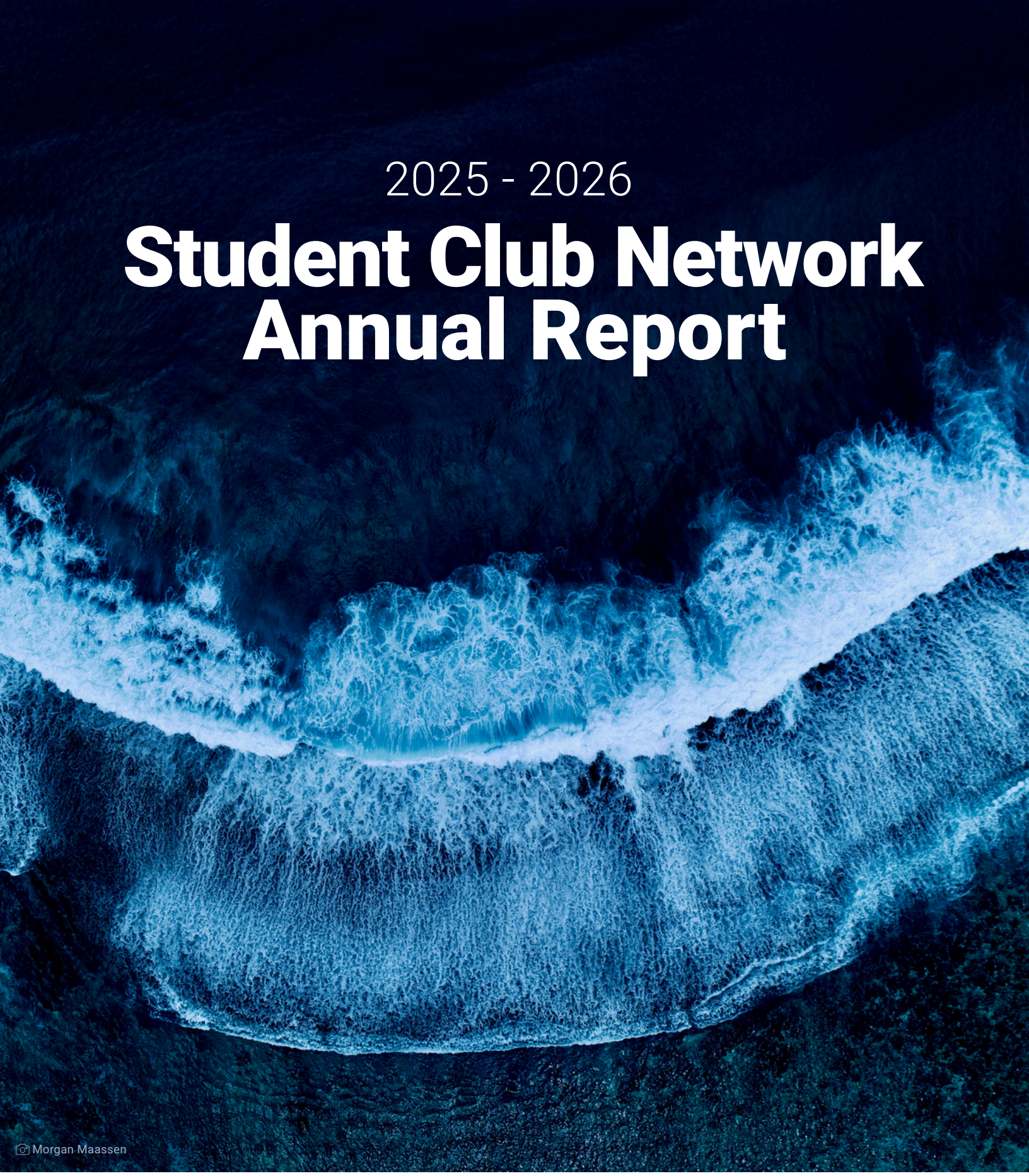
2025 - 2026

Student Club Network Annual Report



Morgan Maassen

SURFRIDER FOUNDATION

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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. We do this 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 172 in the 2025–2026 school year!

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Clubs in Numbers: A Quick Look

172
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.

127
High School Clubs

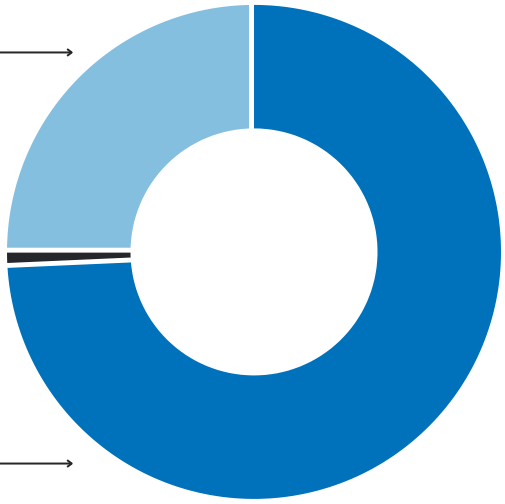
43
College/University Clubs

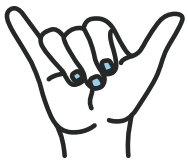
2
Middle School Clubs

25%
College/University

1%
Middle School

74%
High School





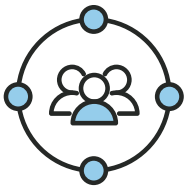
7,658
Volunteers Engaged*



245
Off-Campus Events*



516
Club Leaders



4,713
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 11,500 students engaged in mission-centric activities.

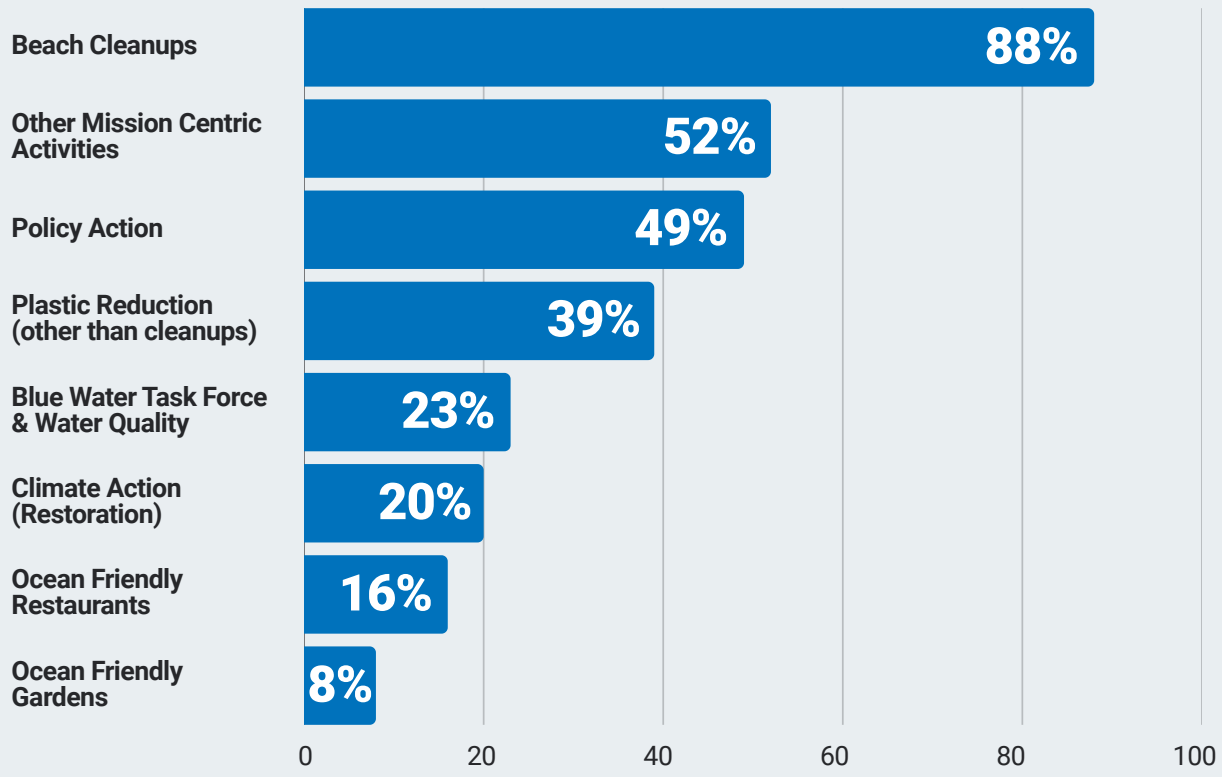
Project & Program Engagement

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 88% of clubs engaged in Beach Cleanups during the 2025–2026 school year, and so on. "Other" encompasses various environmental stewardship projects related to our mission, such as fundraisers, film festivals, concerts, 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 63% response rate. Given this response rate, we acknowledge a slight margin of error in the extrapolation of this data.

Student Project Highlights

Beach Cleanups

University of Texas Rio Grande Valley

Texas coastlines are cleaner thanks to our UTRGV Surfrider student club! The club logged an impressive 1,125 pounds into our cleanup database, representing five cleanups over the 2025–2026 school year. As a result, the club placed second in Surfrider's national club cleanup competition. Additionally, they set a new record for the largest number of volunteers at a single clean-up, with 65 volunteers coming out to support Surfrider's mission.



Climate Action Program

CROEM, CeDIn, Colegio Marista

Student-developed mangrove nurseries were established by three high school Surfrider clubs in Puerto Rico, representing the first projects of their kind within our organization's network. These trailblazers included Surfrider CeDIn (San Juan), Surfrider CROEM (Mayaguez), and Surfrider Colegio Marista (Guaynabo). These projects will support local restoration efforts while strengthening hands-on environmental education amongst students. The nurseries will facilitate the germination of mangrove propagules (seedlings), which will be used in future restoration efforts across various coastal areas of Puerto Rico.



Blue Water Task Force

St. Thomas Aquinas High School, Florida

The St. Thomas Aquinas High School Surfrider club is gaining hands-on environmental science experience while supporting their local coastlines. In collaboration with the Broward Surfrider Chapter, students assist with the bi-weekly collection, processing, and analysis of water samples for the chapter's Blue Water Task Force.



Ocean Friendly Dining Hall

California State Polytechnic University, Humboldt

In an effort to reduce single-use plastics on their campus, the CSPH Surfrider Club successfully recruited their campus's primary dining hall, Jolly Giant Commons, to join Surfrider's Ocean Friendly Restaurant Program. Some of the ocean-friendly practices of the Jolly Giant Commons' Dining Hall, also known as "The J," include only using reusable foodware for onsite dining, avoiding beverages sold in plastic bottles, engaging in composting efforts, and more. Driven by the values of students, these actions represent a true commitment to sustainable practices on CSPH's campus.



Ocean Friendly Garden

Santa Clara University

Centered around the connection to indigenous plants significant to the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe, a new Ocean Friendly Garden is thriving on the Santa Clara University campus. Led by SCU's Center for Sustainability, the garden is dedicated to native plants with traditional uses of food, medicine, and fibers by the indigenous tribes of the Santa Clara Valley. This project was in collaboration with SCU's Community Heritage Lab and Muwekma Ohlone Tribal representatives. The OFG is organically managed and features a rainwater collection system.



Other Mission-Centric Project: Recycled Fashion Show

Amherst Steele High School, Ohio

In an effort to raise awareness about microplastics and the benefits of reuse, the Amherst Steele High School Surfrider club showed off some unique styles to spread its message. Through a fast fashion awareness campaign, the club encouraged fellow students to thrift before buying new. They also participated in (and won) a local recycled-fashion show performance, which featured outfits made from recycled items, including some debris found during their beach cleanups.



Conference Engagement

Each year, Surfrider hosts a series of in-person conferences across the United States open to a limited number of volunteers. These conferences are an opportunity for volunteers to collaborate on regional priorities and develop grassroots solutions that drive meaningful change.

Through workshops, presentations, and idea sharing, volunteers leave inspired, empowered, and better equipped to create lasting impact in their communities. In the 2025–2026 school year, we had 97 students attend regional conferences in Hawai'i, Maryland, Florida, California, Rhode Island, and Georgia.

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Hill Days & 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. During the 2025–2026 school year, we continued to see a high level of student interest and engagement 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.

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Federal

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. Additionally, three student clubs in Puerto Rico participated in an advocacy day at the Capitol, where they spoke with elected officials and attended an educational presentation to learn about the legislative process.







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 2025–2026 school year, we had 14 students participating in the council.

We also provide a direct action organizing and policy-focused training program for the Club Leadership Council, the Coastal Defender Academy, which provides 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 comprised 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 2025–2026 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
- Ocean Friendly Businesses and Advancing Change Private Sector
- Campaign Planning
- Importance of the California Coastal Act: California Coastal Commission Chair, Megan Harmon



Student Voices

Rani Crosby

University of California, San Diego



"Growing up in a coastal community, I've always felt connected to ocean conservation and participated in a lot of beach cleanups throughout my childhood. I first heard about Surfrider in seventh grade and got involved with the South Bay Chapter with their Teach and Test program through the Redondo Union High School Surfrider Club.

"The highlight of my Surfrider experience has definitely been starting up the main campus club at UC San Diego. A lot of UCSD students are interested in coastal conservation but don't know how to get started, so it's been so amazing to create that community for them. I'm so proud of the community I've formed at Surfrider, and I really want to thank my mentor and BWTF champion, Mary Simun, who has encouraged and supported me throughout the years."

See Full Activist Spotlight Here →

Elianny Ramirez

Florida International University



"Being involved with Surfrider has made me more passionate about ocean conservation. I've educated high school students and volunteers about the plastic pollution crisis, hopped on a surfboard for the first time, and conversed with leaders of other environmental organizations, all of which I probably never would have done if I hadn't joined Surfrider.

"My time with Surfrider has also strengthened my confidence as a leader and deepened my belief that when people share their unique abilities in service of their communities, real and lasting change can happen! Most of all, Surfrider has given me a community that feels like family, and I'm excited to keep working together to protect the ocean we all love."

See Full Activist Spotlight Here →

Club to Chapter Leaders

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 in 2026.

Annie Zeiler

University of Texas Rio Grande Valley Club → South Texas Chapter

"Starting a Surfrider student club during graduate school was one of the most rewarding experiences of my education. I wanted to bring students together around ocean conservation and create opportunities for them to make a real difference through beach cleanups, advocacy, and community engagement. Through that experience, I learned how to organize cleanups, recruit volunteers, and lead a group of people focused on protecting our coast.

"After graduating and deciding to stay in Texas, I joined the South Texas Chapter and stepped into the role of Acting Chair. I'm excited to continue growing our community and working to protect the beaches and ocean that make South Texas such a special place. The leadership and advocacy skills I gained through Surfrider not only shaped me as a volunteer but also helped launch my career in coastal conservation.

"This transition has been a reminder that the impact of a student club doesn't have to end at graduation — it can grow into a lifelong commitment to protecting our coast and inspiring others to get involved."



Emma Kavanaugh

STA High School Club → University of Florida Club → O'ahu Chapter

"It has been an amazing experience to transition from club leadership to chapter leadership. I moved from South Florida to O'ahu to continue my education in marine sciences, and I was instantly welcomed to the O'ahu chapter. I have served as the Volunteer Coordinator since November 2025, and it has been an incredible opportunity to make new friends, engage in important projects, and learn more about environmental issues affecting Hawai'i. As a club leader at my previous schools (St. Thomas Aquinas High School and the University of Florida), I received unwavering support and guidance from the Broward County and First Coast chapters. It is very rewarding to continue to work with the Surfrider Foundation at the chapter level, and I hope that my role as a leader of the O'ahu chapter can support and inspire current and future high school and college club leaders."



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

University of New Hampshire x New Hampshire Chapter

As a newly established Surfrider club, the University of New Hampshire collaborated with its local New Hampshire chapter to gain hands-on experience across a wide range of activities. Collaborations included beach cleanups, water quality testing through the chapter's Blue Water Task Force lab, a dune restoration event, and advocacy for a beach access campaign. This partnership helped forge genuine connections across our network and strengthened support for critical programs.



West Coast

Oak Park High School x Ventura Chapter

The Oak Park High School Surfrider club collaborated with its local Ventura Chapter to increase volunteer power and build more resilient coastlines. Throughout the school year, students from the OPHS Surfrider Club participated in dune restoration events, Ocean Friendly Garden workdays, and beach cleanups held by the chapter. Additionally, Joan Tharp, a Ventura Chapter EC, attended a club meeting at OPHS as a guest speaker. Joan spoke about Surfrider's history and programs while increasing the connectivity between the club and chapter.



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Partnership Highlight

Yerba Madre

Surfrider is growing a movement of young environmental leaders, and Yerba Madre's support helped our student clubs to connect, build community, and find inspiration. With a mutual focus on environmental stewardship, we teamed up to leave a positive impact on people and the planet. Participating clubs distributed 156 cases of Yerba Madre across 26 college campuses and generated 43 social media posts. Yerba Madre's generous in-kind donation helped create new connections during Surfrider club beach cleanups, general meetings, campus tabling events, advocacy nights, and more!

"Having a physical product to give out at events is always helpful to draw people in and increase engagement, and Yerba Madre couldn't have been a more perfect partner. Not only did these products build hype and enthusiasm among students at our events, but they also allowed us to effortlessly tie sustainability into our conversations. With Yerba Madre being a Certified B Corp, that connection felt natural and authentic."

— Ava B. (University of NH Surfrider Club)









Thank You

Looking forward, our goal is to continue to support the growing demand from our student club leaders to build the leadership skills, knowledge, and confidence needed to become influential coastal advocates. Through a combination of in-person opportunities like regional conferences, lobby days, and partnering with our chapter network, we are providing valuable hands-on advocacy experience. Surfrider student clubs are the future leaders of our network and the coastal conservation movement.

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 →

