



The Stone Soup Leadership Institute's Report

For College of Marin
Dr. Jonathan Eldridge, President

November 2024-May 2025

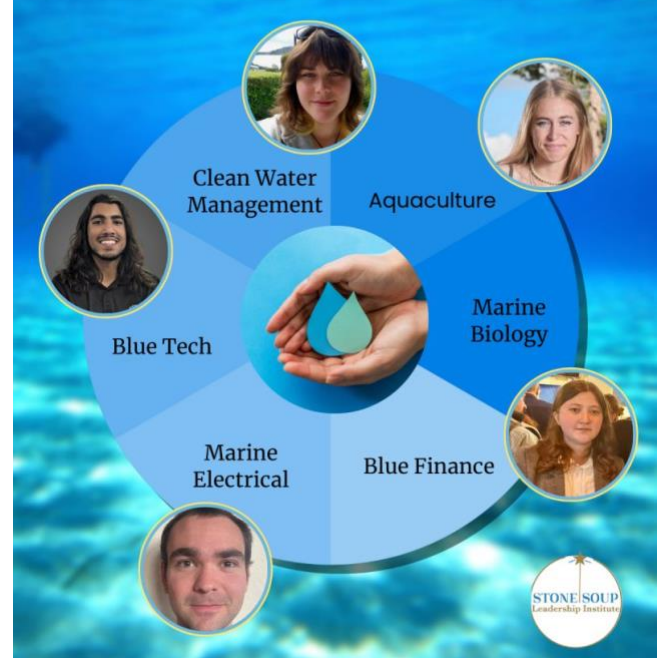


Stone Soup Leadership Institute
www.stonesoupleadership.org
www.SustainWDN.com

The Institute's Sustainable Career Pathways Interns



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Positioning the College of Marin as a Leader in California's Blue Economy

California's Blue Economy is booming—spanning ocean exploration, sustainable aquaculture, underwater robotics, and marine-based renewable energy. The OECD projects this sector will surpass **\$3 trillion globally by 2030**. This explosive growth demands bold partnerships between academia and industry to shape a future workforce ready to meet the challenge—and the College of Marin is uniquely poised to lead.

With its cutting-edge facilities, 333-acre Indian Valley Campus, a strong endowment, and deep community roots, the College has a once-in-a-generation opportunity to become a regional hub for Blue Economy innovation, workforce training, and environmental leadership. This is more than an academic strategy—it's a legacy-defining moment for the next 100 years.

The Blue Economy presents a powerful path forward:

- A platform for **transformative collaboration** across industry, education, and community.
- A magnet for **new academic programs**, funding, and student engagement.
- A way to join with those who are invested in the Blue Economy—like Hog Island Co.'s 40-year investment in growing locally sourced food to create a **Blue Farm-to-Table movement**.
- A chance to honor the **visionary legacy of the Kent family** and generations of Marin leaders dedicated to protecting our natural resources.

As Marin rebuilds in the wake of the pandemic and prepares for shifting federal priorities, the time is now for a bold, future-facing economic vision. With the transformation of the Bolinas Field Station, the College has a critical opportunity to convene the community and ask:

***How might we build a thriving Blue Economy —
one that empowers youth to lead in creating a more sustainable world?***

- Marin students are seeking **green career pathways** that offer both purpose and prosperity.
 - Blue Economy employers are ready to invest in **local workforce development**: they need partners
 - Our highly educated community want to serve as **guest speakers, mentors, and adjunct faculty**.
 - High schools stand ready to align curricula, expand **dual-enrollment**, and **career certificates**.
- Portugal is a global leader in the Blue Economy. The large Portuguese community in Sausalito and the Bay Area could be invited to join in and expand their Sister City program to embrace Blue Economy development.
 - The College can learn from innovations like Boston's clean water management center, which transformed their harbor from the dirtiest to the cleanest in the US, processing water for 43 communities.
 - California has estimated thousands of new jobs in clean water management, thus the need for training. The College could become the new academic partner to repurpose the Romberg Center to become a workforce development training center for aquaculture and clean water management. The College could reach out to Marin City's community to provide entry-level clean water management training for Black men who have been left behind by previous funding cuts. This could have a powerful ripple effect on the whole community.

The momentum is real. The infrastructure is in place. The leadership opportunity is now.
Let the College of Marin lead California—and the nation—into the Blue Economy future.

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Building Blue Economy Workforce Development Pipeline & Eco-System
The Stone Soup Leadership Institute's Showcase:
Blue Job Shadow Day & the Sustainable Career Pathways Internship

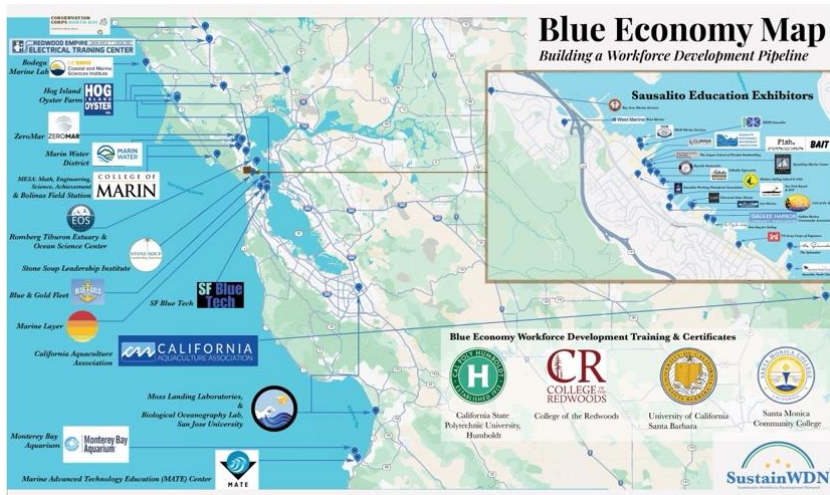
The Stone Soup Leadership Institute announced our Cronkite Oceans Initiative at the 2024 Cronkite Oceans Award in conjunction with Climate Week in New York City in September 2024. [Cronkite Oceans Initiative](#)
In November, we embarked on developing a Showcase with a series of meetings with College of Marin President Dr. Eldridge and student leaders of the Environmental Action Club to explore how the College could expand its academic programs to respond to the desire of students to be trained for sustainability careers. We then developed a partnership with the College to host a Blue Job Shadow Day on February 12, 2025.

The Institute is a global workforce development leader: we use our educational tools and leadership trainings to develop customized community initiatives and public-private partnerships that empower young people to become leaders in their communities. We build bridges with business, education, and community and government leaders using our SustainWDN™ Platform as a planning tool for communities to re-envision their future. We have worked with other community colleges that are responding to local business needs by expanding their academic programs to include more sustainability-oriented certificates, dual-enrollment programs, and [workforce development training programs](#). (See [Blue Economy Case Studies](#) & Fall River, Massachusetts [link](#))

The Blue Job Shadow Day builds on three decades of hosting Job Shadow Days on Martha's Vineyard and in communities around the world. This immersive career event brought together leaders from local and national blue companies to enlighten students, educators, and academic leaders about the potential of the Blue Economy in the Bay Area. Local companies and organizations presented educational exhibits with workforce development opportunities – internships, jobs, certificates. They also completed the Institute's [Blue Economy Business Survey](#) and shared their needs, projected jobs, challenges and goals. (See [Newsletter](#) [video](#))

*I am really hoping that College of Marin will do more in the future - we've only scratched the surface.
We can do so much more with it! The College's students are ready for it.*

Reva Siu-Masset, Environmental Action Club



Our [Blue Economy Business Survey](#) shows that local companies need sustainability certificates. Businesses strongly believe that these certificates will prepare students for the Blue Economy, especially in Aquaculture, Clean Water Management, Regenerative Agriculture, Marine Electricity, and Coast Guard Licensing. But until now, companies have had to search elsewhere for their workforce development training.

- **Aquaculture:** Hog Island Co. goes to Humboldt's Cal Poly Tech and Santa Monica Community College.
- **Marine Electrical:** Call of the Sea, Spaulding Marine Center, Clipper Yacht Harbor: on-the-job training

- While the College's transfer programs are commendable, more students -- especially students of color -- could benefit from job-rich sustainability certificates that align academics with real-world needs. In addition, many students aspire to continue living in Marin/Bay Area. By training local students for local jobs, it could help alleviate the housing crisis. Developing a local workforce trained to care for our communities is a win-win strategy.



The Institute's Sustainable Career Pathways Internship

Following Blue Job Shadow Day, CoM students joined a 10-week intensive paid internship to explore our SustainWDN™ Sustainable Career Pathways Platform. They were inspired by stories and videos from the *Stone Soup Climate Education Curriculum*, and discovered real-world examples of careers in sustainability that will pay them to help protect, preserve, and rebuild the planet. They used our leadership development tools to envision their 5-year plans; develop professional portfolios and learned how to use professional tools like LinkedIn to search for local jobs. They interviewed local and national Blue Economy leaders and attended professional networking events with professionals who opened their minds and expanded their perspective on how they could seek job opportunities. The interns worked with our tech team to explore the wealth of resources available in our Sustainable Career Pathways. Each features the education requirements for entry, mid, and advanced-level jobs, as well as projected jobs and salary ranges. They researched other community colleges that are offering sustainability certificates to meet this demand. Through their research, interns were heartened to find that these careers are accessible, in demand, and offer living wages that could allow them to live and work in Marin and the Bay Area. Eager to support future students and the College's sustainability goals, they have made the following key recommendations for the College.



The College of Marin's SustainWDN™ Sustainable Career Pathways is the first designed specifically for community college students. Our goal is to scale it to other community colleges across the state and around the world.

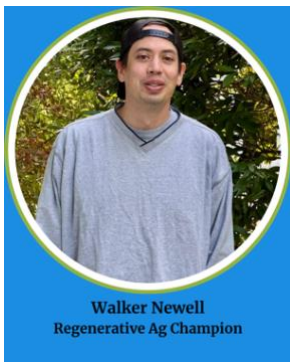
The Institute created a Showcase site to feature all the Interns presentations sharing their journeys with the Sustainable Career Pathways Internship. **Learn more** [here](#)



Recommendations from the Sustainable Career Pathways Interns
Clean Water Management Pathway Champion Alex Loucks unearthed a treasure trove of the good-paying blue jobs that are emerging as California's pipeline of new water workers is drying up. A Bay Area water workforce report found there is an urgent need for candidates to apply for mission-critical roles - thousands of openings for electricians, instrumentation technicians, mechanics, heavy equipment operators. Alex was inspired by interviewing **Professor Robert Rak** at **Bristol Community College's Blue Center for Water Technologies** - and hopeful that he thought the **Romberg Center** in her Tiburon community could be repurposed as a training center for both aquaculture and clean water management for Marin City jobs.

Alex recommends:

- **Curriculum Development:** Collaboration with industry professionals and accrediting bodies to develop a curriculum that meets SWRCB and CWEA standards.
- **Faculty Training:** Engage current instructors and possible future instructors with practical experience in wastewater operations who are and can be certified professionally.
- **Partnerships:** Establish possible partnerships with local water agencies and wastewater agencies to provide students with hands-on training and internship opportunities.



Regenerative Ag Pathway Champion Walker Newell would like to revitalize COM's **Indian Valley Organic Farm and Garden (IVOFG)** program. Given Marin's lack of farmable land, IVC, with its 333 acres of land, is an ideal location to offer regenerative agriculture certificates and to partner with local regenerative agriculture farms to offer **work study & internship programs** so more students can gain work experiences prior to graduation. This could help meet the growing demand for locally sourced food from Community Supported Agriculture (CSAs) and local Farmers Markets. Walker was thrilled to interview Marin's Regenerative Ag leader **Lisa Poncia** at **Stemple Creek Ranch** who offered to provide teach CoM courses and give students the first-hand experience that many local regenerative agriculture jobs require for entry level positions. He suggests creating a work

study program with a variety of farms - since picking vegetables, maintaining a vineyard, dairy farming or managed grazing is different from farm to farm -- and offers hands-on experience beyond the classroom. Walker affirmed his own research by interviewing the Institute's Regenerative Agriculture leader, **Vincent Kimura** in Hawaii, and discovering best practices of the Dutch farming model and Korean Natural Farming.

Walker recommends:

- **Certificate Programs** - for organic agriculture, landscaping, and soil science at CoM
- **Partnerships** - Partnering with Chico State University or Oregon State University to open their soil science permaculture program to CoM students
- **Guest Lectures** - so that students can build their industry network while still in school.
- **Job Fairs** - Allowing students to meet local job creators, ask questions, and see if they would be a good fit.
- **Work Study/ Paid Internships** - Create a program at COM where students can work for a month or two at one farm before rotating to another. Some farms will only hire people with previous hands-on experience so this could be the best way to help students get started. It's also a chance to discover what they like and don't like without having committed 4 years into a degree they aren't suited for.



Green Building Pathway Champion Reva Siu-Massett shared that her professional goal was now to work as a Sustainability Coordinator, perhaps even at the College of Marin. Many students in the Construction Certificate program are local residents who are well-positioned to retrofit buildings threatened by sea-level rise and extreme heat linked to climate change. Building Managers and Operators at CoM could also be retrained to lower the carbon footprint of campus buildings, and achieve **LEED accreditation**.

Reva recommends:

- **Certificate Programs** - CoM could offer a credential in energy auditing or building performance.
- **Curriculum Integration** - Integrating green building content into existing real estate curricula—for example, by teaching sustainable building materials and home energy efficiency ratings.
- **Partnerships** – CoM could expand its construction certificate training in partnership with **Canal Alliance** to include Building Operator Certification (BOC); courses in Air Conditioning & Refrigeration Technology offered at **Mt. San Antonio College** could be particularly beneficial to CoM students.



Blue Tech Pathway Champion Mateus Veneroso was inspired by interviewing **Clark Suprynowicz** of **Energy Innovators Network** and learning about initiatives like the **Hub for Blue Green Innovation** and the exciting growth in areas like ocean robotics and aquaculture. His insights on building partnerships, raising awareness, and supporting career development were very inspiring to better understand the future of the Blue Economy.

Mateus recommends:

- **Certificate Programs** - offering certificates merging cybersecurity, sustainability, electronics, and data.
- **Internships** – Internships related to Blue Tech would allow student to build a strong portfolio to find opportunities and connect with professionals.
- **Networking Skills Development** – students should learn how to effectively use LinkedIn to find opportunities and connect with industry professionals.



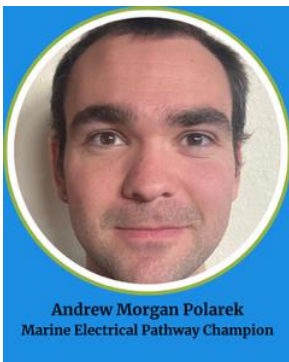
Marine Biology Pathway Champion: Vanessa Debisschop was inspired by **SeaGreen Insights' Mike Blakely** at the SF Blue Tech networking event. She was excited to be invited by **Professor Joe Mueller** to help set up the lab for the launch event at the **Bolinas Field Station**. After sharing how she wished she had this kind of wet lab for her Marine Biology course, was thrilled when Dr. Eldridge encouraged her to consider being a TA for future courses.



Environmental Engineering Pathway Champion Michelle Gantos was motivated by **Tyla Brown**, Senior Partnership Development Manager, **Marin Clean Energy** hearing her insider's perspective and insights. Her passion for making clean energy options available to everyone motivated Michelle's interest in climate justice. Michelle believes that community colleges can be a launchpad: by offering a foundation in **STEM** and then supporting students in transferring to top UC/CSU programs.

Michelle recommends:

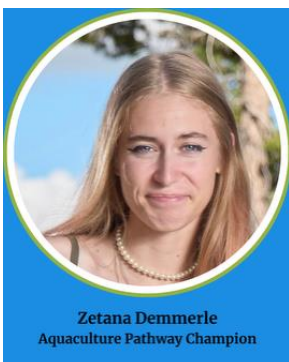
- **Certificates** - Offering certificates in: Hazardous Waste Operations and Emergency Response (HAZWOPER), Occupational Safety and Health (OSHA), Certified Stormwater Inspector (CSI), Associate Environmental Professional (AEP), Certified Environmental and Safety Compliance Officer (CESCO), Certified Erosion, Sediment, and Storm Water Inspector (CESSWI). An Environmental Engineering Certificate at CoM could include courses such as Intro to Environmental Engineering, Environmental Chemistry, GIS, and CAD for Infrastructure Design.
- **Partnerships** - Creating formal agreements with Bay Area environmental engineering firms so that students can gain real-world skills, improve resume competitiveness, and help students confirm career fit. Examples of partnerships include: Paid summer internships for COM students, On-campus career panels or mentorship days, and Project-based collaborations with COM classes or clubs



Marine Electrical Pathway Champion: Morgan Polarek has lived in the Sausalito houseboat community his whole life so he was excited to tour the waterfront in **Clipper Yacht Harbor's** Vita electric vessel with **Curtis Havel**, Harbormaster. He was inspired by his in-person interview with **Veronica Cargay**, Education Coordinator at the **Spaulding Marine Center in Sausalito**. "What Veronica told me about the local maritime industry and electric vessels gave me a new focus that has thoroughly fleshed out my research for my marine electrical pathway."

Morgan recommends:

- **Certificate Programs** - offering a certificate in Marine Electrical at CoM.
- **Apprenticeships** – students can access paid apprenticeships through the **Spaulding Marine Center** and simultaneously work towards certification through **Las Positas Community College**.



Aquaculture Pathway Champion: Zetana Demmerle was inspired by **Tony Vaught** of the **California Aquaculture Association** who shared his 40-year career in aquaculture. They discussed entry-level opportunities in aquaculture, the importance of nurturing skills in employees, and the significance of understanding business and agriculture for environmental science majors as well as the potential of artificial intelligence in agriculture, and the importance of water conservation in agriculture.

Zetana recommends:

- **Certificate Programs** - offering an aquaculture certification program in collaboration with other community colleges,
- **Work Study** - offering a work study program with Hog Island Co. at the Bolinas Field Station,
- **Expanding Lab and Fieldwork Facilities** – by offering a wet lab for Marine Biology at the Bolinas Field Station.

Browse Pathway ▾
Prototype Session
Explore Your Pathway

Aquaculture Career Pathway

An Aquaculture Career Pathway prepares students for careers in sustainable seafood farming and aquatic organism cultivation. Professionals work as farm technicians, hatchery managers, or water quality specialists, developing systems that produce fish, shellfish, and aquatic plants while minimizing environmental impact and supporting food security as wild fisheries decline.

Welcome Video

Curriculum

Videos

Presentation

The Importance and Science of Hydroponics

Presentation by: Sherry Anne Pancho and KaMele Sanchez

View on SlideShare < 1 of 11 >

Portugal's Blue Economy

Aquaculture

EXPLORE →

Entry-Level Jobs

- Aquaculture Technician**
- Entry-Level Aquarist**

Mid-Level Jobs

- Aquaculture Farm Manager**
- Aquaculturist**

Advanced Jobs

- Aquaculture Research Scientist**

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Browse Pathway ▾
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An Aquaculture Career Pathway prepares students for careers in sustainable seafood farming and aquatic organism cultivation. Professionals work as farm technicians, hatchery managers, or water quality specialists, developing systems that produce fish, shellfish, and aquatic plants while minimizing environmental impact and supporting food security as wild fisheries decline.

Aquaculture Technician

Entry-Level

Salary

- \$38,000–\$54,000 annually (varies by region and company)

Tasks / Responsibilities

- Monitor and maintain the health of aquatic species in hatcheries or farms
- Feed fish and monitor water quality parameters (e.g., pH, temperature, salinity)
- Assist in breeding and harvesting operations
- Maintain and repair equipment such as pumps, filters, and tanks

Job Projections

- Growing demand for aquaculture professionals due to increasing global seafood consumption
- Projected job growth of 10% or more in the aquaculture sector over the next decade

Work Experience

- No prior experience necessary for entry-level positions
- Internships or volunteer work in related fields can be helpful

Local Businesses

- [SeaTrek](#)

Education

- High School Diploma or equivalent

Resources

- [California Aquaculture Association](#)
- [Massachusetts Aquaculture Association](#)

Entry-Level Aquarist
Aquaculturist

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The Stone Soup Leadership Institute's Blue Job Shadow Day

In partnership with the College of Marin's Environmental Action Club



In these six months we've seen these young people grow into future leaders as they've experienced a condensed version of the Institute's year-long leadership program. They've learned from our team who've changed their lives by using our educational tools - and are now sharing them with these future leaders. We've found that when we listen to students, we breathe new life into old ways of thinking and discover innovative ideas and best practices. We hope you'll join us so we can imagine how we might revitalize our academic institutions and build partnerships with the local business community so together we can build something new for their future and future generations.

To implement these recommendations, the College of Marin will:

- Respond to students and businesses by educating local students for local jobs in the green/blue economy.
- Increase support for local business community and respond to their needs by offering sustainability certificates.
- Request County of Marin gather data from local companies to determine their workforce development needs.
- Collaborate with other community colleges to offer online sustainability-oriented certificates.
- Foster collaboration between business, academic institutions, training centers and CTE programs.

1. Expand College of Marin Departments to Embrace the Blue Economy

- Expand CoM Career Education & Workforce Development to train students for the blue/green economy.
- CoM's Career Fairs: Invite blue/green companies to feature jobs, internships and work study programs.
- Provide on-campus networking events so students can meet and learn from prospective employers.

2. Recruit Sustainable Career Pathways Coordinator

- Hire energized local organizer who works with Marin community to be liaison with CoM Departments
- Develop partnerships with blue/green companies - develop work-study programs, paid internships;
- Expand Blue Job Shadow Day and develop ongoing Blue Economy Education Series;
- Coordinate Networking Opportunities: SF Climate Week and Bioneers for students to meet professionals

3. Offer Sustainable Career Pathways Certificate Expose students to *all* of The Institute's SustainWDN™ Pathways so they can make educated decisions for where they want to invest their time to get a blue-green job.

4. Blue Economy for Climate Action Program [BECAP](#) Southern California is a coalition of 17 community colleges in Southern California's Blue Economy & Climate Action Pathways (BECAP) offers certification programs. These programs aim to provide career training and pathways for students in the Blue Economy, a sector focused on sustainable ocean-related industries. On June 9, Dr. Eldridge is meeting with Blue Economy leaders in Northern California to hear their thoughts about a unique collaboration with Northern California community colleges and their communities.

The Institute's Blue Job Shadow Day could spark an ongoing exploration of the Blue Economy, including topics such as blue tech, blue finance, marine biology and research, clean water management, and sustainable fisheries. We invite potential supporters and funders to join us in investing in Marin and Bay Area young people, and in supporting this exciting sustainable economic initiative.

**We're Grateful to All Sustainability Leaders
Who Were Interviewed**

**By Our Young People to Explore Sustainable
Career Pathways**



SF Blue Tech



**Thank you to our
Blue Job Shadow Day
Education Exhibitors!**

For sharing your workforce development opportunities internships, jobs, certificates for students to explore and pursue in the Blue Economy in the Bay Area community.



COLLEGE OF MARIN
Dream • Learn • Achieve

SustainWDN™
Sustainable Workforce Development Network

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