

2015 ANNUAL REPORT – LAEO U.S.
Bringing about a renaissance of constructive decision making
in the environmental field

LAEO U.S. had a very productive year in 2015 and we are excited to share our progress in our areas of endeavor. As we have researched the most important environmental issues facing the planet today, we have become increasingly focused on water issues as one of the most pivotal planetary situations, impacting *all* life, which must be addressed. From advocating for efficient, non-toxic cleanup technologies to replace the woefully inadequate methods currently used to address hazardous oil and chemical spills, to finding real solutions to providing abundant quantities of fresh water in order to reverse drought and desert areas, we are making progress in critical subjects of environmental concern.

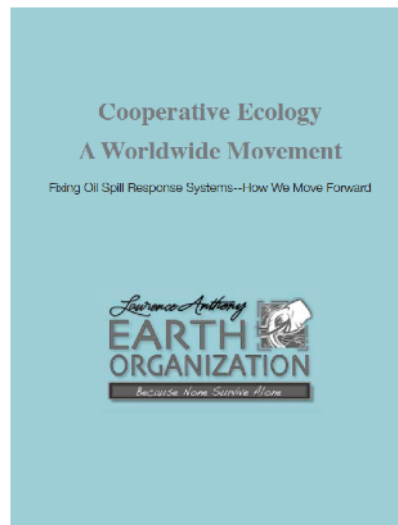
Providing accurate, scientific information through educational materials and one-on-one meetings with senior government regulators and industry officials, it is our intention to bring about a renaissance of constructive decision making in issues related to the protection and enhancement of the natural world. Here are a few of the details of our work in 2015.

CLEAN WATERS PROGRAM:

As part of our Clean Waters Program, LAEO U.S. greatly expanded its outreach programs, educational activities, and information distribution in order to advance effective pollution clean up technologies. We are primarily focused on chemical pollutants impacting ocean and inland waters, which, per our research, is proving to be one of the most major sources of environmental harm.

Earth Day 2015 saw the launch of our expanded educational campaign with the release of several commemorative edition publications including:

- [Cooperative Ecology - Fixing Oil Spill Response Systems](#)
- [Assessing and Optimizing Oil Spill Response Tools](#)
- [Chemical Dispersants and the Clean Water Act](#)
- [A Call for a Twenty-First-Century Solution in Oil Spill Response](#)
- [Updated and Peer Reviewed Bioremediation Science, Factsheet Corrections](#)



As a part of this campaign, we marshaled together our supporters to respond to the US Environmental Protection Agency's call for public comments on their proposed revisions to the Federal Code of Regulations governing Clean Water Act enforcement re hazardous spills. LAEO's Science and Technology Division reviewed and analyzed these regulations and submitted [extensive recommendations](#) for sections that needed correction and stronger policy directives.

These EPA regulations, and some of their newly proposed changes, keep the door open for undesirable cancer-causing chemicals to be used on petrochemical spill clean ups, and hamper advanced and more workable technologies that are capable of completely *removing* the harmful affects and toxins from our waters and oceans. We have worked to scientifically correct, simplify, and distribute these complex documents so that decision makers and the public can more easily understand them.

REFUGIO / SANTA BARBARA OIL SPILL – 2015:

There were many major oil and hazardous chemical spills impacting inland and ocean waterways in 2015. Of major note was the Refugio State Beach pipeline spill of more than 100,000 gallons of crude oil in Santa Barbara, California. In an unnecessary repetition of spills like the Exxon Valdez and BP's Gulf of Mexico spill, obsolete and ineffective "cleanup" methods resulted in a large part of the toxic spill spreading several hundred miles down the Pacific Coast. We compiled and distributed a [spill solutions documentation package](#) to educate U.S. and California legislators, state, county and city officials, industry and federal agencies involved in the clean up.

LAEO additionally submitted formal testimony to congressional investigators regarding the fact that the methods used and overseen by government officials to address this spill only served to exacerbate the disaster, and cost more than \$95 million in direct cleanup costs, and untold additional millions in environmental damages yet to be fully calculated.

LAEO alerted key government officials and, through the media, exposed numerous issues related to the spill, letting the public know that far better options for effective clean up solutions were available. Through our educational materials and testimonies, LAEO was able to raise public and industry awareness of this to a much broader degree. The impact of these materials can be seen in our forward progress in other countries towards the full implementation of effective cleanup solutions, and the banning of antiquated and inadequate prior methods. While there is still much work to be done to overcome the arbitrary bureaucratic barriers and policies that are preventing the oil spill cleanup industry in the U.S. from advancing, we are making progress, and are confident that, with persistence, we will be able to help raise U.S. standards in this field to levels that have already been adopted in many other countries.

SUPPORTING TALENTED YOUNG SCIENTISTS:

One interesting part of our work to raise awareness in the public and the oil industry was achieved through our support of and media releases about the fascinating story of a 13-year-old science student, Alana Tessman. Concerned about the environmental and wildlife devastation she had personally observed in 2010 during BP's oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico, Alana did her own research, through cutting-edge experiments, independently proving that the very same cleanup technology we advocate for is not only a safer and more effective means for cleaning up oil spills, but is also a better solution than current methods for cleaning oiled birds. Consulting with several of our Science and Technology Committee advisors, as well as working with one of the top environmental laboratories in the U.S., she designed protocols that would have saved many birds and marine life in distress during the Refugio/Santa Barbara spill. For her stellar work, she went on to win First Place in the Kern County Science Fair, and then placed third in the State of California's Science Fair. See article at: [13 Year Old Scientist Finds Perfect Solution To The Santa Barbara Oil Spill](#)



LAEO's VP Operations Diane Wagenbrenner congratulates Alana Tessman for her incisive science project at Los Angeles Science Center

WORKING TO RAISE INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS:

In June, we formed a partnership with a team of Canadian environmental engineers and scientists to advance oil pollution clean up standards in Canada. Our Senior VP Operations, Diane Wagenbrenner, participated in three days of educational meetings held to raise understanding of advanced bioremediation techniques for oil spill and hazardous waste removal, including a conference with several biologists at the National Research Council Laboratory in Montreal.



Montreal Canada: Diane Wagenbrenner, Peter Russell, Steven Pedigo, Chris Ives and Dr. Bill Adams presented to Canada National Research Council Biologists studying bioremediation.

In August the Environmental Ministry of Canada announced their ill-advised endorsement of chemical dispersant use in their country's oil spill response plans. Several major oil companies are expanding their offshore deep-water drilling production and submitted the same antiquated oil spill response plans already scientifically proven ineffective in earlier spills. LAEO U.S. submitted a better plan to the Ministry, which, if implemented, would not only put into responders' hands the ability to rapidly clean up future oil spills, but would increase profits for oil industry shareholders through the prevention of natural resource destruction and subsequent fines.

See our plan here: <http://www.theearthorganization.org/laeo-sends-oil-spill-response-caution-to-environment-canada/> to protect the Canadian coastline.



EXPANDED ALLIANCES:

This year we have greatly expanded our alliances with many professionals and experts in the fields of water clean up and preservation. This included, for example, working hand in hand with world-renowned

conservationist Ivan MacFadyen, through a fundraising campaign, to bring about increased awareness of the alarming condition of the world's oceans.



Ivan MacFadyen aboard the Fuvial Web. Picture by Steve Mason-Holmes

Through our expanding alliances, we have worked to open up new countries to better water pollution clean up technologies, including introducing better practices to key port authorities, water regulators, and important officials in the U.S., several South and Central American countries, and Arctic Nations.

We are very proud that our educational materials and the work of our Science and Tech Advisory Board is, for the first time in oil and chemical spill history, moving some of the worst toxic spill sites in the world towards full cleanup and restoration. 2016 is going to be a watershed year in this industry.

New allies also include luminaries such as Pal Pauer of the Primary Water Institute, working in the field of locating and accessing fresh water sources produced in the Earth's magma level as a solution to long-term drought conditions being experienced in many areas of the planet. This science, first developed in the 1930's, promises, by all indications, to be a game changer.



Pal Pauer and Barbara Wiseman

COOPERATIVE ECOLOGY EDUCATION PROGRAMS:

We are currently in the process of writing educational booklets to raise awareness of the LAEO concept and field of Cooperative Ecology. This fundamental principle is based on the fact that all life forms have one common purpose – to survive – and that, to do so, it is invariably a cooperative endeavor. As our tag line says, “Because None Survive Alone”. To the degree each individual makes decisions that don’t support the concept of working cooperatively for the mutual survival of *all* life, and makes decisions solely for one’s own enhancement to the detriment of the majority of other life forms involved, his/her own potential for survival diminishes. There are endless examples of this, and our educational materials, which will be distributed broadly in schools, will bring about increased understanding of this concept. The first of these materials will be released in early 2016.

OUR NEW U.S. OFFICE:

In May of 2015, our U.S. headquarters moved into new offices in Glendale, California. With interior design by Virginia Fair and Associates, we're proud of our new offices, situated in a perfect area of Greater Los Angeles, and now have even more facility to bring our staff and volunteers together to focus on our campaigns. Many of our local members and supporters celebrated the opening of our new facilities with us. With a gorgeous photo exhibition by National Geographic photographer Joy Tessman, live music, great food, and briefings about the structure of our organization and progress of our projects, we received local [media recognition](#) and rave reviews in feedback from attendees.



National Geographic photographer, Joy Tessman



LAEO Members:
Gil Schrock and Vladimir Kurjapiatnik



Our New U.S. Headquarters



U.S. Executive Director Barbara Wiseman and Senior VP Operations Diane Wagenbrenner presenting the organizational structure of our organization.

WILDLIFE IN WAR ZONES CAMPAIGN:

When the economic and political turmoil in Ukraine escalated in March of 2014, LAEO U.S. Headquarters began receiving calls from concerned citizens regarding starving Ukrainian zoo animals. In crisis, the government had cut all funding to several zoos, leaving thousands of animals in peril of starving. Following in the footsteps of Lawrence Anthony's courageous rescue of the Baghdad Zoo in 2003, LAEO U.S. raised the initial funds to launch a new chapter in Ukraine, headed up by Lionel de Lange, a South African bush war veteran with a passion for animals, living in Ukraine. Lionel's achievements during that year are well recorded in LAEO's 2014 Annual Report.

In early 2015, LAEO U.S. helped to bring more international [media attention](#) to the project, once the building of more humane enclosures for a pack of wolves and a family of bears in the Kherson Zoo was completed. (More info and photos under Ukraine Chapter section.)

BEACH CLEAN UPS / EDUCATIONAL SESSIONS:

LAEO U.S. teamed up with Elon Musk's solar company, SolarCity, and Los Angeles-based ocean cleanup non-profit, Heal the Bay, for three much needed beach cleanups in the summer of 2015 at Dockweiler Beach. Included in the events were educational briefings by LAEO and Heal the Bay staff regarding current ocean and marine life conditions and solutions that each individual can be a part of.



We are positioned for tremendous expansion and forward progress in 2016, and look forward to our 2016 annual report when we'll be sharing the successful culmination of many of the projects we are currently working on!