



AFTER ALL, IT'S YOUR BEACH!

**VOLUNTEER  
MENU BOOK**

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## **Mission Statement**

***The Surfrider Foundation is an international 501(c)(3) non-profit environmental organization dedicated to the protection and enjoyment of the world's oceans, waves and beaches, for all people, through Conservation, Activism, Research and Education (C.A.R.E.).***

## **Introduction**

The Surfrider Foundation's greatest strengths are our grassroots, community-based focus and our ability to act as local activists for the protection of the coast. In order to strengthen and build on these core competencies, the organization must continually grow our chapter network's volunteer activist base. The method that has proven most effective is the development of programs for chapter implementation. Surfrider Foundation programs range from participating in beach clean ups and collecting water samples to giving educational presentations and speaking to state and federal agencies before Congress.

There are many levels of volunteerism available to suit your taste. Whether you're a first time volunteer or an old pro, don't be shy about asking questions of any of our chapter members. Everyone has to start on some level and we're grateful that you're taking that first step. As you scan this menu book for great volunteer opportunities, remember that the Surfrider Foundation is only as effective as you, our volunteer base, allow us to be. Without you, we don't exist!

Theodore Roosevelt said, "Far and away the best prize that life offers is the chance to work hard at work worth doing". Volunteering to protect and preserve something that has touched your life in an intimate and irreversible way is worth doing!



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## Volunteer Activities

Entry Level

**1. Beach Clean up:** What better way to spend an hour at the beach than to participate in a local beach clean up. By participating in a beach clean up you are making direct and tangible improvements to the coastline as you pick up trash. It doesn't get much easier than this folks.

**Involvement:** Collecting debris on the beach.

**2. Petition Drives:** Education is a big part of what Surfrider Foundation does. If the community isn't aware of what's happening, than why should developers or elected officials care about how we feel? One way that Surfrider educates communities and informs officials is by gathering signatures for issues the chapter has taken a position on.

**Involvement:** Gathering signatures door-to-door, sitting at a petition signature table at an event and gathering signatures at appropriate functions.

**3. Storm Drain Stenciling:** Many people have no idea that a street gutter leads directly to the beach and that cities are required by federal law to help prevent ocean pollution. To help cities meet this requirement, chapters stencil local storm drains with the words "No Dumping Drains to Ocean".

**Involvement:** Approximately a few hours over a weekend day either spray painting stencils or epoxy warning plates on storm drains.

**4. Member Outreach:** Every chapter has to spread the word about what's going on in their community. Many chapters do this via newsletters or special update mailings. Without this function, chapters lose a valuable vehicle for community support.

**Involvement:** Folding letters, stuffing and labeling envelopes. You can do this at home.

**5. General Assistance:** There are always little things that come up when you're involved in a volunteer based organization. Chapter campaign projects, big or small, involve many different levels of activism. Many seem like mundane responsibilities, but don't judge a book by its cover. These are all integral parts of the grassroots network!

**Involvement:** Dropping off mailings at the post office, picking up donated auction items, carpooling members to a meeting, picking up paperwork for an issue. The list can go on, but you get the idea.



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## Volunteer Activities

Intermediate Levels

**1. Blue Water Task Force (BWTF):** BWTF is Surfrider's most visible and successful program to date. It provides citizens with the opportunity for hands-on involvement with environmental problem solving efforts. Water samples are gathered and analyzed on a regular basis to determine pollution patterns in the near shore environment. The data is used to bring polluters into compliance, develop programs that can influence national legislation and enforcement and develop solutions to pollution problems.

***Involvement:*** Collecting coastal water samples on a regular basis, then analyzing them with the appropriate testing method used by the chapter. All the materials and training are supplied by the chapter. The testing procedures are very simple. Please don't be intimidated, it's fun.

**2. Respect the Beach (RTB):** The RTB program is a coastal and surf educational program that includes field trips, classroom lectures, handouts, video presentations, and sometimes hands-on laboratory projects designed to teach ocean and surfing safety, marine ecology and coastal stewardship to K-12 students and community groups. What makes this program so enjoyable for the presenter and participants is that it is brought into the classroom from your perspective and experience as an ocean enthusiast.

***Involvement:*** Presentations are usually given M-F during regular school hours. Some weekend days may be required. Presentation times are dependent on the presenter's availability and outreach capabilities of the chapter. A short training session (usually about an hour or less) is needed from a local chapter member where you will learn about the Surfrider Foundation, local involvement and basic coastal eco-knowledge. This is a great volunteer opportunity for college students thinking about becoming teachers or anyone who enjoys working with students.

**3. Beachscape:** Beachscape is a hands-on coastal mapping program documenting coastal areas, wave habitats and surf zones on a local level. The Beachscape program is helping to establish an accurate and credible baseline of coastal conditions that will be available to the chapters, local citizens, state and federal agencies. This program will illustrate cumulative trends and improve information to promote sustainable coastal resource management. It demonstrates the power local citizens have to be effective advocates for the coastline.

***Involvement:*** Documenting small segments of the coastline for outfall pipes, hard coastal structures, accumulation of marine debris, beach access ways, rideable waves, rivermouths, etc. Volunteer time is dependent on your schedule. This can be done on a weekday, weekend, or over a week-long period. Surfrider Foundation supplies you with all the needed materials. All you have to do is fill out a form. This program is a great way to really see what your local beach is all about.



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**4. Newsletter Committee:** Chapter newsletters are great way to involve the community and keep them updated on chapter activities. We can't stress enough the importance of educating the community and members non-active about the priorities of the chapter.

**Involvement:** There are various degrees of involvement ranging from writing and editing to doing the actual mailing. You'll have a weekly, monthly or bi-monthly deadline to meet. A computer is necessary and the time to research subject matter, if needed. Articles will generally focus on eco-education, chapter events and issue updates. You don't have to be an English or Journalism major to write an article for a newsletter.

**5. Phone Trees a.k.a. "the Telephone Rapid Response Team":** Perhaps the single most important thing a chapter can do to ready itself to participate in an environmental campaign is to create a phone tree. Many times, just a dozen calls or a handful of letters have saved a threatened place or added extra political juice. A phone tree is a network of chapter members and individuals who agree to make a couple of phone calls to other activists, politicians or to one or two more people on the phone tree.

**Involvement:** Must be willing to make phone calls whenever needed (within reason). Calls could last two minutes to a half hour. The amount of time spent will be dependent on the number of people involved and the issue for which you are mobilizing members. It could be as simple as calling members to remind them of a meeting/event that the chapter needs people to attend, or reminding members to write a letter to the mayor. Remember, it's a phone tree so you won't be the only person calling.

**6. Fundraising Committee:** The Fundraising Committee can be one of the most fun and difficult committees in the chapter. Without funding, it is impossible for a chapter to do the environmental work it was formed to do. Fundraising events serve two purposes 1. they bring in money and 2. they provide a social activity for members to bond together in a relaxed atmosphere. Chapter fundraising events include staffing social activities, t-shirts sales at events, soliciting local business sponsors and gathering donation items.

**Involvement:** Your level of commitment on the Fundraising Committee will depend on your involvement. If you choose to secure five auction items for an event, it could take you anywhere from three days to a week or longer. If you commit to sitting at a table and selling t-shirts on a specific day, it would take a few hours. You might volunteer to be in charge of locating a venue for an event. Your participation will probably depend on what you're comfortable doing.



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## Volunteer Activities

Advanced

**1. Program Coordinator:** A Program Coordinator is responsible for coordinating all the elements of a specific chapter program. For example: If you are the Blue Water Task Force Program Coordinator you might be responsible for making sure the chapter is testing on a regular basis, meeting with water quality agency representatives, updating the chapter regularly, keeping up-to-date on materials sent from National, ensuring that accurate records are kept on the testing results and overseeing all the aspects of the program. In new chapters, this person could be responsible for establishing the program within the chapter.

**Involvement:** The commitment level is high. You will be in charge of coordinating volunteers, coordinating existing data between the proper channels and very possibly representing the chapter at local and state meetings. Some weekday commitment might be required (this will be based on the extent and outreach of the program).

**2. Fundraising Organizer:** The Fundraising Organizer (FO) is the person within the chapter who chairs the Fundraising Committee. It is very similar to the responsibilities of a Program Coordinator. The FO is the primary contact for all aspects of chapter fundraising. The FO, along with the Chapter Chair is responsible for planning fundraising activities to meet the needs of the chapter on a quarterly and yearly basis. They are responsible for making sure that fundraising events, donations and sponsorships are consistent with the mission statement of the Surfrider Foundation, that all chapter commitments are met to sponsors, etc.

**Involvement:** The commitment level is high. You will be in charge of volunteers and responsible for large sums of cash, checks and in-kind donation items. You will need to have the wherewithal to seek out fundraising opportunities. You should have strong people skills, a good knowledge of Surfrider Foundation activities and great follow through.

**3. Task Force Panel Representative:** Many times chapter members are requested or volunteer to represent their local chapter on a local, state or federal task force. These task forces can range anywhere from water quality to development issues depending on what your chapter is involved with. A general knowledge of Surfrider Foundation policies on the issue will be needed.

**Involvement:** Task force committees can last anywhere from a month to a year depending on their objectives. Meeting times and dates can range widely. Generally task force committees consisting of volunteers will be a bit more flexible with meeting times, but it is not guaranteed. If you are interested in participating on a task force make sure you gather as much information as possible on what the commitment requirement is.



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## Volunteer Activities

Chapter Officers  
Advanced

**Chair:** The Chair is the Chief Executive Officer of the Chapter and is responsible for fulfilling the mission of the chapter. The Chair presides at meetings of the chapter, the Executive Committee and has general supervision of the operation of the chapter. The Chair shall be an ex officio member of all committees of the chapter. The Chair shall transmit to the chapter all ideas and plans proposed by the Chapter Operations Director and Surfrider Foundation National Headquarters which may affect the chapter or its members; and shall take no action binding upon the chapter without either specific prior authorization or subsequent ratification by the chapter or their Executive Committee. The chair is the primary contact with Surfrider Foundation National Headquarters.

**Vice Chair:** The Vice Chair shall perform duties that usually pertain to this office or as may be assigned by the Chair or the Executive Committee. The vice chair is responsible for planning, organizing and directing a program that ensures membership retention and membership growth.

**Secretary:** The Secretary is responsible for the chapter's records (minutes) and correspondence. The Secretary keeps an accurate record of the meetings and topics of discussion of the chapter and of the Executive Committee; and transmits the same to the successor in office. The Secretary is responsible for sending monthly reports to Surfrider Foundation National Headquarters and is also a primary contact to National Headquarters.

**Treasurer:** The Treasurer is responsible for the chapter financial records. The Treasurer receives and disburses, with the approval of the chapter, all chapter funds; pays to Surfrider Foundation National all financial obligations of the chapter as they come due; and keeps an accurate account of all transactions. The Treasurer shall produce financial reports for the chapter or Surfrider Foundation National upon request, and shall transmit the accounts and all undistributed funds to the successor in office. The Treasurer, along with the Chair, will be co-signatories on the chapter bank account.

**Volunteer Coordinator:** The Volunteer Coordinator (VC) is responsible for coordinating all members within the chapter. This officer helps to recruit new members, coordinates all volunteers within the chapter, places volunteers within each committee, and delegates and supervises new and current volunteers within the chapter. The VC builds chapter membership and helps increase member satisfaction. This person is responsible for bringing in new chapter members on a regular basis, which is a vital component for chapter growth.

## *Closing*

Thank you for taking the time to read Surfrider Foundation's Volunteer Menu Book and for your support! We hope that it gave you some idea of the different levels of volunteerism available through our chapter network. If you didn't see an activity that suits you, don't be discouraged. These are just some of the basic volunteer activities available. Endless levels of volunteerism are needed in any grassroots organization. Contact your chapter representative and ask them how you can help, or make a suggestion, or better yet just volunteer to do it.

"Never doubt that a small group of committed people can change the world. They are in fact the only ones that ever have." – *Margaret Mead*

