

Orange County Coastkeeper - Strategic Plan 2019

<p>Our Mission</p>	<p><i>The mission of Orange County Coastkeeper is to protect the region's water resources so they are swimmable, drinkable and fishable for present and future generations.</i></p>
<p>Our Vision</p>	<p><i>Orange County Coastkeeper is a nonprofit clean water organization that serves as a proactive steward of our fresh- and saltwater ecosystems. We work collaboratively with diverse groups in the public and private sectors to achieve healthy, accessible, and sustainable water resources for the region. We implement innovative, effective programs in education, advocacy, restoration, research, enforcement, and conservation.</i></p>
<p>Our Goals: 2019 - 2021</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Remain vigilant as the leading regional nonprofit organization providing professional environmental advocacy to protect water quality and advance ecosystem health. 2. Directly engage in pollution prevention through conducting or engaging others in monitoring, research, and enforcement of clean water laws. 3. Educate and inspire students and community members to strive for clean water that supports beneficial uses and ensures the future sustainability of our water resources. Encourage communities to conserve water and eliminate runoff, utilizing our 2.5 acre demonstration garden as a springboard for landscaping programs and community engagement. 4. Ensure OCCCK remains a stable, viable, and visible organization that provides an effective and influential voice for clean water in our communities. Coastkeeper must maintain its strong financial stability, transparency, and must represent the diversity of the community. 5. Expand Coastkeeper’s jurisdiction to implement programs that protect water quality, promote sustainability, provide watershed education, and enforce clean water laws throughout the greater southern California region through: our existing program – Inland Empire Waterkeeper; through our newly created Coachella Valley Waterkeeper; and through our new partnership with Los Angeles

Goal 1: Remain vigilant as the leading regional nonprofit organization providing professional environmental advocacy to protect water quality and advance ecosystem health.

As the region continues to suffer from polluted urban and industrial runoff, impaired waterways, and degraded ecosystems, Orange County Coastkeeper must advocate for water quality improvement, ecosystem restoration, and human health by advancing relevant regulations, practices, and policies. Coastkeeper is uniquely positioned to take leadership roles in addressing a variety of current and emerging threats to water quality because of the depth of knowledge its staff has in technical, regulatory, scientific, and historical matters. In many settings where key decisions are made by regulators and/or other agencies, Orange County Coastkeeper is often the “only NGO at the table” – a seat that we have earned through our professional environmental advocacy over the decades.

Strategies:

- a) Engage with regulators and responsible parties in the permit-crafting process to ensure inclusion of adequate and enforceable water quality protection, monitoring, and measurable outcomes.
 - b) Analyze and develop positions on high-impact regional projects and activities impacting inland, coastal, and offshore water quality and aquatic ecosystem health.
 - c) Promote policies and decisions protective of water quality by providing testimony, comments, and data during hearings and comment periods for decision-making processes that will affect future water quality.
 - d) As activists, engage the community to educate and promote positive actions by elected and appointed officials of agencies and special districts that fulfill our mission.
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Goal 2: Directly engage in pollution prevention through conducting or engaging others in monitoring, research, restoration, and enforcement actions.

In addition to advocacy, Orange County Coastkeeper is an active “doer.” Through partnerships, grants, donations, membership, and litigation settlements, we are able to fund, co-fund, or provide technical resources for activities in our community’s watersheds that directly address pollution sources and promote healthy ecosystems through restoration efforts. At the same time, we are the leading nonprofit organization in the region for identifying pollution sources, bringing them to the polluters’ and the regulators’ attention, and initiating enforcement actions when necessary.

Strategies:

- a) Increase our beach cleanup activities, emphasizing the significance of surface water pollution on ecosystems and the economy.
 - b) Facilitate independent water quality testing where needed to identify, assess, and address pollutant levels.
 - c) Participate in research aimed at determining the sources and quantities of pollutants and the impacts of those pollutants on beneficial uses.
 - d) Identify unmonitored or unregulated water pollution sources in our communities, promoting voluntary compliance when viable and effectuating enforcement action when needed.
 - e) Promote and implement research-based programs that improve and enhance our marine habitats and generate data that furthers the understanding of water quality and climate resiliency issues.
 - f) Aggressively pursue funding sources that will support our collaborative marine restoration projects.
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Goal 3: Educate and inspire students and community members to strive for clean water that supports beneficial uses and ensures the future sustainability of our water resources. Encourage communities to conserve water and eliminate runoff, utilizing our 2.5 acre demonstration garden as a springboard for landscaping programs and community engagement.

The success of Orange County Coastkeeper's efforts to protect and restore water quality relies on the strength of the organization's relationship with its surrounding communities and its ability to mobilize individuals and groups around important water quality issues. Orange County Coastkeeper will empower and engage diverse communities, groups, and individuals to be effective clean water advocates and stewards.

Strategies:

- a) Reach new audiences through our education programs by:
 - i) Increasing partnerships with public agencies, foundations, corporations, school districts, other non-profits and government agencies.
 - ii) Increase education and cleanup program budgets by \$40,000 to cover the cost of expansion.
 - iii) Hire two part-time hourly education specialists to help run multiple education programs simultaneously to extend our reach while maintaining a balance between quality vs quantity.
 - iv) Add or expand educational components in our beach cleanup, restoration and research departments.
 - b) Significantly expand and document the membership base, including a more formalized program for engaging and providing meaningful benefits to members.
 - c) Expand the diversity and accessibility of educational materials to reflect the communities OCK serves, including language translation of its core outreach materials and the development of more easily understood descriptions of its programs and services.
 - d) Continue regular beach cleanups, expand our inland waterway cleanup program and develop educational materials that teach to a greater depth the impacts of microplastics.
 - e) Continue to promote Coastkeeper Garden as a demonstration facility to educate the public on landscaping designed to eliminate urban runoff and to substantially reduce potable water consumption.
 - f) Increase efforts to identify and generate increased funding to maintain and support the Coastkeeper Garden.
 - g) Aggressively support actions and projects that lead to increased capture and reuse of water resources, especially advanced treatment of recycled water for potable use.
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Goal 4: Ensure OCCK remains a stable, viable, and visible organization that provides an effective and influential voice for clean water in our communities. Coastkeeper must maintain its strong financial stability, transparency, and must represent the diversity of the community.

Coastkeeper needs to maintain a business model that is sustainable while expanding its visibility in the region in order to serve its mission, maintain its influence, and support its programs. Expanding OCCK's visibility in its communities will require a more robust and effective communications capability within the organization and an emphasis on articulating the benefits of its programs to the communities it serves. OCCK must also expand its organizational makeup to better reflect the diversity of communities it serves.

Strategies:

- a) Increase the number of board members, with an emphasis on creating greater diversity.
- b) Explore opportunities for diversifying OCCK funding sources into a portfolio not as reliant on grants, potentially including contributions from membership dues, events, institutional donations, bequests, and more.
- c) Increase resources devoted to marketing and external communications, with a greater emphasis on the organization as whole rather than individual programs; at the same time, consider the "return on investment" from the resources devoted to increased visibility.
- d) Develop an in-house media position to work with our outside media consultants for overall greater media presence.
- e) Develop a succession protocol/process for executive leadership.
- f) Maintain transparency by continuing to publish 990 forms on our website, continue to publish annual tax audits, and maintain the highest level of achievement with Charity Navigator and Guidestar.

Goal 5. Expand Coastkeeper’s jurisdiction to implement programs that protect water quality, promote sustainability, provide watershed education, and enforce clean water laws throughout the greater southern California region through: our existing program—the Inland Empire Waterkeeper; through our newly created Coachella Valley Waterkeeper; and through our new partnership with the Los Angeles Waterkeeper in the Ports of Long Beach and Los Angeles.

Coastkeeper’s programs and influence have expanded over its 20-year legacy as a proactive agenda for achievement. Likewise, our jurisdiction has expanded. What started in Orange County expanded to the Inland Empire, and now expands to the Coachella Valley and across the Mojave Desert. In addition, Coastkeeper is developing a partnership with the LA Waterkeeper in the ports of Long Beach and Los Angeles. These activities are expanding Coastkeeper’s voice as an advocate for clean water throughout the region.

Strategies:

- a) Utilize the expanding membership to identify new opportunities for addressing water quality and pollution prevention needs in our members’ “backyards.”
 - b) Further develop the expanding membership and the new Board Advisory Committee structure to be representative of the growing region in which we work.
 - c) Provide sufficient seed funding, management, and staff support to the new Coachella Valley Waterkeeper to ensure its long-term viability.
 - d) Expand OCCK’s programs to include protecting groundwater and drinking water sustainability.
 - e) For the Inland Empire Waterkeeper, expand the budget to expand the staff to include full-time education and restoration directors; identify and acquire a facility in that region that can serve as an office/educational center within the next two years; expand programs in the Inland Empire to reach communities throughout Riverside and San Bernardino Counties.
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