

2024 - 2025

Club Network Annual Report

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Contents

- 03 Purpose & Background
- 04 Clubs in Numbers: A Quick Look
- 05 Project & Program Engagement
- 06 Student Project Highlights
- 09 Conference Engagement
- 10 Hill Days & Policy
- 11 Leadership Development
- 12 Hear From Our Network
- 13 Club to Chapter Leadership
- 14 Chapter x Club Collaborations
- 15 2025-2026 Priorities
- 16 Thank You



Purpose & Background

Surfrider's Student Club Network creates a platform to meet the demand by young people for opportunities to influence environmental action within their communities and on high school and college campuses. This occurs through service projects, leadership development, civic engagement, and direct action organizing. Each student club focuses on the development and implementation of

environmental stewardship projects such as beach cleanups, restoration activities, campus-based plastic reduction initiatives, and public awareness campaigns on various issues affecting our world's ocean and coastal ecosystems. All of our clubs are student-led, and we have seen the network grow organically from 16 clubs in 2008 to 170 in the 2024-2025 school year!

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Clubs in Numbers: A Quick Look

170

Active Student Clubs

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.

The middle school clubs were grandfathered into our program. Our focus remains on cultivating the high school and college-level clubs.

131

High School Clubs

37

College/University Clubs

2

Middle School Clubs

22%

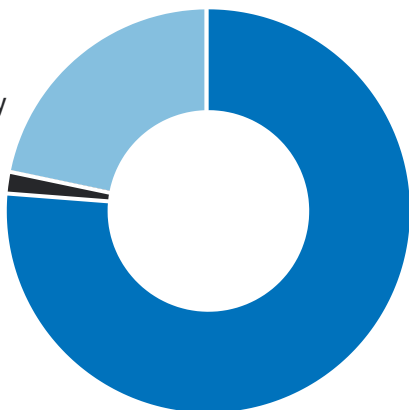
College/University

2%

Middle School

76%

High School

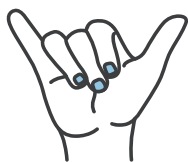
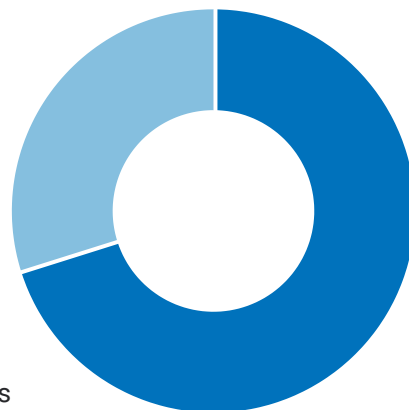


30%

New Clubs

70%

Returning Clubs



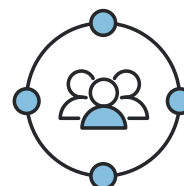
6,317

Volunteers Engaged*



510

Club Leaders



4,934

Club Members

*This number represents data from event approval requests and the beach cleanup database, both of which are not universally utilized by our clubs and only include off-campus activities. We expect the actual number of students engaged to be at least 50% higher, or approximately 10,000 students engaged in mission-centric activities.

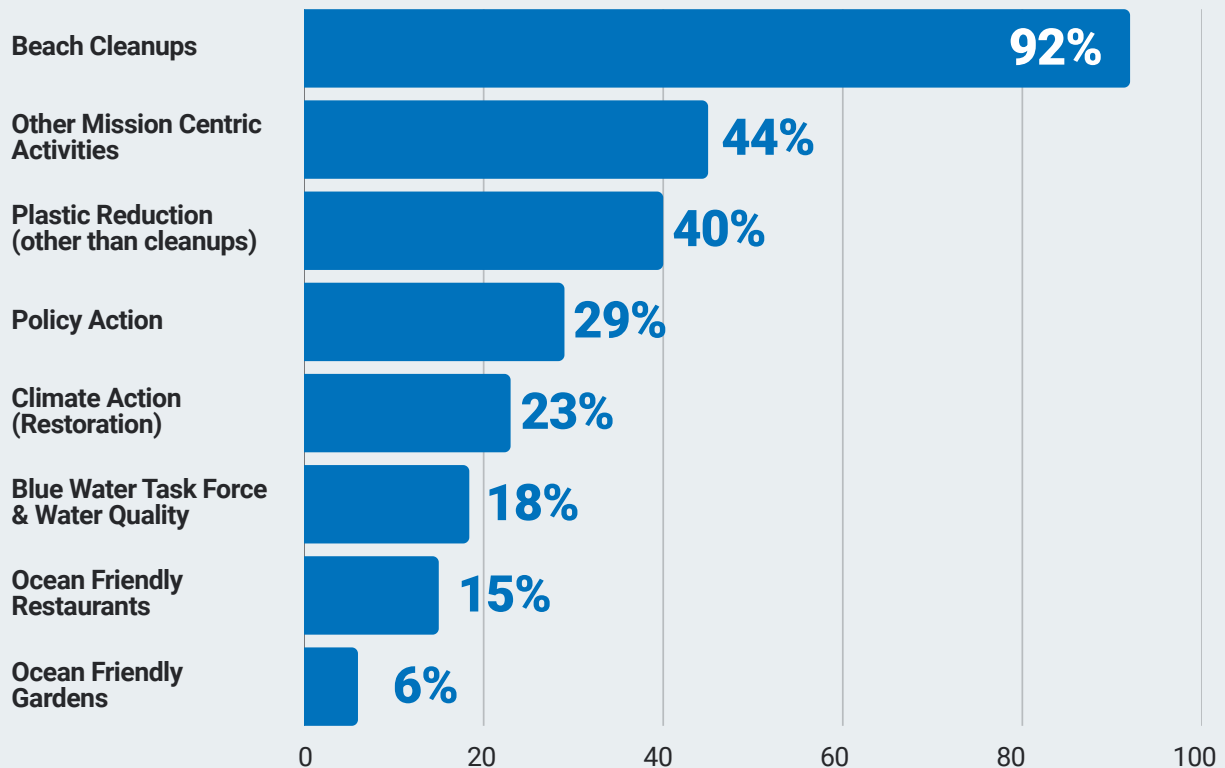
Project & Program Engagement

This data represents the percentage of total clubs participating in each type of project/program across our network*. From this data, we can conclude that approximately 92% of clubs engaged in Beach Cleanups during the 2024-2025 school year, and so on. "Other" encompasses various environmental stewardship projects related to our mission, such as fundraisers, art shows, JEDI initiatives, concerts, podcasts, educational outreach, and more.

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Percentage of Club Participation in Surfrider Programs



*These percentages are based on data collected from our Annual Project Report, which received a 67% response rate. Given this response rate, we acknowledge a slight margin of error in the extrapolation of this data.

Student Project Highlights

Climate Action Program

CeDIN (San Juan, Puerto Rico)

Mangroves provide critical habitat, storm surge protection, and carbon sequestration for the island of Puerto Rico. In an effort to restore these native ecosystems, 17 students from the CeDIN (high school) Surfrider Club joined forces with the San Juan Estuary Program to participate in two red mangrove planting events. The students learned about the value of nature-based solutions in bolstering coastal resilience, and also received a 'Citizen Scientist' certification from the San Juan Bay Estuary after the planting was complete.

Surfrider Puerto Rico has also been leading and organizing mangrove propagation and planting efforts across the island, which receive consistent participation from the local Surfrider student clubs.



Rise Above Plastics

University of Hawai'i, Mānoa

Throughout the school year, the UH Mānoa Surfrider Club hosted multiple beach cleanups at various local points of interest such as the Mānoa Stream, Magic Island Beach Park, Diamondhead Beach, and more. Throughout the '24-'25 school year, the club collected a staggering

2,428 pounds of debris, much of which included single-use plastic items. Student leaders then used their experiences from these cleanups to inform public testimony for single-use plastic reduction policies at the state level.



Ocean Friendly Restaurant

University of California, Santa Barbara

The UCSB Surfrider Student Club successfully recruited their three campus dining commons – De La Guerra, Carrillo, and Portola – to join our Ocean Friendly Restaurant program. This milestone represents a major step toward more sustainable dining practices on a large college campus, provides a blueprint for other universities to implement, and highlights the power of student-led environmental advocacy.

Ocean Friendly Garden

Annapolis High School, Annapolis, MD

In partnership with the Annapolis Maritime Museum, the AHS Surfrider Student Club installed an Ocean Friendly Garden (OFG) on the museum grounds. The OFG will support conservation, permeability, and watershed retention for the native ecosystem, while educating museum attendees about the importance of clean water, resilient coastlines, and healthy watersheds. The AHS Surfrider Club has also been awarded a recognition of achievement from the Annapolis City Council for the project's positive impact on the community.

Other Mission-Centric Project

Make Waves Film Festival, California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo

Combining local ocean-centric films, vendors, and educational booths, the CPSU Surfrider Club hosted its annual 'Make Waves' film festival. The featured films highlighted topics around ocean conservation, indigenous surf culture, plastic reduction policies, and more. This community event brought together over 200 attendees, which generated awareness for Surfrider's mission and also raised \$1,250 for NOAA's Coastal Discovery Center. Additionally, attendees had the opportunity to take civic action by signing a personalized postcard in support of the California Coastal Act through Surfrider's 'Love Your Beach Tour.' These postcards were then hand-delivered to lawmakers in Sacramento during Surfrider's California Ocean Day a few weeks later.



Conference Engagement

Each year, Surfrider hosts a series of in-person regional conferences across the United States open to a limited number of volunteers. During these conferences, we discuss regional priorities and grassroots solutions while networking with one another and sharing ideas, challenges, and successes related to ocean conservation.

2024 was a partially special year, as Surfrider celebrated its 40th Anniversary, bringing together activists around the country for a “Super Summit.” In the 2024-2025 school year, we had 67 club leaders attend and contribute to Surfrider conferences in Long Beach, Monterey, and Charleston, SC.

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Hill Day & Policy

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, 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 life-long skills that foster civic engagement, including public speaking, advocacy, relationship building, and leadership development.

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Federal

Surfrider's 9th Annual Federal Coastal Recreation Hill Day received the highest level of participation ever. Students comprised 39% of participants who represented our volunteer network, which included 39 students from 28 different Surfrider clubs around the country.

State

Our California, Florida, and Maryland Surfrider clubs also attended and organized state lobby days. Between these three events, we saw 40 students from 12 different clubs advocating for clean water and healthy beaches in their respective state capitals. This reflects a 150% increase in the number of students participating in state lobby days compared to the previous year.



Leadership Development

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 2024–2025 school year, we had 14 students participating in the council.

Coastal Defender Academy

During the 2024-2025 school year, we launched our newly developed Coastal Defender Academy (CDA). 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 trainings; 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:

- Plastic Pollution & Advocating for Policy Change
- Leadership Recruitment, Retention, & Succession Planning
- Soft Skills & Critical Thinking: Reflective Journaling Activity
- Presidential Elections 101, Electoral Processes, & Navigating Challenging Political Conversations
- Climate Action Program Webinar
- Coastal Recreation Hill Day Training
- Global Plastics Treaty Webinar
- Policy Pathways & Community Organizing with Justin Cummings, then Chair of the California Coastal Commission



Hear From Our Network

Hayley Yoshinaga

University of Hawai'i, Mānoa

"Surfrider has been an incredibly inspiring part of my life. It's deepened my love for the ocean and strengthened my commitment to protecting our environment. As I pursue my degree in mechanical engineering, I hope to apply my skills toward environmental and coastal conservation work in the future. After graduation, I'm excited to continue my involvement with Surfrider, especially with the O'ahu Chapter. I truly love this community, and I hope to keep volunteering and contributing for life."

[See Full Activist Spotlight Here →](#)



Ruby Dougherty

Broadneck High School

"I've been a member of the club for only a year, but have already connected with restaurant owners, elected officials, professors, and scientists. The opportunity to come out of my shell and engage with people of all ages and professions is something I'm so grateful for. You don't have to be an avid beach bum or surfer dude to make a difference with Surfrider. Everyone is welcome to share their passion for healing and preserving our ocean."

[See Full Activist Spotlight Here →](#)



Brooke Yeh,

University High School, Irvine, CA

"I am so grateful to be a part of the Surfrider Foundation's Club Leadership Council and community. The experience offers so many different opportunities to meet new people and get involved, all while working to improve the future of our oceans. I hope to continue working with Surfrider throughout my time at the University of Southern California, in the greater Los Angeles area, and even on a more national level."

[See Full Activist Spotlight Here →](#)



Club to Chapter Leadership

As leaders of our Student Club Network graduate from their clubs, we encourage them to stay involved with Surfrider as the next generation of chapter leaders, volunteers, and members. The stories below feature two examples of club leaders who transitioned to leadership roles within Surfrider's Chapter Network this year.

Jess Kotrick

UNCW Club to Maine Chapter Volunteer Coordinator

"It has been so cool to grow from a club leader to a chapter leader. Moving from North Carolina to Maine was a big change — new friends, new job, new place — but I knew that Surfrider was a space where I could connect with my new community. I'm the Volunteer Coordinator, Research and Policy Analyst, and Beach Cleanup Coordinator on the Surfrider Maine team. Over the past couple of months, we have removed over 500 pounds of trash from Maine beaches, advocated for ocean conservation with Maine legislators during Ocean Recreation Hill Day, and hosted the Surfrider Northeast Conference. I'm so excited to grow here and work with our team to bring our chapter up to the next level."

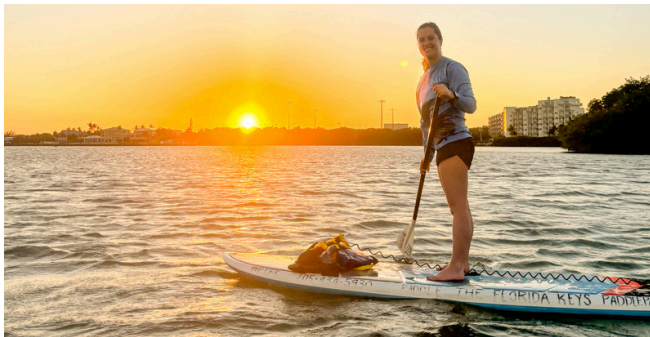


Carolyn Corley

University of San Diego Club to FL Keys Chapter Volunteer Coordinator

I have been involved with Surfrider since high school, volunteering at beach cleanups for the Ventura County Chapter. I continued my involvement in college with the University of San Diego Student Club, first as Outreach Coordinator and eventually as Co-President. From writing newsletters, to planning beach cleanups, to starting a Break Free From Plastics campaign on campus, Surfrider was one of the most rewarding experiences of my time at USD.

When I moved across the country after graduation, I was thrilled to see the Florida Keys Chapter was looking to expand their leadership team. In my role as Volunteer Coordinator, I help plan and promote events and connect with the local community to recruit new chapter members and volunteers. From coast to coast, Surfrider has given me the opportunity to work with an incredible network of inspiring ocean enthusiasts!"



Chapter x Club Collaborations

Club and chapter collaborations are an extremely valuable opportunity for our volunteers to elevate their programs, learn from one another, and build new connections across their community. Our chapters and clubs can provide inspiration, support, and new ideas to one another while expanding Surfrider's impact. We highly encourage chapter and club collaboration, and aim to increase these partnerships.

East Coast

Cape Fear Academy x Cape Fear Chapter

The Cape Fear Academy Surfrider Club consistently joined forces with the Cape Fear Chapter throughout the school year. This collaboration strengthened volunteer participation for the chapter while allowing the club to be a part of Surfrider's larger programs and campaigns. The CFA club participated in chapter cleanups, JEDI Surf Programs, and a Christmas tree dune restoration event. The chapter also opened up their "Annual Strategic Planning Meeting" to all student clubs in the area, which allowed for increased cross-collaboration, planning, and connection.



West Coast

Mt. Carmel High School x San Diego Chapter

The Mt. Carmel High School Surfrider Club collaborated with the San Diego Chapter's "Rise Above Plastics" lead, Janis Jones, to draft an ordinance for their local city council. The club was able to learn about plastic reduction policy while gaining hands-on experience to create their own draft ordinance aimed at banning single-use plastic items. The ordinance plan was given to Poway's City Council, where it is still pending. This was a fantastic way for the San Diego Chapter to expand their policy work, and for the Mt. Carmel Club leaders to learn about civic action, local decision-making bodies, and environmental policy. Some students also used this opportunity to receive class credit for an AP Government project.



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2025-2026 Priorities

Expand Student Policy Engagement

Student interest and engagement in our policy work has been expanding over the past three school years, and we plan to continue that growth with additional training and travel support. During the 2024-2025 school year, 40 students (the goal was 30) engaged in state lobby days and 39 students participated in Ocean Recreation Hill Day (the goal was 20). Our goal for next year is to engage over 100 club leaders in advocacy days across our network. We have found that in-person advocacy events like this are the most impactful and empowering experience we can provide our club leaders.

Develop a Framework for Internship/Fellowship Program

We've seen a growing demand from our graduating college/university club leaders for an avenue to continue building their leadership skills and engage in Surfrider's mission while building their professional resumes. We plan to develop a comprehensive outline for an internship/fellowship program and seek funding to meet the needs of early career development for recent graduates, while also providing existing Surfrider staff with much-needed additional capacity.

Strategic Recruitment of New College Clubs

In collaboration with regional managers, Surfrider club network staff will continue using the regional recruitment plan developed in 2024 to onboard new college clubs in strategic areas. We hope that the recruitment and growth of college-level clubs can help advance Surfrider's strategic plan and strengthen our regional impact. We had two successful recruitment efforts in 2024, and look forward to building upon these lessons learned. This will be achieved through various tactics such as tabling, guest speaking, direct outreach, and digital marketing.

Foster Chapter & Club Partnerships

Through a combination of in-person opportunities like regional conferences, lobby days, and chapter events, we plan to help foster more substantial club and chapter collaborations. In the fall of 2025, we will be launching digital resources for both chapter and club leaders to assist with developing and maintaining relationships and to solidify the club leader to chapter leader pipeline.



Thank You

Thank you to our Surfrider Student Club leaders, members, and advisors for being impactful community leaders and ocean advocates! We appreciate your dedication to our mission and are honored to uplift the work you're doing locally for our ocean, waves, and beaches. We also want to extend our thanks to all of our partners, funders, chapter

leaders, and fellow Surfrider staff for providing crucial support to the Student Club Network. We look forward to continuing to grow, collaborate, and evolve the Student Club Network!

[Learn More & Contact Us Here](#) →

