



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Media Contacts:**

Lisa Bell or Megan Esteves  
Regan Communications Group  
617-488-2883/212-710-0322

lbell@regancomm.com / mesteves@regancomm.com

**AROUND THE AMERICAS EXPEDITION SAILS ONWARD FROM  
GALAPAGOS ISLANDS TO COSTA RICA AND MEXICO**

*13-month, 28,000 nautical mile expedition continues to prove that the Americas are indeed  
One Island, Surrounded by One Ocean*

**BOSTON, MA (March 31, 2010)** – [Around the Americas](#) today announced it has set sail for its final [port stops](#) in Central America and Mexico before heading to the United States’ West Coast, ultimately concluding in Seattle in June. On March 30, 2010, the steel-hulled, 64-foot sailing vessel (S/V), [Ocean Watch](#), departed the Galapagos Islands, en route to Puntarenas, Costa Rica and then Puerto Vallarta, Mexico after spending the last two months rounding the coast of South America, including an adventurous voyage around Cape Horn, making several port stops in Chile and Peru.

Along their journey, the *Ocean Watch* crew has found that while local challenges and threats to coastal environments differ around the Americas, the long-term effects on local inhabitants are often surprisingly similar.

“Our voyage Around the Americas was launched under the simplest of precepts: The continents of North and South America should be considered a solo island entity; surrounded by a shared, singular ocean; with challenges, communities, issues and solutions all linked together as a common whole,” said [Herb McCormick](#), full-time crew member and on-board journalist. For example, melting sea ice has posed new threats to human inhabitants of the Arctic in the form of polar bears that are now migrating inland as their natural habitats are melting away. This is taking a toll on coastal communities, whose proximity to Alaska’s coastlines is vital to their livelihood. Similarly, the livelihood of Chile’s fishing communities is being threatened by unsustainable fish farming practices. Natural fish supplies are diminishing and falling prey to farmed species that often escape from farms. The crew has also been witness to the effects of waste from salmon farms causing algal blooms which render shellfish crops inedible.

McCormick adds, “It’s clear that the long-term ramifications to communities, economies and the environment – and to the way people live their lives – are surprisingly similar in places as far apart as the Arctic and Chile.” The expedition sees a common theme again and again -- One Island, One Ocean.

More on the issues that the Around the Americas expedition identified and studied while visiting the South American ports are as follows:

- **Receding Glaciers**

- The crew of *Ocean Watch* found stunning similarities between the receding southern glaciers and the northern glaciers in Alaska, Canada and Greenland. Forty-six of the 48 glaciers in Chile are receding. In Alaska, with over 200 glaciers, all but two are receding. *Ocean Watch* [Captain Mark Schrader](#) observed that while several years ago there were few ships nimble enough to navigate the Northwest Passage, narrow with sea ice, today it is traversed by the likes of small cruise ships.

- **Farm Fishing**

- The expedition has found that fish farming, particularly in Chile, has become a huge, yet often unsustainable industry. Overcrowded salmon farms, once prosperous, have become laden with disease and the use of antibiotics has tarnished the global reputation of Chile’s farmed exports. Many citizens who traveled to Chile’s coasts to take jobs at farms during the industry’s boom have now lost them. As local scientists, environmentalists and the government work to regulate the industry and establish sustainable practices, the country’s natural fishing industry continues to suffer as well. The crew of *Ocean Watch* saw vast harbors of abandoned fishing boats and neighboring villages, like that of Quellon, Chile, filled with offshore fisherman who were out of work because the local waters have been overfished. In fact, crew members found an unlikely comparison between the U.S.’ “bread basket” and the coasts of Chile in that the waste of animals from both land and sea can cause major damage to local waterways if not properly monitored.

As *Ocean Watch* spends time in the ports of the Galapagos Islands, Ecuador, Puntarenas, Costa Rica and Puerto Vallarta, Mexico, there is one prominent issue that the crew will be studying and focusing on, and that is coral reef damage.

- **Coral Reef bleaching**

- During the expedition’s stops in the Ecuador, Costa Rica and Mexico, the *Ocean Watch* crew will study and document first hand the damage to coral reefs. One-fifth of the world’s coral reefs have died or been destroyed and the remainder are increasingly vulnerable to the effects of climate change.
- Coral reef bleaching has been linked to manmade and environmental causes including overfishing, increased sedimentation, nutrient overloading, run off pollution, violent storms, flooding, high and low temperature extremes and El Nino events. Coral reefs have the ability to recover after major bleaching events. In fact, 45% of coral reefs worldwide are currently healthy. One can encourage recovery of the other 55% by putting an end to damaging fishing practices like bomb and cyanide fishing, adopting sustainable fishing practices, regulating nutrient, chemical and sediment run-off

pollution, and preventing further acidification of our oceans by reducing atmospheric carbon that is absorbed by the ocean.

[The Tiffany & Co. Foundation](#) is a major funder of *Ocean Watch*, in order to raise awareness for coral reef conservation. Tiffany & Co. stopped selling coral in 2002, and The Tiffany & Co. Foundation continues to support research and conservation endeavors to protect corals and reef ecosystems, such as Around the Americas.

“We are aware of the damage coral harvesting inflicts on critically important marine ecosystems,” said Fernanda Kellogg, President of The Tiffany & Co. Foundation. “Our support of the Around the Americas expedition is an exciting and important way to increase awareness about the health of the oceans, the important role that coral reefs play, and the necessary and important steps to take to protect these species.”

*Ocean Watch's* remaining [Ports of Call](#) include:

- Puntarenas, Costa Rica 04/04/10 - 04/09/10
- Puerto Vallarta, Mexico 04/20/10 - 04/26/10
- San Diego, California USA 05/04/10 - 05/10/10
- Los Angeles, California 05/10/10 - 05/14/10
- Santa Barbara, California 05/14/10 - 05/20/09
- Monterey Bay, California 05/22/10 - 05/26/10
- San Francisco, California 05/26/10 - 06/05/10
- Astoria, Oregon 06/10/10 - 06/12/10
- Port Townsend, Washington 06/16/10 - 06/17/10
- Seattle, Washington 06/17/10

For more information about Around the Americas, including photos and the current whereabouts of the sailboat, please visit [www.AroundtheAmericas.org](http://www.AroundtheAmericas.org), become a fan on Facebook at [www.Facebook.com/AroundtheAmericas](http://www.Facebook.com/AroundtheAmericas) or follow the expedition on Twitter at AroundAmericas.

### **About Around the Americas**

Around the Americas is a 28,000 mile sailing circumnavigation of the American continents with the mission of inspiring, educating and engaging the citizens of the Americas to protect our fragile oceans. Around the Americas was launched by Sailors for the Sea, which was founded in 2004 by David Rockefeller, Jr. with a mission to engage the boating community to help protect our endangered oceans. The expedition is collaboration among Sailors for the Sea, Pacific Science Center, a Seattle-based not-for-profit science foundation that has developed a full curriculum for K-8 students on ocean studies, and renowned ocean sailor Mark Schrader, who has twice before sailed around the world by himself.

The Around the Americas sailboat, *Ocean Watch*, embarked on the expedition from Seattle in May 2009 and has successfully sailed through the Northwest Passage, continued down the east coast, around Cape Horn and is now sailing up the west coast returning finally to Seattle in June 2010. It will visit approximately 50 ports along its journey.

North and South America are continent-islands surrounded by a large, complex and fragile ocean environment. The ocean is changing: fish stocks and other marine creatures are vanishing; coral is suffering, pH levels are changing, and the melting of the Arctic and Antarctic ice is raising the sea level and threatening low lying areas. Our ocean is at risk.

### **About the Sailboat, *Ocean Watch***

The steel-hulled, 64-foot sailing vessel *Ocean Watch* has a full-time crew of four, including a photojournalist. Throughout the expedition, a Pacific Science Center educator will be on board to facilitate education activities. In addition, ocean and atmospheric scientists will join different legs of the expedition to conduct research on board *Ocean Watch*. Activities at approximately 40 scheduled ports-of-call will engage the public in hands-on exhibits, didactic displays and public talks about ocean health.

### **About Sailors for the Sea**

The nonprofit organization Sailors for the Sea (SfS) educates and empowers the boating community to protect and restore our oceans and coastal waters. As a direct result of his work on the Pew Oceans Commission, SfS was founded by David Rockefeller, Jr. to galvanize the sailing and boating community around ocean health issues.

Sailors for the Sea works with many organizations to leverage the effectiveness of our projects and programs - this includes the 2009 release of a powerful new documentary film co-sponsored by SfS entitled *A Sea Change*, which focuses on ocean acidification. Sailors for the Sea is also a co-supporter of the Around the Americas expedition, which is circumnavigating North and South America by sail to raise awareness of ocean conservation issues.

Additionally, Sailors for the Sea has three core programs - the nationwide Clean Regattas program assists and certifies yacht clubs and regatta organizers as providing clean events that minimize impacts upon our oceans. The web-based Ocean Watch program provides essays on current ocean conservation issues as well as resources for further information and engagement with stewardship activities. SfS is developing the strategic plan for the Certified Sea Friendly program which will create a voluntary, LEED-style certification program to transform the marine manufacturing industry and make the construction, maintenance and operation of vessels more environmentally friendly.

To learn more and join Sailors for the Sea, please visit: [www.sailorsforthesea.org](http://www.sailorsforthesea.org).

### **About Pacific Science Center**

Pacific Science Center, a not-for-profit institution in Seattle, Washington, is a nationally recognized leader in informal science education. The Science Center's flagship facility serves a million guests each year with exhibits, IMAX films, planetarium and laser shows, programs and events for all ages. Pacific Science Center has expertise in curriculum development and informal (non classroom-based) education, much of which is available for bilingual audiences. Through the van based Science On Wheels education program, Pacific Science Center brings engaging, hands-on activities to schools and communities throughout the Pacific Northwest. These capabilities, combined with the Science Center's strong connections with the atmospheric and oceanographic research communities, make it uniquely well-suited for partnering in the Around the Americas venture.