Introductior

"Think of all of the things that live in our water—the animals, the plants, the bacteria, the bugs. They are all living creatures like us so they deserve to live just as much as we do. Imagine you lived in the water and one day a giant dumped a bunch of oil in it, and everything around you dies, and then finally you die, too. See what I'm talking about?"—Maddie, age 13



"Protecting our oceans and waterways is important because if they get polluted, our culture could drastically change. The environment would become our first priority, and we'd have to set aside some of the other, equally important things such as world peace. If we protect our waterways now, we are protecting our entire society."—Jude, age 15

"The work we do today is important for future generations. We may not see much effect in our lifetime, but we know our children will."—Kiddest, age 17



A Call to Action from Philippe Cousteau

Philippe Cousteau is the cofounder of the ocean conservation and education organization EarthEcho International and grandson of the legendary ocean explorer Jacques Cousteau. In this interview he explains why now is the time—more than ever—to become an environmental champion.



My grandfather's first adventures into the world at large were considerably different than the ones we embark on today. He was one of the first people to explore the oceans—his was a true journey of discovery. Few, if any, had seen the wonders of the deep captured on film. Jacques Cousteau and his crew were the first to capture those images and share them with the wider world. Imagine all the creatures we have grown up with and take for granted—from coral reefs to polar bears, Nemo the clownfish and even Shamu the whale. All were total mysteries to the world.

I encourage you to watch two films my grandfather produced many years ago. *The Silent World* and *World Without Sun* won Academy Awards and showcase Jacques Cousteau and my father Philippe Cousteau Sr. diving the reefs off the coast of Southern France and the Red Sea in the 1950s and 60s and filming them for the first time in human history.

My father, Philippe Cousteau Sr., passed away in an airplane accident six months before I was born. Growing up with tales of his adventures, I heard stories of how he took his first breath underwater and descended to those reefs. I was told of his devastation at seeing what happened to those very same reefs, now mere shadows of what they once were, due to climate change and pollution. I spent many hours of my own youth diving off the coast of France and I can no longer stand to go back. I find the barren, desolate underwater landscape so terrible. It can break your heart when you see the beauty captured by my grandfather on film and know that today that beauty is virtually gone.

As part of the third Cousteau generation, I see my role as a journey to understand the relationship between humans and nature, and especially to be a steward of this planet. Of course I am proud to have the Cousteau name. But I'm not a Cousteau only because of my name. The Cousteau spirit of conservation and care for the environment was taught to me. It lives on through me because of my actions, not my birth certificate.

Daily, I consider the choices I make and the influence I can have by sharing information and ideas with others. Of the many concerns facing our environment, without question, the excessive output of carbon into the atmosphere is the most troubling. Carbon is the leading cause of climate change. This current global crisis is changing our oceans—the primary drivers of our climate.

As climate changes, the domino effects will be felt around the world. For example, water scarcity will likely be the defining cause of conflict and mass migration of people in the 21st century. In large part this will be instigated by the world's changing weather patterns brought about by changing currents and rising temperatures and sea levels in the ocean—all caused by climate change. That is a bit of a simplification, but you get the idea: everything is connected to everything else on this planet.

But climate change isn't the only problem caused by carbon. The excessive output of carbon into the atmosphere is also

responsible for another very scary problem that has nothing to do with climate change: ocean acidification. OA, as we call it, is caused purely by the absorption of carbon by the oceans. The carbon absorption causes oceans to become

"The Cousteau spirit of conservation and care for the environment was taught to me. It lives on through me because of my actions, not my birth certificate."

more acidic and ocean creatures that build shells—such as coral, shellfish, mollusks, and pteropods (small free swimming snails that form the basis of many ocean food chains)—are unable to build shells and survive. If this continues, the wholesale collapse of many ocean ecosystems will have disastrous effects on the planet. Imagine: more than a billion people currently rely on fish for their primary source of protein. If fisheries collapse because they have no basic food source, those people would starve and many would go to war to feed themselves. That is just one example; others are just as serious.

If this seems pretty depressing, remember: there is hope. The key to helping these creatures survive is to give them the healthiest, safest environments in which to live. For example, coral reefs in a pristine environment are much more likely to adapt to rising water temperatures than those already stressed from pollution and overfishing. That is good news, and it means that we must double our efforts to protect our environment.

Some of the most effective solutions involve replacing the exploitation of natural resources with alternatives that protect our environment and have mutual benefits. In Florida during the 1990s, gill net fishing (a very destructive form of fishing) was banned along the coast. Instead of putting the gill net fishermen out of work, scientists devised a way for them to grow clams in baskets along the shore. This simple form of aquaculture was even more lucrative than gill net fishing and it protected the

environment. In a short period of time, Florida went from being last in clam production in the United States to being first.

We have a chance to change this world. The last 50 years have seen the greatest amount of destruction on this planet in history, and it is the next 50 years our 50 years—that will decide its "Remember: there is hope. The key to helping these creatures survive is to give them the healthiest, safest environments in which to live. . . . We must double our efforts to protect our environment."

fate. This means demanding that our politicians take these problems seriously by expressing a willingness to make changes in our own lives. Ask yourself: "Do I really need a bigger house or a bigger car?" A comfortable life is what we all aspire to, that is human nature. However, a comfortable life could be defined by living in gracious and sustainable harmony with the planet. Each of you has an exciting opportunity to consider what choices you will make and what distinct steps you will take to be part of both a local and a global solution.

You probably hear people tell you all the time that you can make a difference. But the truth is this: You already make a difference. *Everything you do makes a difference*. Every single one of your actions has consequences. What do you want to be the results of the actions you take every single day? Look around at the world you live in—this time with "super-vision"—to see deeper into the impact of each choice. What can you be doing?

Start with simple things, like bringing reusable bags when you shop, finding an area in your community to protect, being "water smart" at every opportunity, and encouraging your par-

ents to vote for politicians who care about your future. Endless reports prove the number one reason adults change their behavior is because of the influence of their children . . . you have *power*!

I grew up sitting with my grandfather and listening to his life's stories, hearing the urgency in his voice, being inspired by the passion my own father had for taking action for a better future. Their voices influenced me in becoming the person I "You probably hear people tell you all the time that you can make a difference. But the truth is this: *Everything you do makes a difference.*... What do you want to be the results of the actions you take every single day?"

am today. You could call it a family legacy, or just good teaching. Regardless, I am a firm believer that if we are to build the sustainable future we all dream of, we must do it together. Each of us—*all* of us—making a positive difference; that is a legacy we can all share.



Philippe Cousteau

What Do You Know?

- "Water has no beginning, end, or middle." What does this statement mean?
- 2. What fraction of the earth is covered by water?
- **3.** Which of the following does the ocean provide: oxygen, rain, food, or oil?
- **4.** What percentage of the oceans has been explored: 5%, 25%, 50%, or 85%?
- **5.** Which of your everyday activities affect our oceans?

Have you thought about our oceans and *waterways* lately? Perhaps you've seen headlines about polluted lakes, toxic rivers, droughts, waterborne illnesses, rising sea levels, or coral reef damage. These days more ocean species are considered endangered than ever, and human overfishing threatens to starve dolphins, sharks, and seabirds. During the summer of 2009, the world's ocean temperatures were the warmest ever recorded. New lakes and rivers are being added to

The term **waterways** (as used in this book) includes all bodies of water on Earth apart from oceans—from ground springs to streams, brooks, creeks, ponds, marshes, wetlands, lakes, rivers, canals, bays, lagoons, ice fields, and seas.

endangered lists yearly. In many countries, drought has dried up food crops and safe drinking water is difficult to find.

We have depended upon our waters since the dawn of life on this planet. They feed us, quench our thirst, help us travel and transport goods, provide medicine, create energy, and let us swim, surf, sail, and dream. However, these same waters are changing in ways that threaten our way of life now and for future generations. Our oceans and waterways are hurting. With increasing acidification in the oceans, glaciers melting at the poles, and trash accumulating everywhere, what we have taken for granted for too long needs to be addressed. And *fast*. The good news is that we can do something. We can step in, learn about the issues that are all interconnected—just like our

waterways—and create plans for action. We can talk with others, find out what is already being done in our communities, regions, and nations, and join in. We can come up with brand new ideas to meet the water needs we see around us every day.

You've probably heard the phrase "going green," which means pitching in to help the environment—our forests, fields, land, and air. This remains essential. What this book proposes is to add another color to the mix by going *blue* and helping to conserve and protect our planet's water. What can you do to go blue? "We all have to take responsibility for the direction we are going. In our schools we need, from the earliest times, to get across the concept that we are connected to nature and that we are trying to find a space to sustain ourselves." —Sylvia Earle, oceanographer

Starting Now

However you found this book or it found you, these pages will help you discover ways to address community or global problems. Whatever you choose to do to help our oceans and waterways whether it's organizing a water usage awareness campaign, cleaning a local creek, planting trees to stop soil erosion, or eating more locally grown food—the time to start is *now*.

Did You Get the Right Answers?

Here are the answers to the questions on page 6. Our oceans and waterways are all interconnected and flow without beginning, middle, or end. A full three-fourths of the earth is covered by water, making ours truly a "water planet." Our oceans provide all four of these things: oxygen, rain, food, and oil. Only 5 percent of our oceans have been explored by humans, which leaves plenty for you to do! And every single one of your daily activities affects our oceans and waterways—from the electronics you use, to the clothes you put on, to the foods you eat. By reading on, you will find out exactly how these choices and others reach to the furthest depths of the ocean.

What's Inside?

This book is filled with curious questions, eye-opening facts, useful information, inspiring quotes, amazing photos, extraordinary stories, and plenty of examples of what teens just like you are doing to keep this planet of ours healthy. All of this information is divided according to the five stages of an exciting journey called service learning. These five stages are Investigation, Preparation, Action, Reflection, and Demonstration (each stage is explained in detail in the next chapter). You'll also notice four repeating sections throughout the book: The Teens in **Action** sections tell recent stories of real teens across the world making significant contributions. The Your Turn boxes help you relate the topics discussed to your own life and give you ideas for getting involved. The Time for Reflection boxes ask questions that encourage you to pause, think, and look at the larger picture of what you are doing. And the EarthEcho boxes suggest tips for how to transform the information and ideas that you read here into simple day-to-day actions that benefit the planet.

How to Read This Book

There is no one "right" way to read this book. You might decide to plunge in and read it straight through, from beginning to end. Or you can pick and choose sections that interest you at a given time, or that relate directly to a service plan you already have in progress. To help navigate whichever route you choose, each of the five service learning stages is introduced with an example of what actual teens did at that stage during a specific service learning experience (see **The Story of Tar Creek, Parts #1–5**, beginning on page 18), and each stage ends with a box briefly summarizing its contents.

Beware that once you dive in, there may be no returning to the surface. You may realize it's time to change the tide and reclaim your water planet. You may feel compelled to join in the challenge to investigate, explore, brainstorm, plan, and get involved to improve your world. You may find yourself a changed person. You may even find yourself turning a little ... blue.

Tips for Using this Book

- You are holding a written guide, but you will find other guides around you—adults you meet who know about our waters, friends, family, and community members who are all eager to help. People all across the globe are getting involved every day. Ask them questions. Learn what they have to share.
- Use a journal (made of recycled or reused paper) to keep track of your thoughts and observations as you read.
- Stay informed about current news involving our oceans and waterways, including issues of climate change and global warming.
- Visit the many websites listed in this book to find additional information and resources.
- Involve others in your journey—friends, family, a class, or a youth group. Learn, think, laugh, and work together to get the job done.
- Let your creativity inspire you to be an agent of change. Planet Earth needs **you.**



Service + Learning = Service Learning

What is service learning and how does it fit into all of this? Simple: service learning is the adventure that will take you from where you are now . . . to where you will be—helping rescue our planet's water by using your knowledge, skills, interests, energy, and enthusiasm. Service + Learning = a recipe for action and success. This chapter introduces you to the process of service learning, and along the way provides examples of what you can do at each of its stages.

Service: Service means contributing to or helping to benefit others and the common good.

Learning: Learning means gaining an understanding of a subject or developing a skill through study, experience, or an exchange of ideas.

Service Learning: The ideas of service and learning combine to create service learning. Investigation, preparation, action, reflection, and demonstration are the five stages of service learning. By understanding how each stage works, you can be more effective in making plans to help in your community and the world.

Stage 1: Find Out → Investigate

"People can only protect what they love, but they can only love what they know."—Philippe Cousteau Sr., explorer

The journey of service learning begins the way you begin many things: you *investigate*. What do you investigate? First, you investigate the resources that you bring to helping this planet. Then, you investigate the needs in your community related to oceans and waterways.



Create an Inventory of Your Skills and Talents.

Do you enjoy photography, writing, art, research, math, or science? Are you a behind-the-scenes organizer or do you prefer being onstage with a microphone?

Throughout service learning, your interests and abilities can be further developed. Stretch your mind as you think of all your skills and talents. If you are exploring Going Blue with a friend, interview each other to discover skills and talents. Ask questions. Make an inventory—a list—and keep it visible as you prepare, act on, demonstrate, and reflect on your ideas. This inventory can be helpful at every stage of your voyage. Remember, every person has unique value.

What Community Needs Interest You? Start a list and then discuss it with others and let your list grow. What topics are of greatest interest to people you speak with? Which ones capture the attention of just a few? Here's a surprise: Nearly every community need you can think of will have something to do with water. As you read on, you will find out how.

Investigation Example: Water Audit

Sometimes a community need appears in the form of a question. That happened when one middle school student asked: "How much water do we use?" This led her class to the challenging task of investigating and evaluating water usage at their school and in their homes. Were they wasting water? How could they find out? What could they do about it?

The students learned to read water bills and took a walking tour of their school to identify ways to conserve water. They developed a survey for home use to record how much water each family member used per week. They compared the results with the average water use in the United States of 80 to 100 gallons each day. After hearing a guest speaker describe strategies for water reduction at home, and conducting research through books and the Internet, students created and distributed a family-friendly guide, Save Water: We Need Every Drop.

Reread the previous paragraph. What skills and talents did the students put to use? What techniques did they use to investigate the community need? This will help you begin to investigate water issues in your own community.

Stage 2: Dive In \rightarrow Prepare

"It takes as much energy to wish as it does to plan." —Eleanor Roosevelt, former first lady of the United States, author, humanitarian

The next step on the service learning journey is to *prepare*. You have experience preparing all the time. You prepare for school in the morning, you prepare for a basketball game by shooting hoops, you learn lines for a play, and you gather ingredients to bake cookies.

Preparation Example: Flood Readiness

Imagine that your community experiences severe flooding. The flood might be due to a storm, to problems with overdevelopment, to soil erosion, or to some other cause. After investigating the issue, you decide to find ways to help people in your community know what to do if flooding occurs again. How would you prepare to help your community be ready for a flooding disaster? Answer this question on your own first, *before* reading the list below.

Now look at this list. Did you have similar ideas?

- Talk to people who work for emergency relief services, such as the Red Cross. Find out what they require for a flooding emergency. Do they need common supplies that could be collected, like blankets? What do they suggest people do to prepare for a flood?
- Speak to rescue workers, such as paramedics or firefighters. Are local maps accurate enough for them to reach the most remote homes in your community?
- Interview community members who were affected by past floods. What advice do they have about preparedness?
- Visit the location where people have been relocated during past floods, such as a school gymnasium or community center. What would make this place more welcoming—for

adults, children, and pets—if it is needed again for this purpose?

- Read about the causes of flooding in your community and what can be done to prevent it. Educating the community about flood awareness could be part of your action plan.
- Check out local newspaper coverage of recent floods. Who in your local government has ideas and knowledge about the issue? Can you meet with this person?

Part of preparation is finding people and organizations that care about the community need you've chosen to address. Gather the contact information for these people and build a team that can help you plan. This includes brainstorming ideas and generating possibilities. Think big and wide—all of this preparation and planning leads to the next stage of service learning . . .

Stage 3: Get Going \rightarrow Act

"If you're walking down the right path and you're willing to keep walking, eventually you'll make progress."—Barack Obama, United States President

Once you have investigated your interests, skills, and community needs, and are prepared with the background knowledge you need, you are ready to create and carry out a plan to *act*. Action typically occurs as direct service, indirect service, advocacy, research, or a combination of several of these approaches.

Direct Service:

Your service involves face-toface interactions or close contact with people, animals, or the environment—such as rivers, lakes, oceans, or any part of the watershed that is near you.

Indirect Service:

Your action is not seen by the people or animals who may benefit from it, but it meets a real need.

Advocacy: What you do makes others aware of an issue and encourages them to take action to change a situation.

Research:

You gather and report on information that helps a community.

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Action Example: Flood Readiness

Using the scenario of flood readiness again, here are examples of the different types of action that students have taken.

Direct Service: Students organized books, games, and toys and placed them in bins to be stored in the school gymnasium for use in flooding emergencies. They would then be able to lead activities with young children, entertain pets, and help families cope with the difficult situation.

Indirect Service: In case of flooding and evacuation, what documents must a family take with them? Students prepared large envelopes with a list of all the necessary documentsbirth records, insurance papers, medical information, pet information—that families can place inside and take with them in case of an emergency evacuation.

Advocacy: A youth group learned how commercial development had caused soil erosion, leading to increased risks of flooding. They worked with local politicians to hold a town forum to discuss local concerns and advocate for zoning to protect fragile areas.

Research: Using photography, video, and podcasts, students documented the experiences and effects of flooding in their community and compiled a report for response teams and civic groups.



Four Action Strategies

What if you wanted to address toxic dumping in your local waterways? Think of an example for each of these four types of action.

Stage 4: Think Back → Reflect

"The most important thing is to actually think about what you do. To become aware and actually think about the effect of what you do on the environment and on society. That's key, and that underlies everything else."—Jane Goodall, environmentalist

What is one piece of information you have learned so far that you want to remember? What is one idea you have now that you didn't have before opening this book? When you answer these questions, you *reflect*: you look at your experience to determine what it has to do with you. Reflection takes place all along the service learning journey: as you investigate and prepare, as you do the service, and as you demonstrate what you have learned and accomplished. You will find reflection built into this book in the **Time for Reflection** boxes and in a series of questions in the Reflection section on pages 128–129.

Stage 5: Tell It → Demonstrate

"Not only is your story worth telling, but it can be told in words so painstakingly eloquent that it becomes a song."—Gloria Naylor, novelist and educator

In this final stage you review what you learned, how you planned, what you did, and how you've reflected along the way. Then you tell others; you *demonstrate*. Here, you can again draw upon your interests and abilities to showcase your service learning efforts. How you tell your story is up to you. Will you:

Make a mural?

Create a website?

Build a display for your school or town hall?

Produce a PowerPoint presentation?

Perform a skit for a class or youth group?

Record a video or podcast?

Write an article for a school or community newspaper?

Create a comic book or brochure showing the steps you took?

Going Blue guides you through the service learning journey as you investigate, prepare, act, reflect, and demonstrate—all toward saving our oceans and waterways. So let's get started!

Bottled Water

People in the United States buy an estimated 34.6 billion single-serving bottles of water a year—up from 3.3 billion in 1997. Worldwide, 2.7 million tons of plastic are used each year to make water bottles, and in the United States, less than 20 percent of these plastic bottles are recycled. Does using all this plastic and drinking the water inside make a difference?

In most cases, tap water actually follows higher purity standards than bottled water.

In 2006, more than 17 million barrels of oil was used to manufacture plastic water bottles and generated more than 2.5 million tons of carbon dioxide.

While some are recycled, a whopping 9 out of 10 water bottles like this one end up as garbage or litter, which equals 30 million bottles. U.S. cities pay around \$70 million every year in costs related to trash cleanup and landfills.



The process of manufacturing a plastic water bottle requires three times the amount of water that is needed to fill it.

About 40% of bottled water originated as tap water.

It could take over 1,000 years for this plastic bottle to biodegrade (naturally decompose).

This bottle contains chemicals called plasticizers, or *phthalates* (pronounced THAL-ates). These seep into the water over time, posing health risks such as hormone disruption and cancer. In summary, the environmental impacts of plastic-bottled water are impossible to ignore any longer. They include:

• huge oil resources are used to create the bottles

- water resources are depleted in local communities where water is harvested
- health risks are associated with water that isn't as strictly regulated as tap water
- toxic chemicals such as phthalates seep into the water from the plastic
- a large volume of waste is generated and usually not recycled

How Can the Plastic Water Bottle Problem Be Solved?

1. "What if I just reuse one plastic bottle for a while before buying a new one?"

Not so fast. Reusing plastic bottles often means that more and more phthalates are released into the liquid inside. As previously noted, phthalates have been shown to cause cancer and disrupt bodily hormones. In addition, plastic bottles can harbor harmful bacterial growth inside any cracks or crevices that may form over time.



Plastic bottles and other waste floating on a lake.

2. "What about buying in bulk—2 liters at a time instead of 12 ounces?"

This can help reduce the waste, although it doesn't eliminate the oil and water depletion issues or the health concerns.

3. "Let's recycle all the bottles!"

Again, this is necessary to help reduce waste, but it still won't address other concerns. Also, recycling water bottles requires a lot of energy resources and—you guessed it—water.

4. "Let's make the water bottle companies adhere to stricter water quality standards."

Remember that soda, sports drinks, and juices are also bottled "water." Instead of using a disposable plastic bottle, invest in a reusable stainless steel one. If you do buy a plastic bottle, always recycle it, or use it as a water-saving device in your toilet (see page 25).



This could help decrease the

health risks from the water, but not from the phthalates in the plastic bottle. Also, it could lead to higher production costs, which could make the bottles of water even more expensive.

5. "How about just . . . not buying so much bottled water?"

At the core of the water bottle issue is a simple case of supply and demand. If consumers (like you and me) cut back on the purchasing of plastic water bottles—instead drinking water from nonplastic containers—what might happen to the supply? It will sit in warehouses, unsold, which means companies will likely stop manufacturing so many bottles.

So what *are* people in the real world—teens in particular—doing about this issue?

TEENS IN ACTION

Chagrin Falls, Ohio, United States Go Green—Drink Tap

In Chagrin Falls, Ohio, the youth board of Community Partnerships for Youth created an awareness campaign about the destructive nature of disposable water bottles culminating in a Go Green Water Tasting. Stationed in a shopping center, the kids invited passersby to taste two water samples, choose the one they liked best, and then guess which sample was bottled water and which came from the tap. The tasters overall preferred tap water and guessed incorrectly that it was bottled water. Students gave out Go Green—Drink Tap T-shirts, bumper stickers, and nondisposable water bottles. Sharing facts in the community and in school raised awareness that not only is tap water better for the environment, it also tastes better than bottled water.

Okanogan, Washington, United States GEAR UP for Recycling

What do you do if your school sells drinks in plastic bottles but doesn't offer a way to recycle the empties? You GEAR UP for recycling. The GEAR UP program was planned, budgeted, implemented, and presented by sophomores at Okanogan High School in Washington. They set out to educate students, parents, and community members on the importance of recycling plastic bottles and the harmful effects on the environment when recycling does not take place. By educating the community and city council, they hope to spearhead an ongoing plastic bottle recycling program in their school and community.

TURN

A Reusable Bottle Campaign

Do we need plastic water bottles or is there a better idea, like using stainless steel, aluminum, canvas, or some other type of material? Brainstorm the best alternatives and come up with ways to convince people that we are better off avoiding plastic bottles. Then, design a logo, think of a slogan, create posters, start a blog, alert the media, post a video—and make your community a plastic-bottle-free zone!

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