

Voices of the Bioneers

Special to the *Co-op Reporter*

By Wallace J. Nichols

LIVBLUE

If I were to sum up the work I've been involved in over the past two decades into one simple statement for that hypothetical "elevator pitch" (that never seems to happen, no matter how many elevators I get on) it would be something like: "I spend my time asking people to live in ways that are friendlier to our ocean planet."

The "asking" comes in the form of conversations (long and short ones), research publications, petitions, letters, resolutions, lawsuits, films, public presentations, concerts, stickers, television shows, documentary films, random interviews...generally the asking is polite, tempered, patient. But occasionally we turn up the volume.

The "askees" have ranged from my parents, neighbors, students and friends, to sea turtle hunters, government agencies, fishing cooperatives, costenos, my employer, people on the beach, my mayor, our local restauranteurs, surfers and people I've never met. Generally, I find that people are receptive, increasingly so. And that blue living—ocean-friendly living—is something people WANT to do. They are looking for ways to live blue. And there are many other people out there asking, and living blue, too.

Vikki Spruill, president of Ocean Conservancy, is clear on this: Our work is about communication of an ocean ethic. In our case, as people focused on the marine environment, we seek to share details of an "ocean friendly" lifestyle to anyone who will listen and especially those whose lives intersect the ocean most.

I find it hard to imagine a human being on our ocean planet who doesn't live off the ocean daily. And there are very few who can get through a day without impacting the ocean in some small or large way.

If I had to get my pitch down to a single phrase (perhaps on a very fast elevator?), it would be this: LIVE BLUE, or shortened even further: LIVBLUE!

LIVBLUE is a message that unifies various campaigns, projects and programs under one simple, positive phrase. LIVBLUE is a response to the growing "green" movement and a way to lead the growing ocean conservation movement, while representing "ocean friendly living" to new constituencies and expanding our base.

LIVBLUE Resonates

Popular recent social marketing campaigns such as LIVESTRONG, Live Earth, Live 8, Live AID and others help LIVBLUE resonate and “make sense” immediately. But LIVBLUE remains remarkably fresh. The action verb LIVE combined with the ocean color BLUE results in a strong call to action. The phrase puts a clear call to action out to the ocean movement, without the potentially abrasive (to some) language often associated with movements.

LIVBLUE Message

The LIVE (verb) + BLUE format provides us with a clear set of LIVBLUE actions that coordinate with current strategic priorities and major ocean programs. These will be the detailed “calls to action” on the LIVBLUE.org Web site.

For example:

EATBLUE: Promotion of local sustainable seafood choices at home and in restaurants. A nice counterpoint to our fisheries, ocean wildlife bycatch and aquaculture work.

A great, organic product called Whale Tail Chips allows you to dip your chip and save the ocean at the same time!

And don't forget, SHRIMP SUCK. Don't eat them, unless you know that they're sustainably fished or organically farmed. Most shrimp aren't.

SHOPBLUE: Support local, ocean-friendly businesses, such as those using biodegradable materials, reducing their ocean footprint and those selling used or rebuilt items. Support your local businesses wherever you are and buy locally-made and grown items whenever possible. And be sure not to add to the heap of disposable plastic!

SEEBLUE: Make your travel count. Our ocean wildlife conservation tourism program, beginning with SEE Turtles and potentially expanding to SEE Whales, SEE Sharks, SEE Reefs, etc. puts you where your vacation can tip the balance for endangered ocean animals. Check it out [HERE](#).

RIDEBLUE: Advocate for high MPG vehicles, public transportation, walking/cycling, biofuels, hybrids, etc. And help Stop Ocean Warming.

VOTEBLUE: Aligning with our colleagues like Ocean Champions to advocate for supporters of ocean governance.

LIVBLUE is also a call for people to become members of “blue orgs,” at least one local ocean-saving organization (such as a community group, Surfrider or WaterKeeper

chapter) and one national/international organization such as Ocean Conservancy.
LIVBLUE Helps Reach New Constituencies

We can follow this ocean lifestyle messaging to new media including television, Web and magazines that are normally not on the eco-media list. LIVBLUE will help us access people who care about the ocean and environmental issues, who may not have found a place in the ocean movement previously (e.g. surfers, boaters, seafood lovers, hybrid drivers). LIVBLUE could also help us reach a younger group of people via concerts, social networking sites, etc. LIVBLUE can also help us to connect with other ocean organizations in a complementary way—in particular smaller, local ones.

Miscellaneous LIVBLUE thoughts

There may be “green” fatigue coming...the LIVBLUE “blue” ocean message is fresh... facts are on our side: 70% of the earth’s surface, 80% of biodiversity, “ocean warming,” overfishing, increased attention on plastics in the ocean, etc...“LIVBLUE” per google.com is wide open as an eco-phrase, top hits are related to sports, blue crabs and music...we could “own” the phrase immediately in our niche...everyone I’ve discussed LIVBLUE with “gets it” and quickly begins using it...

Reprinted with permission from liveblue.org and Wallace J. Nichols.

Wallace J. Nichols, Ph.D. (www.wallacejnichols.org) is a scientist, ocean activist, author and a dad. He's senior scientist at the Ocean Conservancy and a research associate at the California Academy of Sciences. He works with many non-profit organizations, youth, fishermen and researchers around the world to build an Ocean Revolution. He's especially fond of sea turtles.