2019 / 2020

IMPACT REPORT

SAVE THE WAVES
COALITION

This Impact Report covers the activity and progress of Save The Waves Coalition in 2019 and 2020.

Cover Photo:
Playa Hermosa World Surfing Reserve
© Esteban Delgado

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LETTER FROM OUR DIRECTOR

Dear Save The Waves Supporter,

In 2019, Save The Waves Coalition made amazing strides to change the way we structured the organization. We dedicated ourselves to a major shift, moving from a grassroots nonprofit to international NGO with far-reaching impact for surf conservation.

Then, 2020 arrived. It changed the fabric of our daily operations. It challenged the way we strategized and collaborated. Lockdowns and restrictions kept us from international partners and forming on-the-ground connections. Like many nonprofits, the future suddenly became uncertain.

Despite the hardships and curveballs, with hard work and dedication, Save The Waves still carried out impactful programs and scored victories for our coastlines.

In collaboration with our Coalition partners around the world, we pursued and managed projects large and small – all over Zoom, Hangouts and email. Our team rose to the challenge to achieve historic milestones for surf conservation and scale our work across the globe.

It was our Coalition framework that allowed us carry out impact without missing a step despite global circumstances. Our values built upon teamwork and collaboration are stronger than ever, and we will continue to build and support a diverse Coalition of organizations and individuals who share our passion for protecting surf ecosystems.

From all of this, 2020 reminded us how important crucial greenspaces are for community health and personal mental stability. The loss of access and removal of these wild places from our lives, if only temporarily, showed us the dire consequences if we lost them permanently.

Together, we forge ahead to protect the places we love.

Sincerely,

Nik Strong-Cvetich, Executive Director

VICTORIES AT A GLANCE

2019 - 2020

Launched a campaign to protect Punta Conejo, gathering 280K+ signatures to oppose an industrial port at the Oaxacan point break.

Dedicated Guarda Do Embaú, Brazil and Noosa, Australia as the newest World Surfing Reserves.

Launched the IUCN Alliance for Latin America for Surf Protected Area Networks, and the Latin America Protected Areas Congress.

Approved new Surf Protected Area Networks in Latin America and completed a multi-criteria analysis tool for Mexico and Costa Rica.

Approved Playa Hermosa, Costa Rica as the newest World Surfing Reserve, the first WSR in Central America.

Identified coastal threats in 34 countries with the Save The Waves App and awarded a $5,000 prize to steward waves in Viti Levu, Fiji.

Created Piedra del Viento Coastal Marine Sanctuary with Fundación Rompietes, protecting 10,000 acres of Chile's central coast and the famous surf breaks Topocalma and Puertecillo.

Launched the Surf Conservation Partnership with our colleagues at Conservation International.

Celebrated improved water quality at Cowells when the Santa Cruz beach dropped off the "Beach Bummer's List" for the first time in a decade.

Protected Doughmore Beach, Ireland against a now-defeated seawall project after multi-year campaign efforts.

Completed a Surfonomics Study of Guarda do Embaú.

Hosted an impromptu and first-ever, virtual iteration of Save The Waves Film Festival for at-home viewers during COVID-19 lockdowns with a six-episode release.

© Nikki Brooks

ABOUT SAVE THE WAVES

Save The Waves Coalition (STW) is an international nonprofit that works in coalition with diverse organizations dedicated to protecting surf ecosystems.

WHO WE ARE

Launched in 2003, we are the only organization solely dedicated to protecting surf ecosystems around the world.

OUR VISION

Our vision is a world where surf ecosystems are valued and surfing provides a proactive vehicle for long-term coastal conservation.

OUR MISSION

Save The Waves' mission to is protect surf ecosystems across the globe.

OUR GOAL

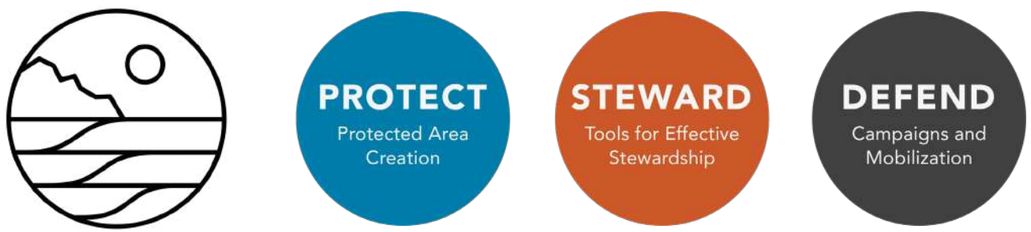
Our goal is to protect 1,000 surf ecosystems by 2030.

THE WORK

We build coalitions to protect, steward, and defend surf ecosystems through a unique combination of protected area creation, stewardship and grassroots mobilization. See figure below.

THE COALITION

We are a Coalition - it's in the name. We work with organizations and individuals at a grassroots level on an international scale – enabling local surf breaks to be protected by the communities that cherish them the most.



RELEASE OF OUR STRATEGIC PLAN

2020 - 2025

Following years of dedicated and careful planning, Save The Waves was proud to release our 2020-2025 Strategic Plan.

The document outlines our major shifts and structural change as an organization, as well as detailed programmatic objectives to achieve our most ambitious goal yet: protect 1,000 waves by 2030.

Our Strategic Plan was accomplished with the generous support of the Packard Foundation. It can be found and read at savethewaves.org/model.

- Shifting our programmatic focus squarely to conservation impact through three strategies: protect, steward and defend.
- Expanding our commitment to a networked organizational model.
- Fundraising will be more focused on relationship building and multi-year commitments with foundations, corporate collaborations and major donors.
- Tailoring our marketing and communications to specific audience targets and function to communicate STW's impact.

© Will Henry

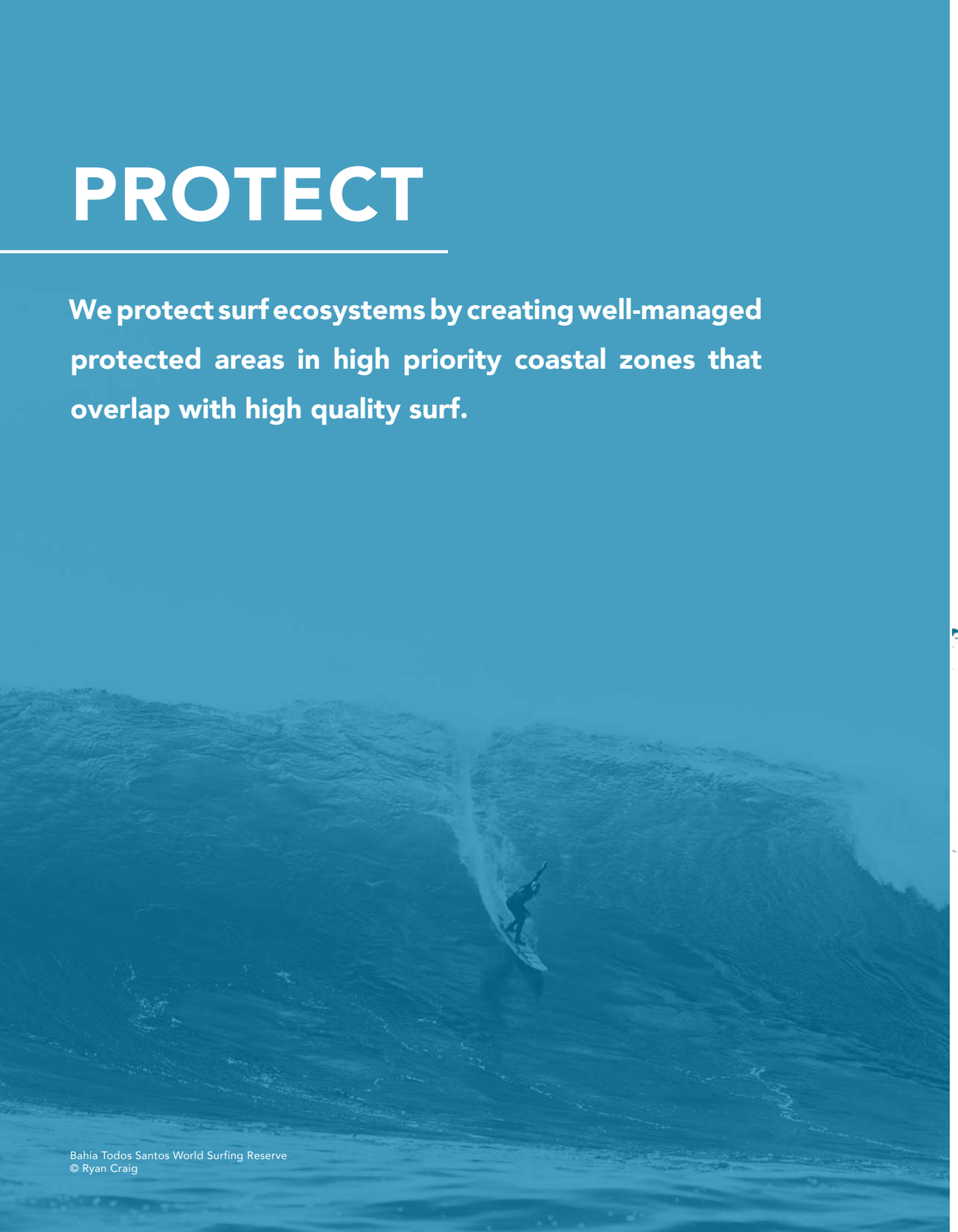
2019 / 2020

PROGRAMS & IMPACT

Noosa World Surfing Reserve
© Paul Smith

PROTECT

We protect surf ecosystems by creating well-managed protected areas in high priority coastal zones that overlap with high quality surf.



Bahía Todos Santos World Surfing Reserve
© Ryan Craig

WORLD SURFING RESERVES

Our flagship World Surfing Reserve program protects and preserves outstanding wave breaks and their surrounding coastline.

World Surfing Reserves presents a global model for protecting waves and the surrounding surf ecosystem.

By recognizing the key environmental, cultural and economic attributes in coastal communities and designing a conservation plan to protect them, World Surfing Reserves proactively preserve the waves and activate against specific, local threats.

All WSRs are created and managed in partnership with local communities. We work collaboratively with coalition partners at each site, guiding them through a conservation planning process that results in the creation of a Local Stewardship Council (LSC) and a Reserve Stewardship Plan. The LSC is responsible for the ongoing management of the Reserve once established.

Current World Surfing Reserves

- Bahía de Todos Santos, MX
- Ericeira, PT
- Gold Coast, AUS
- Guarda do Embaú, BR
- Huanchaco, PE
- Malibu, CA, USA
- Manly Beach, AUS
- Noosa, AUS
- Playa Hermosa, CR
- Punta de Lobos, CL
- Santa Cruz, CA, USA

Guarda Do Embaú, Brazil

On October 26th 2019, Brazil's Guarda do Embaú was officially dedicated as the 9th World Surfing Reserve. The celebration was the culmination of more than three years of intensive work building the Local Stewardship Council, completing a Stewardship Plan and finalizing an economic study of the area.

Formed by the Rio da Madre, the Guarda do Embaú surf ecosystem is one of the most classic Brazilian surfing locations, as well as one of the most biodiverse areas in the Atlantic Coast Rainforest of Brazil.

Save The Waves and Local Stewardship Council drafted plans to implement important projects to improve the water quality of the Rio da Madre. The reserve will pursue a new water quality monitoring program, municipal approval and funding for construction of a wastewater treatment plant.

Guarda do Embaú WSR Dedication © Plinío Bordin

Water quality monitoring program through WSR Local Stewardship Council

SURFONOMICS

Using research and economics to protect surfing resources

Save The Waves partnered with Federal University of Santa Catarina Surf and Sustainability Research Group (SandS) for the completion of a 2018 Surfonomics Study in the Brazilian World Surfing Reserve.

Findings of the Surfonomics study shows that surf tourists and their travel partners account for approximately 44% of the tourists visiting Guarda do Embaú and surf tourism generally contributes approximately $4.2 million dollars annually to the local economy.

Surfers on average spend twice as much as tourists and are responsible for around 77% of the tourism contribution to the local economy.

This is the first Surfonomics study conducted in Brazil and its findings will help decision makers make better choices to preserve the surf resources in Guarda do Embaú for future generations.

- All primary data was collected throughout 2018
- Daily Expenditure: US $61.00
- Annual Total Economic Local Expenditure: US $4.2 million

Noosa, Australia

On February 21st, 2020 Australia's famous Noosa pointbreaks were officially dedicated as the 10th World Surfing Reserve.

Noosa has long been out in front of the world when it comes to conservation, with the forethought to protect the stunning Noosa Headlands and amazing pointbreaks through the establishment of the Noosa National Park.

The Noosa World Surfing Reserve will work to further support the conservation of Noosa's waves and coastline, as well as promote initiatives to reduce the impacts of surf tourism, manage erosion, and help improve the water quality and biodiversity of the Noosa River.

Paddle out at Noosa World Surfing Reserve Dedication

Playa Hermosa, Costa Rica

Expanding the World Surfing Reserve program for the first time to Costa Rica, Playa Hermosa, Garabito was announced as the next reserve.

Beyond the incredible biodiversity of the area, strong community support, and a clearly articulated conservation vision, Playa Hermosa is the center of surfing in Costa Rica and every year hosts surfers from around the world who seek out the renowned waves at the beach break.

The WSR will also serve as a launching point for Surf Protected Area Networks across Costa Rica under the Surf Conservation Partnership, an alliance between Conservation International and Save The Waves. The two organizations will work together with the Costa Rican government and local communities to protect critical surf ecosystems across the country in the coming years.

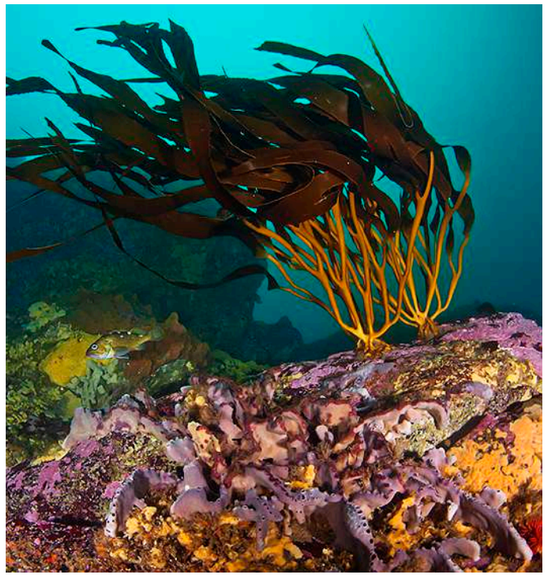
Playa Hermosa World Surfing Reserve © Esteban Delgado

SURF PROTECTED AREA NETWORKS

Our newest program, Surf Protected Area Networks (SPANs), is a cutting-edge conservation approach to protecting surf ecosystems that overlap with biodiversity hotspots.

Surf Protected Area Networks combines legal protection and sustainable community development to leverage protection for critical coastal ecosystems on a global level.

Our SPAN program establishes a systematic approach to conserving large numbers of surf ecosystems that can scale quickly.



Top Left Photo: © Fundacion Rompientes
Top Right & Bottom Photo © Rodrigo Farias Moreno

The Milestone:

Chile

In a victory for conservation of surf ecosystems, the Piedra del Viento Coastal Marine Sanctuary was officially approved in Chile.

Located on Chile's central coast, the federally approved project protects 10,000 acres of gorgeous coastline as well as two famous surf breaks, Topocalma and Puertecillo. It is one of the first protected areas in Chile to include wave protection and surfing as part of its management process.

Piedra del Viento is known for its unique scenic beauty, rich biodiversity and the traditional ecological knowledge of the community who practice sustainable kelp harvesting.

The Piedra del Viento Coastal Marine Sanctuary is a direct result of the partnership of Fundación Rompientes and Save The Waves.

Topocalma, Chile @pablopalmacalderon

The Framework:

Mexico and Costa Rica

Save The Waves is proud to have completed a multi-criteria analysis tool, allowing our staff and partner organizations, to prioritize regions and sites for our Surf Protected Area Networks.

We are piloting Mexico and Costa Rica under this new framework and hope their respective surf break inventories will be used as a practical tool used to assess and monitor surf zones, as well as their surrounding coastal environments, and function as a central database for identifying and prioritizing high-value surf breaks.

Playa Hermosa, Costa Rica © Esteban Delgado

Piedra del Viento Coastal Marine Sanctuary, Chile
© Jose Gerstle

Leadership in Surf Conservation

In November 2019, Save The Waves traveled to Lima, Peru to attend the III IUCN Latin America Protected Areas Conference with several of our coalition partners, including Conservation International, Fundacíon Rompientes, Conservamos Por Naturaleza, Aprender Ecologia, and the World Surfing Reserves of Huanchaco and Guarda do Embaú.

The convening of these Coalition partners resulted in the formation of an alliance in Latin America dedicated to the protection of surf ecosystems through a transdisciplinary approach that emphasizes cross-collaboration among stakeholders. Together, this alliance requested that the IUCN create a task force to discuss and realize strategies so that surf can be an effective tool and innovative approach to coastal conservation.

Together, with Save The Waves spearheading the concept of surf conservation, there is a global movement as we coordinate and support the work of our Coalition partners in Brazil, Peru, Chile, Mexico and beyond.

Surf Conservation Partnership

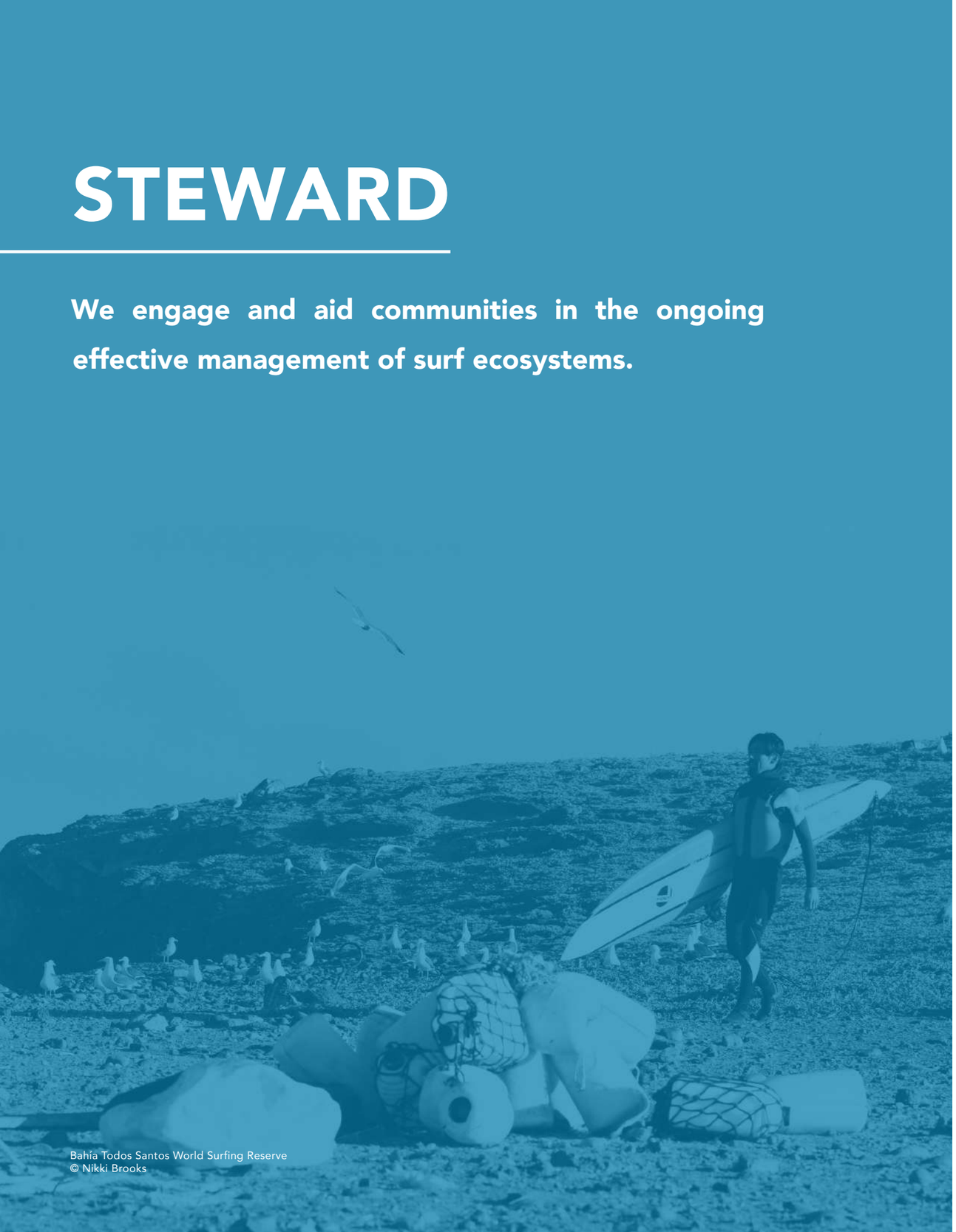
The Surf Conservation Partnership (SCP) is an innovative collaboration between Conservation International (CI) and Save The Waves Coalition (STW), focused on expanding conservation by working with surfing communities to create large community-based protected areas in locations where excellent surf breaks overlap with globally important marine, coastal and forest ecosystems.

Our goal is to bring 1 million hectares (2.5 million acres) of marine and coastal ecosystem under conservation, protect 300 waves and improve the quality of life for tens of thousands of people by creating a global network of 20 Surf Protected Areas.

The Surf Conservation Partnership has successfully laid the groundwork for surf conservation programs in Costa Rica and Fiji.

STEWARD

We engage and aid communities in the ongoing effective management of surf ecosystems.



Bahía Todos Santos World Surfing Reserve
© Nikki Brooks

Cowells Beach, Santa Cruz

For the first time in 10 years, Cowell's Beach was not included on Heal The Bay's "Beach Bummer" list. The 2020 Annual Beach Report Card showed bacterial pollution improvement for the iconic Santa Cruz beach and World Surfing Reserve surf break.

This water quality improvement derives from combined efforts by Save The Waves Coalition, City of Santa Cruz and the Cowell's Working Group.

Cowell's Working Group was launched in 2014, with representatives from the City, Santa Cruz County, Save The Waves, Sierra Club and Surfrider Foundation, with the mission to study and develop recommendations to improve the water quality at Cowell Beach.

The group, in conjunction with the City's Wharf crew, oversaw installation of bird screening designed to reduce pigeons and gulls roosting and defecating under the Wharf. This, in combination with routine City cleaning practices at the Neary Lagoon outlet and Cowell's Beach vault, plus improved Main Beach management practices, has radically reduced bacteria count.

"The changes in bacteria data measurements which have removed Cowells from the "Beach Bummer" list in 2020 demonstrate the positive power of government working with a focused group of community organizations."

Nik Strong-Cvetich
STW Executive Director

Cowells Beach. ©Joel Hersch / Swan

SAVE THE WAVES APP

Our app empowers surfers, beach-goers and ocean lovers to report and track coastal threats in real-time.

The Save The Waves App crowdsources data from users who identify coastal threats like illegal development, plastic pollution and poor water quality.

The data provided is shared with local partners and coastal agencies, with the aim to address and reduce threats through stewardship projects.

Dirty Wave Challenge

We announced the winner of the Dirty Wave Challenge – a hosted global competition to identify and post the trashiest surf ecosystem on the Save The Waves App.

With hundreds of photos submitted from over 10 countries, the $5,000 prize and stewardship fund was awarded to Hannah Bennett, Fijian Pro Surfer and Vice President of the Fiji Surfing Association.

With the award, Hannah went on to organize her community in Viti Levu to clean local beaches and find solutions to intercepting upstream river pollution.

Hannah Bennett in Viti Levu, Fiji.

"It's extremely important for the conservation of surf ecosystems to have a platform such as Save The Waves, where communities like mine can expose our issues in real time at exact locations. After using the app I got so many more people on board within my community who didn't even realize how bad it was. This coalition I feel has given me a voice and a sense of support to tackle my biggest fear – losing my favorite surf spot to pollution."

Hannah Bennett
Fijian Pro Surfer / Winner of Dirty Wave Challenge

DEFEND

Save The Waves mounts international campaigns to defend surf ecosystems under threat and inspire the public to take action.

© Will Henry

Doughmore Beach, Ireland

The multi-year campaign to stop a controversial seawall project from destroying Doughmore Beach ended with a major victory in March 2020.

The #NatureTrumpsWalls campaign succeeded in preventing the construction of major seawalls proposed by Trump International Golf Links (TIGL).

Over the last four years, the original proposal for a 2.8 kilometers, 15 foot tall, 200K ton seawall had been resubmitted by TIGL many times - and each proposal was fought by the Save The Waves and Irish partners.

Finally, Ireland's national planning appeal board, An Bord Pleanála, rejected the plan, citing the concerns about the adverse impacts to the dune ecosystem.

This was a momentous victory for the coastline of Ireland and the local community in Clare County as the Carrowmore Dune ecosystem will continue to protect Doughmore Beach and provide essential ecosystem services, as it has for thousands of years.

Surfers at Doughmore Beach, Ireland with TIGL in background.

San Miguel, Mexico

Save The Waves is working to protect the first Mexican surf spot, preserve the San Miguel watershed and create the first state park in Baja California.

Located in the heart of the World Surfing Reserve in northern Baja, the watershed is a critical riparian ecosystem that contributes necessary sand and cobblestones to form the classic wave at San Miguel. We're working closely with our partners at Pronatura Noreste to establish Arroyo San Miguel State Park, designating 67 hectares in total, including 6 kilometers of watershed.

With the park's approval, the iconic wave of San Miguel will be protected in perpetuity, will preserve the watershed, provide a public green space and safeguard the San Miguel Creek that supplies water for local residents.

San Miguel, Mexico. Site of the proposed State Park.

Punta Conejo, Mexico

Save The Waves is campaigning to protect Punta Conejo, a renowned surf break along the coastline of Southern Oaxaca, from destruction by a new industrial port project.

We joined local partners - Reservas de Surf Mexico, A.C., Wildcoast, and Union de Surfistas y Salvavidas de Salina Cruz, A.C. - to implore the Mexican government to explore alternatives with a lower impact on the coastal ecosystem and the economies that depend on it.

Since the launch of the #SalvemosPuntaConejo campaign in June 2019, Save The Waves has:

- Secured 280,000+ petition signatures and amassed international attention.
- Carried out a community workshop and participatory mapping session on the ground in Punta Conejo with local surfers, businesses, fishermen and leaders to solidify a grassroots community-driven strategy.
- Developed required technical studies for the proposal of a Ramsar Site (UNESCO international designation of important wetlands).
- Developed a strategic campaign plan with our grassroots Coalition to create a protected area around Punta Conejo.

Save The Waves staff in Punta Conejo, Mexico.

Save The Waves' Mara Arroyo with local leaders, Efraín and Uriel, in Punta Conejo.

Punta Conejo © Ryan Craig

Punta Conejo, Mexico
© Uriel Camacho

OUTREACH

Save The Waves Film Festival

The 2019 international tour of our surf and environmental film festival saw another year of exciting films, new locations and packed theaters.

STWFF engaged and inspired audiences on four continents through 28 screenings, with stops in Munich, Ericeria and Amsterdam, as well as both East and West Coast tours in the United States. These events engaged over 4,000 attendees and 200 volunteers at these screenings.

Inspiration While Indoors

Due to COVID-19, and in celebration of the 50th Anniversary of Earth Day, we decided to help entertain and inspire audiences from the safety of their homes.

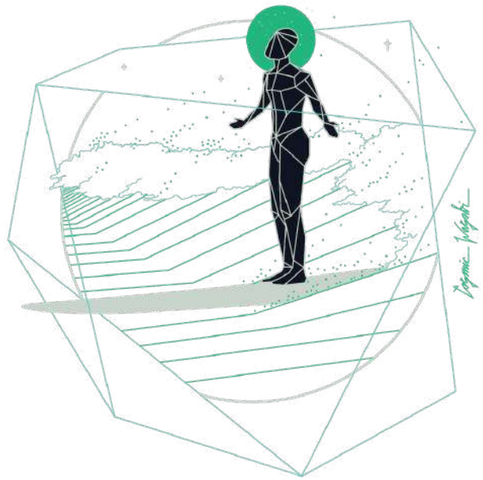
Save The Waves Film Festival opened its archival vault for a virtual world tour and released six hour-long episodes for free online.

With many of our audiences in lockdown, or unable to access green places and wild coastlines once part of daily routines, we were thrilled to share the vast library of films for free.

The online release of STWFF recieved over 14,000 views globally across 97 regions.

Films were released in thematic episodes over a month-long period, including “Our Greatest Hits: Part 1 and 2“, “Wave Savers: Environmental Heroes“, “Creators & Makers“, “Women In Waves“ and “Surf Conservation“.

SAVE THE WAVES FILM FEST



Global Wave Conference

The 6th Global Wave Conference was hosted by the Gold Coast World Surfing Reserve along with Save The Waves Coalition and Surfrider Foundation from February 10th-14th, 2020.

The conference – a biannual international ocean conservation event – made its Australian debut at Southern Cross University, cementing the city’s reputation as the heart and capital of surfing and conservation in Australia.

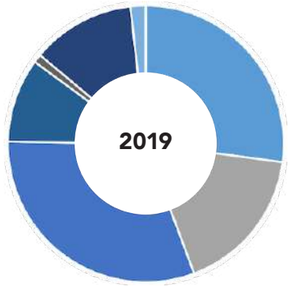
Save The Waves led a workshop around surfing reserves. We invited open discussions with WSR managers in Brazil, Australia, Portugal and Mexico, as well as our partners at the Australian-based National Surfing Reserves.

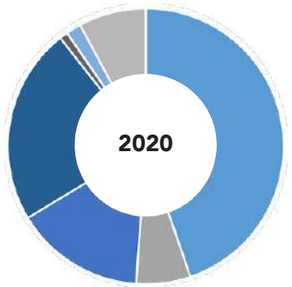
Another side event co-hosted by Save The Waves centered on preserving surf breaks alongside marine protected areas - a continuation of the Coalition’s efforts to unite global partners and spearhead the concept of surf conservation.

Top: STW’s Trent Hodegs reviews workshop ideas
Center: STW’s Mara Arroyo presents on SPANs
Bottom: Participants in workshop for surf conservation

OUR FINANCIALS

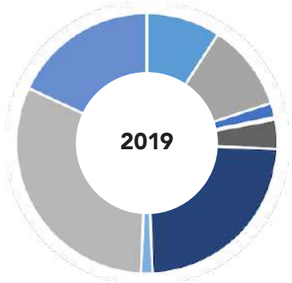
STW REVENUE	2019	2020
Grants	274,891	573,142
Corporate Contributions	174,299	81,358
Individual Contributions	313,691	194,459
In Kind Donations	99,721	295,016
Contracts	10,000	12,500
Events	122,658	-
Merchandise Sales	18,170	22,624
PPP Loan	-	101,125
Total Income	**1,013,431**	**1,280,224**

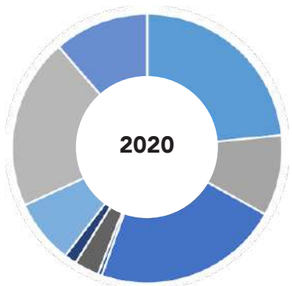




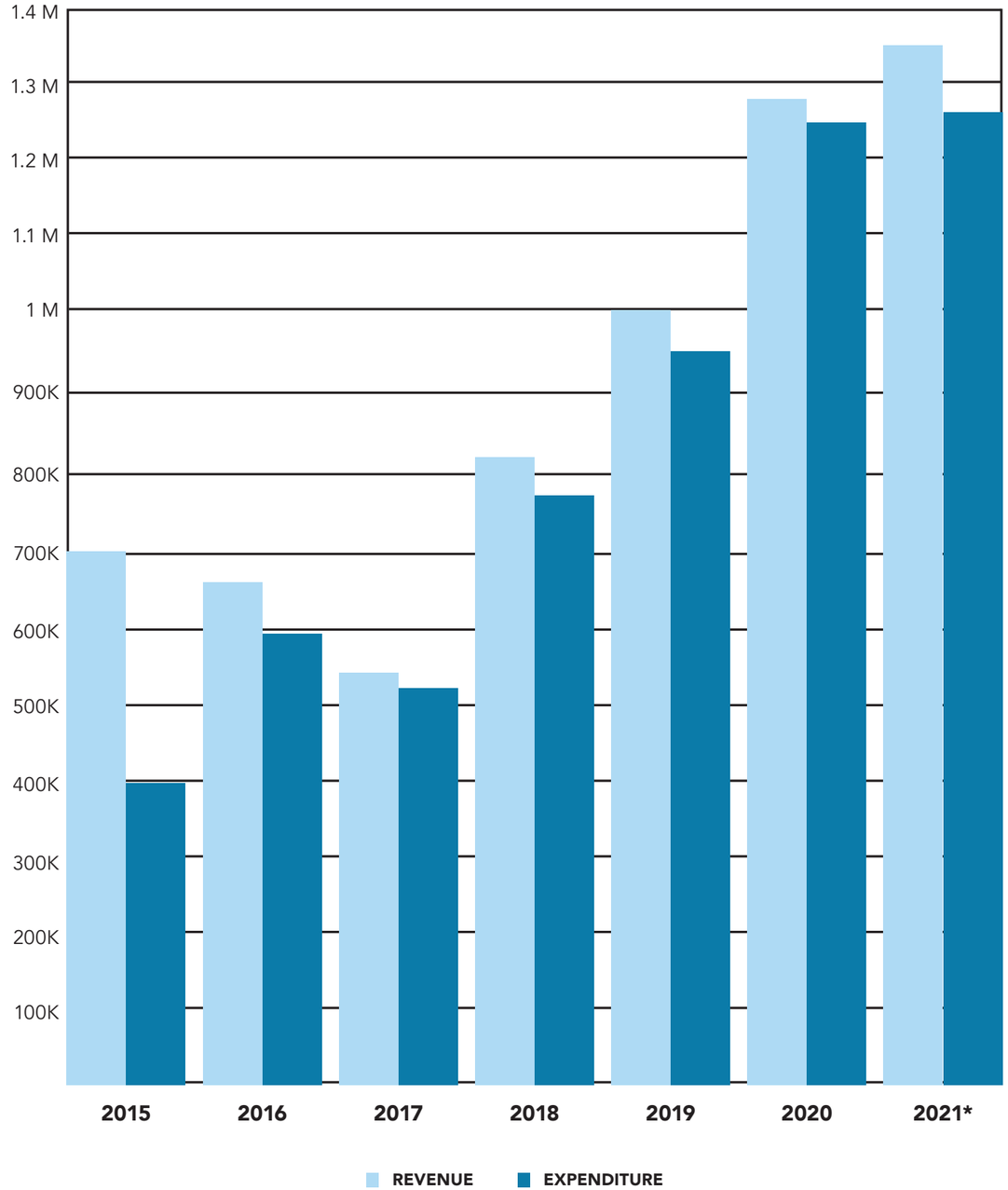
■ Grants ■ Corporate Contributions ■ Individual Contributions
■ In Kind Donations ■ Contracts ■ Events
■ Merchandise Sales ■ PPP Loan

STW EXPENDITURE	2019	2020
Surf Protected Area Networks	87,538	293,087
World Surfing Reserves	102,921	121,665
STW App	16,769	279,782
Surfonomics	2,816	5,893
Campaigns	34,730	37,221
Outreach	224,257	18,473
Programmatic Support	13,995	96,615
Administration	297,154	257,224
Fundraising	171,592	142,316
Total Expense	**951,771**	**1,252,276**





■ Surf Protected Area Networks ■ World Surfing Reserves ■ STW App
■ Surfonomics ■ Campaigns ■ Outreach
■ Programmatic Support ■ Administration ■ Fundraising



*2021 projected budget.

Save The Waves is a 501(c)3 nonprofit corporation and adheres strictly to United States governing such entities. The 990 tax forms filed by STW on an annual basis are public and can be downloaded from the STW website at any time. www.savethewaves.org

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

STAFF

Nik Strong-Cvetich
Executive Director
Mara Arroyo Rodriguez
Surf Protected Area Network Manager
Trent Hodges
Conservation Programs Manager
Lauren Parrino
Communications Manager
Mikaela Osten
Operations Manager (2020)
Susan Coffey
Finance Manager
Jonathan Steinberg
Operations & Development Director (2019)
Sam Bennett
Brand Strategist
Trey Highton
Film Festival Manager (2019)
Riley Hanson
Operations Intern / Administrative & Programs Specialist (2019)
Chantelle Sanders
STWFF Intern (2019)

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Tiago Pires
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Bianca Valenti

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Matt Beard
Ethan Estess
Ryan Craig

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50,000 +

The David and Lucile Packard Foundation
Greg and Amanda Jones
Mulago Foundation
UGG / Deckers Brands
Valtech

10,000 - 49,000 +

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Betsey and Terry Nelson
The Charles Engelhard Foundation
The Chin Family
City of Santa Cruz
Clif Bar Family Foundation
GoPro
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Lumen Wines
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Patagonia
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Pela Case
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Surf Industry Manufacturers Association
Tim Atkinson
William Henry

2,500 - 9,999 +

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Caryn Marooney
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Jeff Yoder
The Joe Collins Fund
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Montauk Marram Resort
New Belgium Brewing Co.
Patagonia Action Works
Ronald S. Grober Living Trust
Sam and Sarah Clarkson
Shane Valenti
Sierra Nevada Brewing
Steve and Susan Davies
Ted Wilson
Travellers Autobarn
The Untermyer Family

100 - 2,499 +

1% For The Planet
Aaron Huffman
Alan Tarbell
Alicia Harmon
Andrew Barker
Anthony Robinson
Bianca Valenti
Bill and Denise Hodges
Bill Brownell
Bill Saxton
Bob Pearson
Bob Roberts
Brad Keitt
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Cathy Flanagan
Chad Goytia
Charles Simmons
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Emmaline Dean
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