

# The Drop

SPRING 2023





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.



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# Driving Change to Ensure Clean Water and Healthy Beaches for All People

Over the past year, many of us have experienced the significant impacts of extreme weather, from coastal erosion, rising seas and hurricanes to flooding, torrential rain and bomb cyclones. The effects of a changing climate are clear and we must double down on our efforts to protect our ocean, waves, beaches and coastal communities for the future. We're working nationwide to elevate our collective actions to take on the increasing threats facing our ocean and coasts, including water and plastic pollution, poorly-planned development, offshore oil drilling, outdated infrastructure and increasingly evident climate change.

The Surfrider Foundation is tackling these challenges at local, state and national levels with more than 200 chapters and student clubs working in coastal communities across the country. Our volunteer-based network is uniquely positioned to identify issues that are most significantly affecting communities and then address these threats through on-the-ground campaigns, programs and solutions.

In this issue, you will hear from our mission and regional teams and learn about coastal protection advancements, efforts in Florida to solve harmful algal blooms, a beach access victory in Hawai'i and dune restoration nature-based solutions taking place in North Carolina. You'll also get to know our new Regional Directors, who are helping to guide

the extensive work taking place across the East and West coasts, and meet outstanding activists, such as Olivia Angus, Greg Masessa and artist Gabriella Angotti-Jones. In addition, you will find out more about organizations, such as Warm Current and Faherty, which are working in tandem to help to protect our coasts for all people.

The ocean makes up most of our planet and plays a crucial role in the health of our coasts, environment and world. Now, more than ever, the ocean needs more friends. We are working to not only protect these areas, but also to expand our outreach and bring even more coastal enthusiasts to the beach. Our actions now will impact the next generations and this is our chance to stand up and fight for the ocean and coasts so everyone can enjoy these special places in the future.

Thank you for your continued support and for making this critical work possible. As a friend of the ocean, you are generating a significant difference in the protection of our ocean, waves and beaches for today, tomorrow and years to come.

For Clean Water and Healthy Beaches,



Dr. Chad Nelsen  
Chief Executive Officer



# Advancing the Protection of Our Ocean and Coasts

By: Zach Plopper, Senior Environmental Director

The end of 2022 and beginning of 2023 delivered an awakening to the current state and future of our ocean and beaches in the U.S. Last year's Atlantic hurricane season wreaked havoc on Florida's shorelines, causing unprecedented coastal erosion and property loss, as well as sewage spills and toxic runoff, which led to months of harmful algal blooms along the Gulf Coast. This winter, California experienced its most severe storm and swell events in decades, resulting in massive amounts of trash and debris on beaches, sewage spills up and down the coast and severely damaged coastal infrastructure.

While the impacts of these storms were tragic, they highlight why Surfrider has elected its clean water, plastic prevention, ocean protection, climate and coastal access priorities for the next decade. With our chapter and student club network spanning 26 states and territories, along with our amazing staff of expert conservationists, scientists and grassroots activists, we have never felt better equipped to effectively protect what we love. Here is a snapshot of our progress so far:

## Clean Water

To improve water quality monitoring and public notification, we are asking Congress this year to provide more support for BEACH Act programs, the primary funding source for most of the beach water quality monitoring

programs in the country. We are also asking for more support for sewage treatment infrastructure upgrades through the Clean Water State Revolving Fund.

Surfrider is advancing state and local policies in 2023 that will improve water quality monitoring, public notification and sewage treatment infrastructure in Washington, Florida and Hawai'i. Meanwhile, Surfrider's 55 volunteer-run Blue Water Task Force labs are testing 500 beaches around the nation, keeping more people informed about their local water quality.

## Plastic Pollution

In the wake of California's storms, beaches were inundated with plastic trash and debris, highlighting why we need comprehensive action to reduce single-use plastics. At the federal level, our goal in 2023 is to eliminate single-use plastic on public lands and advocate for policies that address plastic pollution across its lifecycle, from extraction to disposal.

With the leadership of Surfrider's New York City Chapter and coalition partners, New York City passed a hallmark 'Skip the Stuff' bill this year. We have identified other state and local policy opportunities across the country to 'skip the stuff' at restaurants, ban polystyrene and achieve other plastic pollution reduction measures.

## Coast and Climate

This year, Surfrider is working at local, state and federal levels to advance climate-smart solutions for our coasts. We are advocating for state-level climate policies that improve sea level rise planning and facilitate nature-based solutions. In addition, we are actively working across the country to restore coastal dunes and carbon-storing mangroves. This year, Surfrider has installed more than 1,500 native dune plants and mangrove seedlings with 820 volunteers in North Carolina and Puerto Rico.

## Ocean Protection

In 2023, Surfrider is continuing its efforts to stop new offshore drilling in U.S. waters. We are advocating for two federal bills that seek to permanently ban offshore oil drilling along the East and West coasts.

Surfrider is also working to establish new protections for coastal and marine habitats off our coastlines. This includes the 4.9 million acre Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary in California to preserve Chumash tribal history and protect the area's rich biodiversity. We are advocating for the establishment of the 1.8 million acre Hudson Canyon National Marine Sanctuary on the East Coast as well, which will protect one of the largest submarine canyons in the world.

In Puerto Rico, Surfrider is working with local communities to establish a new marine protected area to safeguard nearshore coral reefs.

## Beach Access

In South Texas, we are working to protect public beach access as well as habitat for endangered birds, Kemp's ridley sea turtles, and other wildlife against the expansion and beach impacts of the Boca Chica SpaceX launch site. The project is poised to close the only public road to the coast for approximately 800 hours a year.

In Coos Bay, Oregon, Surfrider is working to restore the public's long-standing access to Lighthouse Beach. The pathway to this beloved community beach was cut off in 2021, spurring the local chapter into action. Surfrider has filed litigation to defend public beach access rights.

Thanks to your support, Surfrider has made huge progress on these issues in 2023. Although the tasks ahead can seem daunting, we are steadfast in our commitment to protect our ocean, waves and beaches. When you love something as much as we love our coasts, there is no choice but to work every day to protect them.



Volunteers in Puerto Rico plant carbon-storing mangroves to improve coastal resilience on the island.

# East Coast Regional Director: Shannon Lyons, Ph.D.

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

I am the new East Coast Regional Director for the Surfrider Foundation and oversee the regional chapter and policy work in the coastal zones encompassed by the Great Lakes down to Texas, over to Puerto Rico, and back up to Maine. In my new role, I hope to connect work across the region and amplify the power of our advocates.

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

As I head into my first year with Surfrider, I am still pinching myself every morning that I get to be a part of such an inspiring organization with incredibly talented, positive people rallying together to befriend the ocean. This opportunity fit perfectly with my long-time desire to work on the most critical

issues for ocean conservation – clean water, climate change, plastic pollution, and protecting our beaches and access to them. In my most recent work, I leveraged oysters and trees as nature-based solutions to meet clean water policy goals in the Chesapeake watershed. I look forward to exploring opportunities for Surfrider to expand our nature-based approaches on the East Coast to maximize coastal resilience and blue carbon potential, as well as rally new volunteers to join us in these efforts.

## What Surfrider projects or committees do you work on?

I serve on the Leadership Team and oversee the East Coast operations of our campaigns and projects, which span all of our initiative areas.

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

Living in Annapolis, Maryland, our local beaches are along the shores of the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries. The greatest threats to clean water here are nutrient and sediment influx from agricultural runoff and storm water. Public water and beach access is another local issue. Surfrider has been working as part of the Coalition for a National Chesapeake Recreation Area, which supports new legislation that provides increased opportunities for recreational water use and access in the region.

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

I am definitely still on 'cloud nine' from being offered this incredible opportunity and in my first few months, I am inspired daily by the positive vibes and top-notch work my colleagues bring to the table every day.

Over the next few months, I will be traveling throughout the region and I am thrilled to get to know more of the Surfrider team working and volunteering across the East Coast.

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

I have never seen so much impactful, successful ocean conservation work being accomplished by one organization. I believe that we will be at the forefront of national ocean policy reform.

## Why is it important to you to serve as a Regional Director with the Surfrider Foundation?

I love leading teams, investing in people and helping them to grow into their full potential. Surfrider is poised to launch into a new era of staff, chapter, club and advocacy expansion and I am honored to steer the East Coast into that new frontier.

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# West Coast Regional Director: Gus Gates

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

My position with the Surfrider Foundation is the West Coast Regional Director. Currently, my role is to manage and guide Surfrider's regional field and policy staff across the states of Washington, Oregon, California and Hawai'i.

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

I first became aware of and loosely involved with Surfrider when I was studying for my undergraduate degree at Oregon State University. A couple of years later, there was a 'gold rush' along the Oregon coast by ocean renewable energy developers trying to stake claims on potential wave energy sites. Along my home stretch of coast in Florence, there

was a multinational corporation that was attempting to place devices that were similar to small oil platforms in extremely shallow water that would have had a significant impact on wave quality and recreational enjoyment. The company had no interest in creating meaningful dialogue with local stakeholders and I thought that was wrong. So I started to organize and on my back porch overlooking the Siuslaw River, we formed a local Surfrider chapter. Soon thereafter, I was elected to be the chapter chair, and not too long after that, I started working for Surfrider in the role of Oregon Policy Coordinator. After about six years, I relocated and transitioned to the Washington Policy Manager position, which was my most recent role for the past eight years.

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

The most pressing issue that I see affecting my stretch of coast in Washington state is coastal climate change, including increasing storm severity, marine heat waves, ocean acidification, sea level rise, harmful algal blooms and accelerated erosion. Washington state is particularly vulnerable to sea level rise. In the U.S., 42% of the population lives along the coasts. In comparison, more than 68% of Washingtonians, or about 4.6 million people, live along or near the state's 3,026 miles of tidally influenced coastline.

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

A major highlight has been completing ocean and coastal recreational use studies for both Oregon and Washington. These include an overview of who does what and where, and how much revenue coastal recreation contributes to the economy. This data is then used to advocate for the protection and enjoyment of our coasts.

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

Surfrider is YOU. We provide a platform for coastal enthusiasts and recreational ocean users to get actively involved in improving the health of our ocean, waves and beaches for the protection and enjoyment of ALL people.

## Why is it important to you to serve as a Regional Director with the Surfrider Foundation?

This role is important to lead and support our highly experienced and dedicated field staff to advance the Surfrider mission and meet the organization's strategic goals.

With my roots as an activist, chapter leader and policy staff member, I have a good understanding of the challenges that our coastal communities face from emerging threats, as well as opportunities to find solutions toward a more resilient future.



# Ensuring Beach Access for All People in Hawai‘i

By: Lauren Blickley, Hawai‘i Regional Manager

In Hawai‘i, access to our coastlines is essential to our communities for recreation, subsistence fishing and gathering, cultural practices, celebrations, and physical and emotional health. Ho‘okipa Beach Park on the North Shore of Maui represents one of the most consistent waves on the island and is heavily used by local surfers, especially during the winter months. While gates were installed at Ho‘okipa more than a decade ago, they were often open prior to sunrise for early morning surfing and fishing access.

However, beginning in 2020, the County of Maui more firmly established county beach park hours from 7 a.m.–7 p.m. As a result, the gates at Ho‘okipa were not opened until at least 7 a.m., or sometimes later. Early morning ‘dawn patrol’ surfers were

then forced to park along the busy Hana Highway, the main artery connecting North and East Maui to the rest of the island. To make matters worse, the shoulder along the highway is narrow and there is no room to park on the ‘makai,’ or ocean side, of the highway. This made parking especially dangerous and forced the public to run across the highway to access the water.

Two local surfers, Justin Edwards and Greg Mebel, started a petition requesting that the county open the gates at Ho‘okipa at 5:30 a.m. instead of 7 a.m. to accommodate early morning beach access. While the petition garnered more than 800 signatures, county officials consistently said it was not possible to open the gates earlier and cited issues with personnel costs, union requirements and the county budget.



View from Ho‘okipa Lookout to Ho‘okipa Beach Park on the North Shore of Maui.



Photo: Justin Edwards

Early morning surfers parked on Hana Highway getting ready to dodge traffic on their way into Ho‘okipa Beach Park due to the parking lot closure.

When Justin and Greg approached the Surfrider Foundation Maui Chapter about supporting this campaign, the chapter responded with an immediate, “YES.” Over the ensuing months, Justin, Greg and the Maui Chapter continued to reach out to the county and councilmembers about solutions and options to open the gates early. Finally, in November 2022, the county contacted the Maui Chapter about signing a Right of Entry (ROE). Under this ROE, the Surfrider chapter would oversee the opening of the gates each morning.

To ensure the gates were opened consistently, the Maui Chapter contracted Maui Traffic Control Services to open the gates at 5:30 a.m. through March 2023.

Owned by Raina DeVault, the mother of professional surfer Imaikalani DeVault, Maui Traffic Control Services readily partnered with Surfrider to open the gates and even discounted their services. Local community members pitched in to cover the costs of the new hours and raised more than \$3,000 to ensure community beach access.

The Ho‘okipa Beach Access campaign highlights the power of community collaboration. The Surfrider Foundation Maui Chapter is stoked to play a part in maintaining beach access on the North Shore of Maui and appreciates the support of the North Shore community as we work together to protect coastal access for everyone.

# Christmas Tree Dune Restoration: A Tradition of Nature-Based Solutions

By: Shannon Lyons, Ph.D., East Coast Regional Director

Reduce, Reuse, Recycle – and Restore! That fourth ‘R’ is just what Surfrider’s Cape Fear Chapter in North Carolina is doing with upcycled Christmas trees that are past their prime. The trees are diverted from landfills to sand dunes where they stabilize and restore the shoreline. In 2015, Ethan Crouch, a devoted Cape Fear Chapter leader and resident of the nearby Carolina Beach, first proposed the sustainable idea. Since then, the movement has grown into an annual, highly anticipated, community-wide event.

The concept is simple – two weeks after the holidays, the town of Cape Fear collects Christmas trees that have outlasted the eggnog season. Volunteers then use biodegradable twine and pine stakes to plant the trees into dunes. The skeleton trees trap sand and remain for years, reducing erosion and creating new dune structures. As Surfrider aims to expand our nature-based solutions approach to coastal restoration, holiday trees offer an ecological and economically attractive solution to shoreline stability.



However, not just anyone can show up with their expired tree and plop it in the sand. Surfrider’s Cape Fear Chapter partners with the town of Carolina Beach each year to organize Christmas tree collections and the trees are delivered to the beach on the day of the Surfrider event. In addition, the town applies through the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality for a Coastal Management Permit exemption, which allows Surfrider volunteers to access and amend the dunes.

Special attention is given to allowing enough space between the trees for dune grass to grow. In North Carolina, it is particularly important to ensure that sea turtle nests are not disturbed by restoration efforts so

sites are scoped in advance and trees are carefully placed 10 feet apart and away from nest sites to provide turtles with plenty of space. Volunteers are also trained on how to secure the trees with stakes to minimize their movement during storms.

This nature-based solution has far-reaching potential for scalability. Already, Surfrider chapters in Bogue Banks and Emerald Isle in North Carolina are hosting similar events each year and the efforts can be expanded. By partnering with towns and insuring compliance with local and state permitting regulations, Surfrider chapters seeking solutions to dune erosion can organize additional holiday tree beach restoration events.



For Keni Rienks, who leads the annual Christmas Tree Dune Restoration event and has served on the Surfrider Cape Fear Chapter Board for eight years, the holiday magic really comes from “hitting all three legs of the sustainability stool – providing environmental, economic and social benefits.” This event offers a tangible way for volunteers to get involved and get their hands in the sand.

In Cape Fear, Christmas tree dune restoration has certainly become a holiday tradition. Rienks described a “flawless

day” this year with hundreds of volunteers turning out to enjoy the warm sunshine and dolphins frolicking in the waves while planting around 200 Christmas trees.

“People saw it on the news last year and showed up with their families and classmates,” said Rienks. “It really is an opportunity for all ages and the movement is growing. This event defines our community – it is the stepping stone to more involvement with Surfrider and protecting our coast and beaches.”

**Rienks described a “flawless day” this year with hundreds of volunteers turning out to enjoy the warm sunshine and dolphins frolicking in the waves while planting around 200 Christmas trees.**



All Photos: Laura Glantz

# The Ocean Needs More Friends Like You

By: Chris Casey, Membership Manager

For nearly 40 years, the Surfrider Foundation network has worked to ensure the protection and enjoyment of our ocean, waves and beaches for all people. But why? One key reason is captured in that word, 'enjoyment.' According to Marine Biologist Wallace J. Nichols, "Research has proven that spending time near the water is essential to achieving an elevated and sustained happiness."

This is not news to Surfrider's supporters. Our ocean and coasts bring us joy and we work hard to protect and defend this source of happiness. Just as we stand up for our friends and look out for each other, all of us at Surfrider, including members, activists, advocates, volunteers, club members, staff and supporters, are doing the same and taking action on a daily basis as friends of the ocean.

But here's the tough part. With plastic and water pollution, rising seas, oil spills, coastal erosion and climate impacts, the ocean NEEDS more friends like you. Surfrider is committed to finding new friends for our ocean and coasts.

**Just as we stand up for our friends and look out for each other, all of us at Surfrider, including members, activists, advocates, volunteers, club members, staff and supporters, are doing the same and taking action on a daily basis as friends of the ocean.**

Our 2022 strategic plan lays out an ambitious goal of raising one million voices in support of the ocean. To achieve this goal, we need your help as we join forces to defend our friend that is not only a source of great happiness, but is always there for us as well.

Our membership surveys reveal that many Surfrider supporters are first exposed to our organization when a friend invites them to come along on a beach cleanup. Others meet Surfrider when they see a chapter event happening while they are spending some time with friends or family at the coast.

In 2023, how will you demonstrate your friendship with the ocean? Will you introduce the ocean to someone new? Whether you're surfing, swimming, playing in the water with family, or enjoying a stroll in the sand, you're always near a friend. Join us as we work together to add more voices to our nationwide network to protect the ocean, waves and beaches that we all love for the future.



Photo: Tahnei Roy

# Another Reason We're Friends With The Ocean



**The ocean needs more friends.**



# Resilient Coasts and Clean Water in Florida

By: Emma Haydocy, Florida Policy Manager

The 2022 Atlantic hurricane season tested the limits of Florida’s coasts. Category 4 Hurricane Ian barreled across the state in September, inundating Florida’s coastal and inland communities and unleashing millions of gallons of raw or poorly-treated sewage into nearby waters. This contributed to an enduring red tide event – a harmful algal bloom that has persisted into this year.

Later, Category 1 Hurricane Nicole battered Northwest Florida’s coasts, collapsing homes, severing roads and seriously eroding beaches that were already impacted by Hurricane Ian. Surfrider’s Florida network is working at local, state and federal levels to enact policies and build programs to protect coastal communities, build resiliency and restore water quality statewide.

Florida has a reputation for inadequate or failing wastewater infrastructure, which is pushed to the brink by flooding from storms. This triggers ongoing harmful algal blooms and a myriad of public health threats to beachgoers and coastal communities. Alarmingly, in the counties where Hurricane Ian first made landfall, Florida recorded the highest number of cases of *Vibrio vulnificus*, a flesh-eating bacteria with proliferation that is linked in part to sewage and rising water temperatures. Soon after that storm, a red tide bloom emerged off the southwest coast of Florida that migrated throughout the greater Gulf Coast for months, precipitating localized fish kills

and threatening public health. While red tide events have been recorded throughout Florida’s Gulf waters since the 1840s, nutrient pollution from human sources further exacerbates these events, which has been the case in the aftermath of the Atlantic hurricane season.

To be clear, the deficiencies of Florida’s wastewater systems existed prior to these extreme weather events. However, they are further threatened by stronger storms and rising seas, which underscore the urgency and importance of Surfrider’s federal advocacy for robust funding of the Clean Water State Revolving Fund. This fund helps to address the backlog of more than \$18 billion in wastewater infrastructure upgrades that currently are needed in the Sunshine State. At the state level, Surfrider is working to fund beach water quality testing for fecal bacteria and strengthen public notification requirements. These complementary campaigns seek to address the root causes of the state’s water quality issues, and protect the public health, safety and welfare of everyone who recreates in Florida’s beach waters.

Florida’s sandy beaches were also significantly impacted by this year’s storms, which raises the question of how exactly the state can recover resiliently and more holistically manage its 825 miles of beaches. Surfrider embraces Florida’s internationally-recognized blue carbon ecosystems, which



Photo: Kilby Photo

Surfrider’s volunteers are working on the ground to restore coastal ecosystems and enhance resilience.

hold the keys to both carbon sequestration and flood protection. Surfrider is executing policies and programs that unlock the potential of nature-based solutions statewide. Our network is working to enact policy at the state level that coordinates and streamlines permitting for natural infrastructure and nature-based solutions in coastal adaptation projects. This will make it easier to protect Florida’s coasts as a result of using its existing nature-based features. At the same time, Surfrider’s Florida chapters and volunteers are working on the ground to restore coastal ecosystems

throughout the state and enhance its resilience for the next hurricane season.

In the aftermath of last year’s storms, Surfrider is working strategically at local, state and federal levels to implement solutions to Florida’s climate and water quality emergencies. Through our time-tested campaign planning and victories, technical expertise, rigorous programming, and network mobilization, Surfrider is building a more resilient future for Florida’s ocean, waves and beaches.

**In the aftermath of last year’s storms, Surfrider is working strategically at local, state and federal levels to implement solutions to Florida’s climate and water quality emergencies.**

## PARTNERSHIP SPOTLIGHT

# Teaming Up With Faherty to Protect What We Love

By: Mary Herbranson, Partnerships Manager

Faherty is a family-run clothing brand with a deep respect for the planet – fueled by their purpose of leaving the world better than they found it. Founded in 2013 by twin brothers Alex and Mike Faherty, their mom, Ninie, and Alex's wife, Kerry Docherty, the Faherty team lives by a code: to be the best, deliver on promises, spread good vibes, be better together, and stay authentic. As lovers of nature – especially the ocean – they are committed to continuously tapping into their values and leading by example, while creating beautiful, high quality clothing.

The Surfrider Foundation is honored to have Faherty's dynamic, long-term support. Surfrider has been a beneficiary

of Faherty's passion for protecting what we all love since 2016 and our partnership has included special events, a product capsule, Faherty employee education, volunteer engagement, beach cleanups and collaborative campaigns to raise awareness. We share a commitment to hard work and enjoyment as the Faherty family members are avid surfers as well.

An essential element of the Faherty brand is building community and connection, which it achieved through its ongoing event series, Sun Sessions. This is a space where people can come together, be inspired, and experience joy through concerts, dinners, workshops and more.

On March 1, 2023, Faherty and Surfrider teamed up to celebrate Faherty's 10-year anniversary with the biggest Sun Sessions event to date – a concert featuring Moon Taxi and Forester at Brooklyn Bowl in New York City.

“Celebrating 10 years is a huge milestone and we're thrilled that we could do this while supporting Surfrider,” said Faherty's Co-Founder and Chief Impact Officer, Kerry Docherty. “We create amazing moments through our Sun Sessions event series that bring people together around community, conversation and creativity. And it's deepened our connection to so many.”

Not only did the event honor Faherty's achievement of reaching their 10-year anniversary, but every concert ticket sold also included a membership to the ticket holder's local Surfrider chapter. The gifted memberships from Faherty will help to fortify our ability to achieve our mission and grow our network of coastal defenders for the future. Here's to the next 10 years. Congratulations Faherty.



Faherty family and founders of the brand, Mike, Kerry and Alex.



Moon Taxi performs at a Sun Sessions event celebrating Faherty's 10-year anniversary.

## ORGANIZATION PROFILE

# Creating Change With Warm Current

By: Anne Beasley, Board of Directors Member of Warm Current

### What can you tell us about this organization?

Warm Current is a nonprofit organization that hosts free surf camps for Native youth on the Washington coast. We empower kids to explore their local coastlines and share the benefits of outdoor recreation in their own backyard. By supplying the equipment, knowledge and inspiration, Warm Current provides a path for kids to become lifelong surfers and environmental stewards.

### How is Warm Current involved with the Surfrider Foundation?

Warm Current works alongside our local Surfrider chapters by participating in beach cleanups, presentations and amplifying the mission to protect our coasts through our social platforms. Many Surfrider volunteers are also Warm Current volunteers! Warm Current prioritizes educating the youth that we serve as we have to be good stewards of the land and the sea in order to be good surfers. Similar teachings are also part of our tribal partners' histories and ceremonies.

### Which coastal communities and tribes do you work with?

Warm Current works closely with four coastal tribes, including the Makah Indian Nation, Quileute Nation, Hoh Indian Tribe and the Quinalt Indian Nation. Our main partners in the success of our program are the tribal communities and the people who help to organize and generate excitement for our surf camps. For over a decade, with the power of

more than 500 volunteers, we have worked with over 2,000 Native youth to teach basic surfing techniques and support personal growth.

### What is your Surf Outpost program?

The coastal tribes that Warm Current serves are rural communities that are tucked away along the often-isolated Olympic Peninsula. Our Surf Outpost program is funded and then built to provide cost-free, year-round access to all the gear needed to go surfing. In 2017, the first outpost was installed at Hobuck Beach for the Makah Tribe. In 2022, we created a second outpost for the Hoh Tribe. Due to sea level rise and coastal flooding, this outpost is a mobile trailer that can be moved to higher ground as needed. All outposts are completely stocked with surfboards, leashes, wetsuits and safety equipment. This program, paired with free surf camps, has encouraged and enabled entire families to surf together.

### What are some of Warm Current's primary goals or challenges?

Our biggest challenge is being able to accommodate all the kids that would like to participate in a surf camp. We don't want to turn any child away. Donations and fundraising allow us to purchase surfboards, wetsuits and safety equipment. Recruiting volunteers enables us to have enough people to run each camp or event. In the near future, we hope to have a surf outpost in each community we serve.



Photo: Sara Satterlee



Photo: Carly Giles

## BOARD MEMBER PROFILE

# Olivia Angus

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

I'm a medical device engineer and serve as a board member for the Surfrider Foundation.

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

I joined Surfrider in 2008 for two reasons: to Save Trestles and to find a husband. I know the second reason sounds funny but in thinking about the qualities I wanted in a husband, I knew that those included being with someone who surfed and cared about our ocean.

I started by making protest signs for the Save Trestles campaign. The day of the main rally, there were thousands of concerned citizens fighting to protect the surf spot, Trestles. I felt an energy that day that I feel every time I'm with other Surfrider members and that is what keeps me coming back.

By the way, I didn't end up meeting my husband through Surfrider but our first date included me teaching him how to surf and he does care about the ocean!

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

Plastic pollution is a local and global issue that is affecting our ocean, waves and beaches. From fishing nets strangling our sea life and microfibers shedding off our clothes and being eaten by fish, to microplastics in our drinking water and cigarette butts and single-use plastics littering our beaches, plastic touches nearly every part of our lives and our ocean.

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

Before the California state straw ban passed, I decided to pursue a straw ban in my city. I screened a film about plastic pollution to a group of local fourth graders and asked them to write letters to the city council to help stop plastic pollution. The students and I spoke at a city council meeting and asked for an ordinance that would prevent restaurants from handing out single-use plastics, including straws, sauce packets and cutlery, unless requested.

The city council members loved the kids and their letters, and voted unanimously to add a single-use disposables ordinance to their work plan! With so many big problems in the world, it sometimes feels like a single person can't make a difference. While I needed the students and city council to get the job done, as one concerned citizen with an idea, I was able to push for real change in my city.

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

Surfrider is full of people who are protecting the places that they love. We come from different walks of life and do all sorts of amazing things in our jobs but at the end of the day, we all want a clean and healthy ocean.

### Why is it important to you to sit on the Board of Directors for Surfrider?

As a grassroots organization, I think it's important to have Board of Director voices from those who have been in the weeds and have first-hand experiences.



### Anything else you would like to add?

For anyone thinking, "I should get more involved," make this the year you dive in even further with Surfrider. Whatever your talents are, there's a use for them in your local chapter. We always need passionate people helping to protect our ocean, waves and beaches for all people for the future.

**We come from different walks of life and do all sorts of amazing things in our jobs but at the end of the day, we all want a clean and healthy ocean.**



# First Look: Spring Collection

The weather is warming up and so is our latest collection of apparel and accessories. Shop today and 100% of the proceeds will directly fund our mission to protect our ocean, waves and beaches.



**Scan the code or visit [shop.surfrider.org](https://shop.surfrider.org) to see what's new.**





## ACTIVIST PROFILE

# Greg Masessa

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

I first got involved with Surfrider when I was in college studying marine science at Coastal Carolina. I volunteered at an event with the Grand Strand Chapter and that led to me helping out with beach cleanups. When I moved to Maui, I had a few people tell me how important it was to get involved locally. I'm now the Blue Water Task Force Coordinator with the Maui Chapter. Being a part of Surfrider is a good way to give back to the community and environment, as well as participate in something that I'm interested in.

### What are some issues that affect water quality in your community and how is your chapter responding?

Cesspools, agricultural runoff and coastal development are some issues affecting our local water quality. As a result, we have been working to test water quality on a monthly basis at 18 sites on the North Shore of Maui since 2018. We have also publicly testified and supported statewide bills to address cesspool pollution and improve statewide coastal water quality monitoring.

### What changes have you helped advance in your role with the Blue Water Task Force program?

In the last two years, we created a new lab space in partnership with the Pā'ia Youth and Cultural Center that allowed easier access to equipment. Most recently, we were able to add new Blue Water Task Force sites to areas of Maui, including Hāna, that are not regularly monitored by the State of Hawai'i Department of Health. It's been a great opportunity to connect with the Hāna community and see the results come in from the sample sites each month. As no one else has tested in these areas, that information is really important. We can't make positive changes if we don't have data and don't know what the problem is.

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

Highlights have included meeting like-minded people and getting to volunteer in the water quality lab. Everyone deserves a clean ocean to surf and swim in.

**Being a part of Surfrider is a good way to give back to the community and environment, as well as participate in something that I'm interested in.**



## ARTIST PROFILE

# Gabriella Angotti-Jones

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

Since 2019, I have been working on a project about Black female and non-binary surfers. I have documented my own friend group, as well as other communities across the country. I've been so honored to witness the continued growth of our community, let alone document it! Last year, I published my project in a photo book called, "I Just Wanna Surf," which delves into my experience growing up in a small beach town as a Black person. I started contributing my images to Surfrider last year and felt honored to be able to showcase my work surrounding Black surfers on Surfrider's social media channels.

### How did you get involved with photography?

I grew up by the coast in the Capistrano Beach, Dana Point and San Clemente areas. I'd spend a lot of my summers during and after high school in Dana Point Harbor, working at the

Ocean Institute or outrigger. The ocean became a big part of my identity as I spent so much of my free time there. I started taking photos during an ocean research internship. I had always thought that I wanted to be an ocean researcher but quickly realized that I liked documenting the process of research as opposed to actually doing it.

Since I was deep into studying environmental science, I decided to teach myself documentary photography. After transferring to San Francisco State University from a community college, I began covering local protests and the lead up to the 2016 election, and eventually had an internship at the San Francisco Chronicle. Later, I was an intern at the Las Vegas Review Journal, Tampa Bay Times and New York Times, and then I joined the Los Angeles Times as a staff photographer for a year. I then transitioned to being independent two years ago.

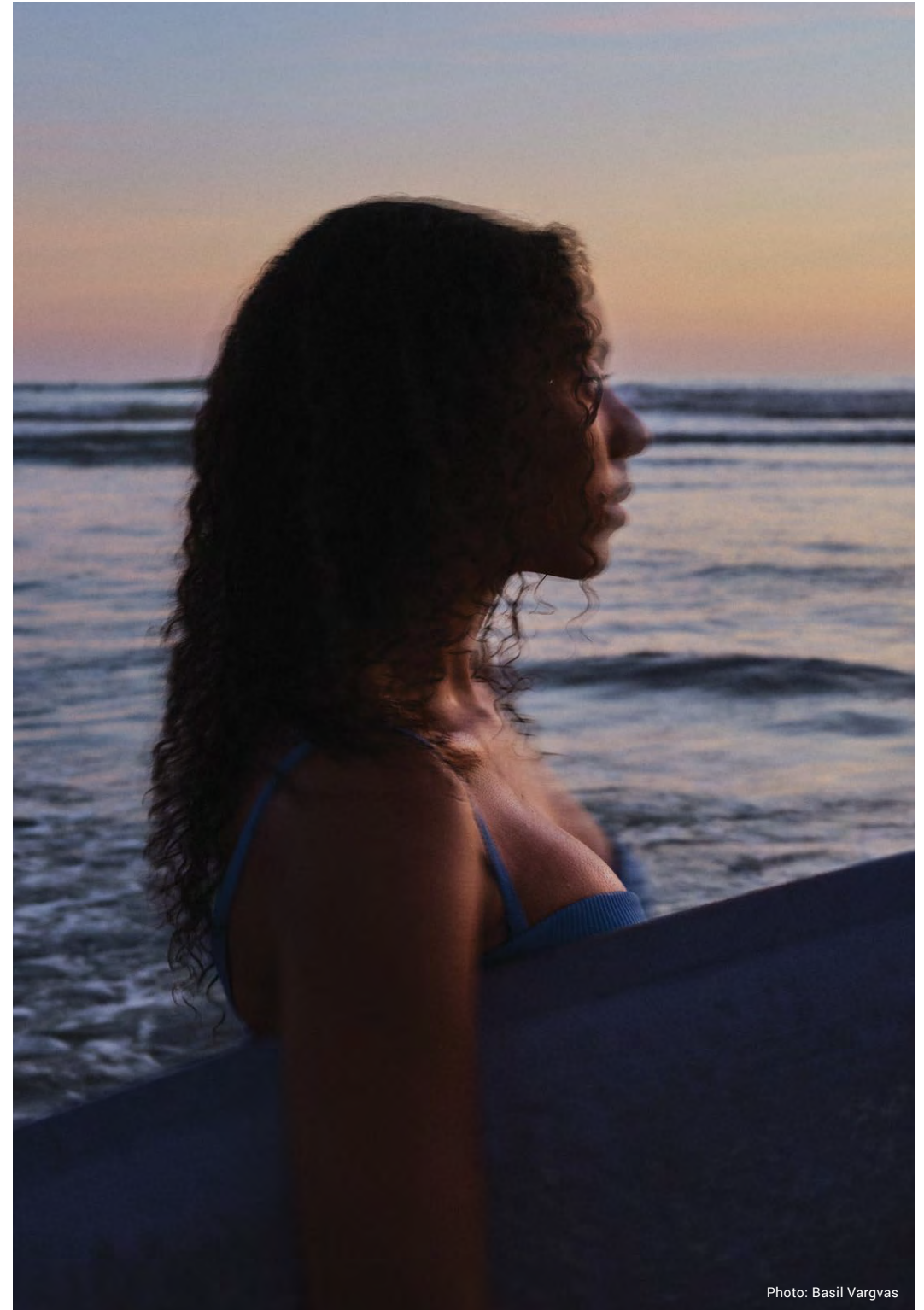


Photo: Basil Vargvas



**Do you have any favorite locations or people that you like to photograph?**

I started in photography by capturing political protests, so that'll always be a comfort zone. I love photographing my friends and our adventures too. I also enjoy photographing events that have enough going on where people don't recognize that they're being photographed!

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

I think just being able to experience so many different situations has been a highlight. I'm not even 30 yet and I've covered wildfires, hurricanes, border crossings, professional football games and have photographed a few famous actors and artists. My job lets me experience so many aspects of our world.

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

Growing up in Southern Orange County, "five minutes from fun," as my mom used to say – meaning five minutes from the beach – I spent long summer days hanging out with my friends, swimming and bodyboarding, and eventually surfing and outrigger.

Getting to know our coastlines on such an intimate level made me acutely aware of its patterns. I've realized that recreating in our ocean has led me down the path of finding out more about how to protect it. I've also learned that sharing images of all types of people enjoying the ocean is a powerful tool in helping people to care about our beaches and local bodies of water.

**Traveling and noticing patterns about people's experiences with the ocean have made me appreciate that we're all more connected than we realize.**



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

I like to remind people about the history of ocean access and that there are multiple reasons that there are so few Black surfers. But that's changing as there are so many programs, like Color The Water, Black Girls Surf, SurfearNEGRA and Sofly Surf School.

**What has been the highlight of your experiences related to protection of the ocean and coasts?**

Being able to spend so much time at the beach has definitely been a highlight. I also think that traveling and noticing patterns about people's experiences with the ocean have made me appreciate that we're all more connected than we realize.





The Blue Water Task Force is Surfrider's volunteer water quality monitoring program that provides critical information to protect public health at the beach. We are testing the waters for bacteria and toxins, raising public awareness and finding real solutions to ocean pollution.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

**50**

Water Testing Labs

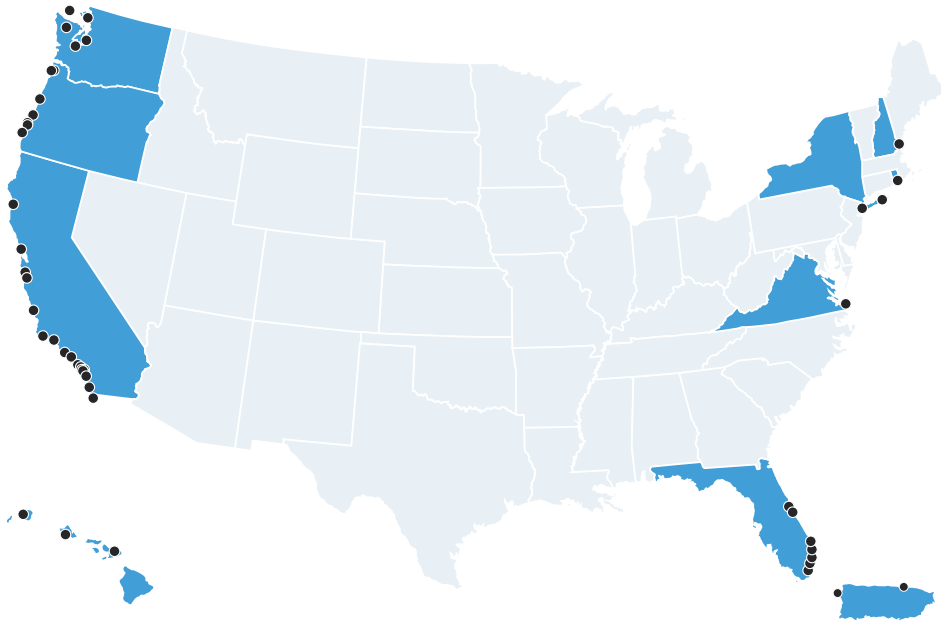
**500**

Water Sampling Sites

**9,000**

Water Tests Annually

WATER TESTING LAB LOCATIONS



Join Surfrider's Blue Water Task Force  
[surfrider.org/volunteer](http://surfrider.org/volunteer)



# 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)



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