

Waitt Institute – Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Waitt Institute?

The [Waitt Institute](#) is a non-profit organization based in Washington, DC. It was founded in 2005 by [Ted Waitt](#) (co-founder of Gateway Computers) to foster exploration and discovery. The focus of the Waitt Institute has shifted in recent years, and today its mission is “empowering communities to restore their oceans to full productivity.” To achieve this, the Waitt Institute directs its efforts toward fostering deep collaborations with local governments and communities to create comprehensive ocean zoning and management solutions. For more information, please visit www.waittinstitute.org.

What is our mission statement?

The Waitt Institute endeavors to ensure ecologically, economically, and culturally sustainable use of ocean resources. The Institute partners with governments committed to developing and implementing comprehensive, science-based, community-driven solutions for sustainable ocean management. The Institute goal is to benefit coastal communities while restoring fish populations and habitats. The Institute approach is to engage stakeholders, provide the tools needed to design locally appropriate policies, facilitate the policymaking process, and build capacity for effective implementation and long-term success.

Who is on our team?

Executive Director, *Ayana Elizabeth Johnson, Ph.D.*

Program Manager, *Stephanie Roach*

Science Manager, *Andy Estep*

Senior Financial Accountant, *Dawn Salvador*

General Counsel, *Mark Dickey*

Contractors, [SeaSketch](#), [Environmental Law Institute](#), [Daryn Deluco](#), [The Brandling](#), [Shah Selbe](#), [WildAid](#), [Scripps Institution of Oceanography](#), [Kate Gardiner](#)

Full staff bios are available [here](#). Information about our Board of Directors available [here](#).

What is the difference between the Waitt Institute and the Waitt Foundation?

Both the Waitt Institute and Waitt Foundation were founded and are funded by Mr. Ted Waitt, to address pressing ocean issues. The Institute *does* conservation, while the Foundation *funds* conservation. Priorities of the Institute are ocean zoning and sustainability of small-scale fisheries. The Foundation’s funding priorities are creating, strengthening, and expanding marine protected areas (MPAs) as a fisheries management tool, and promoting sustainable fishing solutions broadly. For a complete comparison of the Institute and Foundation, please visit our website and see this [table](#).

How are the Waitt Institute projects funded?

The [Waitt Foundation](#) funds the Waitt Institute. As the Institute expands its work to additional sites, we are seeking partners to co-fund the Blue Halo Initiative. If you are interested in supporting this Initiative, please [contact us](#).

What is the Blue Halo Initiative?

The [Blue Halo Initiative](#) sets out to empower communities to restore their oceans, and use ocean resources sustainably, profitably, and enjoyably for this and future generations. This is done by partnering with governments, communities, and scientists to create and implement ocean policies, including sustainable fishing practices and comprehensive ocean zoning. The Waitt Institute provides the toolkit, and the partner governments provide the political will. The Blue Halo Initiative deeply engages stakeholders in a science-based, community-driven approach.

Who do we work with?

The Waitt Institute works with committed governments and communities who understand the need for, and benefits of, managing fisheries sustainably. We contract technical experts to work with us at Initiative sites, such as [Environmental Law Institute](#) (legal analysis and drafting), [Sustainable Fisheries Group](#) at UCSB (fisheries research and modeling), [NOVA](#) (habitat mapping), [SeaSketch](#) (community-based mapping and zoning analysis), [Daryn Deluco](#) (film), and [The Brandling](#) (graphic design).

How does the Waitt Institute choose Blue Halo Initiative sites?

We work where our help is wanted, needed, and can be of use. The Waitt Institute selects Blue Halo sites based on the level of political will (bipartisan and at the highest levels) and stakeholder support for working to create and implement new sustainable ocean policies and coastal zoning. Other factors such as population, economy, status of marine resources, and safety are also considered.

Does the Waitt Institute work only in the Caribbean?

In previous years, while under the mission of “exploration and discovery”, the Waitt Institute partnered with institutions and scientists around the world. Today, the Waitt Institute’s Blue Halo Initiative is currently only in the Caribbean, but we plan to expand to other regions in a few years.

How can I keep updated about Waitt Institute activities and news?

To stay up to date with the Waitt Institute, follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), [Vimeo](#), [YouTube](#). We also have a newsletter for the Institute. And visit the [blog](#) and [press](#) pages on the Institute website for more.

How can I get involved?

- A. **Social Media:** We’d love your help spreading the word about the work we do and about solutions for sustainable ocean use more broadly. Follow us on social media, share our [factsheets](#), and focus on [#OceanOptimism](#) and out [#BlueHalo](#) Initiative.
- B. **Volunteering:** We do not yet have an active volunteer program, but if you’re interested in working with us please [contact us](#) indicating what skills you’d like to contribute, and we’ll add you to our roster of people to contact once we have a mechanism in place for engaging with volunteers.
- C. **Your Ideas:** Send us an email with any ideas about how we can improve the effectiveness of the work we do or what we should try to tackle next. We’re all ears.

Where will the next Blue Halo site be?

We have some ideas, but we'd love to hear from you. If you and/or your government are interested in partnering with the Waitt Institute on developing and implementing a sustainable ocean management plan, please [contact us](#).