

2025

# ANNUAL REPORT

SURFRIDER FOUNDATION

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Morgan Maassen

# Our Story

More than 40 years ago, a handful of surfers made a powerful statement by founding the Surfrider Foundation. The waves that they surfed in Malibu, California, were threatened by development and pollution. They wanted to protect what they loved, so they took action and organized a group to protest the threats to their local surf break. That spark ignited a movement that now consists of more than a million supporters, including activists and members comprising over 200 volunteer-led chapters and student clubs.

Today, the Surfrider Foundation is a powerful network of coastal defenders who share a deep passion for the ocean, waves, and beaches because we live, work, and play there. We're surfers, swimmers, divers, beachgoers, stand-up paddleboarders, and coastal recreationists. It's our love for the ocean and coasts that drives us to defend clean water and healthy beaches.

Our vision is to lead the movement for clean water and healthy beaches for all people — always. Surfrider's members and supporters, like you, empower citizens to be leaders in their communities. By bridging local knowledge with national experts in law, policy, and science, our formula for success has produced hundreds of victories that result in scalable change. We don't just play. We win.

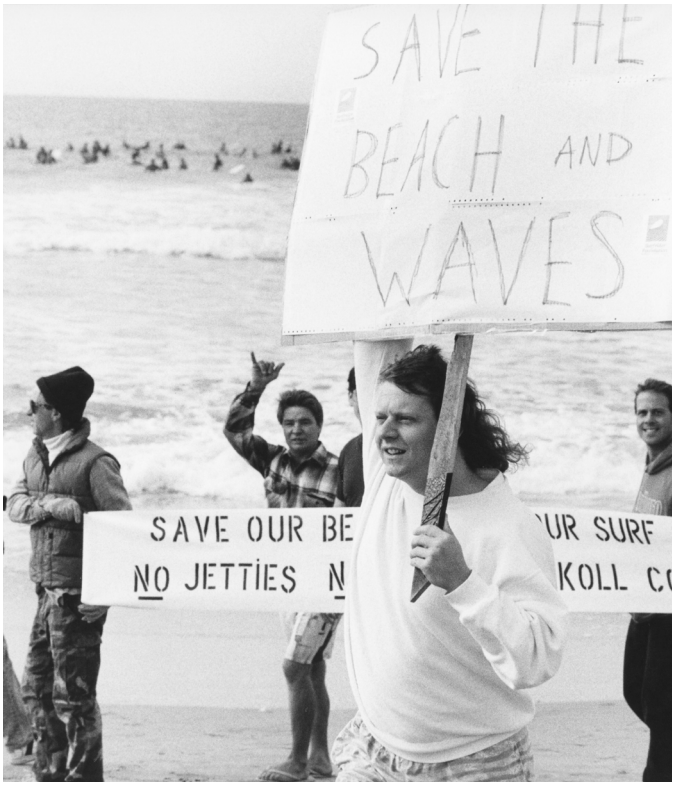
We each have a stake in taking action to ensure the places where we surf, swim, play, and live are protected for this and future generations. The Surfrider Foundation invites all who care about the ocean, waves, and beaches, regardless of background, socioeconomic class, or geographic location, to join us as we work together to protect our coasts for the future.

Thank you for your continued support.

**The Surfrider Foundation invites all who care about the ocean, waves, and beaches, regardless of background, socioeconomic class, or geographic location, to join us as we work together to protect our coasts for the future.**





# Letter From Our CEO

Dear Friend of the Ocean,

As we anticipated, 2025 proved to be immensely challenging, but our network rose to meet it. On its first day, the Trump administration moved to reopen America's coasts to new offshore drilling, and Surfrider fought back fast, filing the first environmental lawsuit against the new administration.

But our fight for the coast never stops at one issue. At San Onofre State Beach, we launched a community-led restoration effort that cleared 5,000 pounds of invasive plants and removed 400 pounds of trash. At the same time, we started a community outreach to inform a resilient, nature-based coastal adaptation project to protect the future of Surf Beach. Our Student Club Network posted its strongest year yet for civic engagement, with the highest-ever turnout at our federal Hill Day and a 150% jump in students showing up for state capitol ocean-awareness days to advocate for clean water and healthy beaches. Meanwhile, our chapters kept building on decades of work fighting plastic pollution, protecting water quality, and defending public access to the beaches we love — the unglamorous, in-the-trenches campaign work that rarely makes headlines, but keeps adding up coastal victory after coastal victory.

So while we played defense at the federal level, our chapter and club network continues to advance important laws and policies, racking up 45 campaign victories won at the local, state, and federal levels that improve water quality on our beaches, reduce plastic pollution, protect ocean ecosystems, and strengthen the resilience of our coastlines to the impacts of climate change through nature-based solutions. Read **here** for a richer, more detailed accounting of 2025's major achievements.

Every one of those wins started with someone showing up locally and refusing to accept that the issues facing our coasts are someone else's problem to solve.

For Clean Water & Healthy Beaches,



Dr. Chad Nelsen
CEO, Surfrider Foundation

# DEFENDING OUR **OCEAN** **FOR ALL** TO ENJOY




Sarah Plenge

# Environmental Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

## Our Commitment

The Surfrider Foundation is committed to fostering a just, equitable, diverse, and inclusive organization for all people working to 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.

## Why It Is Important

Our ocean and coasts are public commons, and we believe that access to healthy and clean coasts and a vibrant ocean should be for the benefit of all people. But around the world, too many people are excluded or made to feel unwelcome on our coasts and are disenfranchised from decisions made about the future of these shared resources.

For over four decades, our mission has been to protect and ensure the enjoyment of our coasts and ocean for all people through active engagement in our democratic decision-making processes. We know we must expand our community of coastal activists to be more inclusive of and serve nearby communities, and we recognize that we have fallen short in proactively welcoming and empowering everyone to be part of our organization in the past.

To address this reality, Surfrider is infusing the principles of Environmental Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EJEDI) into every aspect of our work. We are working to achieve environmental justice guided by a vision of a world in which all individuals, communities, and people work together toward the protection of our coastal and ocean resources, as well as our shared access to them; are active participants in the decisions that affect them; and equitably share the joy and benefits of healthy and vibrant coastal communities.

With EJEDI principles guiding our work, Surfrider is evolving to become a more just and powerful organization. Diversifying our network of activists and integrating their unique perspectives enables us to learn from the wisdom of marginalized communities, and empowers us all to better protect our environment.



## EJEDI Progress

Our EJEDI committee, composed solely of board and staff members, continued to provide oversight and guidance to the organization on our EJEDI goals. In addition, our "Equity Roundtable" discussion group continued to meet on a regular basis to provide the broader network (chapter, clubs, and staff) an opportunity to share successes and challenges of EJEDI work in the field, as well as provide input and feedback to the EJEDI Committee via quarterly meetings. This group held quarterly deep dives to hear what is happening in the network, share best practices, host guest speakers, facilitate talks, etc. In 2025, Surfrider's staff-led Culture Committee continued its work to strengthen an inclusive, connected, and mission-driven workplace culture. The committee provided opportunities for staff to share perspectives and identify organizational themes and opportunities related to communication, policies and practices, resources, and behaviors and values. This work supports Surfrider's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion by helping ensure that different perspectives and experiences inform how our culture evolves and how employees experience the organization day to day. In addition, we continued to foster our work with tribes with our indigenous working group.

We continue to work towards our goals of increasing diversity of our board, staff, and volunteers, creating an inclusive work culture, educating our network on the importance of EJEDI work and how it relates to our mission by providing necessary training and resources to our chapters and clubs, diversifying creative collaboration in our marketing and communications materials, and integrating environmental justice into our campaign efforts by partnering with environmental justice organizations and communities to achieve common goals and initiatives.

This work is not easy and has recently been under attack. We are as committed to making sure our workplace and network are as welcoming to all people as we are to the protection of our ocean, waves, and beaches for future generations. The work that we do here matters, and ensuring a seat at the table for everyone is imperative. Collectively, we can make the Surfrider Foundation a more just, equitable, diverse, and inclusive organization for all.

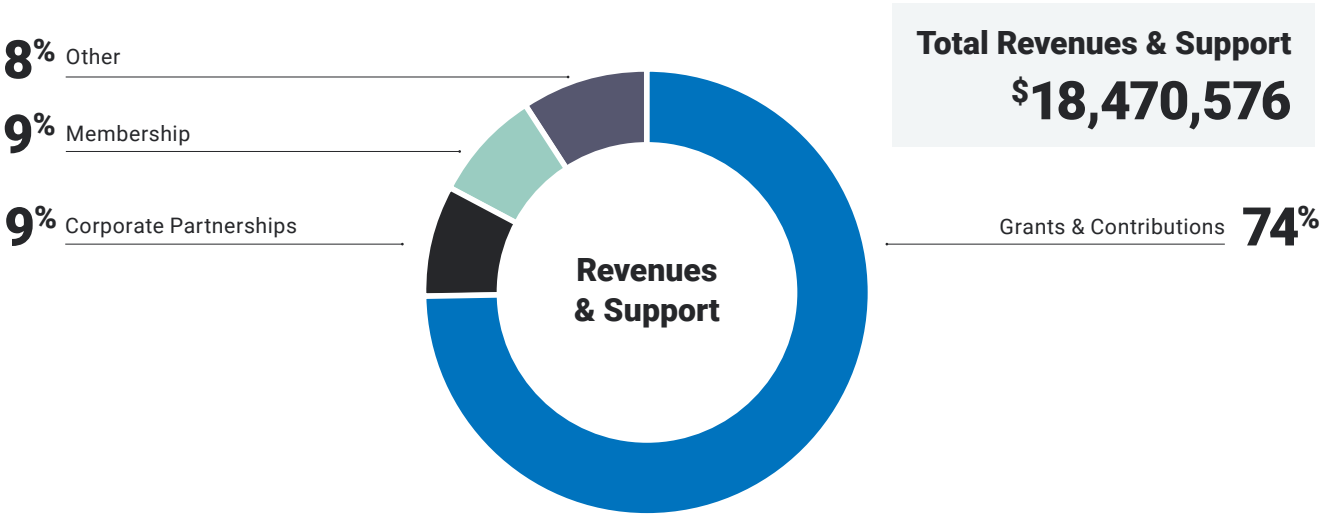




# **CLEAN WATER** AND HEALTHY **BEACHES**

# Financial Activities

**Years Ended December 31, 2025/2024**

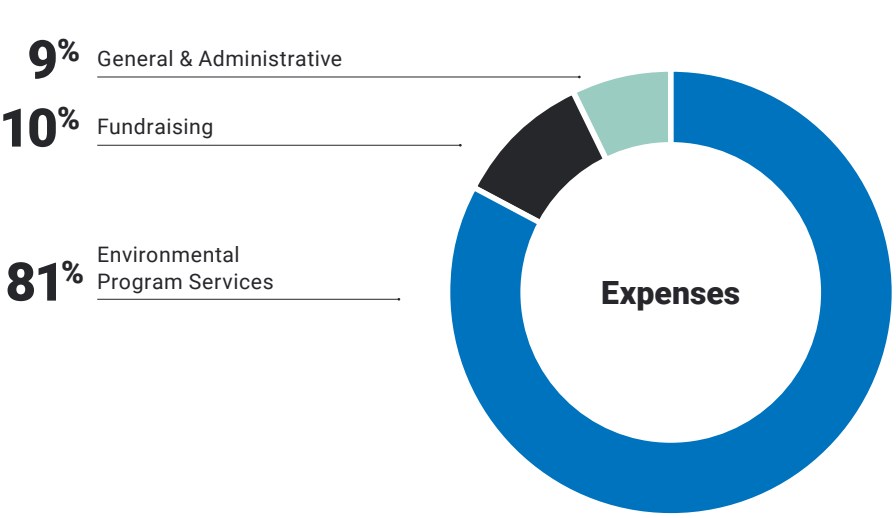



| Revenues & Support | 2025 | 2024 |
|---|---|---|
| Grants & Contributions | $13,648,680 | $9,922,936 |
| Membership | 1,674,739 | 1,500,946 |
| Sales, Mail Order Merchandise (net of cost of goods sold) | 279,065 | 246,386 |
| Corporate Partnership Revenue | 1,659,388 | 1,569,652 |
| Special Events (net of direct costs) | 23,703 | 225,549 |
| Employee Retention Credits | 0 | 924,114 |
| Other Income (loss) | 38,965 | 94,168 |
| Investment Income (loss) | 1,146,036 | 574,963 |
| **Total Revenues & Support** | **$18,470,576** | **$15,058,714** |

| Expenses | | |
|---|---|---|
| Environmental Program Services | 11,828,519 | 12,020,410 |
| Fundraising | 1,456,545 | 1,617,888 |
| General and Administrative | 1,324,833 | 1,251,010 |
| **Total Expenses** | **$14,609,897** | **$14,889,308** |
| **Changes in Net Assets** | 3,860,679 | 169,406 |
| **Net Assets Beginning of Year** | 20,017,851 | 19,848,445 |
| **Net Assets End of Year** | **$23,878,530** | **$20,017,851** |

# Financial Position

**Years Ended December 31, 2025/2024**




**Total Expenses**
**$14,609,897**

| Assets | 2025 | 2024 |
|---|---|---|
| Cash & Cash Equivalents | $14,198,315 | $9,443,619 |
| Investments | 5,859,461 | 5,327,615 |
| Accounts & Grants Receivable | 4,724,696 | 5,003,545 |
| Employee Retention Credit Receivable | 0 | 924,114 |
| Inventory | 121,932 | 126,104 |
| Prepaid Expenses | 193,226 | 222,348 |
| Property & Equip. (net of depreciation) | $24,817 | $54,147 |
| Operating Lease Right-Of-Use Asset | 330,965 | 480,117 |
| **Total Assets** | **$25,453,412** | **$21,581,609** |
| **Liabilities** | | |
| Accounts Payable & Accrued Liabilities | 372,656 | 281,774 |
| Payroll Related Liabilities | 826,584 | 744,469 |
| Operating Lease Liability | 375,642 | 537,515 |
| **Total Liabilities** | **$1,574,882** | **$1,563,758** |
| **Net assets** | | |
| Without Donor Restrictions | 10,452,755 | 7,862,545 |
| With Donor Restrictions | 13,425,775 | 12,155,306 |
| **Total Net Assets** | **$23,878,530** | **$20,017,851** |
| **Total Liabilities & Net Assets** | **$25,453,412** | **$21,581,609** |


THE **BEACH** BELONGS
TO **EVERYONE**

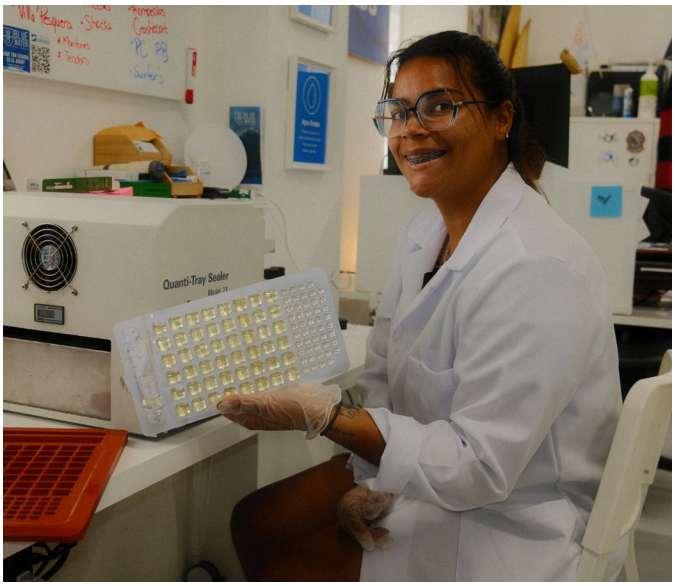
# Our Work

Our ocean is our work, as well as our sanctuary. Some of us love to ride its waves. Others might like to just dig our feet in the sand. Our ocean regulates our climate and provides us with food and most of the air we breathe. Our ocean also possesses powers that can help us to combat climate change and protect our coastlines. Whatever the ocean means to you, protecting it is one of the most important things we can do. Unfortunately, our ocean is facing growing challenges every day.

To turn the tide before further damage is done, we must proactively protect our ocean from a range of growing threats. That is why the Surfrider Foundation, powered by a grassroots network of passion-driven activists, serves as the collective voice for our ocean and coasts. With one foot in the sand and the other in the water, the Surfrider Foundation is the only nonprofit organization with a 100% focus on protecting our ocean, waves, and beaches.

**With one foot in the sand and the other in the water, the Surfrider Foundation is the only nonprofit organization with a 100% focus on protecting our ocean, waves, and beaches.**


Guru Khalsa






# Initiatives



## Plastic Reduction

Plastic pollution is suffocating the ocean and the many animals that call it home. To address the plastic pollution crisis, we seek to reduce plastic pollution at its source by holding corporate polluters accountable, working to educate the public, cleaning up litter at beaches, passing laws that reduce single-use plastic consumption, and reducing unnecessary single-use plastics in the hospitality industry through our Ocean Friendly Restaurants and Hotels programs.

surfrider.org/initiatives/plastic-pollution

## Clean Water

We protect our clean water resources and prevent pollution along our coasts and waterways through water testing, community outreach, and planting Ocean Friendly Gardens. On the policy level, we advocate for pragmatic clean water solutions to protect the health of you, your family, and our coastal ecosystems.

surfrider.org/initiatives/clean-water

## Coasts and Climate

Our network of staff and volunteers are addressing the impacts of climate change on our coasts through nature-based solutions. We work collaboratively with community stakeholders to restore coastal ecosystems, including mangroves, wetlands, and dunes, and drive smart, long-term climate planning solutions on our coasts.

surfrider.org/initiatives/coasts-climate

## Ocean Protection

Our ocean faces new and growing challenges from pollution, habitat loss, development, resource exploitation, and climate change. To protect the ocean, we work to stop offshore oil drilling and seabed mining, and to establish marine protected areas.

surfrider.org/initiatives/ocean-protection

## Beach Access

The coasts are where we live, work, play, and visit. Our beaches are the entryway to our ocean. We need access to beaches in order to enjoy these special places. We work hard to ensure that our beaches are accessible for all to enjoy through policy campaigns and legal action.

surfrider.org/initiatives/beach-access

# Programs



## Beach Cleanups

Beach cleanups can reduce ocean-bound litter, raise awareness about plastic pollution, and drive practical policy solutions. The Surfrider Foundation's volunteer network conducts beach cleanups throughout the East, West, Gulf, Great Lakes, Hawaiian, and Puerto Rican coasts. Surfrider uses the data from these cleanups to contribute to an annual Beach Cleanup Report and to inform policies across the nation.

surfrider.org/pages/beach-cleanup-activist-guide



## Ocean Friendly Restaurants & Hotels

Surfrider's Ocean Friendly Restaurants and Hotels programs recognize businesses that adopt sustainable operational practices to protect our ocean. Partnering with Ocean Friendly Restaurants and Hotels increases awareness, drives change in consumer behavior, and ultimately creates scalable impact across the hospitality and travel industries to reduce our plastic and water consumption footprints.

surfrider.org/programs/ocean-friendly-restaurants
surfrider.org/programs/ocean-friendly-hotels



## Climate Action Program

The goal of the Surfrider Foundation's Climate Action Program is to provide a platform to empower and support our chapters' longstanding work to restore and protect our coastlines, mitigating and adapting to climate change impacts while preserving coastal environments for future generations through nature-based solutions.

surfrider.org/programs/climate-action



## Ocean Friendly Gardens

Surfrider Foundation volunteers help local communities create Ocean Friendly Gardens, which conserve water and promote wildlife habitats with native plants — restoring soil, sponging up rainwater, filtering out pollution, storing carbon, and ultimately reducing the amount of runoff reaching our ocean.

surfrider.org/programs/ocean-friendly-gardens



## Blue Water Task Force

The Blue Water Task Force is the Surfrider Foundation's volunteer-run water testing, education, and advocacy program. Our chapters use this program to alert communities and local officials of water quality problems and to work toward solutions.

surfrider.org/blue-water-task-force

**From testing our coastal waters to ensuring that runoff stays in your garden to reducing plastic pollution, Surfrider's programs help ensure that our marine ecosystems are protected.**


TRANSFORMING **PASSION**
INTO **PROTECTION**

# Our Impact

In 2025, the Surfrider network doubled down on opportunities to make progress on the ground, in the local councils, and in the state capitols, while still defending the bedrock federal protections in place for our coasts and ocean. Several state plastic pollution prevention bills were passed after years of effort. We won more than 20 local-level campaigns across the country with the leadership of Surfrider's chapters. Volunteers turned out in the tens of thousands to give nature a boost by restoring coastal ecosystems. Despite the challenges and an absence of federal leadership for healthy coastlines, 2025 was still a year of incredible impact for Surfrider and our coasts.

**Despite the challenges and an absence of federal leadership for healthy coastlines, 2025 was still a year of incredible impact for Surfrider and our coasts.**




## Top Highlights

**48**
Campaign Victories to Protect our Coasts and Ocean

**23,000+**
Volunteers Engaged in Beach Cleanups

**120,633**
Pounds of Trash Removed From Beaches and Coastal Waterways

**10,000**
Water Quality Tests Performed

**97**
Ocean Friendly Garden Workday

**40,000**
Native Plants Installed

**686**
Ocean Friendly Restaurants and Hotels

**42 Million**
Estimated Single-Use Plastic-Free Meals Served

# Coasts and Climate

In 2025, there were significant threats at the federal level to upend bedrock ocean protection laws, climate programs, and funding for coastal management. Even so, Surfrider demonstrated in real time how coastal communities and ecosystems can not only survive, but thrive with nature-based solutions. By working with nature and leaning into community voices and expertise, Surfrider worked swiftly to make real progress on local and state coastal resilience policy and project opportunities.

In 2025, **Surfrider's Climate Action Program** evolved as a frontline defense against coastal erosion and the impacts of climate change. By restoring blue carbon mangrove forests, coastal dunes, and riparian habitats, Surfrider is adding decades of resilience to coastlines across the country while enhancing ecosystem functions and coastal access. More than 2,000 volunteers supported a total of **76 restoration events** across more than 22 acres of coastline in Hawai'i, California, Florida, Puerto Rico, North Carolina, New York, New Hampshire, Maine, and Wisconsin. Collectively, these volunteers installed over 40,000 native plants and removed more than 85,000 pounds of invasives.

Meanwhile, the finishing touches were put on **the Surfers' Point Managed Retreat Project** in Ventura, California. This project has become the gold standard in the application of nature-based solutions to address coastal erosion and climate change preparedness. By leveraging the success of Surfers' Point and years of community organizing, Surfrider secured a state grant of $1 million to design and apply a similar approach to the rapidly eroding and beloved 'Surf Beach' at San Onofre State Beach in Southern California.

Surfrider won eleven local and state campaigns in 2025 to better equip our coasts for a changing climate. In Oregon, Surfrider advanced its multi-year **Oregon Beaches Forever** campaign aimed at safeguarding the state's public beaches as they try to adapt to climate change. Four state and local wins were achieved in Oregon that advance nature-based solutions, promote climate-forward planning, and protect beaches against destructive riprap.

In Florida, Surfrider helped pass a **state bill** to provide long-term protections for state parks, including coastal areas, against harmful development projects. On the legal front, Surfrider's amicus curiae ("friend of the court") support led to a **significant victory for California coasts** in a case that properly limits armoring on California coastlines, consistent with the California Coastal Act.

To help scale proven coastal resilience, climate action, and nature-based tools, policies, and projects, Surfrider's 2025 **State of the Beach Report** highlighted case studies from around the country that can be replicated and applied along coastlines facing similar management challenges.



# Clean Water

While the federal administration's efforts to reduce environmental regulations also targeted protections for water quality at our beaches and waterways, Surfrider worked tirelessly in 2025 to safeguard the programs that keep us and our families safe when we visit the coast. Surfrider won eleven clean water campaigns at the local, state, and federal levels. This includes having **successfully advocated for congressional support** for the EPA's Beaches Environmental Assessment and Coastal Health Act, or BEACH Act, which provides national grants to coastal states to run their beach water quality monitoring and public notification programs. The program is critical to provide families with the information they need to stay safe at the beach and to safeguard our valuable coastal economies.

At the state level, Surfrider **helped pass a Washington bill** that requires public notification of sewage spills. Other state bills that passed in 2025 include: solutions for new wastewater system technology in Hawai'i; **a ban on the use of Neonicotinoids**, a class of synthetic, neurotoxic insecticides in Connecticut; and protections for recreational water quality against seafood processing wastewater discharge in Oregon.

Meanwhile, to address the ongoing public health and environmental crisis at the US-Mexico border, Surfrider and its coalition partners successfully advocated for more federal investment in border sewage infrastructure operations, maintenance, and capital improvements.

Surfrider's clean water programs have become more important than ever in filling the gaps where governments lack the capacity or political will to address pollution issues. The **Blue Water Task Force**, the nation's largest volunteer-driven beach water quality monitoring program, is now testing water quality at 613 sampling sites on beaches and waterways around the country. In 2025, volunteers ran more than 10,000 water quality tests. A total of 107,000 tests have been completed over the program's 30-year history.

To identify and fix the sources of pollution identified through the Blue Water Task Force, multiple Surfrider chapters are working collaboratively in their local communities. This includes projects in San Mateo, San Luis Obispo, and Ventura Counties, California; Eastern Long Island, New York; Melbourne and Miami, Florida; Newport, Oregon; Kaua'i and O'ahu, Hawai'i; and Rincón and Isabela, Puerto Rico.

Surfrider's **Ocean Friendly Gardens** program is helping people across the country reimagine and transform landscapes, yards, and community green spaces with nature-based solutions that protect clean water, build biodiversity, and support climate resilience. In 2025, Surfrider led 97 **Ocean Friendly Garden workdays** during which volunteers planted 2,905 native plants and trees. Across the country, more than 26 acres of Ocean Friendly Gardens now filter 23.1 million gallons of runoff annually.

Surfrider also developed a new digital resource, **Re-planting After Fire: A Fire-Resilient Landscape Guide for Lahaina & West Maui**, to help residents in the Maui community affected by the devastating 2023 fires create and maintain fire-resilient, environmentally responsible, and ocean-friendly landscapes.

Finally, Surfrider secured two significant legal wins in the courts for clean water in 2025. **Hawai'i's Supreme Court held in Surfrider and our partners' favor in Kaua'i** to help end the use of dangerous pesticides in Hawai'i. Meanwhile, in **another federal case**, the courts concluded that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) must make better decisions when setting water pollution standards for industrial facilities.



# Plastic Reduction

In 2025, the issue of plastic pollution on our beaches persisted, as noted by the 120,633 pounds of trash and recycling that were removed through Surfrider's 831 cleanups. On the fifth of July weekend alone, more than 10,000 pounds of trash were cleaned up. All of this was captured in Surfrider's Beach Cleanup Report, which found that 83% of the 870,000 pieces of trash analyzed in 2024 were plastic.

Turning off the tap on plastic pollution is the only effective way to make a meaningful impact on this issue, and market solutions play a major role. This year, Surfrider's Ocean Friendly Business network grew to 646 Ocean Friendly Restaurants in 30 states and territories, serving an estimated 42 million single-use plastic-free meals every year. Many marquee hospitality establishments joined as new Ocean Friendly Hotels, now 40 in total, collectively eliminating about 1.8 million plastic water bottles and 2.7 million mini plastic toiletry bottles from polluting our communities, waterways, and landfills.

While the federal administration's priorities blocked any efforts to pass meaningful plastic pollution reduction legislation in D.C., Surfrider still successfully achieved 14 coastal victories in states and cities around the country.

Together, these victories resulted in more than 862 million single-use plastic items taken out of circulation.
One example was Washington's Recycling Reform Act, which reduces the amount of plastic pollution found on the state's beaches and improves access to recycling. Another was in Oregon, where Surfrider successfully waged the Beyond the Bag Ban campaign, a statewide effort to eliminate thicker plastic check-out bags from grocery stores. Oregon is the second state in the US, after California, to pass a stronger bag ban.

Additionally, Surfrider defeated a dangerous Florida state bill that would have expanded the state's preemption on the local regulation of single-use plastic and reusable materials, containers, bottles, and bags. In the California cities of Santa Cruz and Capitola, Surfrider helped pass 'Ban the Butt' ordinances that end the sale of filtered tobacco products — the number one item found at Surfrider's beach cleanups. In New Jersey, four local campaigns were won to require the containment and removal of plastic particles and dust at construction sites.

These wins from across Surfrider's national network are eliminating needless plastic waste and the impacts it has on our coasts and ocean.



Alex Markow

# Ocean Protection

On January 6, 2025, President Biden **announced** the withdrawal of the entire US East Coast, the eastern Gulf of Mexico, the Pacific coasts of Washington, Oregon, and California, and part of the Northern Bering Sea in Alaska from future oil and gas leasing. The historic action protected more than 625 million acres of U.S. waters from oil and gas development. The Surfrider network celebrated this incredible victory.

However, following the change in administrations, the White House reversed President Biden's ban and initiated an onslaught of policies, proposals, and plans to sell off our ocean resources. Surfrider **quickly filed litigation** with our coalition partners to restore these protections. These cases remain ongoing and may extend for years, reinforcing the importance of Surfrider's grassroots advocacy.

While persistently on the defensive, Surfrider helped achieve two major proactive ocean protection victories in 2025. The 582,570 square-mile **Papahānaumokuākea National Marine Sanctuary in Hawai'i was established**, becoming one of the largest marine protected areas in the world. The sanctuary safeguards coral reefs, seamounts, and shoals that are home to diverse marine wildlife, including invertebrates, fish, birds, and marine mammals, including many endemic species.

Surfrider helped **strengthen protection for Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary**, home to the only barrier coral reef in the continental US, in addition to seagrass beds, mangrove forests, and diverse marine wildlife. The sanctuary's Restoration Blueprint expands the sanctuary by 739 square miles to more than 4,530 square miles of protected marine ecosystems.

While these wins were significant, our ocean faced a dangerous new threat in 2025 — a brewing **offshore drilling plan** to open vast stretches of the U.S. coastline to new offshore oil and gas leases. The nearly 1.3 billion acres of ocean at risk in the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management's proposed five-year drilling plan, released in late November, include all federal waters off California, all of the western and portions of the eastern Gulf, and most of Alaskan waters, including the untouched High Arctic, where drilling has never even been attempted because of the extreme environmental hazards.

In anticipation of such a plan, Surfrider was ready and quickly mobilized a nationwide effort to demonstrate widespread public opposition to more offshore drilling off our coasts. Surfrider's **Drilling is Killing** campaign delivered more than 30,000 public comments to the agency and is continuing to engage communities, businesses, and elected leaders to build the public opposition to the plan.

As part of a coalition effort in California, Surfrider has organized people's hearings in response to the absence of a public process in shaping the plan. Events in San Diego, Orange County, Santa Barbara, San Francisco, Humboldt, and beyond each turned out hundreds of ocean voices to advocate for ocean protection and say no to new offshore drilling.



# Beach Access

In 2025, among the many unique challenges to beach access in the U.S., there were coastal erosion, SpaceX launches, the privatization of coastal parking, and climate change. Surfrider won six coastal victories to help address threats to coastal access in California, Texas, Florida, and Hawai'i while monitoring dozens more.

In California, through the Love Your Beach Tour, Surfrider mobilized the public to advocate **against threats** to weaken or abolish the state's Coastal Act, a landmark law that protects the state's 1,100-mile coastline. With stops from San Diego to Sacramento, the tour collected more than 1,500 signatures from 100 different California districts, all in support of the crucial coastal environmental and access protection law.

Meanwhile, on the opposite coast, Surfrider successfully helped repeal Florida legislation that preempted local jurisdictions from protecting the public's customary use rights to recreate on Florida beaches.



Raul Tafur





# Legal Highlights

**Clean Water:** In June, Surfrider and our partners, represented by Environmental Integrity Project, won a case at the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit that will force the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to update industrial water pollution standards. We challenged the EPA's failure to ensure that technology-based standards for industrial polluters like petroleum refineries, plastics facilities, and pesticide plants reflect today's available technology. The court's decision requires the EPA to consider developments in pollution-control technologies, as well as other data regarding pollutants like nutrients and stormwater runoff, when updating the standards.

In August, Surfrider and our partners prevailed at the Hawai'i Supreme Court, after challenging a state decision that exempted a seed research company that uses restricted-use pesticides from complying with Hawai'i's environmental law. The seed research operations pose significant adverse impacts to the nearby water and coastal recreation. Siding with Surfrider, the court held that the state agency must prepare an environmental review document considering the harms before permitting the operations on West Kauai state conservation land.

**Coasts and Climate:** In July, California coastal preservation notched a win when the California Supreme Court denied review of the Court of Appeal's decision in Casa Mira Homeowners Association v. California Coastal Commission, leaving the ruling intact. Under the California Coastal Act, armoring such as seawalls and rock revetments shall be permitted only when necessary to protect structures that preexisted the act, or to protect public beaches in danger from erosion. Surfrider filed an amicus brief in the case in support of the commission's decision to deny armoring to a portion of property developed after the Coastal Act. The courts' decisions confirm the state's protections from harmful seawalls.

**Surfrider also filed new matters in 2025:** Surfrider's work protecting recreational water quality in West Maui continues. The Hawaii Department of Health finally issued a permit to Maui County for discharges from its Lahaina wastewater treatment plant. The permit came as a result of Surfrider's successful lawsuit, which confirmed Maui County needs a permit for its polluting discharges that reach the ocean and harm the reef and other marine resources. However, the permit fails to set adequate limits for certain pollutants such as nitrogen and phosphorus. Therefore, in October, Surfrider and our partners filed an administrative appeal of the permit. We're represented by Earthjustice.




TOGETHER WE CAN
PROTECT OUR COASTS

# Our Network

What makes Surfrider unique is our grassroots network, and it remains one of our greatest strengths. Across the country, volunteers protect our coasts through stewardship, advocacy, education, and community engagement. Surfrider is committed to developing both ready-now and future-ready leaders by providing high-impact learning opportunities that equip volunteers to be capable, adaptable, and enduring advocates for our coasts. Our chapter leaders are among the most well-trained in the environmental movement, supported by a growing leadership-development ecosystem that includes regional conferences, hands-on training, dedicated staff support, and an expanding suite of virtual learning tools and resources.

In 2025, Surfrider hosted six regional Chapter + Club Leadership Conferences across California, the Pacific Northwest, Hawai'i, the Northeast, Southeast, and Mid-Atlantic, reaching approximately 500 of our leading chapter and student volunteers. Participants strengthened core leadership skills, including volunteer recruitment, cultivating new leaders, and chapter growth, while deepening their knowledge of mission priorities such as climate action, water quality, and plastic pollution. Just as importantly, these gatherings created opportunities for volunteers to build relationships, exchange ideas, and learn directly from peers facing similar opportunities and challenges in their communities. Combined with the launch of Surfrider's new Learning Management System, these investments are creating a stronger and more accessible learning infrastructure to support volunteer leaders wherever they are.

We also continued to develop new pathways for people to participate in Surfrider's mission through the soft launch of the Beach Guardians Network. Beach Guardians creates a flexible, place-based model for sustained volunteer engagement, empowering individuals to care for a local beach, shoreline, or watershed — even where a traditional chapter structure may not exist. This approach expands the ways people can become part of Surfrider's grassroots movement while creating new opportunities to build lasting connections between individuals, their communities, and our mission.

Across our network, 55,000 volunteers participated in Surfrider activities in 2025, collectively contributing more than 60,000 hours toward protecting our ocean, waves, and beaches. Behind those numbers are thousands of people taking action in their own communities and contributing to a growing national movement of coastal defenders.

Surfrider will continue investing in the people and infrastructure that make grassroots action possible. We are preparing to roll out 20 new volunteer-facing training and support courses through our Learning Management System, advance our regional leadership conference programming, and continue developing new pathways for people to engage, lead, and grow within Surfrider. Together, these efforts will help to strengthen the leadership capacity, connections, and resources our network needs to grow an even stronger movement for the protection of our coasts.



# Student Clubs

Surfrider had 172 clubs officially register to be active for the 2025-2026 school year: 43 Colleges/Universities (a 16% increase over last year, exceeding our YOY growth goal), 127 High Schools, and two Middle Schools. The club network consists of 516 club leaders and 4,713 club members, and we directly engaged more than 11,500 student volunteers in Surfrider club-hosted events (245 off-campus) and initiatives.

On average, 70% of clubs return each year, while 30% are either new or existing clubs that have been dormant for more than one school year. Given the nature of a student-led program, this turnover is to be expected and has remained relatively constant over the past seven school years.

Our student clubs engage in a variety of projects and programs related to our mission, such as beach cleanups, ocean-friendly dining halls, policy initiatives, educational campaigns, art projects, and more. This data represents the percentage of total clubs participating in each type of project/program across our network. “Other” encompasses various environmental stewardship projects related to our mission, such as fundraisers, art shows, EJEDI initiatives, concerts, podcasts, educational outreach, and more.









**Conference Engagement:** Each year, Surfrider hosts a series of in-person regional conferences across the United States open to a limited number of volunteers. These conferences are particularly impactful for our student leaders, as we provide training on direct-action organizing and opportunities to network and share ideas, challenges, and successes related to ocean conservation. During the 2025-2026 school year, **we had 97 (exceeding our goal of 80) club leaders attend and contribute to Surfrider conferences in CA, FL, NE, SE, HI, and the Mid-Atlantic — this represents a 44% increase in conference engagement compared to the last school year.** This high level of interest highlights the growing demand from young people to utilize our network to build leadership skills and take direct action in service of our mission.

**Lobby Days:** For many students in Surfrider's Student Club Network, our lobby days are their first-ever political action — an experience that empowers, energizes, and inspires. In 2025-2026, our program engaged the highest number of students to date in direct, nonpartisan political action at the local, state, and federal levels. These volunteer opportunities equip students with lifelong skills that foster civic engagement, including public speaking, advocacy, relationship building, and leadership development.

**Hill Day:** We had 36 attendees from 28 different clubs participate in Surfrider's Tenth Annual Federal Coastal Recreation Hill Day. We also had 51 clubs that directly sent more than 2,200 public comments via postcards to the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management opposing new offshore oil drilling.

**State:** Our California, Florida, and Maryland Surfrider clubs also attended and organized state lobby days. Between these three events, we saw 34 students from 12 different clubs advocating for clean water and healthy beaches in their respective state capitals.

**Club Leadership Council:** The club leadership council advises Surfrider Club Network staff on how to best support the future generation of ocean activists, foster stronger connections between clubs across the country, and provide targeted feedback on new endeavors to help ensure Surfrider's programs, campaigns, initiatives, and communications are relevant and reflective of the values of today's students. For the 2025–2026 school year, 14 students participated in the council.

Furthermore, during the 2025-2026 school year, we continued our Coastal Defender Academy (CDA) initiative. The CDA is a policy-focused training program for the Club Leadership Council, providing the skills and confidence needed to effectively create policy change at their schools and in their communities at the local, state, and federal levels.

The Coastal Defender Academy is composed of two core components: (1) leadership development and skill-building training; and (2) hands-on engagement in existing Surfrider campaigns and events, like California Ocean Day and Coastal Recreation Hill Day in Washington, D.C.

**Trainings for the 2024-2025 school year included:**

- Direct Action Organizing and Advocating for Policy Change
- Leadership Recruitment, Retention, and Succession Planning
- StrengthFinder 2.0: Discovering Your Leadership Talents
- Shifting Policy Landscape & Taking Action
- Coastal Recreation Hill Day Trainings (Surfrider federal legislative priorities, advocacy 101, and intro to federal policy)
- Lobby Days and Advocacy Reflection
- Advancing Policy Through Ocean Friendly Businesses
- How To Influence Change in the Private Sector
- Campaign Planning
- Importance of the California Coastal Act, hosted by California Coastal Commission Chair, Megan Harmon

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# Communications

## The Surfrider Foundation has many channels to help you stay connected and get involved with our work.

### Surfrider website

The Surfrider Foundation's website, **surfrider.org**, shares the campaigns, programs, and initiatives that our dedicated network is working on across the nation to protect clean water and healthy beaches. In addition, nearly all Surfrider chapters maintain individual websites, which host information on local issues, events, and ways to get involved. Chapter websites can be accessed directly through the Surfrider Foundation website at **surfrider.org/chapters**.

### Coastal Blog

The Surfrider Foundation website hosts the Coastal Blog, a resource that provides updates from subject matter experts on Surfrider's initiatives, including plastic pollution, ocean protection, coastal preservation, beach access, and clean water. The Coastal Blog also features analysis from Surfrider's legal team. It brings together a wealth of voices and information on the most current campaigns, programs, victories, and stories about Surfrider's on-the-ground coastal stewardship from across our nationwide network of grassroots activists. Explore our latest news at surfrider.org/coastal-blog.

### Action Network

Through Action Alerts, Surfrider mobilizes our activist network by email and text, inviting them to make their voice heard when it matters most by sending a message or petition directly to their elected representatives and key policymakers at the local, state, and national levels. With a few simple clicks, a personalized letter is generated and addressed to the relevant stakeholders. Our Action Network does the rest—sending timely messages to elected officials, corporate leaders, and other key decision-makers to help influence policy to better protect our ocean. Learn more at surfrider.org/action.

### Social Media

The Surfrider Foundation effectively utilizes social networks — including Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn, YouTube, TikTok, BlueSky, and X (formerly Twitter) — by engaging with supporters and followers, posting organizational updates, responding to questions, and providing resources. Surfrider's social media channels are also tools for staff and chapter leaders to amplify messaging through additional regional and chapter-run social media outlets. Follow **@surfrider** for timely Surfrider Foundation updates.

### Making Waves

"Making Waves" is the Surfrider Foundation's bi-weekly digital newsletter, featuring campaign developments, chapter updates, and environmental news stories. Started in print in the late 1980s, "Making Waves" is Surfrider's longest-running vehicle for communicating with our members and supporters about mission-related activities and achievements. Sign up at **surfrider.org/subscribe**.

### Beachapedia

Beachapedia is a community-driven online reference tool that catalogs combined coastal science information provided by the Surfrider Foundation's environmental experts and activist network. This comprehensive resource captures relevant and timely updates related to the protection of our ocean and coasts using Wiki technology. With its constant influx of content, Beachapedia serves as a valuable source of information for the general public, media, and elected officials. Beachapedia encompasses a diverse range of topics, including beach access, water quality testing, coastal preservation, and plastic pollution. Learn more at **beachapedia.org**

# Giving Options

## Current Gifts

**Cash:** A gift of cash is the simplest and most popular gift to the Surfrider Foundation. It provides immediate support for our mission-related work and gives the donor a charitable income tax deduction in the year of the gift.

**Securities:** Gifts of appreciated securities are an excellent vehicle for giving to Surfrider. If you have appreciated securities that you have owned for more than one year, you may want to consider using such an asset to make charitable gifts. When a gift of long-term appreciated securities (securities held for more than a year) is made directly to Surfrider, there is no tax on your capital gains, even though the gain is counted as part of your charitable deduction. To receive the greatest tax benefit, gifts of appreciated securities should be made directly to Surfrider, rather than selling them first and making a donation of the proceeds (you would then have to pay tax on the gains).

If your gift of appreciated stock, combined with other gifts, exceeds 30% of your adjusted gross income — the maximum deduction allowed for most appreciated securities gifts — the excess might be carried forward for five additional years. The value of the gift is based on the date the transfer of shares is complete.

## Future Gifts

In addition to these current gifts, individuals may make contributions to the Surfrider Foundation through one or more of the following planned giving opportunities. Maximizing your gift and participating in planned giving are wonderful strategic ways to leave the legacy of a healthy ocean environment and help secure the work of the Surfrider Foundation into the future. The Legacy Circle recognizes and honors those who have included the Surfrider Foundation in their financial plans. They have done so by naming Surfrider as a beneficiary of wills, living trusts, IRAs, life insurance, and other life-income gifts or have made an outright gift to the Surfrider Foundation Endowment Fund.

If you qualify for membership in the Legacy Circle or would like to learn more about becoming a member, please contact the Surfrider Foundation's Director of Development Spencer Campbell. We would be happy to show the potential benefits to you and/or your heirs of a planned gift supporting our efforts. Such a consultation creates absolutely no obligation on your part and all information is completely confidential.

**Bequests:** You can establish a legacy that will reflect your commitment to the coastal environment by including the Surfrider Foundation in your will or living trust. Bequests to Surfrider are generally exempt from federal or state inheritance taxes, and subject to an unlimited deduction. Please consult with your financial and tax advisors in selecting a program or specific target for such a bequest.

**Individual Retirement Account (IRA):** Naming the Surfrider Foundation as a beneficiary of your IRA is a very tax-efficient way to make a charitable gift. In fact, retirement plans and IRAs should be the first asset considered in planned giving. This is because retirement funds have never been taxed.

So, when you make a withdrawal from your IRA or retirement plan you must pay taxes on it as ordinary income. At your death, whatever remains in these plans does not escape taxes and is actually subject to both income tax and estate tax. In the highest estate tax bracket this could reduce the value of your retirement funds by 70 percent or more! Making a gift via your IRA or retirement plan is simple to do and can be changed if your financial or estate plans change.

**In addition to gifts, there are a variety of other ways to make a lasting contribution to ensure that our ocean, waves, and beaches are protected for future generations.**

## Workplace Giving

The Surfrider Foundation is a member of EarthShare, a nationwide network of the most respected environmental and conservation organizations. EarthShare partners with employees and employers across the country to support hundreds of environmental groups through efficient and effective payroll deduction giving and offers a simple way to care for the environment.

Workplace giving is probably the easiest way to make a charitable gift. If your company offers an EarthShare workplace giving program, you can choose an amount that you wish to have deducted from your paycheck each pay period. These payroll deductions are fully tax deductible and take place automatically.

Through EarthShare's workplace giving programs, you can elect to contribute only to the Surfrider Foundation or you can donate to all of the environmental and conservation charities you normally support by designating them in your EarthShare gift. Federal employees and military personnel can get involved too. Each year, the U.S. government offers its employees the chance to participate in the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC). Surfrider's CFC code is 10642. EarthShare is a part of many state and municipal government agencies' giving programs as well.

If EarthShare is not offered in your campaign, or if there is no campaign at your workplace, you can help us introduce the program to your employer.

## Employer Matching Contributions

Many employers sponsor matching gift programs and will match any charitable contributions made by their employees. Some corporations set aside millions of dollars for matching gifts each year and only a small portion of the funds are ever used. Most companies match dollar for dollar, and some will even double or triple match your gift. To find out if your company offers gift matching, please contact your human resources department.

## Tributes & Memorials

Honor someone's accomplishment or memory, celebrate a friend's birthday, or recognize an individual's achievement with a tribute or memorial to the Surfrider Foundation. Tribute or memorial acknowledgment cards are sent directly to the recipient to recognize your gift in their honor. You receive a letter for tax purposes and honor a friend while supporting Surfrider at the same time.

## Dillon Henry Memorial Endowed Fund Donors

Created in 2007 by Harriet Zaretsky and Stephen Henry, the Dillon Henry Memorial Internship was created to honor their son Dillon's memory, recognize his commitment to the ocean and coastal environment, and to help young people to pursue a career in coastal and marine conservation. The endowment provides funds on an annual basis for two interns working with Surfrider Foundation's Environmental and/or Legal Departments. The Henry Family welcomes additional donations to the fund. For more information, please visit **dillonslist.org**.



Morgan Maassen


THE **OCEAN** NEEDS
MORE **FRIENDS**

# Our Partners

**We would like to thank our partners for their support.**






























































# Donors

**On behalf of the world's ocean, waves and beaches, the Surfrider Foundation would like to thank the following individuals, foundations, and corporations for their generous support received between January and December of 2025.**

### $500,000+

Chalmers Trust

Armand Riza Trust

Plastic Solutions Fund, a sponsored project of Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors

### $250,000+

The Builders Initiative

Resources Legacy Fund

The Conrad Prebys Foundation

Catherine M. Stiefel and J. Keith Behner Charitable Fund

L'Oreal West

WLS Spencer Foundation

### $150,000+

Matthew Jarvis and Amie Stier

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### $50,000+

LA County Flood Control District's Safe, Clean Water Public Education and Community Engagement Grants Program

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### $25,000+

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