

# The Drop

SPRING 2021





**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.**

# Contents

## **04 Letter From Our CEO**

Our Coasts Have Never  
Been More Important

## **06 Making Progress**

Clean Water and Healthy  
Beaches for All People

## **08 Guest Feature**

The Ecoboard Movement

## **12 Campaign Spotlight**

Tackling Climate Change

## **14 Initiative Spotlight**

Stop Sewage Pollution

## **18 Surfrider Impact**

Trestles Saved Forever

## **22 Regional Spotlight**

Oregon's Fight to Protect the Coasts

## **24 Partnership Spotlight**

Defending Clean Water  
with Dragon Alliance

## **26 Activist Profile**

Christopher Warren

## **28 Ambassador Profile**

Leah Dawson

## **32 Board Member Profile**

Anupa Asokan

## **34 Artist Profile**

The Cigarette Surfboard

## **38 Coastal Victories Update**



# Our Coasts Have Never Been More Important

For the first time in over a year, there is some light appearing at the end of the long COVID created tunnel (at least in the United States). With the vaccine widely available and cases dropping, we are optimistic that we'll be able to carefully resume many of our coastal protection activities, like beach cleanups, chapter events and attendance at public hearings.

We have learned a lifetime of lessons through the pandemic, but one particularly relevant to Surfrider's mission is that we love the outdoors and especially our ocean, waves and beaches. Americans flocked to our public lands and waters at record numbers over the last year. For example, surfing participation nearly doubled. This new wave of diverse and enthusiastic coastal recreation provides an opportunity to increase our reach, engagement and activism to protect our beloved coasts. And that's important because the threats are significant.

In this issue, you'll see how Surfrider is tackling the impacts of climate change on our coasts, our work to defend special places like Trestles, efforts to improve our

wastewater infrastructure to stop sewage pollution, and work to prevent damaging fossil fuel infrastructure in Oregon. These efforts and hundreds more are taking place every day to protect clean water and healthy beaches.

You'll also meet some of the people making a difference, whether it's Outer Banks chapter activist Christopher Warren, pro surfer Leah Dawson, waterwoman and Board member Anupa Asokan, or a business like Dragon Alliance. Defending and protecting our coasts requires a wide range of talents and there is no question there is a place for everyone who wants to make a difference.

Thank you for your continued support of the Surfrider Foundation. We are making progress in protecting our coasts and ocean every day because of you.

For our ocean, waves and beaches,



Dr. Chad Nelsen  
Chief Executive Officer



# Clean Water and Healthy Beaches for All People

By: Pete Stauffer, Environmental Director

As the Surfrider Foundation nears our 37th birthday, we are more passionate than ever about protecting our ocean, waves and beaches. After a tumultuous 2020, there are encouraging signs for the rest of the year ahead. As COVID-19 cases decrease, our grassroots network is able to start resuming some in-person activities. Meanwhile, the Biden administration and 117th Congress

are providing new opportunities for coastal conservation. In 2021, Surfrider is focusing on three top priorities that represent the most critical issues affecting our coasts – clean water, plastic pollution and climate change. We are also committed to advancing environmental justice to ensure that the benefits of our efforts extend to all people.



As part of our Stop Sewage Pollution campaign, Surfrider is protecting coastal water quality by building awareness of local pollution problems and advocating for solutions.

This year, we are working to:

## 1. Protect Clean Water for All People

Water quality at our beaches is threatened by pollution, causing 20,000 health advisories to be issued each year. As part of our Stop Sewage Pollution campaign, Surfrider is protecting coastal water quality by building awareness of local pollution problems and advocating for solutions. With 50 volunteer-run water testing labs across the U.S., our Blue Water Task Force monitors over 450 beaches and will perform more than 6,000 water quality tests this year. Surfrider is also waging advocacy campaigns to protect clean water at local, state and federal levels. This includes urging the Biden administration and Congress to uphold the Clean Water Act through sufficient funding and enforcement of water quality regulations and programs.

## 2. Stop the Flow of Plastic Pollution

Plastic pollution is one of the greatest threats to the health of our ocean. In 2021, Surfrider is working toward local, state and federal policies that keep plastic bags, cigarette butts, foam containers, straws and other forms of plastic trash out of the environment. Our priorities include passing the federal Break Free From Plastic Pollution Act, which is the first comprehensive proposal to address the plastic pollution crisis. Through Surfrider's Ocean Friendly Restaurants program, we are aiming to register 500 restaurants to ensure over 200,000 plastic-free meals every day. Finally, our grassroots network is working to remove 200,000 pounds of plastic and other trash from beaches and parks by engaging more than 30,000 volunteers in cleanup events that build the grassroots movement to stop plastic pollution.



Dune grass plantings led by local chapters are one of the many ways Surfrider is addressing climate change at the local level.

## 3. Demand Action on Climate Change

From sea level rise and extreme weather to ocean acidification, our coasts and ocean are under siege due to climate change. This year, Surfrider's network is demanding that our federal leaders take immediate action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and help communities to adapt to impacts already taking place. During Coastal Recreation Hill Day, Surfrider and our partners met virtually with over 160 congressional offices to push for real solutions to the climate change crisis. This includes the potential passage of the Ocean Climate Solutions Act, which leverages the enormous power of the ocean to drive solutions for the climate crisis. At the local level, Surfrider is working with more than 25 communities to plan for sea level rise and extreme weather events.

We invite you to join us in our efforts by volunteering with your local chapter or club and renewing your membership at [surfrider.org/support-surfrider](https://surfrider.org/support-surfrider).



# The Ecoboard Movement

By: Ryan Harris

## What is your current job or role?

I own Earth Technologies. My company is the leading production facility in the environmentally sustainable surfboard movement. So I like to call us the Ecoboard Capital. We make everything from plain old shortboards to fish. Basically, if it goes in the water, we make it – surfboards, stand-up paddleboards and the skateboard that's coming out soon.

## When did you start surfing?

I didn't get into surfing until I was in college when my best friend and roommate took me out to a place in Oswald West in Oregon, called Shorty's. Then I moved down to Los Angeles about 20 years ago and immediately fell in love with surfing. I got hooked. I got the stoke meter through the roof as soon as I moved down here.



Photo: John Suhar

## How did you get into shaping surfboards?

So I'm a pretty big guy. I got into shaping boards when I moved and fell in love with surfing because I was destroying my equipment. I started doing my own repairs and about six months into that, a buddy said, "You're good at this – you're doing cool artwork over the repair with airbrushing and you should buy a blank." So I bought a polyurethane blank, got a planer, got the power tools and started shaping in the garage. The rest is history. It started as a hobby and eventually turned into a full-on career. They say, "Pursue what you love and you'll never work a day in your life." It's work, but it's a labor of love.

## Could you tell us about your boards and why you chose eco-friendly materials and methods?

I started shaping traditional polyurethane blanks before the invention of the bio-epoxy resin. When people couldn't get polyurethane blanks anymore, epoxy blanks were readily available so I forced myself to learn how to shape them. Around the same time, I met the owner and founders of Entropy, who invented the first bio-epoxy resin. It all happened pretty quickly after that.

I switched to bio-epoxy initially because my board was stronger and didn't break. It was a performance attribute. Then I just went full on into sustainability. They call me one of the founders of the ecoboard movement. That's great. And that's the key. The boards are sustainable but they have to be just as good as what's out there. They feel just as good as regular boards. They last a little bit longer. They have better flex and it's not that bad for the people building them or the environment.

**The boards are sustainable but they have to be just as good as what's out there. They feel just as good as regular boards.**



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

Number one is urban runoff. The pollution is absolutely ridiculous. Obviously, we're in Southern California and it doesn't rain very often but when it does, I will not touch the water because I've gotten sick multiple times from surfing.

**What has been your experience as a surfer of color?**

Specifically in surfing, the experience has been a little bit negative, but relatively positive because I'm very loud, I'm a character and I talk story. I do look different than a lot of other surfers. And I do talk about it. There are also all these organizations, like Black Surfing Coalition and Color The Water, that are doing amazing work. Right now, I am amped to be a surfer of color because we can lead by example. We can encourage more people to get out in the water that look like us. It's a sport for everybody.

One of the things that I saw last summer that brought joy and tears to my eyes was during Labor Day weekend. I saw more people of color, more black people, brown people and yellow people, than I've ever seen at the beach, surfing with their families. It wasn't an event. It was just a three-day weekend. That was really encouraging and cool to see because I'd never seen it before.

**I've got a simple phrase – the golden rule applies to our planet too. Treat people the way you want to be treated.**



L.A. surfers Brick! and Gage Crismond teamed up with Surfrider ambassador Selema Masekela, Earth Technologies founder Ryan Harris, Danielle Black Lyons of Textured Waves, and the folks at Color The Water to host the Black Sand Peace Paddle at the Manhattan Beach Pier.



**What's one of the most important things you would tell somebody about protecting the environment?**

I've got a simple phrase – the golden rule applies to our planet too. Treat people the way you want to be treated. You wouldn't just toss trash on somebody else's lawn, why would you do it in the ocean? We want to leave this place better than we came into it, better for our kids, for our kids' kids and their kids. It's all connected. And honestly, if we didn't have waves in the ocean, we wouldn't have a sport. You read about climate change and rising sea levels and how that impacts surf breaks. It's so important that we start taking action now to protect this planet.

**Anything else you want to add?**

Last summer, I worked with Selema Masekela, Hunter Jones and Danielle Black Lyons to launch our organization "One Planet, One People." It's for surfers of color and it's a collective activation. Our goal is for people to use the hashtag #1PlanetPeople to create a community that supports climate action, and racial and social equality. A percentage of all ecoboard sales and accessories from Earth Tech Surf goes toward a nonprofit in need. We are encouraging other companies to do the same.

Check it out at [1planetonepeople.com](https://1planetonepeople.com)



# Tackling Climate Change

By: Stefanie Sekich-Quinn, Coastal Preservation Manager

Our incredible ocean provides more than 50% of the oxygen we breathe, in addition to sustenance for millions of people worldwide and habitats for amazing marine life. It also holds the key to unlocking solutions to the climate crisis.

In fact, there are many efforts underway by the Biden administration and Congress to leverage the ocean's power in the fight against

climate change. As coastal advocates have been calling for decision-makers to tackle climate change for decades and concrete action has continually languished, these advancements are encouraging. With the renewed momentum by both Congress and the federal administration to prioritize this issue, Surfrider is hopeful that we can use the ocean's potential to help stop climate change by passing *Ocean Climate Solutions legislation*.



**There is no time to waste. Congress must pass bold legislation that will provide long-term solutions by focusing on these critical areas:**

## Coastal Resilience

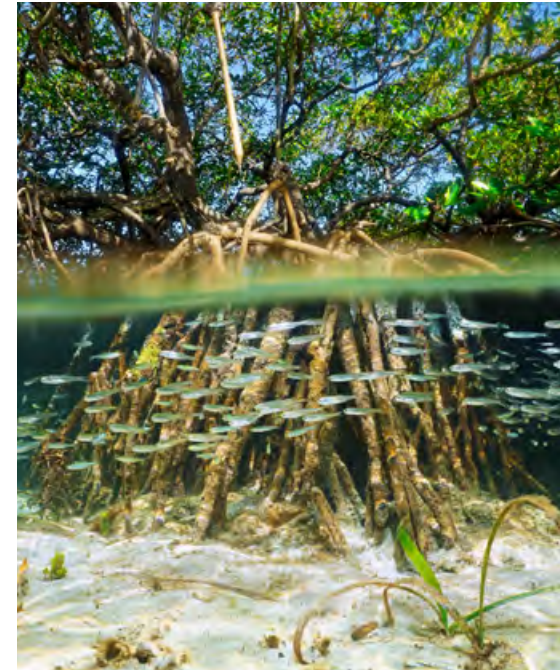
Communities need help to prepare and respond to climate change impacts, such as sea level rise and extreme weather events. Ocean climate solutions legislation can help by investing in climate adaptation, resiliency planning, coastal restoration and natural infrastructure programs.

## Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions (GHG)

Fossil fuels are the root of the climate crisis and we must quickly enact legislation to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, end fossil fuel subsidies and transition to renewable energy sources. This includes well-planned and sited offshore renewables, such as wind and tidal energy. An imperative first step to reducing GHG incorporates a permanent ban on new offshore oil and gas development in the outer continental shelf.

## Advance Climate Justice

Underserved and Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) communities have previously borne the brunt of dangerous environmental impacts. Oftentimes, these communities are located near polluting industries. Climate change compounds environmental justice problems by producing more extreme weather events and sea level rise that inundate these already compromised areas. Surfrider believes that legislation can help underserved communities by ensuring climate change planning is just, equitable and respects diversity. Ocean climate solutions legislation can set up mechanisms to work directly with these communities to transition away from fossil fuels and create good-paying jobs that will benefit every community across the country.



Mangroves and seagrass are crucial in creating a buffer against climate change impacts and future sea level rise.

## Protect Habitats and Blue Carbon

Ocean climate solutions legislation can help prevent the most severe impacts of climate change by protecting and restoring at least 30% of the nation's coastal and marine habitats by 2030. Habitats, such as mangroves and seagrass, trap carbon more efficiently than any other ecosystem on the planet. These preserved habitats also help to buffer against future sea level rise.

Surfrider couldn't be more thrilled that both Congress and the Biden administration are working on tangible plans to tackle the climate crisis. As an organization of coastal recreation users, we are the 'canaries in the coal mine' when it comes to climate change impacts. We hope you will continue to join us in our fight to protect our ocean, waves and beaches from climate change for this and future generations.

# Stop Sewage Pollution

By: Mara Dias, Water Quality Manager

Protecting coastal water quality has been one of our top priorities since the Surfrider Foundation was founded in 1984 by a handful of visionary surfers who were opposing escalating development and pollution at their favorite surf break in Malibu, California. For nearly four decades, Surfrider chapters and activists across the country have been

working hard to build awareness of water pollution problems and advocate for solutions in their own communities to help ensure public health and clean water. Through Surfrider's Clean Water initiative, we are striving to protect water quality and reduce pollution so it's safe to surf, swim and recreate in our ocean and coastal waterways.



Photo: Morgan Maassen

**Through Surfrider's Clean Water initiative, we are striving to protect water quality and reduce pollution so it's safe to surf, swim and recreate in our ocean and coastal waterways.**

## The Threats

Unfortunately, water quality at our beaches is threatened by stormwater, sewage, industrial charges, and urban and agricultural runoff. Years of neglect have left America's wastewater infrastructure outdated and in disrepair. In fact, sewage spills and failing infrastructure threaten coastal water quality by releasing more than 900 billion gallons of untreated sewage into surface waters every year!

Sewage can contain bacteria, viruses and parasites that make people sick with gastrointestinal symptoms, rashes, skin and eye infections, flu-like symptoms and worse. Sewage discharges also pollute waterways with excess nutrients that wreak havoc on coastal ecosystems by fueling harmful algal blooms that put human health at risk and result in fish and coral reef die-offs.

## Cesspools, Septics and Sewers

America's aging sewers, which are nearing 100 years old in many cities, are overwhelmed and failing under stress caused by decades of neglect, growing populations and climate change. As a result, there are frequent problems, such as line breaks, pump failures and overflows. For example, sewage spills in Florida have become a widespread problem. Over the last five years, the Department of Environmental Protection reported nearly 14,000 spills that released over 1.6 billion gallons of sewage into communities and surface waterways across the state.

Many communities are not even connected to sewers and instead rely on cesspools and septic systems. These antiquated systems never adequately treat sewage. Instead, they allow household waste to leach into ground and surface waters. Approximately 25% of U.S. households are still serviced by these disposal



Sewage spills and failing infrastructure release more than 900 billion gallons of untreated sewage into surface waters every year.

systems. In some rural areas, the total reaches nearly 50% of local households. For example, there are about 88,000 cesspools in Hawai'i that discharge 53 million gallons of sewage into coastal waters every day. On the East End of Long Island, there are approximately 360,000 on-site sewage disposal systems, including 250,000 cesspools. These are barely more advanced than a deep hole in the ground.

Stormwater and flooding conditions that cause groundwater levels to rise further complicate this situation, causing septic and cesspools to leach out effluent. In sewer areas, stormwater can infiltrate into old pipes, overwhelming the entire system and causing overflows of undertreated sewage into coastal waters. With sea level rise and extreme weather events associated with climate change added into the mix, it's a true recipe for disaster.



### Surfrider's Approach

To protect water quality along our coasts, we are working to ensure that all sewage in the U.S. is adequately collected and treated to protect public health and the environment. To achieve this goal, we are advocating for robust beach water quality monitoring programs through the federal BEACH Act. We are also filling in the gaps of government-run beach programs with our Blue Water Task Force volunteer water testing program so beachgoers have the information they need to stay safe at the beach. In addition, we are calling on Congress this year to make significant investments to start catching up on the backlog of sewage infrastructure upgrades needed across the country to prevent undertreated sewage from entering our waterways. Investments in water infrastructure will also help to put Americans back to work and contribute to the tourism and ocean recreation dependent coastal economies that are worth nearly \$130 billion nationwide.



With our grassroots network mobilized around this issue, we are bringing together local communities to build awareness of water quality problems so the causes can be found and resolved. In Florida, we are working to secure state funding for the Florida Healthy Beaches program and improve public notification practices to inform beachgoers of elevated bacteria levels and sewage spills. In Hawai'i, our chapters are advocating for improvements to beach water quality monitoring and public notification programs to better protect safe coastal recreation. We are also working with partners to defend coastal water quality by phasing out the use of cesspools across the state.

Along the U.S. and Mexico border, Surfrider's San Diego County Chapter is running a campaign to eliminate the flow of trash, chemicals and untreated sewage that are ending up on local beaches and in the Pacific Ocean. The situation is so dire that beaches adjacent to the Tijuana River Valley were closed for nearly 300 days in 2020 to protect the public from exposure to these pollutants. The San Diego County Chapter is working hard to raise community awareness and build the political will necessary to solve the border region's sewage infrastructure problems so local families can once again enjoy recreating at the beach without having to worry about getting sick.

**Thank you to our supporters who have joined us in these efforts to ensure that the coasts are clean and safe for all people to enjoy for future generations.**



Chapter-led Blue Water Task Force programs fill in the gaps of agency-run beach monitoring programs to inform beachgoers of where it's safe to surf, swim and play in the water.



# Trestles Saved Forever

By: Stefanie Sekich-Quinn, Coastal Preservation Manager

Imagine the energy of 3,500 coastal advocates filling a public hearing room. Now, imagine the energy when these people, some of whom had been waiting for more than 12 hours, heard the news that one of California's most visited and beloved state parks — San Onofre State Beach — would be saved. It would be protected from a six-lane toll road that would have decimated the last remaining undeveloped watershed in Southern California, the world-famous surf break at Trestles Beach, multiple endangered species and sacred Indigenous sites. The energy in that room was absolutely electric.

That seminal day forever fortified Surfrider activists as resilient ocean heroes and coastal defenders working hard to save precious places that belong to all people, not just special interests. Remarkably, that particular moment was from just one day in a nearly 20-year battle to save this iconic park.

Over the course of about two decades, Surfrider and the Save San Onofre Coalition (SSOC) pulled out all the stops to ensure the success of this campaign. Because the toll road project was so large, it required many permits and dozens of public hearings.



Photo: Geoff Glenn

After a marathon campaign of more than 15 years, the battle to Save Trestles came to fruition when Governor Newsom signed AB 1426 into law, protecting San Onofre State Beach and Trestles from any type of road construction.

Every time a permit was submitted, we wrote comment letters, mobilized our grassroots army and testified at hearings. However, every time we won a permit hearing, developers appealed the decision, which is why this campaign was such a long and winding road (pun intended).

These victories, over the course of nearly two decades, helped us to achieve a landmark lawsuit settlement in 2016 that banned toll road developers from building in the park. Unfortunately, in 2017, two lawsuits were filed to undo our park protections.

With each victory, we worked hard and enlisted important decision-makers to help halt the toll road. Despite our multiple wins, the developers were set on building the road, which ultimately helped us gain more momentum and garner widespread public support. From Clint Eastwood and rock stars to professional surfers, the David and Goliath battle caught the attention of world-renowned people who wanted to help.

In order to ensure the park was permanently protected, we worked with Assemblywoman Tasha Boerner Horvath to introduce and pass legislation. It would codify our legal protections to forever protect San Onofre State Beach, the Donna O'Neill Land Conservancy and the San Mateo Watershed.

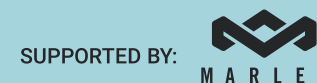
Our success largely came from running a highly sophisticated grassroots campaign which included skywriting, street corner demonstrations, guerilla and mainstream marketing, clever outreach materials and videos featuring surfers, hikers, families and famous people, among other activities. One of the most interesting aspects of this campaign is that our successes happened prior to extensive social media.

The successful legislation, and previous lawsuit wins, were the culmination of years of tireless work to finally Save Trestles. The passage of the bill not only validated 20 years of grassroots advocacy, but it also brought an end to one of the most hard-fought, long-lasting environmental battles in California's history. This victory would have not been possible without the thousands of passionate and motivated advocates who stood our ground to FOREVER save Trestles. If you are one of the many who helped to achieve this landmark victory, future generations thank you!



Activists gather to save San Onofre from a six-lane toll road that would have decimated the last remaining undeveloped watershed in Southern California, the world-famous surf break at Trestles Beach, multiple endangered species and sacred Indigenous sites.





## Get Involved With The Blue Water Task Force

Our volunteers are the lifeblood of the Surfrider Foundation. Join our network and help us tackle the issues that face our ocean, waves and beaches.

Learn more at [surfrider.org/volunteer](https://surfrider.org/volunteer)

# Oregon's Fight to Protect the Coasts

By: Charlie Plybon, Oregon Policy Manager, and Staley Prom, Legal Associate

The Surfrider Foundation's Coos Bay Chapter in Oregon is celebrating major milestones this year in their work to prevent the development and construction of the Jordan Cove Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) export facility. This project would not only threaten more than 400 waterways, but it would also destroy critical estuarine habitats and permanently alter important recreational features essential to local communities and the tourism industry. In addition, the energy export facility would be the largest source of greenhouse gas emissions in Oregon, producing nearly half a million more tons of carbon annually than the state's only coal-fired power plant.



**The bay is our backyard, it's a wild and remarkable space that can accommodate everything from salmon fishing to surfing and sailing.**

Surfrider's Coos Bay Chapter joined the campaign in 2017 as local volunteers were not able to sit on the sidelines of the largest development threat to their beloved bay. After battling the project for years through multiple lawsuits, dozens of local, state and federal appeals, and hundreds of public hearings, a coalition of environmental groups, including Surfrider, recently turned a couple of critical corners in the campaign.

"It's a constant for us to track public hearings, land use appeals and organize our members for countless rallies and advocacy events," said Todd Buchholz, Coos Bay Chapter Policy Chair and LNG campaign lead. "The bay is our backyard, it's a wild and remarkable space that can accommodate everything from salmon fishing to surfing and sailing."

In 2019, Surfrider and the Oregon Shores Conservation Coalition, represented by Crag Law Center, appealed a Coos County Conditional Use Permit for the project to the Oregon Land Use Board of Appeals (LUBA). The groups asserted that the LNG project would substantially interfere with public trust activities, including fishing, boating, kayaking and surfing in and around the bay.



A rally at the Capitol building in Salem, Oregon, brings activists together to stop the LNG pipeline.

In its December 22nd decision last year, LUBA agreed with Surfrider that the county is required to consider whether the project will unreasonably interfere with public trust rights. It also demanded that the county address safety issues and environmental standards associated with dredge and fill activities.

In addition, this year, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission upheld Oregon's authority under the Clean Water Act to determine whether the project complies with all applicable water quality standards. While the Jordan Cove LNG facility has continually tried to circumvent local and state laws that are at odds with the project, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) also denied the most recent request to override the state's objection under the Coastal Zone Management Act. This is another key

determination in preventing the project from moving forward.

As the area has a strong heritage of bay and ocean recreation, the LNG pipeline would threaten both the community's way of life and the Coos Bay Chapter's vision for a thriving, healthy bay. While we celebrate the recent successes and notable milestones in the fight to stop the LNG project, Surfrider recognizes the persistent "zombie" nature of this energy export facility that keeps trying to come back. Surfrider and our Coos Bay Chapter will not rest and will continue to maintain constant pressure with our coalition partners until the Jordan Cove LNG is gone once and for all.

For updates on this campaign, visit [surfrider.org/coastal-blog](https://surfrider.org/coastal-blog).

Photo: Briana Goodwin



# Defending Clean Water with Dragon Alliance

By: Rachael Cushing, Partnerships Coordinator



Since 2015, Dragon Alliance, a globally recognized leader in performance eyewear based in Southern California, has supported the Surfrider Foundation as a Surf Industry Coastal Defender. With a deep heritage in surfing, the Dragon team is keenly aware of the impacts of pollution on coastal water quality. For the last two years, the organization has contributed to Surfrider's national volunteer-led water testing program as the title sponsor of the Blue Water Task Force.

"Without healthy waterways, we can't enjoy what we love," said Thomas Burkhardt, Senior Vice President of Global Brands, Marketing and Design for Marchon Eyewear, Inc., Dragon's parent company. "Knowing the quality of the water is critical to protecting public health at the beach. Aligning with Surfrider's Blue Water Task Force is a point of pride for Dragon because it allows us to help identify and address water quality issues around the country for healthier beaches and communities."

As the title sponsor of the Blue Water Task Force, Dragon has taken a hands-on approach to supporting the program, from robust employee education to engaging professional athletes in water testing activities. Last year, professional surfers and Dragon athletes, Rob Machado and Otto Flores, sat down with the Surfrider team



Professional surfer and Dragon athlete, Samantha Sibley, recently joined Surfrider's San Diego County Chapter to help pull water samples from a newly established testing site in Oceanside, CA.



Last year, professional surfers and Dragon athletes, Rob Machado and Otto Flores, met with the Surfrider team to help raise awareness of the Blue Water Task Force's mission.

to raise awareness of the Blue Water Task Force's mission and discuss how our choices as consumers can make significant impacts. This year, Otto and Rob joined Surfrider's annual Coastal Recreation Hill Day and they have been instrumental in advocating for federal solutions to protect clean water.

In addition, professional surfer and Dragon athlete, Samantha Sibley, recently joined Surfrider's San Diego County Chapter to help pull water samples from a newly established testing site in Oceanside, CA.

"With careers that stem from the ocean and their passion for protecting the environment, Rob, Otto and Sam have been able to bring an even deeper connection between Dragon and Surfrider's initiatives," said Burkhardt. "Having them on board to spread the word and get involved will continue to help grow awareness and encourage others to take an interest in protecting their local watershed."

Thanks to our partners at Dragon Alliance for their continued support of our mission to protect the ocean, waves and beaches.

**Knowing the quality of the water is critical to protecting public health at the beach.**



# Christopher Warren

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

I'm currently a volunteer and an executive committee member with the Outer Banks Chapter in the role of Chapter Treasurer. I have always been passionate about marine biology, along with ocean and beach preservation. The local No Drill, No Spill campaign caught my attention in 2019 and I wanted to take action because oil pollution would be devastating to marine life, the coasts and the livelihood of the community. Since then, I've been involved from setting up tables and tents at local events to educating and informing the community about the No Drill, No Spill campaign. I also support and help organize beach cleanups, fundraising opportunities for campaigns, projects and community outreach programs.

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

The executive order recently signed by the federal administration to halt offshore drilling has been a great highlight result of the local No Drill, No Spill campaign. Work still remains to permanently suspend all offshore drilling throughout the U.S., but this gives us time to regroup, educate more and reform a larger presence to influence current and future administrations to end new offshore drilling as a threat to our ocean, waves and beaches.

**If you believe in something, get involved because the cause is always bigger than yourself.**

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

I've learned that everyone involved has a passion for the ocean, whether they surf, kayak, fish or go to the beach. I didn't grow up on the beach but have always enjoyed water sports, swimming or just relaxing on the sand. As an ocean enthusiast, I always tell people, "It doesn't matter where you currently live or where you were raised." If you believe in something, get involved because the cause is always bigger than yourself. The best experience with the Surfrider Foundation is the support of the community. Just being visible to your community no matter your age, race, gender or orientation, brings everyone together for a similar cause.

## Anything else you'd like to share?

While not everyone is taught to engage in conversation and discussion with others equally, common interests and goals help change interaction and perception. That perception is you being seen as a great individual no matter who you are, what you look like, where you're from, or who you know. Do not be discouraged to get involved because you do not see many people that look like you. We're all human and more alike than we know.







## AMBASSADOR PROFILE

# Leah Dawson

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

The Surfrider Foundation is a beautiful representation of the part of surf culture that I love and adore most – people who care about the environment, friendliness and change-making. Surfrider has been able to attract these like-minded folks in a tremendous fashion, activating their passion to work together to protect our ocean and environment. I'm always blown away by the people I meet through Surfrider and by the achievements they bring to life.

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

I frequent the beaches on O'ahu and in Southern California. Erosion is so clear in both places that it's impossible to ignore. Erosion on the North Shore gets worse every year and now many beachfront homes and main highways are threatened. In California, cliffs along the coast are constantly crumbling into the sea. When sea level rise is at our doorstep, there's no denying that things are changing quickly. From oil and gas to sewage and chemical fertilizers, toxic runoff is also an issue. There has to be accountability for the health and wellness of people and the planet.

**Across local, state and federal levels, every one of us has a voice and the ability to use it.**

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

We all have the power to make a difference. Across local, state and federal levels, every one of us has a voice and the ability to use it. Surfrider helps individuals gain access to various ways to help our ocean and communities and also recognizes that for true change to take place, new policies are necessary. By participating in Surfrider chapters, we gain a strong understanding of the challenges our local environment is facing and are given a blueprint for activation, holding our elected officials accountable and participating with our communities to keep our beaches clean.

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

Surfrider has encouraged me to seek more knowledge about policy and the environmental crisis that we face globally. Being part of Surfrider also makes me feel like these 'larger than life' issues are solvable and that the power is in the peoples' hands. I participated in Surfrider's Coastal Recreation Hill Day in 2020 and walked the halls of Congress, met with elected officials, and connected with volunteers from around the country who are just as passionate about a clean and healthy world as I am. While Surfrider is about environmental preservation, it is also about community, connecting people through their common heart and providing structured outlets to put passion into action together.





## Gifts That Give Back

100% of the proceeds from our store directly fund our mission to protect our ocean, waves and beaches.

[shop.surfrider.org](https://shop.surfrider.org)





# Anupa Asokan

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

I became actively involved with the Surfrider Foundation when I first moved to Washington, D.C. in 2013. That was the farthest I've ever lived from the ocean and Surfrider seemed like a great way to meet other ocean lovers and contribute to a cause I believe in. I currently serve on the national Board of Directors and volunteer with the Los Angeles Chapter.

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

The main issues are climate change and plastic pollution. Fundamentally, the biggest threats to our ocean can be addressed by dealing with the causes of climate change. It's up to us to help mitigate the damage and arm our policymakers with the information they need to make lasting change. For example, a local beach cleanup might not get all the plastic out of the ocean, but the data we gather helps to make a compelling case for policies to stop the flow of plastic from upstream.

**It's up to us to help mitigate the damage and arm our policymakers with the information they need to make lasting change.**

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

Making space for everyone in ocean conservation and recreation is very important to me. At the national level, I'm grateful to contribute to Surfrider's Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion committee. Creating opportunities for youth to have fun and positive experiences in the ocean, such as the L.A. Chapter's One Watershed program, is something I'm also passionate about.

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

I'm still riding the high from the personal challenge I set for myself and accomplished last year. I decided to stand-up paddleboard across Santa Monica Bay as a fundraiser for Surfrider. One of my favorite things about paddling is the chance to encounter ocean life, so I also tried to use the fundraising effort as an opportunity to educate my followers about local marine life and issues they face in Southern California.

On October 3rd, I completed the 27-mile trek, raised over \$10,000 for Surfrider and saw a small pod of fin whales along the way! I've contributed to several campaign efforts over the years, from stopping offshore drilling in the Atlantic to foam bans in and around Washington, D.C. Every single victory, even my paddle across the bay, was only possible because of the volunteers, staff and supportive community Surfrider is able to help bring together for the ocean — so, thank you!







## ARTIST PROFILE

# The Cigarette Surfboard

By: Ben Judkins and Taylor Lane

### Tell us about the Cigarette Surfboard project. Where did the idea come from?

The project was inspired by the 2017 Creators and Innovators Upcycle Contest by Surfrider and Vissla, which prompted people to create a functional surfboard or wave riding craft from upcycled materials. Why use cigarette butts? They're the most littered item in the world, they're made from plastic, and they leach thousands of toxic chemicals into our waterways and ocean. As surfers, we see them every day — they're ubiquitous at beach parking lots, along coastal paths, and often casually strewn on the stretch of sand between cement and sea. With twelve quirky boards beneath our belt and a feature-length documentary in production, the Ciggy Boards have become not only a platform to spark ocean stewardship, but also a bridge between surfing and activism.

### Where do you get the materials from?

We've worked with ocean conservation groups, including Surfrider, to collect all of our cigarette butts from beach cleanups. We've also collaborated with surfboard makers, such as Travis Reynolds, Ryan Harris, Malcolm Campbell, Marc Andreini, and Rob Machado, to shape foam blanks.

After a long and complicated process of sifting and flattening the filters, the butts were laminated by the thousands into the surfboard blanks. Using fiberglass and a bio-based epoxy resin by Entropy Resins, the cigarette butts make their way back to the beach in a new upcycled style.

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

We've had the privilege of spending weeks with some incredible ocean activists, including Fergal Smith and Easkey Britton from Ireland, Chris Hines from the U.K., Cliff Kapono from Hawai'i, and Hannah Bennett from Fiji. Through these people, we've learned firsthand about the many ways we can participate in protecting our ocean.



Photo: Alexander Siegel

**The Ciggy Boards have become not only a platform to spark ocean stewardship, but also a bridge between surfing and activism.**





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

As surfers, we feel it's our moral obligation to give back to the ocean that provides us with so much enjoyment (not to mention, the air we breathe). It's been very inspirational to witness the visceral impact these surfboards have on people — from tears to laughter, anger to awe.

**Many of the problems facing the ocean are a result of things we as humans have created. That means we have the capacity to change them.**

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

Many of the problems facing the ocean are a result of things we as humans have created. That means we have the capacity to change them. However, the immensity of the issues can feel overwhelming, distant and systemic. People often ask, "What can I really do as an individual?" So much! Our upcoming documentary will share the multifaceted, tangible approaches to taking action — from the first step of individual habit change to using art and media as a tool for good; from growing food to science and education; and from responsible business practices to legislative support and grassroots activism. Local action really does help to create global change.



# Coastal Victories Update

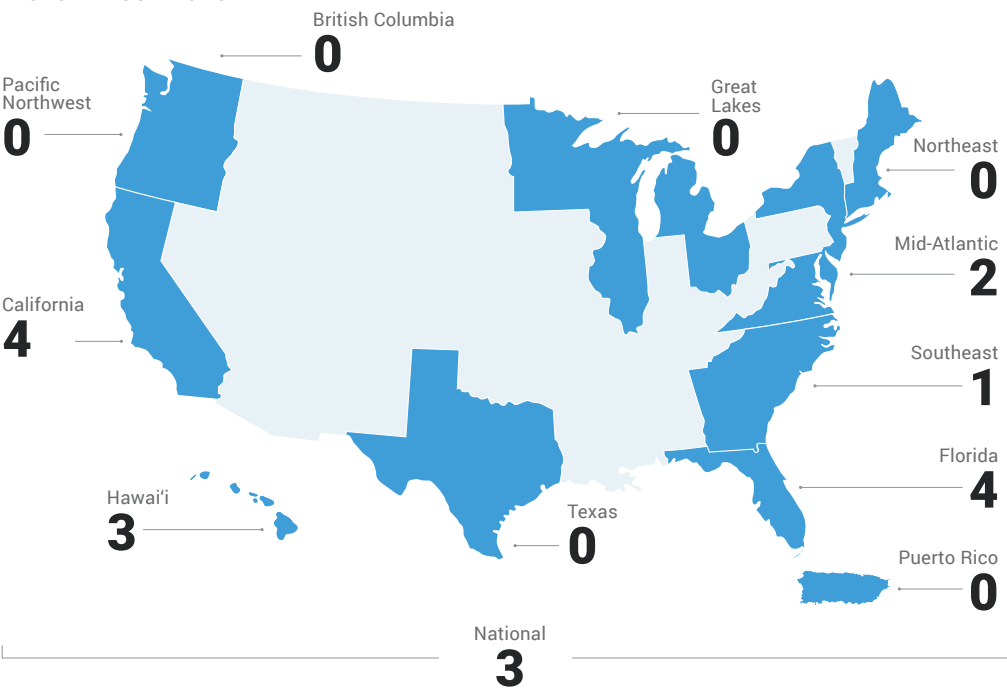
A coastal victory is a decision made in favor of the coastal and ocean environment that results in a positive conservation outcome, improves coastal access, or both.

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

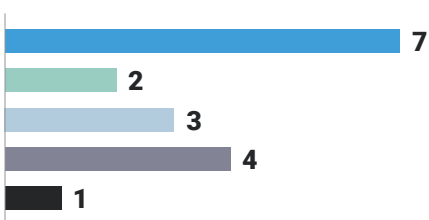
17

Total Victories as of April 2021

## VICTORY LOCATIONS

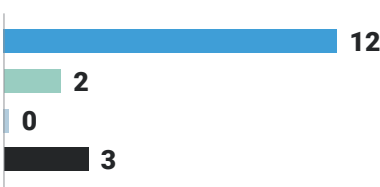


## VICTORY TYPE



- Plastic Pollution
- Ocean Protection
- Coastal Preservation
- Clean Water
- Beach Access

## VICTORY SCOPE



- Local
- State
- Regional
- National



# Leave a Lasting Legacy

Help advance the protection of our ocean, waves and beaches for future generations. Contact us about Planned Giving.

[surfriderlegacy.org](https://surfriderlegacy.org) | 949.492.8170

