

# **DON'T CAGE OUR OCEANS**

## **Strategic Plan**

*This document is intended as a tool for Don't Cage our Oceans to assess and evaluate its purpose, outcomes, and processes. The initial draft was provided by two Coalition partners, Recirculating Farms and the North American Marine Alliance, with the intention of sparking ideas and input from the broader Coalition membership. This is a living document that will be updated and amended as we progress through the plan.*

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# PURPOSE - GOALS - TACTICS

## **Purpose** (why this coalition exists)

To stop offshore finfish farming (OFF) in the United States

## **Goals** (what success looks and feels like when the Coalition “arrives.”)

1. No offshore finfish farming nationwide
2. No new attempts to develop any offshore finfish farming programs in the U.S.
3. Replace offshore finfish farming demand with values-based seafood production that includes wild capture, shellfish and seaweed ocean farming, plus responsibly scaled and sited recirculating farms.
4. Strong and thriving coalition

## **Tactics** (the specific steps involved to achieve the goals)

1. Direct advocacy (Congress and agencies)
  2. Engagement/support with regional community organizations on individual site fights
  3. Follow through with legal challenge, as necessary, when agencies or regional entities overstep
  4. Outreach and media strategy
  5. Strengthen, activate, and develop next steps for a nation-wide coalition
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# VISION | MISSION | VALUES

## **Vision** (a picture of success in the future--what we are working to bring about that others’ may not yet see)

- No offshore finfish farms
- Community-based food security and food sovereignty
- Equity and justice in the food system
- Reduce corporate control/take-over of resources
- Respect of our natural environment and wildlife
- Innovative, smart food production practices that help mitigate the effects of climate change
- Oceans Commons protected from industrial aquaculture

## **Mission statement** (a written declaration of our core purpose and focus.)

To stop the development of offshore finfish farming in the United States through federal law, policies, and coalition building, while uplifting values-based sea-food systems led by local communities.

**Values** (our foundational beliefs--what we stand for.)

- **Community-based Food Systems.** Food systems that are embedded in the local communities, where the collection, production, and distribution are based on local human and natural culture. Within communities, those most unrepresented and under-resourced are lifted up and celebrated. Seafood production is appropriately-scaled and sited. A sea-food system that values quality over quantity, and communities and the environment over the corporate bottom-line.
- **Diversity & Environmental Respect and Protection.** Rich and vibrant diversity of both the human and natural world. Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) voices are highlighted and uplifted. Natural resources are valued for their rich diversity and the food systems reflect and protect natural abundance.
- **Food Sovereignty.** Communities have control over their food systems, including the governance and market structures. Food is a basic human right and must not be used as a weapon of war. Food Sovereignty recognizes that the rights of mother earth are at the heart of food systems.
- **Science-based Advocacy.** Our work is based in sound scientific research that is not influenced or dominated by corporate interests. Traditional knowledge is acknowledged and respected.
- **Oceans Commons:** Respect and value the public commons of our oceans. Protect our oceans from efforts to cordon off areas for industrial aquaculture.

**Principles** (essentially our code of conduct and what we value in how we do our work.)

- **Communication.** Dialogue and decisions at all levels in the coalition should be conducted in an open, transparent manner. We will strive to be clear about expectations, roles and responsibilities for all who are involved. We will communicate constructively and with intentionality.
- **Collaboration.** We will act in a spirit of open collaboration with all who share our vision for the future. We understand that competition for media attention, funding, power and recognition/ rewards could tear us apart, but through our mutually supportive mode of working, the Coalition will bring us together, and make our movement stronger.
- **Justice.** We will promote justice within and outside the Coalition by deepening our understanding of, and actively working to dismantle oppressions on our food system, marine ecosystems, and fishing communities in order to heal ourselves and to strengthen our movement. Respect and value

the public commons of our oceans. Protect our oceans from efforts to cordon off areas for industrial aquaculture. We understand that our work exists in a social context that is fraught with imbalance of power, lack of recognition of communities' roles in creating a vision, and many social oppressions. We know that the results of these exclusions and oppressions include disproportionate impacts on fishing communities, community based fishermen, and fishing-support operations. This is compounded by the lack of a shared power base, poor access to information and resources, and divisiveness among those of us working to achieve the same ends.

- **Capacity Building.** We all have something to share, and we all have something to learn. Coalition members are encouraged to articulate ways in which they need to develop skills and expertise, and to help each other build capacity for success in all aspects of our work, being mindful that there are many types of “experts.”
- **Respect.** We will strive to respect each other as partners in a movement, even when we disagree. Respect keeps open the door to healthy debate leading to consensus and unity. When differences arise, they will be discussed openly, so as not to cause partners to close themselves off.
- **Inclusivity.** We will monitor our language, communication styles, use of technology, knowledge of cultural differences, geographic scope, etc. so that our campaign strategies and tactics are accessible to the wide range of the Coalition’s membership and audience.
- **Openness.** Information and access to a wide range of power-holders (from elected officials to funders, and other organizations within the social change, conservation, economic and environmental justice movements) are key to our success. We will strive to share information, ideas and channels to power holders in an open manner, in which participants use our respective social and political privileges for the benefit of the collaborative and the movement as a whole.
- **Accountability.** We will hold each other accountable for divisive behavior and actions that exclude people, and challenge each other to adhere to these guidelines in all of the Coalition’s endeavors. We will honor our commitments.

**Strategic filters** (are non-negotiable criteria about what we will and will not do in the future)

What We Will Do:

- We will ensure any policy we support is driven by the communities who are most impacted.
- We will work to protect the welfare of fish and marine ecosystems.
- We will protect the Oceans from offshore aquaculture.

What We Will Not Do:

- We will not accept funds from proponents of industrial food production and distribution systems.
- We will not value corporate dollars over community well-being.
- We will not support policies that exacerbate Climate Change.

**Theory of change** (articulates our understanding about the problem we exist to address and our assumptions about what we believe is needed in order to create solutions.)

Offshore finfish farming (OFF) is an unnecessary, pollutive, and dangerous practice that is a threat to our waters, wildlife, seafood system, and coastal fishing communities. Globally, OFF operations have replicated the same industrial food production system models, such as concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs), genetically modified feed crops, and land grabs. Community-based fishing operations and site specific aquaponic systems are marginalized in the effort to maximize production, profit, and global trade associated with OFF ventures.

We believe the following conditions must be in place in order to shift the status quo and achieve the goals we seek:

- **Education.** We must educate the public as well as decision-makers by centering those most impacted and revealing positive alternatives.
- **Organize.** We must generate opportunities for people and leaders, especially those in coastal and fishing communities who are on the front line, to advocate for their own food systems and environment.
- **Cross Pollinate.** We must align and strengthen our efforts with others involved with food systems, ocean issues, and social justice in order to muster the political power required to rival those of the OFF industry.
- **Lawsuits.** We must demonstrate the ability and willingness to litigate in order to build credibility and power in the eyes of government officials and decision-makers.
- **Uplift Alternatives:** In order to block OFF we must at the same time be promoting alternatives. The clarity of our vision and what we “say yes to” correlates directly with the power and support we will gain.

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## SWOT ANALYSIS

**SWOT analysis** (allows us to see ourselves in the context of what is currently happening around us-- both internally (Strengths and Weaknesses) and externally (Opportunities and Threats))

Strengths: long time experience on the issue, know the players involved (agencies, Hill, orgs, corps), network of supporters (state and regional groups, fishing communities, and other food system, new economy, and movement building networks), know the legal aspects (and a good legal decision), new scientist interest, existing campaign resources (website, materials) funding, media support (Berlin Rosen)

Weaknesses: long time involvement on the issue, weak Coalition (not enough orgs interested and engaged), not enough scientist support, being reactive rather than proactive, COVID, and not a good enough narrative and communications strategy to undermine/sway those who are on the fence (ie. James Beard Foundation) when it comes to industrial finfish farming.

Opportunities: AQUAA Act to build strength, EPA challenge still ongoing, no cages in federal waters anywhere, still challenging USACE nationwide permits, resetting the Coalition, new team, more collaboration, increasing outreach and awareness, state CZMA plans can create conflict with fed regs = no offshore finfish farming off these states, ramping up work with farming orgs and others not traditionally involved in fisheries work (new economy, food system, etc). Adding restaurants and businesses. James Beard campaign.

Threats: Midterm elections, AQUAA Act as a rider, So much happening all at once (Hawai'i regulations moving, Hubbs Seaworld, Velella Epsilon, USACE nationwide permits, Trump EO still in effect and driving timelines) SATS (Stronger America Through Seafood - Dardin, Walmart, Cargill etc) = big \$ support, Neil Sims (Ocean Era), Biden Admin currently pro, which means NOAA, NMFS and other agencies too. Middle U.S. states being told growing feed for fish = \$\$\$. The powerful lobbying groups are also recruiting/influencing those on the fence who otherwise might be allies or at least neutral. Monterey Bay Seafood cards.

# GOALS & TACTICS

In the Strategic Planning Document, in the chart with Goals - for Goal #2 (No new attempts to do OOA in state waters) - it might be useful to name a couple of states that are the priority for Year 1 (even if the long term goal is stopping it everywhere.) But realistically in Year 1 you will have to focus on a couple of key places, not be working in every state. Seems useful to name that to have everyone on the same page about where key states are, which could help with prioritizing outreach to new coalition members.

LONG TERM GOALS	YEAR-1 MORE SPECIFIC GOALS	KEY TACTICS NEEDED TO ACHIEVE THE GOALS
<p><b>#1</b></p> <p><b>No offshore finfish farming nationwide</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Block the AQUAA Act/other federal legislation (like riders too)</li> <li>● Support court decisions or other declarations that prevent agencies from overstepping their authority and permitting offshore finfish farming/aquaculture facilities</li> <li>● Agency strategy - focus on agencies (not NOAA and NMFS) to not support offshore finfish farming - build relationships</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Hill strategy &amp; Direct lobbying: focus on key players involved with AQUAA Act, but also those who might help swing agencies to back off - build relationships. Identify Champions.</li> <li>● Engagement with regional community groups</li> <li>● Legal challenges</li> <li>● Develop and execute a communications / media strategy</li> <li>● Work with ally scientist(s) to create science-based opposition of OFF</li> <li>● Strategy to address James Beard Foundation.</li> <li>● Develop a public survey to counter ED's <a href="#">survey</a> and SATS <a href="#">survey</a>. Hire someone to do this.</li> </ul>

<p><b>#2</b></p> <p><b>No new attempts to develop offshore finfish farming programs in waters off of key states in the U.S.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Support court decisions or other declarations that prevent agencies from overstepping their authority and permitting offshore finfish farming/aquaculture facilities</li> <li>● Agency strategy - focus on agencies (not NOAA and NMFS) to not support offshore finfish farming - build relationships</li> <li>● Focus on federal waters off the key states of FL, LA, HI, CA, WA, ME (as of Dec. 2021)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Direct lobbying</li> <li>● Community organizing - work with site-fight organizations to develop regional opposition and action</li> <li>● Legal challenges</li> <li>● Develop and execute a communications / media strategy</li> <li>● Work with ally scientist(s) to create science-based opposition to OFF.</li> <li>● Strategy to address James Beard Foundation.</li> <li>● Develop a public survey to counter ED's <a href="#">survey</a>. Hire someone to do this.</li> </ul>
<p><b>#3</b></p> <p><b>Shift in public awareness and perception regarding offshore finfish farming</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Develop a media strategy: Use media as an advocacy tool (social media, traditional media, investigative journalism, radio, billboards, videos, etc) to tell story and raise awareness</li> <li>● Start building direct actions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Work with Berlin Rosen</li> <li>● Host a training for Coalition partners on effective media outreach.</li> <li>● Materials development - create new/update older materials for outreach and advocacy</li> <li>● Work with ally scientist(s) to create science-based opposition to OFF.</li> <li>● Strategy to address James Beard Foundation.</li> <li>● Develop a public survey to counter ED's <a href="#">survey</a>. Hire someone to do this.</li> <li>● 2 or 3 direct actions in 2022. October - Halloween (scary!)</li> </ul>



<p><b>#4</b></p> <p><b>Replace offshore finfish farming demand with <a href="#">values-based seafood production</a> that includes wild capture and appropriately scaled and sited recirculating farming.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the baseline of “values-based seafood production” that the Coalition can build consensus around?</li> <li>• Family fish farmers / community-based fish farmers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engagement with regional community groups</li> <li>• Develop and execute a communications / media strategy</li> <li>• Work with ally scientist(s) to create science-based opposition to OFF.</li> <li>• Develop a public survey to counter ED’s <a href="#">survey</a>.</li> </ul>
<p><b>#5</b></p> <p><b>Strong and thriving coalition</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build the Coalition to 30 member groups in 2022.</li> <li>• Total of 3-6 groups/leaders comprise the core of DCOC in 2022.</li> <li>• 5 coastal and fishing community leaders serve as advisors to and spokespeople for DCOC in 2022.</li> <li>• 3 scientists serve as advisors to and spokespeople for DCOC in 2022.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hold a power mapping activity with members of the Coalition in order to assess and prioritize our various tactics.</li> <li>• Hold an annual coalition meeting.</li> <li>• Farmers strategy - work specifically with farmers and farming orgs to oppose offshore finfish farming (raising soy and corn for fish feed is not beneficial)</li> <li>• Expand our Network outside the box: ie: local economies project, New Economy Coalition, Student activist groups, businesses, restaurants, etc.</li> </ul>

## TACTIC DETAILS

GOAL #1. National strategy to stop offshore finfish farming in U.S. [federal waters]				
Year-1				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Block the AQUAA Act/other federal legislation (like riders too)</li> <li>Support court decisions or other mechanisms that prevent agencies from overstepping their authority and permitting offshore finfish farming facilities</li> <li>Agency strategy - focus on agencies (not NOAA and NMFS) to not support offshore finfish farming - build relationships</li> </ul>				
DETAILED STEPS	ANCHOR	WHEN	WHO IS INVOLVED?	NOTES & WHAT HELPS, ASSISTANCE, OR RESOURCES NEEDED
Hill strategy & Direct lobbying: focus on key players involved with AQUAA Act, but also those who might help swing agencies to back off - build relationships. Identify Champions.	James	Ongoing	Policy & Legislative Circle AK-WA DC Members Coalition Partners SC & Staff	More members More partners Detailed strategy (see current <a href="#">legislative strategy doc</a> here)
Fight agency over-reach through the EO and Approps.	James	Every FY for Approps; ongoing for revocation of EO 13921 - May	Policy & Legislative Circle AK-WA DC Members (EO) Coalition Partners (EO) SC & Staff	Approps strategy - whether successful or not, should ALWAYS be something that NOAA is worried about - we will consistently try to de-fund their efforts every year. See <a href="#">administrative strategy doc here</a> .
Engagement with regional community groups	Andrianna	Ongoing	Members Coalition Partners SC & Staff	Outreach, Organizers, website, materials, support other spaces - develop a calendar. Events: IOC, LCN, Slow Fish DC

Legal challenges	Marianne	Ongoing	FWW, CFS, Waterkeeper, CBD, FOE	
Develop and activate a communications / media strategy	Andrianna	Develop: end May Activate: ongoing	Comms Circle Berlin Rosen SC & Staff AK-WA DC	See <a href="#">communications strategy doc</a>
Work with ally scientist(s) to create science-based opposition to OFF	Andrianna	Ongoing	Science Circle	<a href="#">Circle notes</a>
Strategy to address James Beard Foundation.	James	End July - draft strategy	SC & Staff	Need to create strategy Brett: to pull together a timeline and names
Develop a public survey to counter ED's <a href="#">survey</a> .	Marianne	Dec 2022	SC & Staff	More intel about the elections Conversations with funders

<p><b>GOAL #2. No new attempts to develop offshore finfish farming programs in <i>federal</i> waters off of <i>key states</i> in the U.S.</b></p> <p><b>Year 1</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Attain court decisions or other mechanisms</b> that prevent agencies from overstepping their authority and permitting offshore finfish farming/aquaculture facilities</li> <li>• Agency strategy - focus on agencies (not NOAA and NMFS) to not support offshore finfish farming - build relationships</li> <li>• Velella Epsilon and Hawaii</li> <li>• Focus on key states: HI, Gulf, CA, ME</li> </ul>				
<b>DETAILED STEPS</b>	<b>ANCHOR</b>	<b>WHEN</b>	<b>WHO IS INVOLVED?</b>	<b>NOTES &amp; WHAT HELPS, ASSISTANCE, OR RESOURCES ARE NEEDED</b>

Direct lobbying	James	Ongoing	Policy & Legislative Circle AK-WA DC State Focus SC & Staff	HI, Gulf, CA, ME
Community organizing - work with site-fight organizations to develop regional opposition and action	Andrianna	Ongoing	State Organizers Green Corps State Champions	Circle Coordination
Legal challenges	Marianne	Ongoing	CFS, FWW, Waterkeeper	
Develop and execute a communications / media strategy	Andrianna	Ongoing	Staff & SC Comms Circle Organizers Green Corps	Specific goals from state organizers. Have them provide more input to outreach plans & communication strategies. Develop Action Days.
Work with ally scientist(s) to create science-based opposition to OFF.	Andrianna	Ongoing	Staff & SC Science Circle	Build science circle, focusing on states Build on the Sarasota science community Build on HI
Strategy to address James Beard Foundation.	James	Sept: Letter	Restaurant members	Specific Restaurants in key areas Letter from JB Award Recipients about the evils of OFF
Develop a public survey to counter ED's <a href="#">survey</a> .	Marianne	By end of 2022		

**Goal #3: Shift in public awareness and perception regarding offshore finfish farming**

**Year-1**

- Develop a media strategy: Use media as an advocacy tool (social media, traditional media, investigative journalism, radio, billboards, videos, etc) to tell story and raise awareness
- Action Days

DETAILED STEPS	ANCHOR	WHEN	WHO IS INVOLVED?	NOTES & WHAT HELPS, ASSISTANCE, OR RESOURCES NEEDED
Work with Berlin Rosen	Marianne	Ongoing	SC & Staff AK-WA DC Organizers	See <a href="#">communications strategy doc</a>
Host a training for Coalition partners on effective media outreach.	James	October: Annual Meeting	SC & Staff IOC	
Materials development - create new/update older materials for outreach and advocacy	James & Andrianna	Ongoing	SC Julia Ramsey Circles	Develop a process
Work with ally scientist(s) to create science-based opposition to OFF.	Andrianna	Ongoing	Science circle	
Action Days	James & Andrianna CHOW - Brett Seafood Summit - Brett	? Ocean October CHOW?	State Members Organizers Green Corps SC & Staff	At least 3 in 2022; Develop a timeline State Specific: Gulf, DC, HI, WA Seafood Summit: In Alaska Aquaculture Expos
Develop a public survey to counter ED's <a href="#">survey</a> .	Marianne	By end of 2022		

**GOAL #4. Replace offshore finfish farming demand with values-based seafood production that includes wild capture and appropriately scaled and sited recirculating farming. Brett will flesh out**

**Year-1**

- What is the baseline of “values-based seafood production” that the Coalition can build consensus around?

DETAILED STEPS	ANCHOR	WHEN	WHO IS INVOLVED?	NOTES & WHAT HELPS, ASSISTANCE, OR RESOURCES NEEDED
Engagement with regional community groups.	Brett	Ongoing	Member Groups SC & Staff NAMA Fishing partners Restaurant Members	Priority groups that are already shifting seafood demand include: <a href="#">Anchors in Action</a> , Slow Fish, and Local Catch Network. NAMA will play a role to build synergy between these efforts and DCO2.  The role of DCO2 will be to provide guidance to each of these community groups around the pitfalls of OFF and the alternatives that we support.
Develop and execute a communications / media strategy	Andrianna	Ongoing		Integrate with communications strategy as outlined under goals #1 and #2.
Work with ally scientist(s) to create science-based sustainable alternatives	TBD.	Ongoing	Science Circle	Involvement will be determined by the goals and priorities set by the Science Circle.
Develop a public survey to counter ED’s <a href="#">survey</a> .	Marianne	End of 2022.		Integrate with survey efforts as mentioned under goals 1-3.

**Goal #5: Strong and thriving coalition**

**Year 1:**

- Build the Coalition to 30 member groups in 2022.
- 3-6 groups/leaders comprise the steering committee of DCOC in 2022.
- 5 coastal and fishing community leaders serve as advisors to and spokespeople for DCOC in 2022.
- 3 scientists serve as advisors to and spokespeople for DCOC in 2022.

DETAILED STEPS	ANCHOR	WHEN	WHO IS INVOLVED?	NOTES & WHAT HELPS, ASSISTANCE, OR RESOURCES NEEDED
Hold a power mapping activity with members of the Coalition in order to assess and prioritize our various tactics.	James	Annual Meeting	Brett Members	Annual Meeting Build on NAMA's This will help inform our approach to Goals 1-4 above.
Hold an annual coalition meeting	Andrianna	Oct?? CHOW in 2023	SC & Staff Members	Have a preliminary meeting/lunch on June 10th with folx in town for CHOW. See if there is any other reason people will be in DC and piggy back on that.
Farmers strategy - work specifically with farmers and farming orgs to oppose offshore finfish farming (raising soy and corn for fish feed is not beneficial)	Andrianna	Ongoing	NFFC	Op-eds IATP Webinar.
Expand our Network outside the box: ie: local economies project, New Economy Coalition, Student activist groups, etc.	James	Ongoing	Andrianna James Brett	Earth Echo, environment America: James has contact with them. They can actually turn out tons of youth voices to boring agency calls where they solicit public feedback during the public commenting period as part of agency rulemaking. Restaurants: James