



THE OCEAN FOUNDATION

Quarterly Newsletter



We're Thinking of You

It has been painful to read the news and watch the devastating global spread of COVID-19. During this difficult time, we hope that you and yours are healthy and taking care of yourselves and each other.

[Read our statement on COVID-19](#)

[Read about the ocean and COVID-19](#)



Protecting Florida's Reefs

The Ocean Foundation is proud to grant funds to the Environment Florida Research & Policy Center to engage the community in restoring the health of the local coral reefs and improve conservation efforts. The Florida Keys are home to the only barrier reef in the United States.

[Learn about the mission of this project.](#)



Unique Research with REV Ocean

REV Ocean will provide The Ocean Foundation with an opportunity for Arctic research on board the 2021 maiden voyage. Collaboration includes ocean acidification and plastic pollution research, utilizing SeaGrass Grow Blue Offsets, and the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development.

[Read more about the partnership.](#)

[Start your UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development with a donation to The Ocean Foundation!](#)

Helping Farmers with *Sargassum* Insetting

In conjunction with our partners at Marriott International, The Ocean Foundation's innovative pilot project to repurpose *sargassum* is yielding positive results in Miches, Dominican Republic.

Sargassum, a genus of brown macroalgae, has been creating public health concerns and devastating the hospitality and tourism sectors, threatening local livelihoods and coastal ecosystems throughout Latin America and the wider Caribbean. The Ocean Foundation's *Sargassum* Insetting project works to collect and repurpose nuisance *sargassum* into organic compost fertilizer used in the local farming community of Miches.

Repurposing *sargassum* for agricultural products mitigates climate change while benefiting resorts, farmers, and communities overall, as it fosters sustainable economic development and local food production.

Below: Amaury beans grown without fertilizer (left), and Amaury beans grown with fertilizer (right)



State of the Ocean

Despite our most careful planning, the seas are unpredictable. We might have a few destinations on our itinerary, but scenic vistas might lull us into anchoring a while longer, or

unforeseen storms might deter us. In fact, all of our best-laid plans in life can be upended by unexpected changes, which can be either disappointing or exhilarating.

For the last year we have been thinking through a framework for adaptive strategic planning for The Ocean Foundation's third decade as an organization. That is always hard. But it is especially hard to anticipate what kind of framework will be needed as we navigate through this pandemic and the kind of global shutdown that may well cause a contraction of the economy akin to the Great Depression.

How do we chart a path that is proactive rather than reactive, that anticipates and prepares for a myriad of future scenarios after this particular storm?

On the other hand, maybe the pressure is off. Planning exercises may be based only on what we know the ocean needs rather than the specifics of how we get it done in uncharted waters. If we get it right, it will be as much about luck and adaptability as it is about setting goals and hitting targets.

In spite of possible health, economic, or political calamities, we urged ourselves to think positively, and maintain a spirit of optimism. Like explorers of old, we are looking at rudimentary maps, testing the winds, and venturing onward into uncharted waters. This is what our strategic planning framework looks like. The goal is to help our community survive, and even thrive.

But this bold framework is not without realism. We know some of the solutions. We know we have good partners and good ideas about other partners we need, and the hope that we will find even more. We know that serious problems and unknowns abound. Some of those old maps were even marked with fanciful sea monsters as a warning to not sail on blithely as if nothing could go wrong.

So, we try as best we can to also minimize the possibility of bad stuff happening. We have set up home offices, lashed down our gear, avoided the rockiest shores so far, backed up our hard drives, and purchased various kinds of insurance. But deep down we realize that setbacks and tragedies, like pleasures and successes, are "natural" parts of the ebb and flow of life and the work of The Ocean Foundation.

So, as we sail on and find ourselves intact, we say "so far so good." When we encounter an obstacle, we say "how can we solve this?"

Every day, we remind ourselves that there is much to be done for the ocean, and our own to do lists have not gotten shorter. We still have our many strengths to bring to bear. We have survived before. We will not give up. We will defend the coasts and ocean. We will encourage our partners. We will face our setbacks with resilience, and accept our successes with grace—and raise a tankard of seawater in thanks to all of you for being members of The Ocean Foundation community.

For the ocean,

Mark J. Spalding
President



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