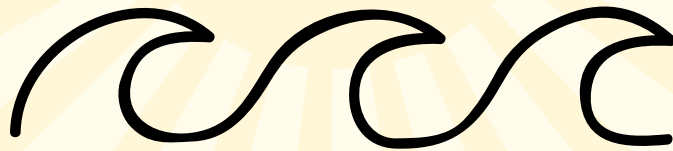


**2023**

# HIGHLIGHTS

AT NP WATERKEEPER®



## Impact Report

This is a comprehensive document that provides a detailed overview of our organization's actions in surf-town Santa Teresa and surroundings from January to December, 2023.



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# ABOUT US



Nicoya Peninsula Waterkeeper is a Costa Rican non-profit organization on a mission to protect water from pollution on the coastal area between the Cabo Blanco Absolute Reserve and the Caletas-Arrio Wildlife Refuge. We raise awareness within the community regarding the main threats to water quality so that we all understand the impact of human actions in water. We look for, create, and offer information, tools, and solutions so that we can, all together as a community, reduce that impact and re-establish a healthier way to relate with nature.



## OUR MISSION

Our mission is to monitor, protect and restore water quality in the coastal watershed and marine ecosystem in our area of action through research, field work, education and advocacy.

We are filling a critical niche in the Southern Nicoya Peninsula as the voice of the ocean and the coastal watersheds.

## OUR VISION

We work towards having fully functioning ecological, biological and hydrological aquatic ecosystems in the ocean and the coastal watersheds.

We work constantly and passionately to come up with new projects that make this vision possible.

# OUR DREAM TEAM

The essence of our organization is to work together as a family, having in common our love for nature and the place we call home!

**Carolina**



Waterkeeper® and ED

**Ariadna**



Program Coordinator

**Nicole**



Communications Coordinator

**Luis**



Coordinator for Water Pollution Prevention

**Carla**



Recycling Project Coordinator

**Evelyn**



Beach Cleanup Project Coordinator

**Cindy**



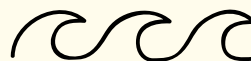
Organic and Special Waste Project Coordinator

**Armando**



Ocean Friendly Business® Project Coordinator

Besides our coordination staff, there is a team of **15** members for our Recycling Project, a team of **4** collectors for our Beach Cleanup project and a Board of **7** Directors. Everyone with the same goal: A CLEAN OCEAN!



# OUR LINES OF ACTION

These four interconnected pillars are the base of our projects for water pollution prevention in a coastal area with low governmental effective action:



**NP WATERKEEPER®**  
 Water Quality Testing

Recycling Project

Solid waste and wastewater trainings and advice

Solid waste and wastewater pollution reports

Grease and Oil Management

**THE BEACH CLEANUP** Beach Cleanup Project  
BY NP WATERKEEPER®

**OCEAN FRIENDLY BUSINESS®** Ocean Friendly Business® Project

Organic Waste Management

Special Waste Campaigns



We monitor water quality in **20 local rivers and streams** once a month.

This year we opened it to the **community**, so that they can join us, learn more about town's streams and get to see with their own eyes the impact of human activity on water pollution levels in Santa Teresa and surrounding towns.



We collect data from the rivers and ocean water samples to check their **pollution levels.**

### RIVER WATER

Fecal Coliform Quantity (NMP/100ml)	Classification
< 100	<span style="color: blue;">●</span> No pollution
100 to 240	<span style="color: green;">●</span> Incipient pollution
240 to 500	<span style="color: yellow;">●</span> Moderate pollution
500 to 1000	<span style="color: orange;">●</span> Severe pollution
> 1000	<span style="color: red;">●</span> Highly polluted water

**Danta River** ●  
Highly Polluted Water  
7.900 NMP/100ml

JUNE

**Carmen River** ●  
Highly Polluted Water  
> 160.000 NMP/100ml

JUNE

**Hermosa Parking Lot Stream** ●  
Highly Polluted Water  
4.300 NMP/100ml

SEP

**Hermosa Majagua Stream** ●  
Highly Polluted Water  
9.200 NMP/100ml

SEP

# OCEAN WATER



Fecal Coliform Quantity (NMP/100ml)	Fecal Streptococcus	Classification
< 100	10	<span style="color: blue;">●</span> No pollution
100 to 240	10 - 50	<span style="color: green;">●</span> Incipient pollution
240 to 500	50 - 100	<span style="color: yellow;">●</span> Moderate pollution
500 to 1000	100 - 200	<span style="color: orange;">●</span> Severe pollution
> 1000	> 200	<span style="color: red;">●</span> Highly polluted water

**Carmen** ●  
No pollution  
11 NMP/100ml

JUNE

**Santa Teresa** ●  
Moderate Pollution  
350 NMP/100ml

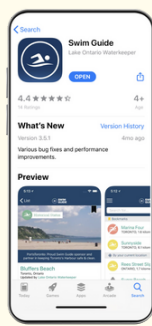
JUNE

**Hermosa** ●  
No pollution  
7.8 NMP/100ml

JUNE

These results are just “a photograph” of the water quality at the moment of sampling, which varies considerably daily. A better understanding of the pollution levels requires more frequency of testing. **See the results of all the tested points [here!](#)**

Hermosa’s streams and ocean water were monitored more frequently in 2023 thanks to the funding provided by the Hermosa Civic Association.



## GOOD NEWS on water quality testing:

We are currently working on fundraising for a new project that will use compact efficient equipment that will let us have more accurate samplings and results in **24 hours or less!**

The main objective is to add these weekly results to the **SwimGuide App** for locals and visitors to know if their favorite spot is swimmable or surfable due to the water pollution levels. Isn't this amazing?!





## 2023 HIGHLIGHT:

We finally found a solution for grease trap waste and used cooking oils!



Instead of ending up in the land and water, tons (literally!) of grease will be properly processed. This is HUGE and has an extremely positive impact on the quality of water and the local environment!

We made an alliance with an industrial composting farm in Cartago so that come collect grease trap waste from local restaurants which they treat and produce organic fertilizer. Used cooking oils will be turned into biodiesel. In 2023 we had **8 collection routes**:

### 1st Route

18 businesses registered  
**1.240 kg collected**

MARCH

### 5th Route

38 businesses registered  
**3.360 kg collected**

SEP

### 2nd Route

18 businesses registered  
**1.435 kg collected**

MAY

### 6th Route

38 businesses registered  
**1.901 kg collected**

OCT

### 3rd Route

29 businesses registered  
**2.765 kg collected**

JUNE

### 7th Route

40 businesses registered  
**3.372kg collected**

NOV

### 4th Route

32 businesses registered  
**1.911 kg collected**

JULY

### 8th Route

40 businesses registered  
**3.340 kg collected**

DEC

## 19.326 kg of grease

were properly processed instead of ending up polluting the land and water with **40 businesses** registered in the route. This is extremely positive and this is just a **13%** of the estimated amount of businesses in town. Imagine the impact on stream and ocean quality if every single business disposed of its greases correctly!

**Join the route here!**



For Reference:  
The weight of a regular pickup truck is 1,000 kg

We encourage constant questioning of consumption habits, **REFUSING WHAT IS NOT NEEDED**. We all have the individual responsibility to choose what we consume wisely, as well as the way in which we are going to return the waste to the environment.

NP Waterkeeper shares information with the community, looks for and provides solutions, tools, and mechanisms to allow solid waste to be managed appropriately through:

- Recycling
- Beach Cleanups
- Organic Waste
- Special Waste

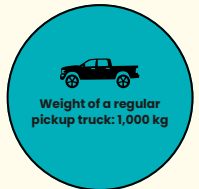


## RECYCLING

Thanks to the financial support of our partner **BIONIC®**, we run weekly routes, collecting all the recyclables from town and pre-process the materials.

In 2023, we collected  
**264 tons of recyclables**

 x 264



**293 BUSINESSES** and **423 HOUSES** started recycling since we began the recycling center's operations in January 2019.

We also give maintenance to **11 RECYCLING STATIONS** so that the neighbors and businesses can dispose of their recyclables at any time during the week.



## WE LAUNCHED A NEW PROJECT IN 2023!

**The Beach Cleanup** is our newest solid waste management project, born thanks to Nicoya Peninsula Waterkeeper's field expertise, a group of generous donors' financial contributions, and the innovative technology developed by the CRDC implemented by Grupo Pedregal construction company, to work towards cleaner beaches in the Southern Nicoya Peninsula, where the amount of beach waste has been constantly increasing.



### How does it work?

We have a team of **4 people** responsible for cleaning the beaches **from Monday to Friday, from 7:00 am to 4:00 pm.**

We have located stations strategically across town from which we operate and send each category of waste to its final destination.

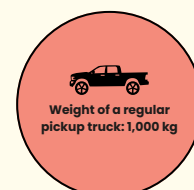
### The best part: tragic plastic will not be polluting the beaches or landfills anymore!

We joined the national environmental initiative **Paisajes sin Plástico** to incorporate the deteriorated plastic we collect from the beach into **RESIN8** - synthetic sand made with 80% tragic plastic - used to manufacture blocks and tiles for construction.

All this tragic plastic is periodically sent from Cóbano to the Pedregal for processing.



From May to December, we collected **4.253 kg of beach waste** from which **2.720 kg (64%)** are tragic plastics that will be used for construction!



See the detailed results of this amazing project [here](#).



# ORGANIC WASTE

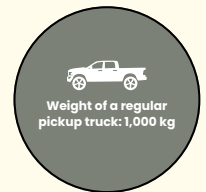


Through the Ocean Friendly Business® project, we promote on-site composting through trainings and follow-up visits.

We have built capacity of farmers around Cóbano so that they collect organic waste from local restaurants, giving value to this waste while reducing greenhouse gas emissions.



In 2023, we prevented  
**707 tons of organic waste**  
from being disposed of in the trash and  
ending up in a landfill.



We prevent **expired medications**  
from polluting the water!

In alliance with **Punto Seguro**, a Costa Rican company dedicated to appropriately managing medical waste, we have **2 MEDICATION COLLECTION BINS**, one at our office in Santa Teresa and another at the recycling center in Cóbano.

## SPECIAL WASTE

In alliance with the Municipality and private donors, we collect electronic waste for its proper processing and recycling.

**In October 2023 we collected a total of 10 tons of electronic waste in the E-waste collection campaign!**

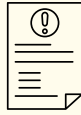


Let's change the way we relate with nature. The more we understand and appreciate its value, the more we will respect it.

In 2023, we held  
**44 talks and trainings**  
about recycling, composting, and  
wastewater management,  
reaching a total of  
**357 people.**



We must understand the problem and realize the environmental impact of human activities to be able to come up with ideas, solutions and actions **to reduce it**, taking responsibility for valuing and protecting the natural resources that make life on this planet possible. It is up to all of us!



We work together with the authorities to encourage law enforcement.

As part of the Wastewater Working Group together with the Municipality and the Ministry of Health, we aim at addressing pollution cases **more efficiently**.



During 2023, we filed **30 wastewater pollution claims** (23 new cases and 7 follow-up cases).

This year, the Ministry of Health had a more efficient response which has resulted in several businesses **installing a wastewater treatment plant or a more efficient wastewater treatment system**.



OCEAN  
FRIENDLY  
BUSINESS®



Ocean Friendly Business® is a project that supports businesses in their transformation process towards implementing sustainable practices that contribute to ocean health.

We are providing restaurants, hotels, and rental houses with a framework that outlines how they can reduce their ocean pollution through simple, practical actions.



## 12 restaurants and 7 accommodations

are certified as an Ocean Friendly Business®  
**+42 other businesses  
are underway!**



This process requires a firm commitment from the businesses and a clear understanding of the importance of adopting these practices.

### To become an Ocean Friendly Business® they need to:

- recycle,
- compost or correctly dispose of their organic waste,
- have appropriate wastewater treatment,
- be part of the grease and oil collection route,
- avoid using single-use plastics,
- use non-polluting cleaning products,
- comply with the country's current legislation.

### These 19 OFB have reduced a yearly average of:



**45.600** units of plastic bottles  
**114.000** units of plastic straws  
**114.000** units of plastic bags



# VISIBILITY AND LOCAL FUNDRAISING

Our social media chanelns and local fundraising efforts have helped us consolidate our presence in town!

## SOCIAL MEDIA

Our follower list keeps growing!  
We have **5.154** followers on Facebook  and **5.779** on Instagram. 

In 2023, our content with the highest reach was the Grease Trap Waste reel with **12.700** views!



## MERCHANDISING

Our summer 2023 t-shirt collection has been a success! It launched by the beginning of the year and is still available at stores around town. **#idocare**



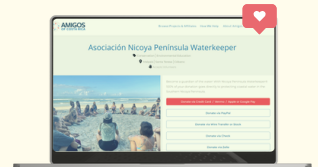
## PARTNERSHIPS

We partnered up with online store **Compra Sin Plástico** and launched the "Beach Kit", from which we receive 10% of each purchase.



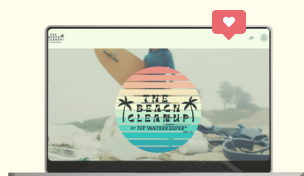
## DONATIONS

We are now receiving all of our donations through fiscal sponsor **Amigos of Costa Rica**. This way we can receive contributions through Credit card, Venmo, International Wire Transfers, Stock and Charitable giving funds.



## CROWDFUNDING

In 2023 we launched **2 crowdfunding platforms** via Classy x Amigos of Costa Rica. These for our two new projects: **The Beach Cleanup** and the **Water Quality Testing Project**, which is still in progress.



## LOCAL MEMBERSHIPS

We rebuilt our membership system, with new benefits and loyalty rewards for attracting more local community members to contribute to our projects!





# NEXT STEPS

## 01 Consolidate the growth of the organization

Our organization has grown considerably in the past year to be able to tackle increasing pollution levels deriving from the town's post-covid accelerated growth. .

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## 02 New Water Quality Monitoring Project

This project will allow us to sample ocean water in-house with fast accurate results shared through the Swim Guide app for locals and tourists to know if their favorite spot is swimmable or surfable.

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## 03 Circular economy project

We want to increase the support we provide to local farmers so that they can consolidate their capacity to collect organic waste from restaurants, create chemical-free compost and grow organic food locally.

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## 04 The Beach Cleanup

We launched this project in 2023 and need to secure its funding to continue to be able to implement it for years to follow as the plastic issue will take some years to address.

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## 05 Ocean Friendly Business®

As this project addresses our main lines of action regarding water health, this is an essential tool for us to reach an increasing number of businesses in town and drive them towards a way of development that respects natural resources.

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[Support here](#)

**Hope you liked what we shared!  
We are grateful for the donations,  
contributions and involvement of the  
community that make all this possible!**

**Thank you for an amazing 2023,  
let's make 2024 even better!**



I  
DO  
CARE.

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[Support us here](#)