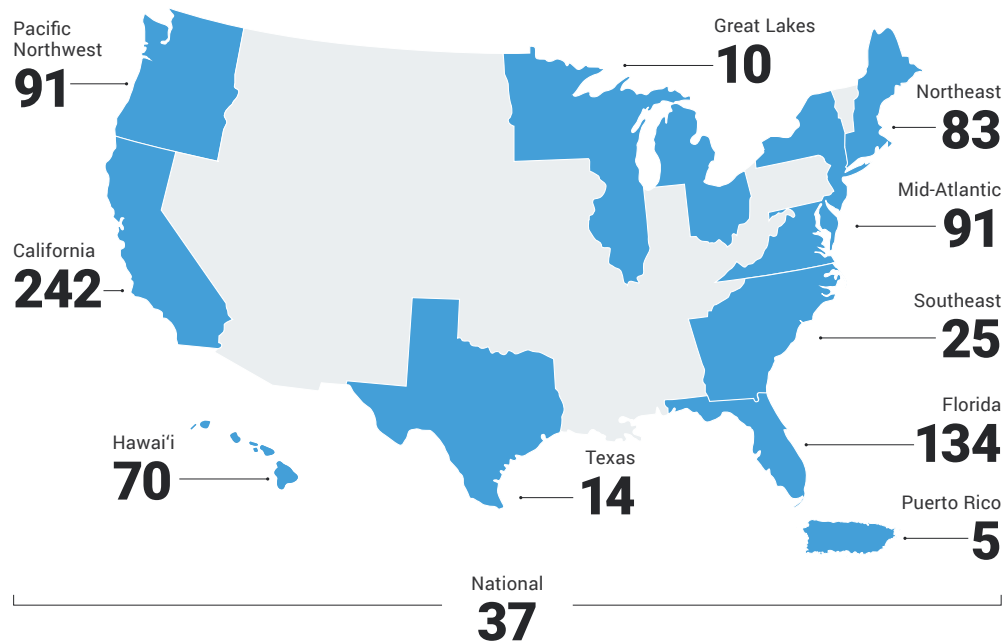
A coastal victory is a decision made in favor of the coastal and ocean environment that results in a positive conservation outcome, improves coastal access, or both.

For more information visit [surfrider.org/campaigns](https://surfrider.org/campaigns).

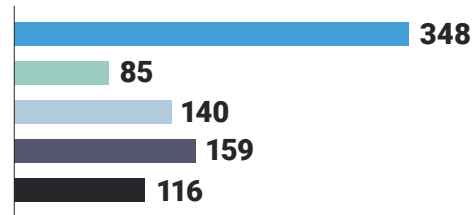
# 854

Total Victories Since 2006

## VICTORY LOCATIONS

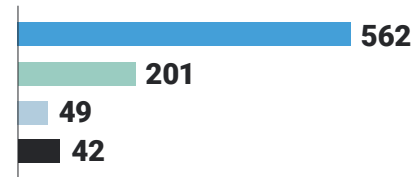


## VICTORY TYPE



- Plastic Reduction
- Clean Water
- Coast & Climate
- Beach access

## VICTORY SCOPE



- Local
- Regional
- State
- Federal



# Leave a Lasting Legacy

Help advance the protection of our ocean, waves and beaches for future generations.

Contact us about planned giving at [info@surfrider.org](mailto:info@surfrider.org)

