



THE OCEAN FOUNDATION

16 July 2009

Dear Friends of The Ocean Foundation,

As I write, I am on my way home from a meeting in San Carlos, Mexico, on the Sea of Cortez. The meeting was organized by SuMar (your ocean) to discuss ways in which to further the goal of improving the sustainability of coastal development in municipalities around the Sea of Cortez. Throughout the meeting—which was attended by 10 people who represented government, science, conservation organizations, the press and community development—it was clear that the conflicts that need to be resolved in coastal planning in Mexico are the same as those found in coastal communities around the world. The goal of more jobs and long-term stable economic development is understandable. What is more difficult is ensuring that consideration is given to water supply, the impact of climate change, and other issues related to the protection of the resources that draw economic development in the first place. I cannot say that every issue was resolved at this meeting, but there are new strategies in place to promote and implement standards for development that allow municipalities to think in terms of all of our five legs of sustainability: economic sustainability, ecological (environmental sustainability), socio-cultural sustainability, aesthetics, and sustainability of purpose.

Earth Day 2009 wasn't just for the forests, it was for the oceans too. The U.S. House Committee on Natural Resources chose April 22 to mark up H.R. 860, The Coral Reef Conservation Act Reauthorization and Enhancement Amendments of 2009. The proposed law would increase the protection status of all U.S. corals, support community-based approaches to coral reef stewardship, and strengthen U.S. international coral reef conservation efforts. Representative Madeleine Bordallo of Guam introduced the original legislation, which also authorizes increased funding to protect these threatened habitats. Of special interest to The Ocean Foundation is the bill's provision to require the U.S. Coral Reef Task Force to undertake a study on the sustainability of the U.S. trade in corals.

On June 8, we celebrated the first U.N. designated World Oceans Day. Although many countries (including the United States) had celebrated Oceans Day for nearly a decade, it took that long and the leadership of Bill Mott of The Ocean Project (a project housed at The Ocean Foundation) to secure the official U.N. designation. In recognition of his efforts, Shark Trust Wines provided a special coupon to donate 30% of wine purchases made using the TOF designation to The Ocean Project. Shark Trust Wines supports a variety of important ocean causes, you can learn more at www.sharktrustwines.com.

The Ocean Project, and its partners at the Monterey Bay Aquarium and the National Aquarium in Baltimore, chose World Oceans Day to announce the release of its new report, representing public opinion research involving 22,000 adult respondents, “**America, the Ocean, and Climate Change.**” The report was funded through the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's ocean literacy program and provides an update and expansion of work that The Ocean Project undertook in 1999 to identify ways to connect ocean conservation to visitors to the nation's zoos, museums, and aquariums. The results proved both heartening and disheartening. For example, the majority of respondents understood that individual actions can collectively make a difference and were eager to learn what those could be on behalf of the oceans, and at the same time, there was remarkably little understanding

of the potential effects of climate change on the oceans. There was also significant evidence that efforts to reach out and educate the young—especially between the ages of 13 and 25—would be particularly fruitful. For more information, see [http://www.theoceanproject.org/resources/America the Ocean and Climate Change.php](http://www.theoceanproject.org/resources/America%20the%20Ocean%20and%20Climate%20Change.php).

Other highlights from donor-supported fiscal sponsorship projects housed at The Ocean Foundation:

- **Michael Stocker of Ocean Conservation Research** reported on the marine bioacoustic presentations at this year's Acoustical Society meeting, looking at the effects on marine mammals of the noise generated by human activities. New research, supported by ever improving technology and its smart application by scientists, is showing distinct disruption of feeding patterns and other natural behaviors by activities as diverse as cargo ship passage and oil companies' seismic airgun surveys. For more information, visit the Ocean Conservation Research website, www.ocr.org.
- From February through the first week of June, **Alexandra Cousteau** and her team from our **Blue Legacy International** completed the first stage of their expedition to India, Botswana, the Red Sea, the Jordan River, the West Bank of Israel, the Gulf of Mexico, and the Mississippi River. The remainder of the expedition will cover Cambodia, Belize, and Australia. For more information and video clips and photos of Blue Legacy expeditions, visit the website, <http://www.alexandracousteau.org>.
- The **Cuba Marine Research and Conservation Fund** hosted two workshops in Mexico that were designed to facilitate collaboration and coordination among science researchers from the U.S., Cuba, and Mexico. Led by Fernando Bretos and David Guggenheim, a third workshop was held on Cuba's Isle of Youth, an area rich in marine resources. Attendees included fishermen from Cuba and Mexico, as well as representatives from Grupo Tortugero and Pro Peninsula. Even as these positive steps towards learning more about strategies for protecting Cuba's diverse marine resources were made, Cuba and the world lost one of marine conservation's most dedicated leaders. Cuba's "Mother Ocean," Dr. María Elena Ibarra Martín, director of the University of Havana's Center for Marine Research (Centro de Investigaciones Marinas, CIM) since 1981, passed away in early May after a month-long struggle following heart surgery. For more information on the Cuba project, please visit the website <http://1planet1ocean.org/category/projects-expeditions/cuba-gulf-of-mexico> .

As you know, part of The Ocean Foundation's core mission is to increase the financial resources available to marine conservation efforts. This is one reason why we have partnered with the Consultative Group on Biodiversity to produce the annual marine funders survey for each of the past five years. At the annual CGBD marine funders meeting, I was pleased to be able to show how marine funding has increased, and that although overall charitable giving was down in 2008, marine conservation contributions were up. While we remain concerned about the delayed effects of the economic downturn on funding for all kinds of important work in 2010 and 2011, we hope that there continues to be a priority placed on the 70% of our planet that is our ocean, the plants and animals within, and the human communities that depend on them.

I look forward to hearing from you, and that you have a great summer!

All the best,
Mark J. Spalding, President