



CLEAN OCEAN ADVOCATE

JUNE / JULY 2026

Defending the Sea
Since 1984

Welcome, Summer Interns and Mentees!

Clean Ocean Action (COA) is proud to introduce our outstanding crew of interns and mentees who jumped in and made a real splash for our programs, events, and issues! These impressive interns have helped power some of COA's biggest summer initiatives, from the Student Summit and Eco-Fest, to Corporate Beach Sweeps, ocean policy initiatives, and marketing and outreach efforts:



The COA Crew – staff, interns, and mentees – summer 2026

- Communications & Marketing Intern **Emily Widmer** helps manage social media, email marketing, and public relations outreach to strengthen our digital storytelling.
- Ocean Policy Intern **Lauren Multari** advances policy work by tracking environmental legislation, supporting advocacy and outreach, and attending and reporting on conferences and workshops about environmental policy.
- Marine Debris Intern **Adriana Whelan** tackles litter pollution by co-leading the Corporate Beach Sweeps and working on "Skip the Stuff" research and outreach.
- Water Quality Intern **Jack Chaneski** conducts Rally for the Waterways sampling and assists with lab analysis to monitor local river and bay bacteria levels to find sources of "poo-llution."
- Education Intern **Alana Woods**, a former SEAL student, supports education and outreach through events and planning, including Eco-Fest and Student Summits.

High schoolers also helped further COA's mission in off campus professional training opportunities. Waves of thanks to COA's Biotechnology High School mentees for assisting with outreach and logistics for education events, connecting with communities and engaging with students, and water quality sampling. College-bound seniors **Mariana Silverio, Rachel Su, Navya Shah, and Logan Gagliardo** brought enthusiasm for science, teaching, and clean waterways. We are sure they will all bring their environmental passion to their college campuses and beyond!

What Does a Clean Ocean Mean To You?

Summertime at the Jersey Shore is a beachy time of year! With your support, COA works tirelessly all year long to protect the ocean. From water testing to beach clean-ups, and youth education to supporting legislation, COA's efforts to improve water quality "enshore" more summer excursions and maritime memories.

Please make a donation to a clean ocean and more shore memories in the future!

Visit CleanOceanAction.org/summer or scan the QR code to donate!



Two Rivers Communities Come Together for Watershed Mindfulness

Contacts: Kristen Grazioso, Education@CleanOceanAction.org
Joe Ahart, Programs@CleanOceanAction.org

The Rally for the Two Rivers Eco-Fest – a celebration of the Navesink and Shrewsbury Rivers watershed – was held on June 6th, and brought together 200 participants from 16 towns. The event showcased unity in environmental education and stewardship throughout the entire region.

More than 20 organizations – including Environmental Commissions, Garden Clubs, and Green Teams from Rumson, Fair Haven, Red Bank, Shrewsbury, and Tinton Falls – filled Victory Park in Rumson, NJ, with hands-on educational eco-activities. Attendees of all ages learned about the river and had fun, resulting in participants getting the EcoFest Passport Stamped and unlocking local rewards!

Local businesses supported the Eco-Fest by offering special incentives from ice cream cones to discounts for those who participated in the activities and filled their Passports. Waves of thanks to the Rumson Environmental Commission for hosting the event at the beautiful Rumson riverside. Special thanks to our generous sponsors at Bayshore Recycling and Mazza Recycling for their unwavering support.



Over 200 participants from 16 towns united at the 8th Annual Eco-Fest!



Scan the QR code to watch the Eco-Fest recap video!



Eco-Fest is a celebration of community, collaboration, and the rivers that connect us and a part of COA's Rally for the Waterways program. Together, we learn, explore, and celebrate these unique watersheds. These efforts help provide the next generation with the tools, passion, and understanding needed to sustain healthy environments and communities for years to come.

Coastal Programs for Every SEASON! Teachers, Camps, Parents, and Group Leaders: This is for You!

Contacts: Kristen Grazioso, Education@CleanOceanAction.org; Kevin Connelly, KConnelly@CleanOceanAction.org



SEA is an exciting shoreline adventure for all ages!

Looking for an engaging, hands-on coastal learning experience for your students or group? COA's **Seaside Environmental Academy (SEA)** is an educational program designed to bring the science, history, and stewardship of our coasts to life through immersive, field-based learning.

SEA offers both day programs and multi-day experiences throughout the summer, fall, and spring. Students of all ages explore coastal ecosystems through interactive activities such as seashell and species identification, shoreline discovery, and lessons on coastal history and ocean conservation. The activities are all designed to connect learning directly with the environment!

SEA provides a meaningful way to learn along the shore. Have questions about accessibility or funding? We are happy to help. Email Kristen Grazioso for information.

To book your SEAside day, contact Kevin Connelly at KConnelly@CleanOceanAction.org!



Why You Should Be Concerned: Policy Threats to the Ocean

Contact: *Madison Wurst, Advocate@CleanOceanAction.org*

In recent months, a wave of policy changes and decisions by the Trump Administration is reshaping the future of our ocean. Here are a few recent actions:



Offshore Critical Mineral Mining ("Strip-mining"): Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) released a request for information (RFI) on a proposal to open 1.77 million acres of ocean floor off Virginia for strip-mining sand for "heavy minerals titanium, zirconium, rare earth elements."



Offshore Carbon Capture and Sequestration: BOEM and the Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement (BSEE) were looking to establish new regulations to implement processes in support of carbon sequestration activities (e.g., injecting carbon dioxide waste into areas in the seafloor for storage) on the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS). BOEM and BSEE sidelined this rulemaking and it is inactive for now.



North Atlantic Right Whale (NARW) Speed Rule: COA opposed the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) proposal to weaken a rule that requires large vessels over 65 feet long to slow down in areas where the critically endangered NARW is known to be present. These speed limits help prevent deadly collisions between ships and whales.



Ocean Observatories Initiative (OOI) saved for now: Directed by the Administration, the National Science Foundation defunded and began removing the OOI, an ocean observation data collection system that provides critical oceanographic data, including for weather predictions. Responding to public outrage, the U.S. Senate stepped up, forcing NSF to suspend the OOI dismantling for now.



National Atmospheric and Oceanic Administration (NOAA) Defunding: The Administration's proposed 2027 budget includes a nearly 20% reduction in NOAA funding. This would eliminate funding for the National Sea Grant College Program, National Coastal Resilience Fund, Coastal Zone Management and Services, and National Marine Sanctuaries. The budget has seen bipartisan pushback by the House Commerce, Justice, Science Appropriations Subcommittees.

New Jersey Environmental News from the Sherrill Administration

The Sherrill Administration has not prioritized environmental protection, either. Here are some recent policy updates at the state level:



The implementation of **NJ Resilient Environment and Landscapes (REAL) Rules** will be delayed by one year. The REAL rules would have required new development to be built with protections and standards that account for flooding and sea level rise.



Initiation of **Operation FAST – Facilitated Approvals for Sustainable Transformation** is a top priority for the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP). The agency is reorganizing key programs to streamline permitting processes, while prioritizing new hires and training staff to expedite these actions. Without strong safeguards, efforts to accelerate permitting could prioritize speed over environmental protection.



Conference Affirms Offshore Wind Research and Knowledge Gaps

Contact: [Madison Wurst, Advocate@CleanOceanAction.org](mailto:MadisonWurst@CleanOceanAction.org)



COA maintains OSW research requires more thorough investigation and public transparency

From June 8–11, members of the COA team attended the “2026 State of the Science on Offshore Energy, Wildlife, and Fisheries Conference,” hosted by the New York State Energy Research & Development Authority (NYSERDA). This event included scientists, decision-makers, industry representatives, and stakeholders discussing the current state of offshore wind (OSW) development, its impacts, and future. The conference heavily favored OSW development, with major industry participants, including OSW companies Equinor and Ørsted.

Many presentations acknowledged significant knowledge gaps that remain unresolved. These included potential harm to benthic habitats, operational effects of turbines, and hydrologic changes. The conference also did not adequately address how OSW projects will meaningfully reduce climate change impacts or benefit ratepayers.

This is not to suggest that the science presented was flawed or lacked merit. However, COA observed a tendency to accept uncertainties and environmental impacts on the premise that OSW's projected benefits justify those risks. COA believes these findings warrant more thorough investigation and transparent public discussion.

After August 1, if You Want “Stuff,” Just Ask!

Contact: [Meg Sulzberg, BeachSweeps@CleanOceanAction.org](mailto:MegSulzberg@CleanOceanAction.org)

Beginning August 1, New Jersey restaurants and food service businesses will implement the state's new “Skip the Stuff” law, which is designed to reduce waste from single-use utensils, napkins, and condiment packets. After August 1, these items will only be provided by restaurants when requested by customers – saving money and reducing plastics and waste.

COA has long supported efforts to reduce single-use waste, which is found in waterways, on beaches, and in the ocean. In 2025, Beach Sweeps volunteers found 1,858 plastic utensils on New Jersey shorelines. Skip the Stuff will help businesses lower costs, reduce waste, and protect the environment.

This summer, COA's Marine Debris Intern, Adriana Whelan, is surveying restaurants to measure reductions in plastic waste and quantify economic benefits for businesses. Keep an eye on COA's social media for more information.



Beach Sweeps volunteers found 1,858 plastic utensils in 2025 alone

COA Water Quality Research Director Judges Prestigious Youth Science Award

Contact: [Dr. Swarna Muthukrishnan, Science@CleanOceanAction.org](mailto:Dr.SwarnaMuthukrishnan@CleanOceanAction.org)

Investing in the next generation of scientists starts with recognizing their discoveries today. The U.S. Stockholm Junior Water Prize (SJWP) was founded in 1997 by the Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI) to complement the Stockholm Water Prize. The SJWP is the world's most prestigious award presented to a high school student for a water-research project. This competition awards students up to \$15,000. COA's Dr. Swarna Muthukrishnan serves as a national SJWP judge, helping evaluate top state-level projects for the national finals, and participating in the final selection process for the USA awardee in Chicago this year. Join us in congratulating Dr. Muthukrishnan for her leadership, which helps inspire and recognize the next generation of water scientists!



Dr. Swarna Muthukrishnan (far right) among an international panel of SJWP judges!

Volunteers and Jack Johnson Make Waves for the Ocean... Plus – More Fun to Come at COA's Surf Open

Contact: Kari Martin, Business@CleanOceanAction.org

COA was thrilled to participate in musician Jack Johnson's All At Once campaign and be featured at his June 21st concert at PNC Bank Arts Center in Holmdel, New Jersey! Volunteers Deby Ives and Patty Hamilton represented COA at the "Green Village," mingling with concertgoers and sharing our programs. They even met Jack in person! Plus! Thanks to Jack's All At Once campaign to promote Plastic Free Initiatives and Sustainable Local Food Systems, the Johnson Ohana Foundation will match donations made to COA's fundraising campaign through October 31, 2026, up to \$2,500!

Save the date for the Surf Open on September 26, 2026, which will provide more opportunities to support COA and Jack Johnson's campaign. Stay tuned!



Left to right: COA water quality monitor Patty Hamilton, Education Intern Alana Woods, and Education Ambassador Deby Ives at Jack Johnson's concert in Holmdel, NJ!

Savor the Shore – To Save Our Shore!

Contact: Kari Martin, Business@CleanOceanAction.org

What does a clean ocean mean to shore businesses?

The Jersey Shore depends on a clean ocean. Protecting the ocean, beaches, and waterways is a universal and passionate calling for visitors and residents! Let them see your ocean devotion!

Through our Savor the Shore campaign, restaurants and businesses can turn commitment to a healthy, clean ocean into visible and meaningful action for all to see. Join The Robinson Ale House - Asbury Park, Mar Belo Restaurant, Ambhar Tequila, and 2nd Jetty in making a one-time seasonal contribution. In return, receive recognition through COA's website and social media channels, along with promotional materials and other exclusive benefits that help showcase your support.

Scan the QR code or visit CleanOceanAction.org/savortheshore to participate!



Join The Robinson Ale House - Asbury Park as a Savor the Shore partner!

Music by The Haven • Lusty Lobster Raw Bar • 3 Hour Open Bar

Harvest Hope for the Ocean



Thursday, October 1, 2026

The Riverhouse at Rumson Country Club

5:30 – 9:30 PM

Tickets & sponsorship opportunities available at:
CleanOceanAction.org/gala

CALLING BUSINESSES OF ALL SIZES!

BOOK A DATE FOR COA'S
"CORPORATE BEACH SWEEPS" PROGRAM!

ONLY 7 SPOTS LEFT!



SCAN TO RESERVE!

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



LABEL



JULY 2026: Dive in for the latest news and actions!

Follow us!

Our Ocean Tributes

Is there someone or something special to celebrate — a special occasion or success?
Is there someone to honor or remember?
Consider donating to Clean Ocean Action as a tribute, which funds our internship program to inspire new ocean advocates. Make a tribute donation at CleanOceanAction.org/donate, or by scanning the QR code below.

In Memory of:

Peter Cauterucci
Gene Geer
Jack Hudson
Michele Ferro Jasionowski
Bob Morgan
Carol Anne Ross
Drew Thompson
Maryellen Walls
Linda Webb

In Honor of:

Janine Karoly
Rumson Country
Day School

