



BLUE FRONTIER

20

Years of

Ocean
Action

20 Years of Ocean Action



BLUE FRONTIER

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“The cure for anything is salt water—sweat, tears or the sea.”

—Isak Dinesen, *Seven Gothic Tales*

Blue Frontier

Twenty Years of Ocean Action

Blue Frontier works to give people who care about the ocean the tools needed to protect their communities, both human and wild.

For twenty years, these tools—summits, rallies, awards, marches, citizen lobbies, expert panels, press conferences, book events, media workshops, and celebrations of the sea—have strengthened activist networks and built the kind of civic power that has had an impact on millions of people’s understanding of and interactions with our blue world.

We are grateful to all those who have been with us on this journey.

Although it’s hard to take an unbiased view of our work, we’re pleased to accept acknowledgments from people we admire including:

“Support for Blue Frontier translates directly to actions aimed at a better, healthier ocean—good news for fish, whales, and coral reefs, and for the future of humankind.”

—Marine biologist, National Geographic Explorer-in-Residence, and “Her Deepness,” Dr. Sylvia Earle



“I fully support the grassroots or, rather I should say, seaweed work that your campaign has undertaken to mobilize the public.”

—Former Republican Senator Olympia Snowe of Maine

“You have more enthusiasm for the oceans than Neptune. You have the ability to prioritize the issues and make things happen. That’s because of your smart approach to problem solving.”

—Former California congressman and ocean champion Sam Farr



“I commend the Blue Frontier Campaign and its continuing efforts to strengthen ocean and coastal conservation.”

—Democratic Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi

The following is a narrative time line of the work carried out by Blue Frontier and the multiplier effect its small staff, board, volunteers, and interns have had over two decades in the building of today’s diverse, solution-oriented ocean community and emerging blue economy.

David Helvarg
Executive Director
Blue Frontier

Executive Summary

In 2002 Blue Frontier was founded, based on the book *Blue Frontier: Saving America's Living Seas*. Committed to building a popular ocean movement, Blue Frontier went on to organize six multiday Blue Vision Summits, which have brought together some 2,500 seaweed (marine grassroots) activists from around the nation and ocean policy leaders in Washington, DC. Many also participated in Blue Vision Ocean Hill Days, joining delegations from thirty-nine states and territories to educate more than 200 members of Congress and 500 of their staff on critical issues, policies, and ocean funding needs.

Blue Frontier has produced a number of books, including the award-winning *50 Ways to Save the Ocean*, which has, for tens of thousands of readers, provided a simple, chapter-based way to make good choices for the health of the seas and humanity.

Blue Frontier's ten years of Peter Benchley Ocean Awards (in partnership with Wendy Benchley, Peter's widow and a marine conservation activist herself) created an ongoing network of multisector ocean leaders and winners for what became known as the Academy Awards of the Ocean. The seventy-eight solution-oriented awardees included five heads of state, ten youth activists, and twelve "seaweed" Heroes of the Sea.

Our Ocean Explorers project included two extraordinary women, Roz Savage and Margo Pellegrino, who between them solo rowed and paddled twenty-five thousand miles across three oceans and much of the US coastline to raise public awareness and link activist networks around the need for healthy oceans and clean water.

In 2018 Blue Frontier launched the global March for the Ocean (M4O), which saw thousands of people organize scores of marches in the District of Columbia and across the United States, plus in twenty-six nations on six continents. These included youth-led marches in Ireland, Africa, Oceania, Mexico and South America. More marches occurred in 2019. The COVID-19 pandemic put them on hiatus in 2020.

Point Molate, the last large unprotected natural headland on San Francisco Bay, would have been designated a world-class park a generation ago if it were located on the other side of the Bay in upscale Marin County. Instead, it's located in Richmond, a low-income community of color in the East Bay, home to Blue Frontier's West Coast office. For fifteen years, Blue Frontier and its Point Molate Alliance (PMA) project have built a broadly based community movement for environmental and climate justice to protect this 422-acre city-owned wonder for all Richmond residents. Having defeated a plan to sell it off as a site for a mega-casino in 2010, PMA is now fighting plans to sell it off as a site for a luxury housing development.

Beginning in 2019, Blue Frontier—in partnership with the Center for the Blue Economy—led hundreds of stakeholders in formulating their Ocean Climate Action Plan (OCAP), aimed at employing ocean solutions in US climate policy. In 2021, under COVID-19 restrictions, more than three hundred OCAP supporters held a virtual Hill Day, meeting with their elected members of Congress, thirteen federal agencies, and White House officials.





OCAP proposals have since been incorporated into legislation, that would secure \$11 billion a year for ocean and coastal jobs and for climate protection. This legislation has stalled in Congress, but Blue Frontier continues to press for its passage, along with additional ocean climate measures.

Blue Frontier is perhaps best known for its media productivity and acumen. Its Blue Beat project reflects its belief that the only ocean resource not fully exploited to date is good storytelling. The Blue Beat includes the following:

- More than 270 ocean articles and opinion pieces appearing over twenty years in major media outlets, including the *New York Times*, the *Los Angeles Times*, the *Washington Post*, *The Hill*, *The Nation*, and *National Geographic*.
- Blue Beat panels at seven journalism and conservation conferences.
- Media training workshops attended by hundreds of scientists, activists, and students.
- *Rising Tide: The Ocean Podcast*.
- Some 150 videos, from summit talks to educational shorts.
- Writers For the Sea, an organization of over 100 ocean authors promoting ocean literacy.
- Critically acclaimed books:
 - *Blue Frontier: Dispatches from America's Ocean Wilderness*
 - *The Ocean and Coastal Conservation Guide*
 - *50 Ways to Save the Ocean*
 - *Rescue Warriors: The US Coast Guard, America's Forgotten Heroes*
 - *Saved by the Sea: Hope, Heartbreak, and Wonder in the Blue World*
 - *The Golden Shore: California's Love Affair with the Sea*

Blue Frontier has done all this and more with its small team and large number of partners and volunteers. In our third decade, we will work to see our Ocean Climate Action Plan implemented in law and in the water, extend additional support to frontline communities at risk, sponsor more Ocean Hill Days and additional actions to promote tidal change in ocean policy and consumer behavior, expand our Blue Beat of great ocean stories, and hold more Celebrations of the Sea—because you protect what you love.

Please enjoy the complete history of Blue Frontier, which follows.

Twenty Years and Counting

2002

Based on longtime journalist David Helvarg's book *Blue Frontier: Saving America's Living Seas*, the Blue Frontier Campaign incorporated in Washington, DC, with the support and encouragement of citizen activist Ralph Nader and many ocean leaders from conservation, science, business, recreation, and exploration. It aimed to mobilize and unify the Seaweed Rebellion, which was marine grassroots activists driving change and providing solutions to cascading ocean disasters—including industrial overfishing; loss of habitat; oil, chemical, plastic, and nutrient pollution; and climate change—all of which continue to threaten our living seas.



2003

Blue Frontier received its nonprofit status. With the early support of volunteers, including Stuart Smits and Jean Logan, it worked on building its seaweed network through articles, events, and ocean talks to thousands of people, including the following:

- A West Coast strategy meeting with twenty-five activists at the Pier 23 Bistro in San Francisco.
- Its founding Celebration of the Sea dinner at the historic Carnegie Institution in Washington, DC. The menu, with the food donated by Legal Sea Foods, was wild Alaska salmon with seaweed salad or Eggplant Napoleon with greens. This event drew 150 ocean conservationists and was addressed by supporters, including:
 - Representative Sam Farr (D-CA)
 - Representative George Miller (D-CA)
 - Representative Wayne Gilchrest (R-MD)



“You’re going to create the seaweed revolution. It’s got a better name. It’s called the Blue Frontier Campaign.”

—Representative Sam Farr, on behalf of the bipartisan House Oceans Caucus

- A special issue of *Multinational Monitor* magazine, *Oceans of Trouble*, was edited by Blue Frontier, with contributions from cartoonist Jim Toomey (*Sherman's Lagoon*) and authors Carl Safina (on overfishing) and Deborah Cramer (on threats to the deep ocean).
- Blue Frontier launched *Blue Notes*, a policy newsletter covering ocean news and profiling seaweed groups and their activities.

2004

“What immediately strikes you about the Blue Vision Summit is not the who’s who list of speakers, or the diverse and well-crafted agenda, but the sense of engagement and optimism that infuses the summit. It’s the way that people from all walks of life, both young and old, come together to have a constructive discussion about the threats that our ocean and coasts face, and to develop bold plans for addressing those threats.”

–Ben Scheelk, The Ocean Foundation

In July, Blue Frontier organized and convened the first Blue Vision Summit, with 250 participants representing 170 organizations from twenty-five states and Puerto Rico. Among the speakers were:

- Peter Benchley, author of *Jaws*.
- Captain Paul Watson, *Sea Shepherd*.
- Carol Browner, *former EPA Administrator*
- Panelists on how to expand the ocean constituency, including representatives from marine recreation, tribal nations, religious institutions, and public health organizations.



Participants also enjoyed an evening reception at the US Botanical Garden, where Philippe Cousteau talked about his grandfather, Jacques Cousteau, and how his “silent world” needed new voices to speak up for its protection.



On the third day of the summit, attendees visited Capitol Hill and met with three senators, thirteen House members, and dozens of congressional staffers, encouraging them to support a range of ocean initiatives around climate, pollution, and the establishment of marine protected areas, which could act as wilderness parks and biological reserves in the sea.

This year also saw the first presentation of the Blue Frontier Ocean Awards. Among the recipients:

2005

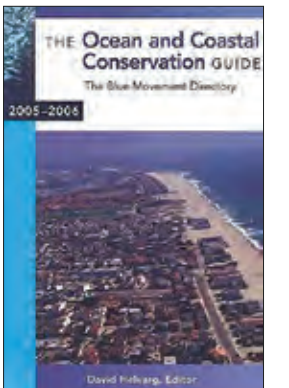
- *The Naples Daily News* for its coverage of the Gulf of Mexico.
- The American Littoral Society’s irascible and inspirational Dery Bennett of New Jersey.
- Renowned fisheries biologist Dr. Ramson Myers of Canada, who noted, “There is no equivalent of a Blue Frontier organization in Europe or in Southeast Asia, so we need to take this vision and expand it worldwide.”

Peter Benchley passed away in 2006, Ramson Myers in 2007, and Dery Bennett in 2009. Blue Frontier has honored their legacies by continuing their efforts to alert the public about human behaviors that threaten the crucible of life on our blue marble planet, and by promoting solutions that work.

In April 2005, Blue Frontier, with support from New Jersey’s Clean Ocean Action, held its first regional conference at the National Aquarium in Baltimore for some fifty mid-Atlantic activists.

The aquarium’s director of conservation, Glenn Page, noted, “The kind of blue vision we’re looking at involves outreach and engagement with the public and groups like yours so that we [zoos and aquariums] don’t just become displays of what habitat used to look like.”

With help from volunteer Diane Williams and intern Javier del Castillo, Blue Frontier published *The Ocean and Coastal Conservation Guide* with Island Press. This book includes listings and descriptions of two thousand seaweed groups, government agencies, marine schools, marine labs, and coastal parks. The directory soon became a valued asset for organizers, journalists, and others. It has been periodically updated and expanded as the online *Blue Movement Directory* on Blue Frontier’s website (www.bluefront.org), which intern Jeff Oppenheimer helped set up.



In San Francisco, Blue Frontier held a Celebration of the Sea for one hundred activists and supporters (including future board members David and Isis Schwartz) at the Bay View Boat Club with a Hawaiian band, a sushi production line



organized by volunteer Alison Loomis, and inspired comments by Peter Douglas, executive director of the California Coastal Commission, and Zeke Grader, head of the Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen’s Associations.

Just as planning got under way for a Gulf Coast regional conference, the area was devastated by Hurricane Katrina.

2006

Blue Frontier's executive director, David Helvarg, traveled to New Orleans and the Gulf Coast to report on the environmental and human costs. One of his articles, "The Storm This Time," has since been used in college composition and writing textbooks.

At the end of 2005, Blue Frontier was honored when Helvarg was named *Coastal Living* magazine's Coastal Leader of the Year.

Blue Frontier produced a new book, *50 Ways to Save the Ocean*, by David Helvarg, with a foreword by Philippe Cousteau and illustrations by *Sherman's Lagoon* cartoonist Jim Toomey. The book explains in simple, fact-based chapters how, by making right choices for the sea, you also tend to do the right things for your spirit, your health and your pocketbook:

- #11 "Talk About the Ocean in Your Place of Worship"
- #12 "Eat Organic and Vegetarian Foods"
- #16 "Conserve Energy to Help the Seas and Yourself"



Titanic discoverer Dr. Bob Ballard advised readers of *50 Ways to Save the Ocean* to "make it a part of your everyday life," while Sylvia Earle wrote, "Everyone, from toddler to tycoon, can find inspiration for action in this must-have guide to ocean care."

Helvarg, Philippe Cousteau, and Toomey attended book launch parties for *50 Ways to Save the Ocean*, which drew hundreds to the Washington, DC, Reef Restaurant and the Mandarin Oriental Hotel (sponsored by the Living Oceans Foundation), and also to New York's Home for Water in Manhattan.

Blue Frontier launched a thirty-five-city book and organizing tour, which included talks at schools, marine labs, aquariums, and major conferences. The House Oceans Caucus distributed copies to every member of Congress.

Blue Frontier also began holding regular Seaweed Happy Hours at the Reef Restaurant, which in time led to Blue Drinks gatherings across the nation.



16. When Diving - Take only pictures - leave only bubbles

2007

Blue Frontier opened its West Coast office in Richmond, California, a low-income community of color on San Francisco Bay. There it helped organize Citizens for a Sustainable Point Molate (later Point Molate Alliance), a



broad-based community group fighting plans to build a mega-casino on a 422-acre natural headland owned by the city, which included one of the state's last native grassland watersheds connected to pristine offshore eelgrass beds. The developer claimed the casino would bring jobs to the area.

Around the same time, Blue Frontier launched its Ocean Explorers project in support of two extraordinary women:

- Margo Pellegrino, a New Jersey athlete and mother of two, inspired by *Fifty Ways to Save the Ocean* and making use of *The Ocean and Coastal Conservation Guide* paddled a one-woman outrigger canoe from Miami to Maine, raising ocean awareness and connecting seaweed groups along the way.
- Roz Savage, an Englishwoman who had already rowed solo across the Atlantic, joined Blue Frontier to raise ocean awareness during her planned row across the Pacific, starting with a California-to-Hawaii leg. After helping her prepare her 23-foot high-tech rowboat, Blue Frontier organized a launch party in July at the Presidio Yacht Club below the Golden Gate Bridge with ninety guests and a Hawaiian band. Unfortunately, not far off California she hit a storm, which capsized her boat three times and tore away her sea anchor. Rescued by a Coast Guard helicopter, she later returned with a salvage vessel to retrieve her boat, refitting it and vowing to renew her journey.



Once again, Blue Frontier was honored when Executive Director David Helvarg received the New York State Marine Education Association's Herman Melville Literary Award.

2008

Early in the year, Blue Frontier convened a “Lessons Learned” meeting for fifty people from thirty-five groups in response to the Cosco Busan oil spill of November 2007, which fouled the San Francisco Bay with 53,000 gallons of bunker fuel. The groups included bird and mammal rescue operators, commercial fishers, International Longshore and Warehouse Union representatives, marine conservationists, and staffers from state and congressional offices.

The meeting led to the establishment of thirteen state laws and regulations and several federal bills aimed at preventing future oil and fuel spills.



Roz Savage re-launched her rowboat from Sausalito on the night of May 25 and arrived in Hawaii one hundred days later, where she was greeted by a Blue Frontier camera crew. After some much-needed rest, she participated in a press conference and beach cleanup.

In November, Blue Frontier’s David Helvarg addressed the European Council of International Schools in Nice, France, encouraging its three thousand teachers to incorporate marine education and exploration into their classrooms.

2009

Roz Savage completed her Pacific row from Hawaii to Tarawa in 104 days. Not satisfied with raising ocean awareness (and many calluses), she went on in 2011 to row the Indian Ocean from Australia to Mauritius off East Africa in 154 days, becoming the first woman and the first Briton to row solo across the Big Three oceans.



Twenty-eight organizations sponsored Blue Frontier’s second Blue Vision Summit (BVS2) at George Washington University in Washington, DC. The summit was preceded by a hands-on workshop, “Ocean in Google Earth Blue Vision,” at Google’s DC offices.

Addressing some four hundred participants were key advocates for ocean policy under the new Obama administration, including Senator Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI) and Nancy Sutley, head of the White House Council on Environmental Quality.

Dr. Jane Lubchenco was unable to attend because the Senate had yet to confirm her nomination to head the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). Still, BVS2 launched a proposal she supported for a US National Ocean Policy (NOP) to coordinate federal ocean agencies with each other and with state and tribal ocean entities. Its purpose was to better manage our public seas in ways that would reduce user conflicts while improving the ocean’s environmental resilience.

To honor the late Peter Benchley—2004 Blue Vision keynote speaker, famed author, and conservationist—Blue Frontier, in partnership with Peter’s wife and adventure partner, Wendy Benchley, launched the Peter Benchley Ocean Awards at this summit. Winners included:

- Representative Sam Farr (D-CA) for policy
- Coral reef experts Dr. Jeremy Jackson and Dr. Nancy Knowlton for science

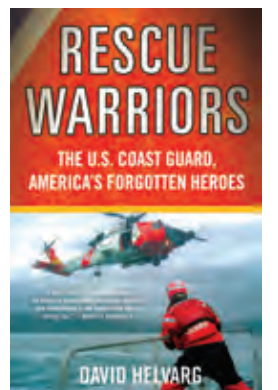
The Washington, DC, chapter of the Surfrider Foundation held a summit party at a local bar that evening, which went on to become a BVS tradition.

In November, Blue Frontier convened a meeting of forty stakeholders to plan a Wear Blue for the Ocean Day in support of National Ocean Policy. It also helped organize some two thousand people who attended and spoke out at six public listening sessions on the policy, which NOAA held across the country. Blue Frontier representatives addressed five of them.



Executive Director David Helvarg’s new book, *Rescue Warriors: The US Coast Guard, America’s Forgotten Heroes*, was published. Included in the book are the viewpoints of both Roz Savage, who was rescued from the Pacific Ocean by a Coast Guard helicopter, and the pilot who rescued her. The book was listed as a Commandant’s Choice for professional reading by the Coast Guard and was distributed to every member of Congress by the House Oceans Caucus.

50 Ways to Save the Ocean won the 2009 Green Book Festival’s top prize in the how-to category. Blue Frontier developed a high school teacher’s guide for the book, which was made available on the *National Geographic* education website.



January 13 was Wear Blue for the Ocean Day, with more than one thousand people participating in marches, in press conferences, and on social media. They included three hundred students in Honolulu, scuba divers in Kona, and climate scientists in Iceland. Blue Frontier led a colorful contingent of one hundred people dressed in fish costumes and carrying flags, a 6-foot globe, and a surfboard on a cold day in front of the White House.



In July 2010, President Obama signed an executive order establishing the National Ocean Policy (NOP). Despite successful regional planning groups in New England, in the Mid-Atlantic, and on the West Coast, with strong state and indigenous participation, the federal commitment to National Ocean Policy was later rescinded by the Trump administration after a Republican congressman from Texas referred to NOP as “Obamacare for the Ocean.”



Meanwhile, Blue Frontier sponsored Margo Pellegrino on her second coastal paddle from Seattle to San Diego. Blue Frontier volunteer June Barnard worked as her land crew, driving an escort truck and setting up meetings with West Coast media and seaweed groups. Asked what she thought of the stunning Northern California coastline, where she almost flipped her outrigger while surfing into a rough cobble beach, Pellegrino laughed and said, “Mostly, it looks like a wall of fog.” She ended her epic journey by addressing five hundred surfers at a Clean Water Paddle Out in San Diego, organized by the Surfrider Foundation.

Blue Frontier also worked with Digital Ocean on the production of an award-winning video, *Students Saving the Ocean*, based on the book *50 Ways to Save the Ocean*. David Helvarg and Jim Toomey presented new talks, with Toomey drawing projected cartoon sharks and fishes to illustrate key points. Presentations were made to a range of audiences, from an elementary school in San Francisco to a UN ocean conference in Paris.

In Richmond, after Citizens for a Sustainable Point Molate got the Point Molate megacasino development on the ballot, voters rejected the scheme by 58 percent to 42 percent. The city council then canceled the deal.

Meanwhile, Blue Frontier sponsored Margo Pellegrino on her second coastal paddle from Seattle to San Diego. Blue Frontier volunteer June Barnard worked as her land crew, driving an escort truck and setting up meetings with West Coast media and seaweed groups. Asked what she thought of the stunning Northern California coastline, where she almost flipped her outrigger while surfing into a rough cobble beach, Pellegrino laughed and said, “Mostly, it looks like a wall of fog.” She ended her epic journey by addressing five hundred surfers at a Clean Water Paddle Out in San Diego, organized by the Surfrider Foundation.

Helvarg’s newest book, a memoir, *Saved by the Sea*, was published. Its final chapters, “The Seaweed Rebellion” and “Blue Is the New Green,” tell the story of Blue Frontier’s work up until then and how the ocean can provide both joy and solace.

The *San Francisco Chronicle* called it:

“An inspiring read. And an important one.”

In his own endorsement, author and climate activist Bill McKibben wrote:

“David Helvarg has done an awful lot to protect the world’s oceans, not least this fine piece of writing!”

Blue Frontier launched a twenty-three-city book and organizing tour.

On April 20, BP’s *Deepwater Horizon* blowout killed eleven workers in the Gulf of Mexico and set off the worst oil spill and environmental disaster in US history. Helvarg made several reporting trips to the region, meeting with retraumatized people he’d met covering Hurricane Katrina five years earlier. He produced news articles, Blue Notes, and a Blue Frontier video calling for an end to offshore oil drilling.



In June, the Peter Benchley Ocean Awards—by now becoming known as the Academy Awards of the Ocean—were held at the modern, elegant California Academy of Sciences museum in San Francisco (not far from the academy’s resident white alligator).

Mantas Award statues, designed by the marine artist Wyland, were presented in seven categories. Cynthia Sarthou of the Gulf Restoration Network (now Healthy Gulf), winner of the grassroots Hero of the Seas award, told those attending that she felt as though, in the wake of the ongoing BP disaster, her past twenty years of effort had “gone to shit.”

Blue Frontier argued in Blue Notes and several newspaper editorials that the oil catastrophe in the Gulf could be an opportunity for the Obama administration to declare a race—like President John F. Kennedy’s race to the moon—for a rapid transition from fossil fuels to carbon-free renewable energy by mid-century. This didn’t happen although Blue Frontier continues to work for it.

2011

The third Blue Vision Summit (BVS3) lasted four days, opening with a Celebration of the Seas at the Carnegie Institution, attended by more than five hundred people. The event included films, music, a dance performance, and book signings by writers for the sea.



BVS3 issues included the following:

- Responding to the BP disaster.
- Cleanup and coastal restoration.
- Offshore energy transition.
- Plastic pollution.
- The future of fish.
- Youth organizing, including a presentation by New York Harbor School students working to restore the city's historic oyster reefs. Blue Frontier later did presentations for this unique maritime public high school on Governors Island, off lower Manhattan.



Along with more than thirty panels, there were more than seventy Capitol Hill meetings, in which state delegations encouraged their elected representatives to respond to the Gulf spill, fund marine science, and develop legislation to address plastic pollution.

The first National Stewardship Award from the Peter Benchley Ocean Awards was presented to President Laura Chinchilla of Costa Rica, who established an almost 3,000-square-mile marine reserve around the shark-enhanced (not "infested") waters of Coco Island National Park.

Blue Frontier composed an Ocean Leadership Letter to the presidential candidates, signed by sixty outstanding explorers, activists, scientists, and business leaders, asking the candidates to move forward on four major areas of concern, including climate change. In September President Obama's campaign responded, pledging additional funding for the Gulf oil spill response and emphasizing funding for the Chesapeake Bay and Everglades restoration, creation or enhancement of 540 coastal recreation areas, and improved fishing stock data assessments. The Romney campaign did not respond.

In Richmond, Citizens for a Sustainable Point Molate helped organize an Earth Day beach cleanup in preparation for reopening the Beach Park section of Point Molate for the first time in more than a decade.



In early spring, following a selection committee review of dozens of nominations, Blue Frontier's David Helvarg called Peter Douglas, now retired from the California Coastal Commission and fighting an aggressive cancer, to let him know he was the 2012 Benchley Hero of the Seas winner. Douglas said he'd be honored to accept in person if his body and the universe gave him dispensation. Sadly, he passed away on April 1. Helvarg wrote an appreciation of him, "The Savior of California's Coast," which ran in the *Los Angeles Times* on Easter Sunday.



accepted on his behalf by California Secretary of Natural Resources John Laird, who received a standing ovation.

Rush Limbaugh attacked Blue Frontier's executive director on his right-wing radio show after Helvarg was quoted in *USA Today* explaining how climate change could have an impact on ocean sports.

On June 1, the awards were held at the California Academy of Sciences, with hundreds of ocean-loving guests in attendance. Winners included President Aote Tong of Kiribati, who established one of the world's largest marine protected areas in his island nation, whose existence was and is threatened by rising seas. Peter Douglas's posthumous award was

2012

2013

David Helvarg's new book, *The Golden Shore: California's Love Affair with the Sea*, with a foreword by actor and ocean activist Ted Danson, was published. It describes how, with close to forty million people and the world's fifth largest economy, California has managed to become a global model for how we can live well with our coasts and ocean.



The co-chairs of the Environmental Legislative Caucus in Sacramento distributed copies of the book to every member of the California State House, and future governor of California Gavin Newsom sent a letter of praise for it. Blue Frontier launched a twenty-five-city book and organizing tour of California and other states.

“Our ocean faces an unprecedented set of challenges from climate change, pollution, energy extraction, and more. But we have the power to move from takers to caretakers of the sea,” Senator Sheldon Whitehouse told participants at the fourth Blue Vision Summit (BVS4) in May.



“Remember, the politics of the ocean is still fresh and the blue revolution still young,” added Congressman Sam Farr, further ginning up the crowd.

Strategic focuses included “Making Climate a Blue Issue” and “Youth Leadership for a Blue Planet.” A Coast Guard admiral warned of challenges in

dealing with “a new ocean in the Arctic” as climate melting opens up Arctic blue water trade routes and a rush for oil, minerals, fish, and other resources.

BVS4 was both the first plastic-free, organic, and vegetarian ocean summit and the largest Ocean Hill Day to date, with delegations from more than twenty states holding more than one hundred Capitol Hill meetings after being greeted in the Dirksen Building by Senator Brian Schatz (Hawaii) and Representatives Jared Huffman and Lois Capps (California), Kathy Castor (Florida), and Chellie Pingree (Maine).

The largest delegations were thirty-four people who flew in from California and twenty from Colorado, part of the Colorado (later Inland) Ocean Coalition founded by Blue Frontier board member Vicki Nichols Goldstein.



One measure of the Ocean Hill Day’s impact came from a Farr staffer who reported that, as a result of the day’s meetings, twenty additional House members signed onto Farr’s Dear Colleague letter in support of National Ocean Policy.

Comments from participants who gathered afterward for a reception at the nearby Mott House were enthusiastic:

“This is my first trip to DC since eighth grade, and we met seven people and I got to speak with my congressman which was very exciting.”

“I talked to my representative, but I don’t think I convinced him. So we’ll get him at home with our students, who are ready.”

“I was with the California delegation, so it was sort of a love fest for us.”

“At the end of the day you can change the course of history by building these kind of relationships from the bottom up.”

Among the winners of the *Peter Benchley Ocean Awards* that evening was President Macky Sall of Senegal. In one of his first acts after winning office in a strongly contested democratic election, he canceled contracts with EU and other foreign fishing fleets whose industrial trawlers were depleting the waters of his West African nation.

In the fall, ocean artists and photographers Wyland, Claudio Garzon, Courtney Mattison, Asher Jay, Jim Toomey, Brian Skerry, Wayne Levin, and Kip Evans generously donated their works to help raise funds for Blue Frontier.

2014

With the help of the Blue and Gold Fleet, Pier 39, and others, Blue Frontier organized the first San Francisco Coast Guard Appreciation Day, including a proclamation from the city. Along with speeches and music, there were Coast Guard cutters for public boarding, helicopter rescue exercises in the Bay, and K-9s for the kids. Tourists and supporters gawked at these displays as more than seven hundred Coast Guard members and their families received free admission to the aquarium and special Pier 39 discounts.



Blue Frontier’s David Helvarg helped Richmond Mayor Gayle McLaughlin cut the ribbon at the official opening of the Point Molate Beach Park, a celebration that included a fireboat spraying jets of water, a salsa-jazz band, and barbecue. This was the beginning of a plan to expand the park area to cover all 422 acres of this natural and historical wonder. The only possible setback was that the pro-park mayor would soon be term-limited out of office.

Helvarg and Jim Toomey gave a presentation at John F. Kennedy High School in Richmond. The next day, Blue Frontier sponsored a field trip for forty students to Point Molate.



Many said they'd never been to the water before. After hiking the highlands and viewing the wildlife (deer, osprey, wild turkeys, geese with goslings, and a dead bat ray) several students began planning to have their senior sunset, an end-of-year outing, at Point Molate.

In June, Margo Pellegrino launched a new adventure, From the Big Apple to

the Big Easy, an inland paddle from New York to New Orleans—via the Hudson River, the Great Lakes, and the Mississippi River and its tributaries—to discover and connect ocean and river activists for clean water.

The seventh annual *Peter Benchley Ocean Awards* honored seven outstanding ocean leaders, including:

- Leon Panetta, President Clinton's White House chief of staff, President Obama's CIA director, and secretary of defense. Panetta also led the Pew Oceans Commission, which raised the alarm about the state of our public seas in 2003. As a congressman from Monterey, California, he played a central role in establishing the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary in his home waters. "At a time of crisis over development, pollution, [and] fisheries...we need to protect the ocean not just for the ocean's sake, but for life itself," he told the easily convinced audience.
- Gabriela Cowpethwaite, director of *Blackfish*, the Netflix documentary on captive orcas, corporate malfeasance, and the 2010 death of a SeaWorld trainer.
- Captain Charles Moore, a sailor and anti-plastics crusader who discovered the "great Pacific garbage patch," although he described it as more like an alphabet soup of large and small plastic waste dispersed throughout the water column.



The next day, hundreds more people attended a public "Bay to Sea Symposium," hosted by Blue Frontier.

Late in the year, Blue Frontier sponsored an "Over the Horizon" meeting in Washington, DC, with fifty ocean groups to agree on a set of issues to promote in the period leading up to the 2016 elections. These included opposition to new offshore oil drilling and support for expanded marine protected areas.

2015

Blue Frontier organized a field trip to Point Molate for thirty-five of Richmond High School's Health Academy students. While they were practicing water quality testing under a live oak tree, an osprey swooped down and snagged a large fish out of the water to their amazed cheers.



The fifth Blue Vision Summit (BVS5) included keynote talks from the following:

- Senator Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI).
- NOAA administrator and former astronaut Kathy Sullivan.
- Coast Guard Commandant Admiral Paul Zukunft.
- Marine biologist Dr. Ayana Elizabeth Johnson.

New York City Councilman Donovan Richards talked about the impact of sea level rise on low-income communities, such as Far Rockaway, the area he represented. Business leaders, including Bill Dewey of Taylor Shellfish and Roger Berkowitz of Legal Sea Foods, talked about how failure to address issues such as ocean acidification and illegal fishing affect not only the health of the environment but also the health of the US economy.

On May 13, Blue Frontier's Healthy Ocean Capitol Hill Day organizer Lauren Townsend helped coordinate the largest US citizen lobby for the ocean to date, with more than 130 people in twenty-four state delegations holding 163 meetings with 9 Senators, 27 House members, and 120 staffers. Key topics included opposing offshore oil drilling and supporting a bipartisan bill to crack down on illegal, unregulated, and unreported pirate fishing. These conversations helped double the number of cosponsors of the pirate fishing bill, which was signed into law by President Obama that fall.



Before the Peter Benchley Ocean Awards were presented, there was a public seminar at National Geographic, "The Ocean in 2050," whose futurist tone was cautiously optimistic.

That evening, the awards dinner made the society page of the *Washington Post*, thanks to the presence of HSH Prince Albert II of Monaco and his wife Princess

Charlene. He received the National Stewardship Award for his support of research and collaboration around issues of ocean acidification, climate change, and marine biodiversity.

Other winners included the *Economist* for its in-depth ocean coverage, and Hawaiian explorer and “Wayfinder” Nainoa Thompson of the Polynesian Voyaging Society.

“Who hears the fishes when they cry,” asks Henry David Thoreau. On June 8, World Ocean Day, Blue Frontier announced the founding of Writers For the Sea (WFS), a group with thirty-five initial plank owner authors who had written at least one ocean book and agreed to a set of principles, including promoting ocean literacy, celebrating past ocean writers, and mentoring emerging new ones. *Publishers Weekly* gave this new group a nice write-up.



In November, Blue Frontier launched the anti-oil drilling Sea Party 2016 at a press conference near the US Capitol under a life-size 90-foot inflatable blue whale and joined by Greenpeace, the Great Whale Conservancy, and others. T-shirts were passed out showing a moray eel wrapped around a Neptune’s trident with the logo Don’t Spill On Me. Speakers included author and climate activist Bill McKibben, Representative Sam Farr, and Freedom Caucus Republican Representative Mark Sanford of South Carolina. “Fish don’t like oil spills and neither do I,” he announced. The next day, a headline in the *Charleston Post and Courier* read “Mark Sanford: From Tea Party to Sea Party.”



2016

Blue Frontier had more than one hundred prominent people sign another Ocean Leadership Letter to the presidential candidates. It asked them to explain their positions on offshore drilling, national ocean policy, and other vital issues. Trump advisers, including a Texas oil millionaire/energy adviser, offered to get a response but failed to. The Clinton campaign responded with an extensive letter on her planned approaches, which proved to be more than expected but less than hoped for.

At the International Union for Conservation of Nature summit in Honolulu, Blue Frontier led a media training workshop for 120 scientists, including two-minute pitch slams for story ideas, followed by professional critiques on how to make these stories work for journalists and news outlets. Participants were enthusiastic about what they had learned.

Margo Pellegrino completed the second and final phase of her New York to New Orleans inland paddle with support from dozens of groups and agencies along the way, including outrigger clubs, waterside restaurants and marinas, the American Waterways



Operators, the Alabama Rivers Alliance, and Mobile Baykeeper. Her daily blogs from the water proved very popular. In Richmond, California, Tom Butt, the new pro-development mayor, cut a closed-door deal with the failed casino developers, who had been suing the city, to sell off Point Molate to a luxury housing developer and split the profits from the sale between the city and the casino group. Blue Frontier

helped launch a new project, the Point Molate Alliance, to expand on the opposition work of the earlier Citizens for a Sustainable Point Molate. This new coalition held its first forum, attended by seventy-five people; demonstrated and spoke out at city council meetings; and with partner organizations and individuals sued the city for violating the Brown Act, which required public participation in zoning and land use decisions.

At the invitation of aquarium Executive Director Julie Packard, the ninth annual *Peter Benchley Ocean Awards* moved to the Monterey Bay Aquarium. The day began with a tour for Benchley award winners of Stanford’s historic Hopkins Marine Station.



Hundreds of awards guests and supporters were inspired and delighted to gather at the world-famous aquarium that evening with its central kelp forest display. They ate dishes from a sustainable seafood buffet while admiring the sea otters, and they took dessert by the massive glass wall of the open sea exhibit of gliding sharks, rays, bluefin tuna, sea turtles, and other wildlife.

The eight winners included:

- Palau President Tommy Remengesau Jr. for his leadership in protecting his nation’s unique marine environment.
- Daniela Fernandez for founding the college-based Sustainable Oceans Alliance.
- *New York Times* reporter Ian Urbina for his investigative series, “The Outlaw Ocean.”
- Imperial Beach, California, Mayor and WildCoast co-founder Serge Dedina for his conservation work on both sides of the US–Mexico border.

The awards were followed by a weekend of forums at nearby Asilomar Conference Center, including “The Ocean and the Election.” At this forum, part of the discussion centered on what an increasingly polarized nation would mean for historically nonpartisan ocean and coastal policies.

In September, Blue Frontier was invited to participate in the “Our Ocean” conference in Washington, DC, organized by the State Department, where President Barack Obama announced the first fully protected marine monument in the Atlantic off New England, and Secretary of State John Kerry announced that twenty nations had committed to investing more than \$5 billion in ocean protection.

In October, Blue Frontier organized an ocean field trip for sixty reporters from the Society of Environmental Journalists annual conference meeting in Sacramento. A charter bus took them to Bodega Bay, where the Coast Guard served them breakfast and took them out on the water. The UC Davis Marine Lab and Hog Island Oyster Co. later served them beer and oysters while explaining the impacts of ocean acidification on shellfish. They then got to interview scientists on the beach and in the labs.

Blue Frontier’s executive director, David Helvarg, completed a ten-city organizing tour of Florida on election night. Shortly thereafter, he wrote a *Los Angeles Times* opinion piece predicting four years of all-out defensive work to protect the marine environment. The Trump administration would go on to deny climate change, weaken rules that kept mercury out of the ocean, and attempt to open up 90 percent of US coastal seas to oil drilling.

2017

The sixth Blue Vision Summit (BVS6) was the youngest and most diverse to date, reflecting the need to grow the blue movement in the face of increasing threats, both political and environmental. The DC premiere showing of the documentary *Chasing Coral* reminded attendees of the stakes, as half the world’s coral reefs have died since 1950, and even more are bleaching due to climate-linked warming seas.



BVS6 attendees included students from several New York City middle schools on a two-day field trip to the summit. “It’s great that they get to meet ocean leaders who

look like them,” exclaimed one of their teachers after a number of the mostly African American and Hispanic kids listened attentively to keynote speaker Daniela Fernandez and became instant fans of Danni Washington, the first African American woman to host a national science show (on Fox) after she spent time with them.

Also attending was the CEO of the National Aquarium, the Professional Association of Dive Instructors’ CEO, and a recently retired Navy rear admiral Ann Phillips who worried about sea level rise and its impact on national security. She was not alone.

Speaking on the opening day, Senator Bob Menendez (D-NJ) warned, “The future of our nation and our planet is inextricably tied to the health of our ocean.” The senator then explained how much he valued visits from his constituents: “They’ve taken time out from their lives, their family, their work because they care passionately about something. I listen and I hope your representatives also will when they see a big blue wave on Capitol Hill.”

After being greeted by Senator Sheldon Whitehouse, twenty-five state delegations held 130 meetings to speak against offshore oil drilling and support full funding for threatened ocean programs at NOAA, EPA, and other agencies, budgets Congress would later pass despite Trump administration attempts to slash them. They also promoted the bipartisan Save Our Seas Act, which Whitehouse introduced to reduce (mostly plastic) marine debris. This was signed into law the following year.



Other hopeful actions included the Inland Ocean Coalition bringing state delegations from Colorado, Arizona, Utah, Ohio, and Michigan because “every state is an ocean state.” Representative Joe Neguse (D-CO) bonded with the Colorado delegation while Senator Cory Booker (D-NJ) released a selfie video he took with the New Jersey delegation.

“This was a summit high point for me,” said Deb Castellana of the Northern California delegation. “Everyone at least once in their life has to experience what it’s like to go and meet with the people you elect to Congress.”

The next day began with an “Ocean of Tomorrow” symposium at the Pew Charitable Trusts, followed by Blue Frontier’s rain-soaked press conference and rally of seventy-five people in front of the Department of Interior to protest offshore drilling. Luckily, the Oceana organization brought a tent.

In the face of Wendy Benchley's major medical challenges from cancer and related issues, Benchley and Blue Frontier decided to retire the globally admired *Peter Benchley Ocean Awards* on a high note. We're happy to report that today Wendy is healthy and cancer-free.

The tenth annual awards ceremonies took place at the venerable Smithsonian Museum of Natural



History. They included a strolling dinner in the grand rotunda (with a Wyland drawing of a manta ray projected on the ceiling) and dessert in the Sant Ocean Hall.

The winners included Indonesia's Fisheries Minister Susi Pudjiastuti, who ordered her country's navy to sink close to four hundred pirate fishing vessels caught in her nation's waters. "You have to send a message," she explained. Along with protecting local fishing communities, she also freed hundreds of enslaved crew members of pirate vessels and released illegally captured whale sharks.

Among the other winners were Senator Richard Blumenthal (D-CT) and Senator Brian Schatz (D-HI), for their work protecting and expanding marine monuments, including Papahānaumokuākea in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands, which comprises 70 percent of US coral reefs and unique wildlife, including monk seals, tiger sharks, and albatrosses.

Seeking new ways to build public awareness of our ocean at risk, Blue Frontier organized a coalition of environmental organizations for the first-ever global March for the Ocean (M4O) set for Saturday, June 9. In preparation, it held a Florida Regional Summit at the University of South Florida, with eighty activists from across the state, who were welcomed by St. Petersburg Mayor Rick Kriseman.



On June 8, Margo Pellegrino completed an eighteen-day March for the Ocean paddle from Atlantic City to Washington, DC, just in time to join a youth-led banner-making party on the Anacostia River. Also that night, the International Ocean Film Festival showed (our kind of)

2018

blue movies under the stars at the M4O stage on the Washington Mall. Musician Jack Johnson also put out a video encouraging participation in the march.



The next morning, three thousand people gathered at the M4O stage to hear musician Jesse Colin Young and his band perform. Danni Washington and Philippe and Ashlan Cousteau were MCs at the rally that followed, which was easy to find, thanks to the life-size 90-foot inflatable blue whale, which resurfaced.

Blue Frontier's executive director David Helvar, told the crowd, "This march for the ocean reflects people's determination. We are not going to tolerate offshore drilling



or the tsunami of ocean plastic pollution. We are not going to allow coasts to be destroyed by the impacts of climate change. We are going to defend what we depend on. Our little blue marble is not going to be turned into a gas station or a garbage dump. This is our source of life, and we are determined. We will continue to march and to vote."

After several more speakers, people mobilized, marching past the White House, chanting, "The ocean is rising and so are we!" Thousands more marched in Hollywood, Florida, and there were marches across the nation, from New York to Illinois, Colorado, Montana, and California. In all, M4O marches took place in twenty-six nations on six continents.



Youth leadership was particularly strong in DC and around the world. In Dun Laoghaire, outside Dublin, Ireland, eleven-year-old Flossie Donnelly led four hundred marchers calling for an end to plastic pollution. Hundreds of students marched in Cape Verde and Belize, in Rio and northern Brazil, in the Bahamas, and by the clock tower in Paramaribo,



the capital of Suriname. Twelve-year-old Kaya Rasa and sixteen-year-old Genzo Gonzales from Heirs to Our Oceans led a march in Saipan in the Northern Mariana Islands. “We look to the ocean as our way of life. We live from it, we fish from it, we eat from it,” explained Gonzales. In the Philippines, sixty-five activists

hiked twelve miles from Tagbilaran City to Alona Beach, where they were joined by one hundred volunteers for a beach cleanup. A similar cleanup took place in Tunisia to mark the approaching end of Ramadan fasting, while underwater diver cleanups took place in Key Largo, in Maui, and on Gili Island, Indonesia.



Blue March for the Ocean T-shirts based on a wave image drawn by Jim Toomey were locally adapted for the DC, Florida, London, Dublin, Paris, and Surinamese marches, while other folks, from San Francisco to near Mar-a-Lago in Florida, wore their own versions of “Blue for the Ocean.” M4O media support was provided by, among others, Elli Kerlow, Nikki Caputo, Brick City TV, and Bare Tree Media.

2019

After 175 issues and 250,000 words, Blue Frontier ended its *Blue Notes* e-newsletter and launched the biweekly *Rising Tide: The Ocean Podcast*.

In April, Blue Frontier teamed up with the Inland Ocean Coalition to hold an Inland Ocean Summit at EarthX in Dallas for one hundred people from a dozen heartland states. Blue Frontier also led a media training workshop at EarthX and another at a science education conference in Washington, DC.

In May, the Point Molate Alliance organized a community meeting of more than 150 Richmond residents to promote a plan for a world-class park at Point Molate and condemn the city’s agreement with Southern California developer SunCal to build two thousand units of luxury housing on the land. PMA’s Andrés Soto, Transit Board member Jovanka Beckles, and other local leaders, including the owners of a Black-owned bike shop (Rich City Rides) and organizers of a Latino youth soccer league, called for more recreational opportunities in the city and for building new housing downtown, where infrastructure and a transportation hub already existed.



A month later, PMA and Wholly H2O cosponsored a Point Molate “Bio-Blitz” with forty citizen-scientists. More than eight hundred marine and terrestrial bird, plant, insect, and animal species would be identified over the next year, marking Point Molate as a biodiversity hot spot on the San Francisco Bay.

In DC, leading Democrats outlined a Green New Deal to

address the climate emergency, but ocean issues were conspicuously absent. Blue Frontier partnered with the Center for the Blue Economy at the Middlebury Institute of International Studies in Monterey to launch an Ocean Climate Action Plan (OCAP), starting with an eight-point white paper they published online in March for a Blue New Deal.



In June, the second annual March for the Ocean took place in cities and towns across the planet, from Santa Cruz, California, to Paris, where a march of two thousand was led by dancers painted as mermaids. Not to be outdone, Blue Frontier’s executive director, David Helvarg, dressed up as a horseshoe crab and spoke to a youth-led march, organized by the New York Aquarium, on the Coney Island boardwalk.

In October, sixty ocean stakeholders from throughout California met for an OCAP Ocean Climate Action Summit in Monterey. Participants included State Controller Betty Yee and others from government, conservation, academia, business, and frontline communities at risk. They broke into groups to attend workshops on infrastructure and coastal adaptation, offshore energy, fishing, and aquaculture. Later each group reported back with suggestions for inclusion in the working OCAP document, which was then circulated nationwide. A reception was held that evening at the Hopkins Marine Station Library, where a sign at the front desk reads “No Wetsuits in the Library”.

2020

Blue Frontier held a small media training workshop at the American Geophysical Union's ocean conference in San Diego, which was attended by five thousand people, shortly after the first COVID-19 case was reported in the United States.



A month later, Point Molate Alliance (PMA) prepared to gather ten thousand signatures to put Point Molate on the 2020 ballot in Richmond. It had forty signature gatherers ready to start canvassing door-to-door when California shut down due to the spread of the virus.

Unable to do live organizing, PMA produced two issues of a bilingual newspaper, the *Richmond Community News*, which was mailed to Richmond's thirty-three thousand households. One of its lead stories, "Racial and Climate Justice for Point Molate," was coauthored by PMA steering committee member and Native American activist Courtney Cummings (Northern Cheyenne, Arikara, and Muscogee Creek), the authorized representative for the Confederated Villages of Lisjan/Ohlone, whose historic lands include Point Molate.

The Southern California developer put out an environmental impact report (based on an earlier one by the casino developer), which did not mention the Ohlone despite the fact that several of their sacred sites are at Point Molate. The Ohlone and two commercial fishing groups concerned about the health of Point Molate's eelgrass beds joined PMA in filing a California Environmental Quality (CEQA) lawsuit against the inadequate EIR. A judge later ruled in favor of the developers, and his ruling was appealed.

In the 2020 city council elections, three pro-park candidates were elected, giving PMA's allies a 4 to 3 majority. Just before the election, however, Mayor Tom Butt signed a contract with the developer, creating new legal obstacles.



An outside evaluation determined that to buy into the proposed development you'd need an average yearly income of at least \$250,000. The average yearly income for Richmond residents is \$65,000.

After many comments from hundreds of stakeholders, the final Ocean Climate Action Plan (OCAP) was published and posted in July.

Its four key issue areas with proposed policy actions included:

1. Coastal adaptation and financing.
2. Clean ocean energy.
3. Ports, shipping, and the maritime sector.
4. Sustainable fisheries, aquaculture, and marine biodiversity conservation.

More than 160 ocean leaders signed onto the plan, including John Kerry, Jane Fonda, and Dr. Robert Bullard, known as the father of the environmental justice movement.

Due to the worldwide impact of COVID-19, Blue Frontier canceled its planned call for a 2020 March for the Ocean.

Plans for a live OCAP summit in Washington, DC, were also canceled due to the pandemic. Instead, in April, eight hundred people attended a five-hour online OCAP seminar. Presenters included Senator Jeff Merkley (D-OR), who started by saying, "Thank you, Blue Frontier....We need an outside force and an inside force to make anything happen in Congress, so let's forge that together." Representative Deb Haaland of New Mexico (later the nation's first Indigenous Secretary of the Interior) explained, "We all need to care about the ocean, no matter where we live....That's why I've included elements of the Ocean Climate Action Plan into several of my own bills."

In a dozen opinion pieces and hundreds of Zoom meetings, Blue Frontier and its OCAP partner advocated for coastal restoration of living shorelines plus a widely supported call for protecting 30 percent of US lands and waters by 2030. President Biden announced his support for producing 30 gigawatts of offshore wind energy by 2030, which was another 30 by '30 proposal contained in the Ocean Climate Action Plan.

Many OCAP recommendations also appeared in the Ocean-Based Climate Solutions Act, which was introduced in Congress in the fall of 2020, based in part on comments submitted by Blue Frontier. Blue Frontier was again honored when Executive Director David Helvarg received Sierra Club's 2020 Rachel Carson Award.

2021

In April, Blue Frontier and its organizers, including Natasha Benjamin, Lauren Townsend, and others, pulled together a virtual OCAP Hill Day in which more than 300 people from thirty states and territories met with 150 House members or their staffs and 33 Senate offices to talk about the Ocean-Based Climate Solutions Act, the Coastal Barriers Resources Act, and clean ocean energy and coastal restoration.



“We’re currently facing the intersecting crises of a global pandemic, rapid and severe climate change, and racial and environmental inequalities,” Senator Ed Markey (D-MA) reminded participants before going on to insist, “Now is the time for groundbreaking science and equally groundbreaking decision making to achieve greatness for our planet.”

Rep. Raul Grijalva (D-AZ), chair of the House Natural Resources Committee, who’d introduced the Ocean-Based Climate Solutions Act, thanked Blue Frontier, saying, “We need grassroots organizers like you weighing in and supporting us every step of the way.”

“We’ve got a long road ahead, but I am confident that working together we can save our planet, because we have to,” added Representative Joe Neguse (D-CO).



Along with the online Hill visits, Blue Frontier invited one hundred people to attend smaller meetings held throughout the day with thirteen federal agencies involved with the ocean, including the Coast Guard, NOAA, EPA, the Department of the Interior, Indian Affairs, Energy, Agriculture, and the Maritime Administration, as well as a half dozen key people in the White House.

Even on Zoom, the day proved inspirational, as seen in people’s feedback session that evening, with delegation reports starting with Alabama and ending with Wyoming. Ellie Jones from the North Carolina delegation noted, “I’ve spent most of my career so far talking about ocean conservation to fishermen and scientists around the world. I’ve never been involved in lobbying before, and I think it might be my new favorite thing ever, because today was super fun!”

Also highly motivated were the youth participants, including the Georgia delegation, which was entirely organized by and made up of students eighteen and younger.

The Ocean Climate Action Plan was designed in 2019 as a template for policymakers. Much of it was then incorporated into the Ocean-Based Climate Solutions Act of 2020. This in turn acted as a template for key provisions of the larger Build Back Better bill of 2021.

Blue Frontier was pleased to see that major investments it advocated for were incorporated into the House version of Build Back Better, which passed on November 19, 2021. These investments included \$6 billion a year for coastal restoration and \$4 billion a year for the greening of ports and shipping.

Unfortunately, the Democrats in 2021 had no margin for error in the 50-50 Senate, and the refusal of Senator Joe Manchin of West Virginia to support the bill put all these investments, along with other major climate actions, in serious jeopardy. Blue Frontier will continue to work for these and other needed investments in our collective survival.

Recognizing that Blue Frontier’s work alone was not enough to affect policy or change the national (and global) conversation, it continued holding media training workshops for a range of emerging groups and influencers, including youth members of EarthEcho International, the Sierra Club Marine Team, and students at the Middlebury Institute for International Studies.

As an additional part of its media efforts, *Rising Tide: The Ocean Podcast*, co-hosted by David Helvarg and Vicki Nichols Goldstein, aired its fiftieth episode, with thousands of downloads and a first syndication by a radio station. Among its many and varied episodes were:

- Danni Washington on “Black Lives and Blue Waters”
- Wallace J. Nichols on “Wildfires and Blue Mind”
- “Her Deepness and Her Daughter”
- “Kim Stanley Robinson’s Science and Fiction”
- “Two Sisters Taking On Plastic”
- “The Scientist and the Abalone”
- “Ralph Nader Gets Salty”



Writers For the Sea (WFS) continued to grow, with more than 100 authors, more than 1,200 fans on its Facebook page, and thousands of viewers of its hour-long Zoom panels, which included discussions between authors Lisa See, Carl Safina, Brian Skerry, Enric Sala, Sylvia Earle, and Hannah Testa among others.

Back in Richmond, the Point Molate Alliance and its allies, including Citizens for East Shore Parks, continued racking up legal and political victories, although, in the words of the late Peter Douglas, “The coast is never saved. It’s always being saved.”

After the new city council voted to admit that Richmond violated the Brown Act in its deal to sell off Point Molate, the developers' lawyers tried to get a restraining order against the council members. A federal judge dismissed this attempt at legal intimidation. Pro-developer mayor Tom Butt, however, was served with a restraining order signed by a state judge after he released Point Molate materials from a closed council session on his blog.

The East Bay Regional Park District set aside \$5 million to operate Point Molate as a public park. PMA began a campaign to raise millions more to try to buy out the developers' legal claims so that Point Molate could be fully restored to the people and so that its present residents, including seals, leopard sharks, swallowtail butterflies, mule deer, and raptors, could remain in their habitat.

As with all Blue Frontier projects, this one is "to be continued."

2022

In the twenty years since its founding, an argument can be made that our public seas and coasts are in worse shape than when Blue Frontier first incorporated. All you have to do is look at the growing impacts of fossil fuel-fired climate change, including warming, rising, and acidifying seas; more intense hurricanes; plastic pollution; spreading coastal dead zones; and greedy coastal developers.



But Blue Frontier's people didn't set out believing they could turn the clock back to where our living seas were seventy years ago, in the mid-twentieth century, when there were less than half as many humans on the planet and 90 percent more large fish in the ocean.

Nor is it realistic to promise major new victories in policy or in the water without the risk of being stymied as has happened before.

What is certain is that there is a new generational surge for equity and democracy now taking place from sea to shining sea, and that swimming in this social current gives us hope and opportunity in the ongoing fight to save the ocean, our fellow creatures, and ourselves.

There are no guarantees that the renewed blue movement Blue Frontier is helping to build is going to win the day, or transition our fractured country and world into something globally sustainable and spiritually rewarding. All that is certain is that if we don't try, we lose. And this salty blue world of ours is too achingly beautiful, fun, scary, and sacred to lose.

So please join us in Blue Frontier's next decades of adventure, beginning now. Si Se Puede!

Best fishes,

The crew at Blue Frontier



Who We Are

Blue Frontier Team

David Helvarg, Executive Director
Natasha Benjamin, Associate Director
Margo Pellegrino, Organizer
Lauren Townsend, Organizer
Pam Stello, Organizer
Eleanor Kerlow, Senior Communications Adviser

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Dr. Wallace J. Nichols, Marine Biologist, Author, and Founder, Blue Mind
Dr. Stephen Palumbi, Hopkins Marine Station, Stanford University
Andrés Soto, Richmond Shoreline Alliance
Serge Dedina, Executive Director, WildCoast
Cynthia Sarthou, Executive Director, Healthy Gulf
Ana Blanco, Executive Director, International Ocean Film Festival





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