



**2014 Final Grant Report
from
“Sustainable Surf – Our Next Steps”**

In November 2014, the Nell Newman Foundation gave a \$25,000 grant to Sustainable Surf for general operating support. The purpose of this grant was to help Sustainable Surf achieve the next phase of its growth as a non-profit organization. This grant has been extremely helpful to growing our impact, visibility, and financial stability.

Background -- Organizational Strategy

The mission of Sustainable Surf is to be the catalyst that transforms surf culture into a force that protects the ocean playground. Our vision is to see all surfers choosing to live a more ocean-friendly life. Sustainable Surf has four main initiatives that are designed to create opportunities for surfers and surf business to incorporate sustainability into their daily decisions and/or corporate strategy.

Our initiatives are designed to work in synergy and create a “systems change” in surf culture. They operate in the key areas of surf culture, such as sustainable surfboards, sustainable surf contests, marine plastic pollution, and sustainable lifestyles. Our programs combine actions, that directly reduce environmental impact, with storytelling that creates a “new narrative” around sustainability and surf culture. These stories have broad public appeal, because of the popularity of surf culture in general society.

Ultimately, it is the transformation of popular culture that will bring about the dramatic reductions in human CO2 emissions and other impacts that directly threaten the ocean. This global transformation has been significantly hindered by the lack of compelling vision of a sustainable society and economy.

Surfing can help provide a solution to this problem, with a power that goes far beyond the absolute number of surfers world-wide. As surfers and surf companies experience the positive benefits of choosing sustainability, surf culture develops the power to tell an authentic story to a more general audience.

Use of funds during the grant term

The grant came as general funds earmarked toward organizational development, and arrived near the end of the 2014 fiscal year. Thus we have included the financial statements for both 2014 and 2015.

Description of activities during grant term

Below is a general summary of the impact of the grant from the Nell Newman Foundation. As the grant was earmarked for general funds, we will give a brief overview of the accomplishments of the entire organization in the past year.

Key Accomplishments in 2015 – Organization Sustainability

In 2015, we grew our fundraising base to \$300,000 vs. \$160,000 in 2014. This significantly increased the stability of our organization, and allows us to afford the resources we need to maximize our educational impact. In 2016, we have hired a program coordinator for the Ecoboard Project, which is our first additional staff beyond the co-founders, Michael Stewart and Kevin Whilden.

We also developed a Strategic Vision document (attached), which explains how our programs and educational messages work together to effect change, and how we measure this impact. The basic strategy is that we create the “new narrative” of a sustainable surf culture, and then use the marketing power of surf culture to influence popular culture. This is how we create capacity for solutions to major global problems like climate change, ocean acidification, and marine plastic pollution.

Key Accomplishments in 2015 – Educational impact and media recognition

At the time of submission of this grant in 2014, we had just received notice of being selected as the 2014 Agent of Change by Surfer Magazine. This is a prestigious award that increased our credibility in surf culture and, in particular, with the surf athletes who saw us receive the award on stage from Gerry Lopez at the Surfer Poll 2014 event. The outstanding video produced by Surfer Magazine, along with photos of our award with Gerry Lopez, is here: <http://sustainablesurf.org/2014/12/sustainable-surf-wins-the-agent-of-change-award-for-2014>

Last year also saw a dramatic increase in media coverage of our efforts. In particular, the Ecoboard Project received coverage by CBS News, Wired Magazine, and Outside Magazine. The combined media reach of these stories, on television, magazine, online, and social media channels, was over 70 million people. This speaks to the power of surf culture to be the focal point of an educational message on sustainability that appeals to a general audience.

Highlights of media coverage:

- CBS News video titled, “Surfing Industry Takes Sustainability for a Ride”. Total reach 29 million people. <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/algae-surfboard-made-by-sustainable-surf-company-scientists>
- Wired Magazine holiday buying guide featuring a Lost Ecoboard. Total reach 27 million. <http://www.wired.com/2015/11/wish-list-2015-outdoors/#slide-10>
- Take Part article titled, “New Ocean Activists Are Totally Stoked”. Total reach 8 million. <http://www.takepart.com/feature/2015/04/24/new-ocean-activists-surfers>
- A dozen articles in surf-endemic media, with a total reach of 12.5 million.

We are very pleased with these results. It validates our assumption that surf culture is a vehicle to spread an environmental message that can appeal to anyone, whether they surf or not. By seeking editorial coverage by popular media, we were able to exponentially increase the amount of people reached. Our plans in 2016 involve messaging around sustainable lifestyle changes for individuals, as part of our Deep Blue Life program.

Key Accomplishments in 2015 – Program Impact

Our programs have been very successful, and are now reaching into most major areas of surf culture. We work with pro surfers, surf brands, surfboard builders, surf media, other surf NGOs, surf scientists, and of course, surfing individuals.

Waste to Waves is our award-winning recycling program for waste “styrofoam” packaging, which can be recycled into new products including recycled EPS surfboard cores. Foam is collected in select California surf shops, and special collection events (“foam-drives”) with schools and communities. This helps prevent marine plastic pollution, of which styrofoam is one of the most common items.

Highlights related to Waste to Waves program impact:

- Over 100,000 lbs of styrofoam recycled and kept out of the landfill and oceans
- Quarterly “foam-drive” events held with various partners, such as the City of Malibu, the Marine Mammal Center (in Marin), and more
- New partnership with GoPro to collect foam at corporate offices and to create video content with surf athletes. See this article with Lakey Peterson:

<https://gopro.com/news/road-to-recovery-checking-in-with-lakey-peterson>



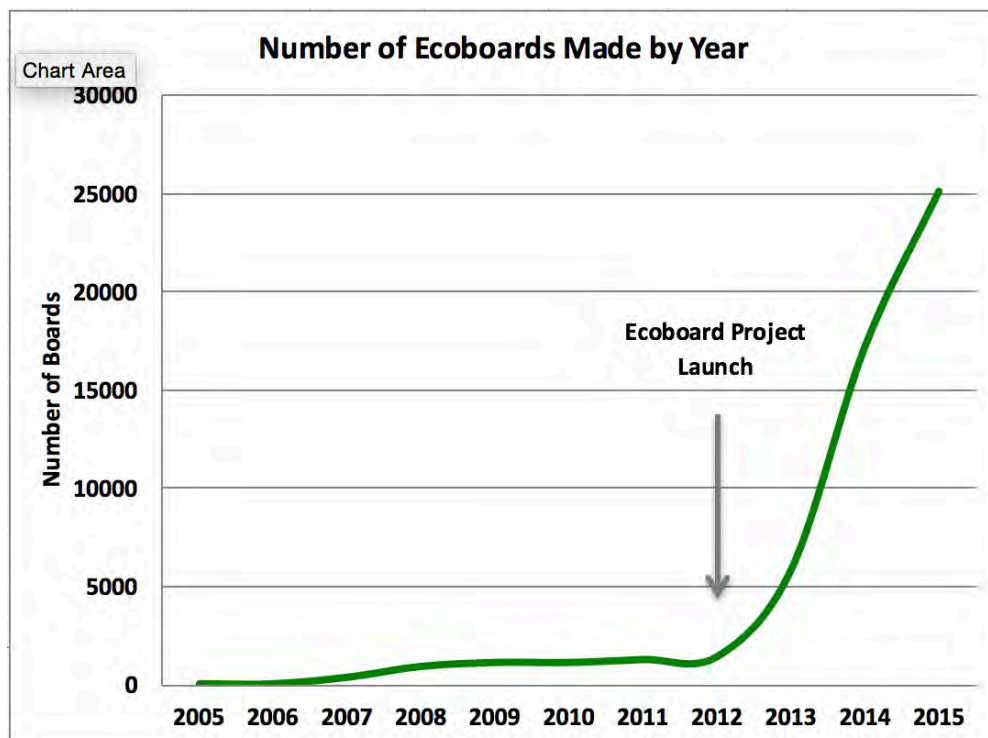
Pro surfer Lakey Peterson at GoPro HQ, with Sustainable Surf

The Ecoboard Project is a “market transformation” program designed to create a permanent change in the way surfboards are made globally. It defines the first-ever standard for a dramatically more sustainable surfboard. “Ecoboards” use more sustainable materials such as plant-based resins, and recycled or plant-based foam blanks.

Highlights related to Ecoboard Project market impact:

- 25,000 verified Ecoboards made in 2015 -- 48% growth vs 17,000 in 2014
- Over 35 manufacturers that produce Ecoboards
- Pro surfers rode Ecoboards in many World Championship Tour contests in 2015, including a contest win at the US Open 2015 by JoAnn Defay
- Kelly Slater rode a verified Ecoboard in multiple contests, and won heats on it
- Kelly invested in Firewire Surfboards and now makes 100% Ecoboards in his new company, Slater Designs Surfboards
- New materials are being developed for inclusion in the Ecoboard Project Benchmark by our partners, including a recyclable epoxy resin that will allow complete end-of-life recycling of an Ecoboard.

In 2015, we produced a major update to the Lifecycle Analysis (LCA) study. We worked with Channel Islands Surfboards to make extremely careful measurements of the energy, materials, and waste involved in surfboard production. Then, a leading LCA firm, Pure Strategies, produced a pro bono LCA model using specialized software and datasets. These results show a 40% reduction in lifecycle CO2 for an Ecoboard vs. a standard poly surfboard. We will be releasing these results at the Boardroom Show in May 2016.



The impact of the Ecoboard Project on the surfboard market



The moment we had been waiting for...

Deep Blue Surfing Events is the first sustainability framework for professional surf contests to systematically reduce all major environmental and social impacts. Strategies include renewable energy, waste diversion and composting, carbon offsets, alternative transportation, and support for local community charities and causes. A transparent public report is produced for each event.

We have now designated 20 major surf contests as Deep Blue Surfing Events. Sustainability performance is improving at each contest site year-by-year, and this progress is visible on the reports on our website. The brand sponsors are also finding opportunities for public communication on sustainability through these contests.

Highlights of Deep Blue Surfing Events impact:

- 20 surf contests designated since 2011
- All events have developed and improved waste diversion strategies
- All events have purchased high quality carbon offsets to minimize the carbon footprint

Two videos produced by our partners best showcase the impact of the program.

- Vans: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FLyjN5DvHAs>
- Volcom: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JlRnsty0rjM>

Deep Blue Life provides information and guides for individuals to live a comprehensive ocean-friendly lifestyle, by making better choices that reduce ocean impact and provide tangible benefits like saving money and improved health and wellness.

In September 2015, we produced the first Deep Blue Dinner, which was a gathering of the core sustainable surfing tribe at the Ecology Center in San Juan Capistrano. This event brought together pro surfers, industry veterans, our VIPs in an intimate setting. Greg Long spoke to the crowd and highlighted the power that our surf community can develop.

Photos and videos of the Deep Blue Dinner are available here:

<http://sustainableurf.org/2015/12/deep-blue-dinner-2015>

In 2016, we are actively developing the Deep Blue Life program with more educational content that will help surfers engage more deeply with changing their own lifestyles to protect the ocean. We are developing an educational video series that will explore specific actions that surfers can take, and the reasons why these actions help solve major issues like climate change and ocean acidification.



ORGANIZATION STRATEGIC VISION

VISION

All surfers choosing an ocean-friendly life.

MISSION

Sustainable Surf is the catalyst that transforms surf culture into a force that protects the ocean playground.

GOALS

Create a new paradigm of sustainability and connection to the ocean environment, within surf culture

The entire surfing community can become more powerful to protect the ocean environment and create a sustainable future for the sport. The surfing community can also help restore and regenerate damaged ecosystems.

There is a profound need for this change, because environmental threats are growing rapidly. Ocean acidification, sea level rise, marine plastic pollution, and global climate change are the biggest issues facing the surfing world today. By mid-Century, the future of surfing and the health of oceans will be greatly diminished and reach a point of no return.

There are many positive solutions, although these opportunities are generally not obvious or compelling to each surfing stakeholder. The modern societal paradigm places a low value on natural systems, and there is often a false choice between healthy ecosystems and a healthy economy.

To solve this problem, Sustainable Surf creates the programs and campaigns that make sustainable solutions easy and desirable, and builds community among all stakeholders. Through our efforts, we envision a new paradigm emerging in surf culture, where surfers, surf companies, and surfing communities *thrive* by adopting the principles of sustainability.

In this new paradigm, we expect the following long-term goals. Sustainable surfboards dominate the global marketplace and become a beacon of sustainable product innovation. Professional surfers and surf contests use their celebrity and popularity to inspire and educate the surfing public toward sustainability. Individual surfers then take actions to live a more ocean-friendly life with low CO2 emissions, that also creates immediate benefits to their quality of life and financial stability.

This transformation to a sustainable surf culture can happen quite rapidly because it draws upon a deep, 1,000 year history of Ancient Hawaiian culture. This is one of the most sustainable societies to have emerged in human history, with a nature-centric worldview and many sustainability practices that are considered advanced today. Much of this culture is still accessible in Hawaii, and the love of surfing is the common thread between modern and ancient times. Through surfing, these stories and lessons can be told in a very engaging way to the modern surfer.

Beyond surf culture, influence popular culture toward sustainability

Surfing wields a significant influence on popular culture. It is the #1 sport that youth aged 14-24 want to learn in America, and it is used extensively in popular advertising and marketing.

A powerful sustainable surf culture can influence popular culture. It can become a model for a sustainable society that is also “cool”, engaging, *and* good for business.

Surf culture can “change the narrative” around the concept of a sustainable society, by first undergoing in its own internal transformation to sustainability. As surfers and surf companies experience the positive benefits of choosing sustainability, surf culture develops the power to tell an authentic story to a more general audience.

Ultimately, it is the transformation of popular culture that will bring about the dramatic reductions in global CO2 emissions and other human impacts that directly threaten the ocean and surfing. This global transformation has been significantly hindered by the lack of compelling vision of a sustainable society and economy. Surfing can help provide a solution to this problem, with a power that goes far beyond the absolute number of surfers world-wide.

STRATEGIES AND PRINCIPLES

Create the “new narrative” of a modern sustainable surf culture

“It’s all a question of story. We are in trouble now because we don’t have a good story. We are in between stories. The old story, the account of how the world came to be and how we fit into it, is no longer effective.”
-- Thomas Berry

Sustainable Surf carefully creates programs, language, imagery, videos, educational materials and story development around the vision of a modern sustainable surf culture. This incorporates the best principles of sustainable business and science, and integrates with the deep history and language of surf culture itself.

This vision and narrative helps all stakeholders understand their role in actively solving the problems that threaten surfing, as well as the immediate benefits that come from this new direction. Benefits such as a happier, healthier and wealthier lifestyle and/or business.

Creating this new narrative is our most powerful tool to catalyze the paradigm shift in surf culture. It establishes the world-view in which every stakeholder in surf culture is an active participant in sustaining and restoring the ocean environment that we love. It also challenges the dominant cultural narrative where choosing sustainability means sacrificing a healthy economy.

Drive transformation throughout surf culture

We use a “systems change” approach, which is defined as creating a holistic network of engagement around sustainability, for all stakeholders in surf culture.

Stakeholders include individual surfers, surf industry, professional surfers, surf contests, surf media, surf non-profit organizations, ocean scientists, and surfing coastal communities.

We work with all stakeholders to foster positive relationships and create a common narrative around sustainability. Everyone in the surfing community has a role to play, and we help them find it. This includes working with the surf industry to help them achieve business benefits from implementing more sustainable strategies.

Incorporate the best sustainability ideas into surf culture

There is a rapidly growing body of best practices and research in the modern sustainability movement. We pick the best ideas and synthesize them to work within the unique dynamics of surf culture. We also form partnerships with leaders in other fields of sustainability, to bring their expertise into surf culture.

Create multiple “on-ramps” for sustainability

Each of our programs creates solutions for key barriers in surf culture, that are the most significant stumbling blocks for individuals and companies to engage with sustainability. We call these “on-ramps” where stakeholders can start experiencing the benefits of participating in the new narrative around sustainability.

Play the catalyst role

Ultimately, it is the new narrative coupled with the action pathways of our programs that creates the catalyst effect throughout surf culture. When everyone can talk a common language about sustainability *and* find an easy way to get involved, this fosters relationships and innovation that occur independently of a direct action taken by Sustainable Surf.

The sustainable transformation will quickly gain momentum as more and more individuals and businesses in surf culture find their own path and voice toward sustainability. After four years of our operations, we are seeing the signs that surf culture is evolving into the powerful community that can address the global threats to surfing in a meaningful way.

Sustainable Surf is a 501c3 non-profit organization through a deliberate choice to play the catalyst role. Only a non-profit can be a trusted independent authority, that can work freely with all competitive interests in surf culture.

PROGRAM STRATEGY

This section describes the strategy of our programs in terms narrative shifts and systems change. More specific details on program delivery and metrics are found in a separate document, “Program Delivery and Metrics”.

The Ecoboard Project

The Ecoboard Project is a “market transformation” program designed to create a permanent change in the way surfboards are made globally. It defines the first-ever standard for a dramatically more sustainable surfboard. “Ecoboards” use more sustainable materials like plant-based resins, and recycled or plant-based foam blanks.

Program Goal: Transform the surfboard market to become a shining example of sustainable product innovation.

The Old Narrative: Sustainable surfboard materials have poor surfing performance, are expensive, and surfers will not buy them.

The New Narrative: Sustainable surfboards have zero performance drawbacks, help protect the ocean, use advanced sustainability technology, and have a rapidly growing market. So why not buy, or make, them?

Ecoboards are a high profile surf product with better environmental performance. Based on our lifecycle analysis, Ecoboards have a 40% reduction in lifecycle CO2 emissions. The toxic impact to humans during manufacturing is also significantly reduced. Ecoboards showcase the principles of “green chemistry” and industrial ecology, by making consumer products that are cool.

The Ecoboard Project solves a major problem area in surf culture. Surfboards are the most iconic component of surfing, and are generally known as highly un-sustainable. The toxic impact of surfboard production is a well-known story, with numerous examples of neurological health impacts on shapers and the forced closure of Clark Foam in 2005 by the California EPA.

The Ecoboard Project unlocks many new opportunities for the sustainable transformation of surf culture. It’s easy to create stories using sustainable surfboards as the starting point. The general media also finds these stories very attractive, and amplifies our message to the general public. Most importantly, surfers have an easy “on-ramp” to start their journey as a sustainable surfer. For many surfers, buying an Ecoboard is an excellent way to excite their interest in sustainability.

The Ecoboard Project creates systems change by defining best practices for the industry, and by creating consumer demand for more sustainable surfboards. It also creates a technological innovation pathway for continual improvement of sustainable surfboard materials. Marketing efforts and story generation builds consumer demand, which influences manufacturers to further increase Ecoboard production.

Key Program Metrics:

- 17,000 verified Ecoboards were made in 2014, following rapid growth from less than 1,000 in 2012 (300,000 boards per year are made globally)
- Lifecycle analysis shows that Ecoboards can have 35% less CO2 emissions than typical surfboards
- Major manufacturers include Firewire, Channel Islands, and Lost surfboards

Deep Blue Surfing Events

The first sustainability framework for professional surf contests to systematically reduce all major environmental and social impacts. Qualifying events use strategies such as renewable energy, waste diversion and composting, carbon offsets, alternative transportation, and support local community charities and causes.

Old Narrative: Sustainability efforts at surf contests are not a priority. Efforts are haphazard, with no measurement system. Marketing and messaging is very poor.

New Narrative: Surf contests are one of the best examples of sustainability in all of professional sports. They have robust data collection and transparent reporting. It provides a solid platform for sustainability marketing and messaging.

Surf contests are one of the primary gathering points of surf culture, and the webcasts reach a global audience of millions. The Deep Blue Surfing Event framework provides an authentic framework for a sustainability story to be conveyed to the global audience. This is key for spreading our message to the global audience of surfers and non-surfers alike.

Deep Blue Surfing Events also have a substantial positive influence on the surf companies that sponsor the contests, because it provides a rallying point for employees to engage with sustainability in a positive manner. This impact has been significant on the companies that have implemented this framework.

Deep Blue Surfing Events create systems change by first creating a world-class sustainable sporting event. To do this, we develop event strategy, data collection systems, and produce transparent reporting. We also work with the contest organizers to create a compelling narrative around their efforts, which can be told to the general public. This provides a platform to integrate any other sustainability message along with the story of sustainable event itself. Finally, we create partnerships with other sporting leagues that can amplify the messages outside of surf culture.

Key Metric: Seventeen major World Tour events certified since 2011

Waste to Waves

Waste to Waves (W2W) is our award-winning recycling program for waste “styrofoam” packaging, which can be recycled into new products including recycled EPS surfboard cores. Foam is collected in select California surf shops, and special collection events (“foam-drives”) with schools and communities.

Old Narrative: Styrofoam is an annoying material that harms the oceans.

New Narrative: Styrofoam can and should be recycled, into products like surfboards. Surfers can help the surf industry create cool new products while helping solve marine plastic pollution.

Waste to Waves is our unique approach to solving one significant source of marine plastic pollution. It generates strong goodwill and creates partnership and story-telling opportunities because people generally dislike receiving styrofoam and love the idea of recycling it at a surf shop. Non-surfers are just as likely to participate as surfers.

Waste to Waves directly targets marine plastic pollution from styrofoam, and it does so in a unique way that showcases our systems change approach. Only 2% of styrofoam is recycled in municipalities, because of key cost barriers in the recycling value chain. We have found ways to break these barriers on a small scale, and are working with large waste management partners, such as Waste Management, to develop a program on a national scale. The surfing connection helps create marketing value for these companies, which helps the recycling program generate positive value.

Key Metric: 100,000 lbs of styrofoam has been recycled through Waste to Waves since 2011.

Deep Blue Life

Deep Blue Life is our educational program for individuals to live a comprehensive ocean-friendly lifestyle, by making better choices that reduce ocean impact and provide tangible benefits like saving money and improved health and wellness. The program provides information and guides for individuals to choose specific steps to change behavior in a positive manner.

Old Narrative: Solving global problems like climate change ("threats to oceans") is difficult and threatens our economic well-being. It is the responsibility of governments and politicians.

New Narrative: It is easy for individuals to do their part to combat environmental threats to oceans. There are many solutions that also provide immediate benefits such as saving money and improving health and wellness. Deep Blue Surfers can create community together around these solutions and live an "ocean friendly life".

Deep Blue Life fulfills a key role in the social transformation of surf culture, because it is targeted directly at individuals. As more people live an authentic ocean friendly lifestyle, surfing can exert a greater influence on popular culture. Ultimately, we hope to make a sustainable lifestyle become a highly desired state of living for everyone. This is a core goal of our systems change approach.

Deep Blue Life is our program most closely tied to the 1,000 year history of Ancient Hawaii's sustainable society. There is no other sport that has such a strong historical background where a sustainable society is the norm. This facilitates our efforts to create a "new narrative", because it's actually not new at all. Because of this, we think the switch to sustainability in surf culture can happen much faster than in other cultures.

Holistic Program Design and Integration

Our programs are designed to work synergistically and create additional opportunities through "positive feedback loops". The results and output of one program amplify the impact of another one. This is a core strategy of our systems change approach. Our programs are also target complimentary areas of surf culture, which facilitates this process.

An example of how this idea works for an individual might look like this:

1. Surfer participates in the **Waste to Waves** program because it addresses the marine plastic pollution issue in a hands-on, engaging way,
2. The surfer then is inspired that new surfboards can be made from recycled styrofoam, and connects to the **ECOBOARD Project** to make their next surfboard an Ecoboard,
3. The surfer then sees professional surfers using Ecoboards in top surfing contests and connects to the **Deep Blue Surfing Event** program as a compelling strategy for creating ocean-friendly events
4. The surfer then connects to the **Deep Blue Life** program as their own compelling pathway towards living a more ocean-friendly lifestyle.

Through this holistic approach, a surfer (or any stakeholder) can enter the Sustainable Surf narrative at any point of contact with one of our programs (an "on-ramp"), and then encounter our other programs and solutions. This will help them go deeper into the exploring the issues at the heart of our programs, like climate change, ocean acidification, sea level rise, recycling and waste reduction, sustainable community development, and healthy lifestyles.

KEY METRICS

Creating social and market transformation often happens quite slowly at first, and then speeds up exponentially as the new ideas become the norm (e.g. a "tipping point"). The time-scale of this transformation usually happens over multiple years. These factors present a challenge for the quantification of organizational impact, which typically values numeric growth on a short-term basis.

To solve this problem, we have developed a set of "key performance indicators" (KPI) that can measure overall impact and social transformation during the early stages of transformation. This document lists a small subset of indicators that

provide the clearest example of our approach. There are many more indicators used in the annual evaluation of programs and the organization.

Indicator #1: Measuring systems change in programs

The sustainable surfboard market is the best example of our systems change approach, because it operates upon a physical product in a defined market. Tracking the transformation of this market is relatively simple, and produces quantifiable results. Other programs also have evaluation and metrics, not described in this document.

Key metrics in the Ecoboard Project:

- Number of Ecoboards made per year
- Percent of total surfboard market
- Rate of Ecoboard market growth per year

Results to-date: Since the launch of the program in 2012, the number of verified Ecoboards made per year has grown from roughly 1,000 in 2012 to 17,000 in 2014. This represents a roughly 200% per year market growth. Total global surfboard production is very murky, but estimated at 300,000 to 400,000 per year. So the number of ecoboards made per year is actually quite low. However, the current rapid market growth rate could make a substantial impact in 3-5 years to the absolute number of boards made per year.

Indicator #2: Measuring the "reach" of communication and education

A key aspect of our work is to increase visibility of the new narrative we are creating. This can be measured by the number of people who see our message through all communication channels, including articles, videos, and social media. This is one of the best indicators of the paradigm shift, because it measures the amount of discussion and visibility of the new narrative.

Key metric:

- Number of individuals reached through all channels

Results To-Date: We estimate that 1.5 million people were reached by the Ecoboard Project in 2014. Analysis including our other programs has not yet been completed.

Indicator #3: Measuring educational and environmental impact

Measuring educational and environmental impact has several components. First we need a baseline survey of attitudes and behaviors of surfers toward environmental and sustainable issues. Each year, we will conduct a survey of sustainability trends in surf culture, in conjunction with our academic partner, the University of Plymouth (UK). Through multiple years of survey data, we will measure social transformation in surf culture from our programs.

Additional metrics include attempting to quantify environmental benefits from people taking action in our programs. This targets reduction in CO2 emissions, energy use, water consumption, etc... These strategies are being developed currently. A first step is to measure the number of hashtags used from our programs in social media.

Key metrics:

- Number of hashtags used (#deepbluelife and #ecoboard)
- Influence of surfing on creating engagement and action with environmental issues
- Environmental benefits from people taking environmental action through our program (e.g. tons of CO2, energy or water saved)

Results To-Date: The first survey has not been completed, and will be launched in 2015.