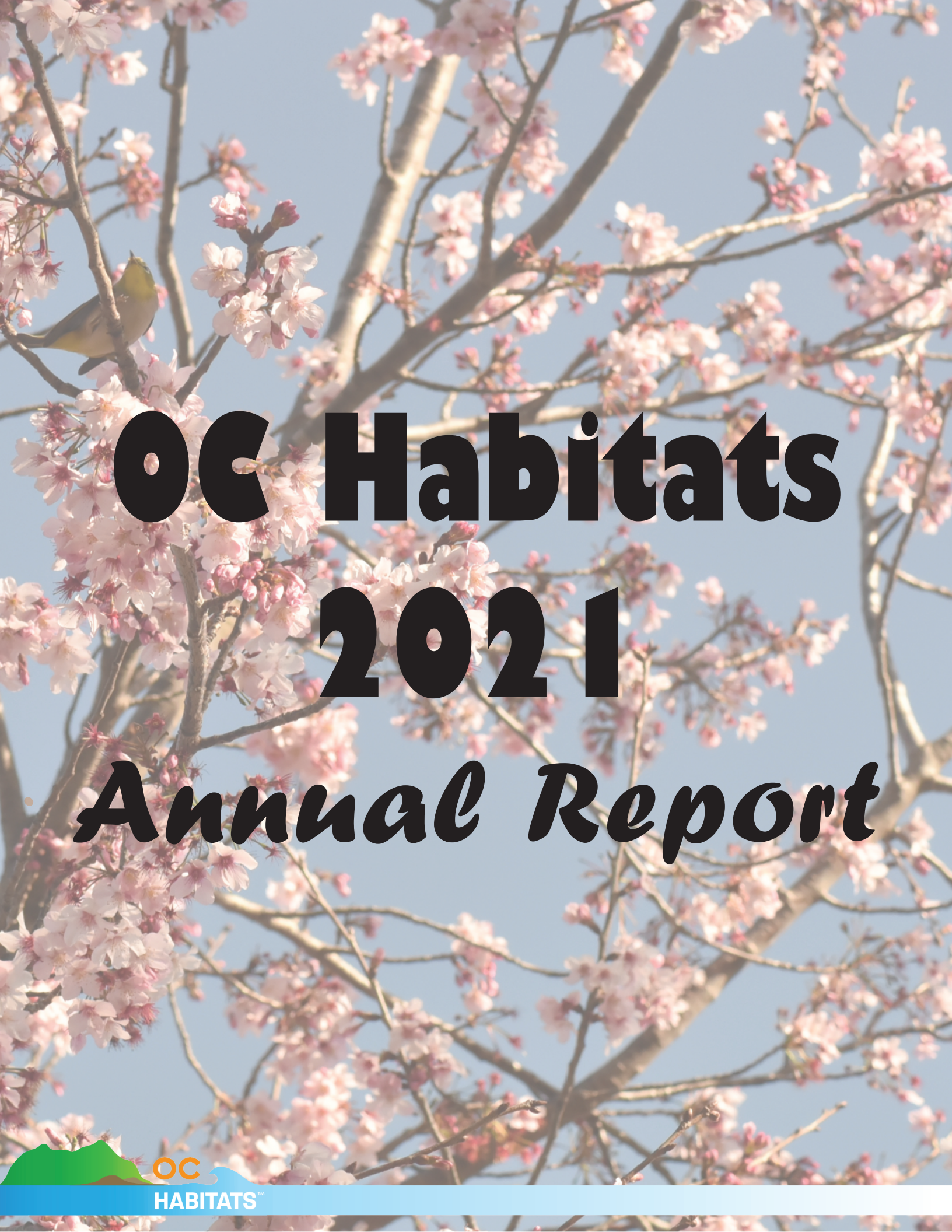


OC Habitats 2021 Annual Report

OC HABITATS™

Message from the President

2021 brought many challenges and successes to OC Habitats. We continue to navigate the Covid 19 Pandemic by developing more educational programs in the virtual format, creating as many small group restorations as were safe and allowable by CDC mandates, and working with our partners to survey our coastal habitats and listed species. We were able to hire a second part-time employee in January, which rounded out our 2021 workforce. Adding staff to our OCH team has made a huge difference in the programming we have been able to provide to the public.

We hosted the largest number of interns to date from local schools such as CSUF, CSULB, UCI, and Saddleback and even from San Diego at Point Loma Nazarene University. These individuals worked on many projects in education, restoration, monitoring, and more. They helped develop and implement interesting, insightful, and informative monthly outreach events through our Coffee & Conservation Outreach program with topics like Water Use, Fires, Environmental Justice, Sustainable Cities and more. Our interns used their backgrounds, culture, education, and passion to work with OCH on their projects and contributed to the overall success of our organization this year.

In the nonprofit sector, we don't always get to keep all of our hard working individuals and we have certainly lost some good ones this year. On a high note, we did gain new individuals who are passionate and eager to help OCH and their local environments thrive. This year we added a new board member, Melissa King, a new assistant bookkeeper, Keeley Rasich, and a new employee, Cristina Robinson. In showing our appreciation to our committed volunteers, we highlighted at least one volunteer of the month and two Volunteers of the Year, Cheryl Dyas and Michelle Lee, for their outstanding work with OCH.

We had the opportunity to assist with the recent OC Oil Spill event of October 2021, which affected our local coastal habitats. We were allowed to partner with other agencies and nonprofits in information dissemination and outreach. Now that the beaches and wetlands have reopened, we are back to our restoration efforts. We have also provided habitat and species data to USFWS that will be used to see the "before and after" of the event and the impacts to all local species on the shores that were impacted.

We feel fortunate that we have continued to thrive and grow as an organization. We are looking forward to continued partnerships and new ones in the coming year and hope to expand our work in all areas to make a greater impact to our local ecosystems.

~ Stacey Chartier-Grable

Monitoring

Habitat Monitoring

OCH consistently monitored 24 segments of the Orange County shores, from Seal Beach to San Onofre (San Diego County). Our job here is to monitor the coastal dune habitat and the species therein including the Western Snowy Plover and the California Least Tern (scientific names here). Overall we are seeing a decline in both of our listed species due to loss of habitat, predation, lack of resources, and human encroachment. As the pandemic slowed down and the shores opened up our listed species tried to continue their efforts on the open beaches where thousands of people frequent the shores especially in summer. Unfortunately, we still haven't made great progress in the protection of these species and their numbers continue to decline in our area. We continued to train new monitors in 2021, which allowed our team to provide more consistent coverage of the beaches throughout the year.

In our efforts to support the listed species, we again, partnered with California State Parks and Bolsa Chica Ecological Reserves Eyes on Nest Sites Program (EONS Program) to help monitor the breeding pairs and their chicks and fledglings. We trained new members of our monitoring team to follow protocols of these programs.

Efforts are being made by government agencies as well as nonprofits to resolve issues near the Santa River outlet between Newport and Huntington Beaches and California State Lands Commission asked for our help in gathering data to show usage by humans, domestic dogs, and native species in this area. This information was used in a formal report in September 2021 by CSLC. This effort is ongoing and we hope to see some positive results in 2022.

We launched our new data log this year that was designed to streamline our data collection. Although it was a better system in collecting data in the field, it was not the system we had hoped for in data compilation. Due to this we had to revert to manual data logging. The good news is that we were chosen by a technological group at UCI, Commit the Change, as a benefactor of a new logging and collection system, which is in progress and will be ready by late spring of 2022. We are hopeful that this system will be more user friendly and allow us to compile information in a more timely and efficient manner so that we can share and analyze the data for our own projects and in partnership with state and federal agencies.

We launched our MPA Monitoring program in spring of 2021. This is in collaboration with OC Coastkeepers. Our intent with this program was to combine our monitoring efforts with this to provide even more information and help with protection of our MPA areas. This program has yet to take off for OCH in 2021 as we were not adequately staffed to manage it but we do hope to get it going in 2022.

Education & Outreach

Habitat Education Programs

Although our programs had to continue to accommodate the coronavirus in 2021, we still managed to provide education and outreach programming to students and the public, reaching approximately 600 individuals in 2021.

In 2021, we kept ourselves busy by providing virtual habitat education programs to approximately 150 students from Peters Elementary, 120 students from Weaver Elementary, and 50 students from Vista View Middle School. In addition, we partnered with the Girl Scouts of Orange County to help the local girl scouts earn one of their STEM badges by hosting an EcoLearners Program to 25 Daisies, a Tidal Pool Program to 41 Juniors, and a Citizen Science Program to 3 Cadettes.

Furthermore, we provided a tidal pool exploration for the Irvine Youth Action Team and the Las Vegas Spanish Hills Ward in June (35 students) and a coastal dune program for Saddleback Community College in September (12 students).

We continued to develop and host virtual programs for our volunteers and the public through our OCH Coffee & Conservation Program. Throughout the year, we hosted events to 92 individuals and discussed a variety of environmental topics, which included wildfires (January), a partnership spotlight with LUSH Cosmetics (February), renewable energy (March), endangered species (May), sustainable cities (June), water usage (August), environmental justice (September), and orb weaver spiders (October).

Outreach and Speaking Engagements

Bolsa Chica Bird Tour - Feb 2021
Huntington Beach Central Park Bird Tour - Mar 2021
MPA Hikes - Feb, Mar, Apr, May, Jun, Dec 2021
Santiago Oaks - Apr & Jun 2021
Dripping Caves - Jul & Oct 2021
Upper Newport Bay Habitat - Sept 2021
San Joaquin Marsh - Nov 2021

Habitat Restoration

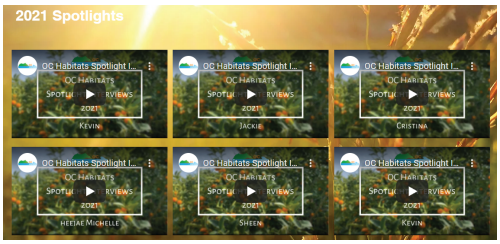
OCH continued its restoration work in 2021 with its partners at Project Grow, Matt Yurko, and Huntington Beach Wetlands Conservancy (HBWC), John Villa. Our monthly events are on the 2nd and 3rd Saturdays and 4th Wednesday of each month. We had many additional events that we provided to specific groups throughout the year at two of our project sites. In total, we hosted over 35 events between the three projects with our partners and our beach cleanup event. The projects that we are making good progress on with Project Grow include the Salt Marsh Restoration project near the northwest corner of Upper Newport Bay (near the Muth Center on University), the NV1, NV2, and MWD riparian sites near Newport Valley in the Newport Back Bay. We also made good progress at the HBWC salt marshes (Magnolia, Brookhurst, Talbert,and Newland) in Huntington Beach Wetlands Conservancy despite the oil spill that plagued our area in October 2021. In all projects, we spent many hours removing invasive plants by hand or tools, removing debris, and planting new native species that will enhance these habitats and provide a more viable living and breeding space for many species.

We have been fortunate enough to be able to open our events to the public the entire year with HBWC, which brought many hard working and enthusiastic volunteers to our project. The Upper Back Bay had more restrictions on group size due to the pandemic but allowed us to open up to the public in the Fall, which made a big difference in our impact to the areas that needed more people-power to move the project forward. By the end of 2021, we had made great strides to our ultimate goals on all three projects.

In 2021, we created some plant species guides for our salt marsh and riparian habitats to help our team and all our volunteers learn the species they were working with in the field. Since OCH prides itself on educating our volunteers about the habitats they are working in, this was a good step toward that goal.

We have had success recruiting volunteers through our own OCH team, our Eventbrite Listings, and through our partner organizations.

Special Projects



OCH Volunteer Spotlight Video Project was a way to engage our volunteers and community members about the work of OC Habitats (OCH) and the volunteers who do it. This got such a great response from the public that we decided to continue this and will be adding volunteers in 2022 and forward.

Career Fairs were a way for OCH to engage with college students about the mission of OCH. In March, students from CSUF had the opportunity to have a one-on-one conversation with staff and virtually shadow them for a day to learn about the inner workings of an environmental nonprofit organization. In November, OCH attended a virtual career fair at CSULB to network with potential interns and inform them about our internship program. OCH is also a part of UCI's Field Study Program, where UCI undergraduates participated in our internship program.

Girl Scouts of Orange County (GSOC) STEM Event occurred at the end of October, where OCH had the chance to join other organizations in providing STEM related "hands-on" activity to Girl Scout Juniors and Cadettes. OCH provided learning opportunities to 98 Girl Scouts in learning about the various habitats of Orange County, how to use scat and tracks to determine an animal's presence, and how to use binoculars to see plants, animals, and birds nearby.

The **Corn Hole Game** was created by our talented volunteers who spent countless hours cutting and painting the board, and making the bean bags for the game. The game was used during any events that we had a booth at, such as the GSOC STEM Event and during the 2021 Coastal Clean-Up Day, and will be used for future events.

Weaving Wild Tales Book Fundraiser - Weaving Wild Tales and OCH have partnered up! A portion of proceeds from If Dolphins have Thumbs will be donated to OCH.

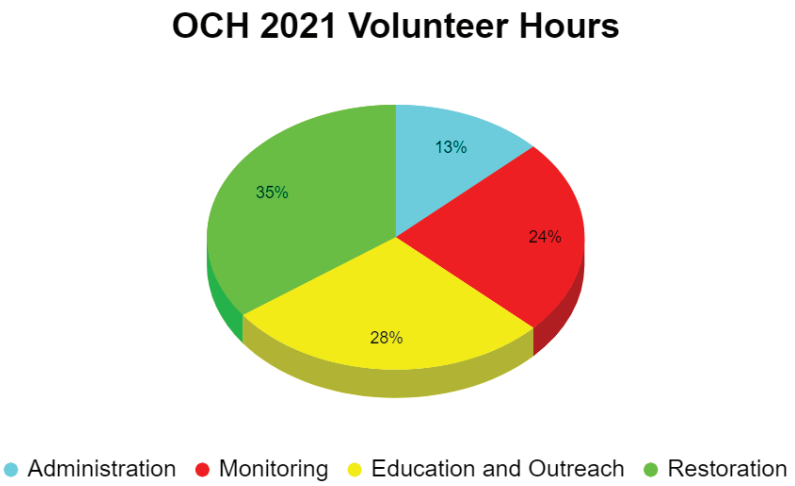
Sticker Project - With the help of a talented volunteer, OCH is working on creating a new set of stickers! These stickers will be given out during events to help spread the OCH name and as a cute memento.

Partnerships - OCH has a partnership with the US Fish & Wildlife Services, where we provide quarterly reports on our coastal dune monitoring data. Our data has been helpful in providing information for listed species, as well as data on a variety of birds that were present before and after the oil spill event that happened early October. OCH has also partnered with the State Lands Commission to provide information on the Santa Ana River and the impact of the area due to dog usage.

The Numbers

Volunteer Team
Active Crew: 5,105 Hours
OCH Friends: 1,730 Hours

Volunteer Hours:
Total: 6,835 Hours
Monitoring: 24%
Outreach & Education: 28%
Restoration: 35%
Administration: 13%



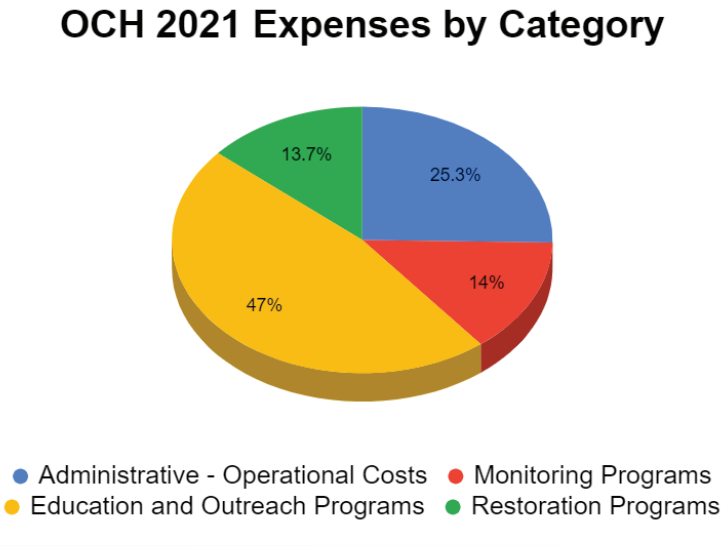
Financials
All funds obtained through grants, sponsorships, program fees, donations and fundraisers were used to benefit our mission through our programs: monitoring, outreach and education, and restoration.

Grants, Fundraisers, Program Income, and Donations
We were awarded several grants in 2021 from the California Relief Grant ($5,000), LUSH Cosmetics Charity Pot ($10,036), the Griswold Family Foundation ($20,000), and Walmart ($1,000). We had a variety of fundraisers over 2021 including Buffalo Exchange ($21.70), Pampered Chef ($350), Weaving Wild Tales Book Sales ($51.28), Stacey's (our founder's) Birthday Fundraiser ($630), Protect & Preserve ($1,052), and GivingTuesday/Annual End of Year Fundraiser ($1,271). Our income came from a variety of groups including GSOC, Hikes, Explorations, Weaver Elementary, Oceanic Teaching Stations, Discovery Prep School, Wild Forest Friends and HBWC. A majority of the funding came from our restoration contract with HBWC. We received a number of in-kind donations in 2021 that included free storage space (Don Grable), a handmade cornhole game (Jo and Marjorie King, Michelle Lee, and Jane Chong), and a Spanish and bilingual MPA coloring books (OCMPAC). These gifts have been used to store our supplies, to enhance our booth, and educate young people about our precious tide pools in Orange County.

Total Revenue:	$ 55,245
Total Expenses:	$ 34,835
2021 Total Net Assets:	**$ 54,690**

Project Expenses: (% of Revenue)

Administrative - Operational Costs:	25.3%
Monitoring Programs:	14%
Education and Outreach Programs:	47%
Restoration Programs:	13.7%



OCH Crew and Info

2021 Board of Directors

Stacey Chartier-Grable, President/Executive Director
Kimi Takatsuka-Garcia - Treasurer
Ginny Gregurek - Director of Outdoor Education
Ross Griswold - Monitoring Director
Melissa King - Secretary

Staff

Stacey Chartier-Grable - Executive Director
Joyce Vu - Associate Director of Operations
Cristina Robinson - Associate Director of Programs

2021 Volunteer and Intern Team

Interns
Josh Ball
Kevin Bartelheim
Wendy Berube
Kevin Bollman
Sanjay Das
Sierra Dey (Restoration)
Kyle Fructuoso
Tania Garcia
Danna Mehtar
Michelle Picca (Restoration)
Crystal Ryan
Gina Thompson
Jackie Tran
James Tran
Jonathan Vasquez
Gaby Yoo
Kim Yumul

Volunteers
Melody Aminian
Evie Andrade
Lenyss Bahena
Judith Berman
Brett Fuller
Tom Gee
Kay Hicks
Mark Holland
Patrick Hunter
Charlton Kao
Summer Kubba
Sydney Kwan
Mara Lam
Peter Lam
Vanessa Lau
Michelle Lee
Dominick Ly
Morgan Martin
Elisabeth Neely
Haruka Noda
Deanna Ochi
Devon Ohlwiler
Claudia Orozco
Angel Phelan
Karis Polfer
Savannah Ramirez
Lis Roche
Nate Spear
Lin Tan
Bailey Webster
Vincent Woolsey

Volunteer Leadership
Bianca Borja - Social Media Coordinator and Monitor Lead
Alice Carter - Advisor
Michaela Coats - Monitor Trainer
Cheryl Dyas - Bookkeeper
Kyle Fructuoso - Monitor Trainer
Drew Kosicki - Restoration Lead
Dominique Murillo - Social Media
Keeley Rasich - Asst. Bookkeeper
Danny Rivas - Monitor Trainer

Contact Information
15333 Culver Drive, Suite 340-763
Irvine, CA 92604
Office: 949.697.8651
Web: www.ochabitats.org
Email: och@ochabitats.org

Find us on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn, and YouTube - OCHabitats

Looking to 2022

As we move into the 2nd half of our 5th year, we would like to focus on the following things for next year:

Admin:

1) Create a Strategic Plan
2) Obtain funding to provide for at least one full time with benefits position at OCH
3) Obtain funding for office space and storage
4) Obtain funding for all of our main programs: Education/Outreach, Restoration, and Monitoring
5) Look at ways we can be more inclusive of all communities in Orange County, providing environmental justice to all of our citizens.

Education and Outreach:

6) Expand our partnership with HBWC to include educational programs
7) Continue to develop our educational programs for grades 2-12 and college level programs using NGSS, Ocean, Environmental literacy standards, a climate change and 30x30 focus.
8) Continue to develop our hiking programs to include more educational hikes around Orange County
9) Build up our educational programs with OC Coast Keepers
10) Develop partnerships with LOF, Project Grow, and HBWC with a shared internship program.

Coastal Dune Monitoring:

11) Finalize our monitoring permit with USFWS for our Ross Griswold and our OCH Team so that we can assist with protection efforts on a deeper level.
12) Maintain and expand number of monitors and find funding to cover parking costs that have been prohibitive in our efforts to gain access to our local coastline
13) Create new monitoring application that is user friendly and efficient in data compilation
14) Work at making partnerships more efficient and effective for OCH and crew.

Restoration:

15) Continue to work in both Newport and Huntington Beaches in habitat restoration programs with HBWC and Project Grow.
    a) Complete Riparian Restoration
    b) Continue to monitor Salt Marsh Restoration
16) Pursue partnership with Banning Ranch for restoration efforts on Banning Ranch lands as they ready for improvements
17) Add more beach cleanup efforts along the coasts, especially at southern beaches and forge new relationships with municipalities in those locations.