

WATERSHED TO OCEAN: PERSONAL CONNECTIONS TO THE OCEAN THROUGH ON-LINE INTERACTIVE EXPERIENCES

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The Ocean Project enhances ocean awareness, education, and action communication strategies with hundreds of zoo, aquarium, museum, and conservation partners worldwide. The opportunity to increase ocean awareness and action through Internet-based applications expands through standard Web browsers. Even world citizens who live and work in the middle of a continent can feel connected to the ocean through their local watershed that flows to the ocean through a series of streams, rivers, and bays. The Ocean Project is developing a new initiative through which anyone can click on a virtual on-line globe and visualize watershed characteristics and join local urgent or interesting conservation efforts. Tools already exist to make an interactive experience compelling to the point of suggesting personal action. Organizing data and developing the process for all our partner aquariums is the key.

We are demonstrating on-line experiences Web visitors can access to drive the call to action they've experienced through on-line and physical ocean-related exhibits. Included are datasets that provide natural resource information, location of potential institutional partners, other educational facilities, virtual organizations, volunteer opportunities, public lectures, and other rewarding experiences to motivate conservation action. Our visual watershed-oriented mapping system ties experiences to physical surroundings. The Ocean Project is building a trust management system to coordinate geo-spatial datasets and develop workflows organizations can use for coordinating watershed-quality improving experiences. Our aim is to build a community of worldwide citizens who assess and work with us to continuously publish an iterative process that demonstrates successes for watershed awareness.