

*5 EASY WAYS TO SAVE OUR SURF PG.72

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THE **GREEN**
ISSUE



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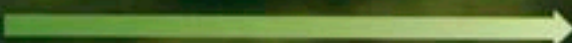


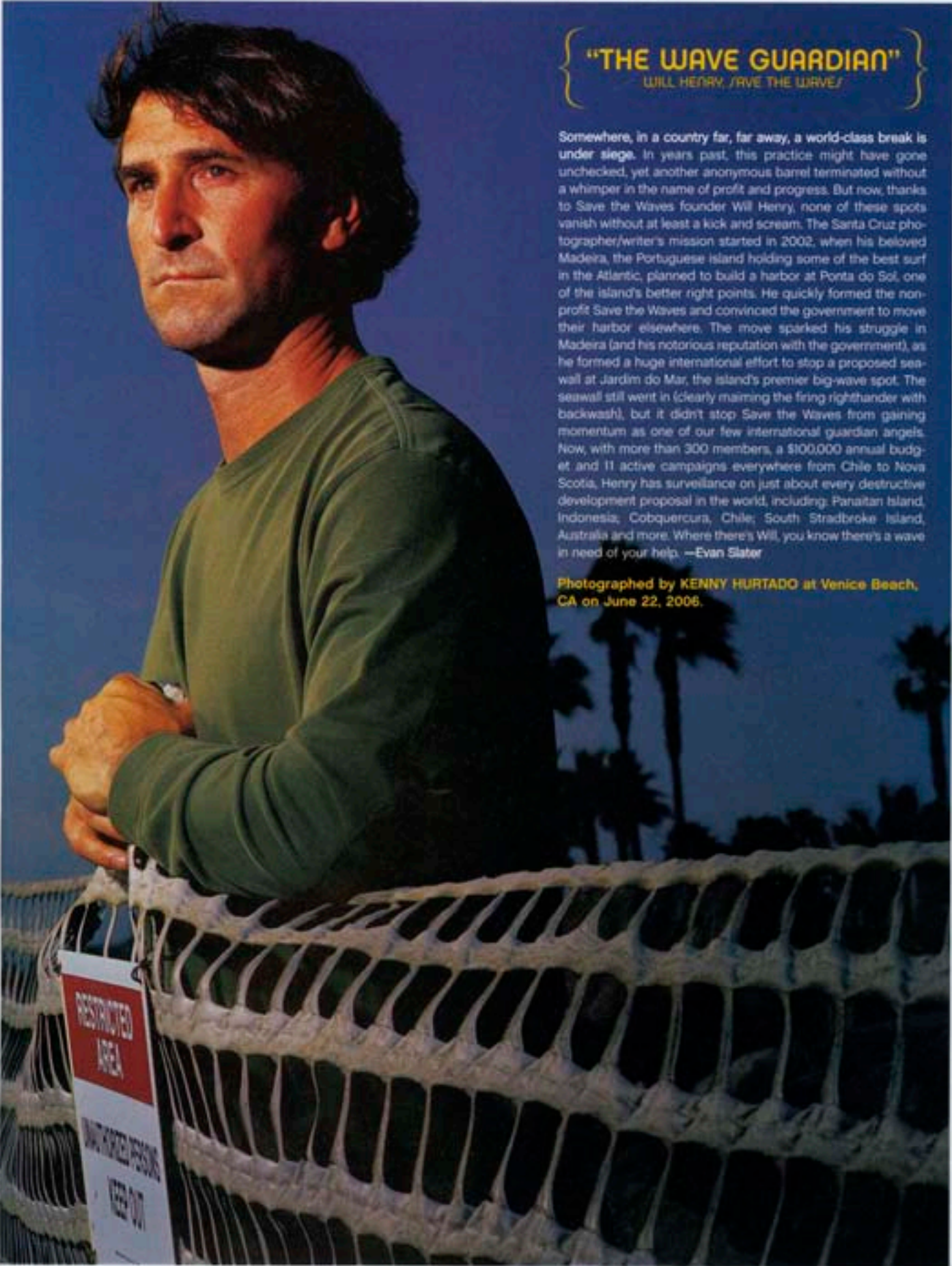
THE DIRTY TRUTH

BEHIND CHILE'S PERFECT LEFT POINTS

PLUS

THE BEST DAY OF THE YEAR





"THE WAVE GUARDIAN"

WILL HENRY, /SAVE THE WAVES/

Somewhere, in a country far, far away, a world-class break is under siege. In years past, this practice might have gone unchecked, yet another anonymous barrel terminated without a whimper in the name of profit and progress. But now, thanks to Save the Waves founder Will Henry, none of these spots vanish without at least a kick and scream. The Santa Cruz photographer/writer's mission started in 2002, when his beloved Madeira, the Portuguese island holding some of the best surf in the Atlantic, planned to build a harbor at Ponta do Sol, one of the island's better right points. He quickly formed the non-profit Save the Waves and convinced the government to move their harbor elsewhere. The move sparked his struggle in Madeira (and his notorious reputation with the government), as he formed a huge international effort to stop a proposed seawall at Jardim do Mar, the island's premier big-wave spot. The seawall still went in (clearly maiming the firing righthander with backwash), but it didn't stop Save the Waves from gaining momentum as one of our few international guardian angels. Now, with more than 300 members, a \$100,000 annual budget and 11 active campaigns everywhere from Chile to Nova Scotia, Henry has surveillance on just about every destructive development proposal in the world, including: Panaitan Island, Indonesia; Cobquecura, Chile; South Stradbroke Island, Australia and more. Where there's Will, you know there's a wave in need of your help. —Evan Slater

Photographed by KENNY HURTADO at Venice Beach, CA on June 22, 2006.

Don't let Shaun Harrington get the last pit
at South Straddle. www.savethewaves.org

5 MOST ENDANGERED WAVES IN THE WORLD



1. COBQUECORA, CHILE

A series of world-class left pointbreaks are threatened by water pollution from a pulp mill under construction on the Rio Itata. The area's waves are some of the best in South America, but have remained relatively unknown until recently. Pulp manufacturing, the process of turning trees into white pulp for paper, can be extremely toxic to the environment. The company that owns the mill, Celco, has already been found responsible for a previous disaster at another of its mills in Chile, in Valdivia, where a flock of black-neck swans perished after a UNESCO biosphere was polluted by mill wastewater. To help, visit www.savethewaves.org/cobquec.asp or see page 112 for the full story.

2. SOUTH STRADDLE ISLAND, AUSTRALIA

Anyone who knows anything about the surf on Australia's Gold Coast has probably heard about the crystal clear peaks at South Straddle. Nonetheless, the Australian Government wants to build a cruise ship terminal in the channel and has proposed extending a jetty by 2500 feet and regularly dredging the channel of excess sand. Furthermore, the new project would prevent surfers from legally paddling across the waterway to reach the island. A

grass-roots alliance has formed among Queensland residents to send a strong message to the state government and its Premier, Peter Beattie. Called "Save Our Spot Alliance" or SOSA, the organization recently sent over one thousand letters to Premier Beattie, challenging his support of the project. The state government "seems not to be listening," stated Steve Grason, president of SOSA. To help, visit www.loveourspot.com.

3. LA ENHAMADIA, CANARY ISLANDS

The latest in a series of ill-conceived beach-building projects promises to destroy yet another of the Canary's prime surf spots on the southwest coast of Tenerife. Two of the area's surf spots have already disappeared due to similar projects, La Florida and La Casita, as hotel owners battle to attract tourists to their high-priced rooms by building artificial beaches with long breakwaters. These breakwaters have buried the surf spots and threaten the last remaining break on this coastline. The project is proceeding despite being designated a protected zone by the European Union. To help, visit www.savethewaves.org.

4. BASTION POINT, AUSTRALIA

The East Gippsland Shire Council (EGSC) in Victoria is proposing to develop an all-tide ocean access boat

ramp at Bastion Point, which will include a 400-foot long breakwater to protect safe access to and from the structure. Surfers in the nearby town of Mallicoote fear that the structure will ruin the surf spot, the only local spot that can handle southerly winds. "Surfing is big business in Australia," states Geoff Withycombe, Chairman of Surftrider Foundation Australia. "Per capita, surfers spend as much, if not more, than recreational fishers." To help, visit www.savebastionpoint.org.

5. PLAYA TETA, PANAMA

A hydroelectric dam was under construction last year on the Rio Teta, on Panama's Pacific coast, threatening to cut off sand flow to one of the area's prime surf spots. "Sand depletion on our beaches has already become a huge issue in this region," states Rio Mar Surf Camp owner Allen Barnes, "leading to problems such as beach erosion and wave quality degradation." Save the Waves has funded the initial stages of an alternate EIR, motivating the government of Panama to put the project on hold until completion of the study. To help, visit www.savethewaves.org/teta.asp. —Will Henry



How one business tycoon and a toxin-spewing pulp mill could effectively ruin one of the world's best stretches of pointbreaks.

By Geoffrey Ragatz



While Warren Smith looks on, Jesse Faen enjoys one of the best days of his life at another secret spot along the southern Chilean Coast. Thanks to the pulp mill in Constitución (left), these days may be numbered.

WWW.PHOTO: KEVIN HURTADO (LEFT); JESSIE FAEN (RIGHT)



I've been driving for nearly six hours following a 13-hour flight. A thick mist is slowing my advance to a trailer-truck's pace. The single-lane road weaves through a coastal mountain range, reminding me of some coastal river passage in Northern California. Fog gives way to a steady downpour and I'm hard-pressed to locate the exact turnoff. That there are no signs here, no arrows pointing the way or placards to follow, is a blessing. Even better, if you were to ask directions, even the most dialed local probably wouldn't have a clue.

This is old-school Chile, and like any good undercover surf destination, finding your way is a matter of taking the time and making a serious effort. Fifteen years ago I made my first trip here and immediately knew I'd found my calling. Today, I find myself en-route to meet up with friend and long-time Chile aficionado Jesse Faen, who's arrived with compatriots Warren Smith, Joel Tudor and photographer Kenny Hurtado on a multi-purpose mission to score some early winter tubes and — more importantly — help publicize an issue that's become a lightning rod of controversy in this country.

Under cover of night, I feel as if I'm part of some covert mission in the making. And as with any undisclosed surf destination, I relish in the fact that ground zero is about as far off the beaten track as one could possibly imagine. I've come to love this cold, wet and dirty place; its salt-of-the-earth people seem to be walking out of the history books and the lack of modern convenience is a welcome change from the pampered norm at home. But most of all, I've fallen in love with the pristine ocean landscape which never ceases to amaze.



"Chile represents the tip of the iceberg with regards to similar locations around the world." —Insight CEO Jesse Faen

Chile's southern coast is an Ansel Adams dream photo. It's a visit back to the California coast in the early 1900s, a land where endless, etch-a-sketch headlands and non-stop swell play host to a proliferation of natural resources left virtually untouched for centuries on end. That is...until now.

Because right now, this pristine ecosystem is set to be ravaged by the toxic dumping of carcinogenic waste. On Thursday, June 26, 2006, the recently completed Celulosa pulp mill, a \$1.4 billion dollar wood processing plant owned by one of the most powerful businessmen in Chile, Anacleto Angelini, will start operations of its newly constructed Nueva Aldea plant. Located only 50 miles from one of Chile's best left points, this will effectively signal the beginning of the end of what many consider to be one of Chile's priceless treasures.

For Jesse, an Australian who first fell in love with Chile six years ago and now has a home in the area, the connection is personal. While the situation will undoubtedly bring international attention to a string of anonymous world-class waves, he knows publicity is the only option. "Chile represents the tip of the iceberg with regards to similar locations around the world," says Insight CEO Faen. "Sure, a few more people will come and enjoy the

surf, but in reality this place isn't easy and it takes an adventurous sort. To hold out and not expose the environmental situation for what it is would be flat-out wrong."

With few surfers scouring the coast in search of waves and a seemingly endless supply of Southern Ocean swell, there is no question this frontier holds infinite possibilities that are just starting to be explored. And while I know just how good a few of the legitimate points are at present, what I'm really looking forward to is having Jesse share some of the magical nuggets he's been scoring over the past few years on his own reconnaissance.

Our movements are dictated by the weather and, with three days of rain, the dirt roads leading to various spots afield are more like slip-n-slides. Restless and in need of physical release, we end up at one of the coastline's gems, a half-mile point grooming the incoming swell into manageable form. It's all any of us can do to get in the water fast enough. Doubling sections stand up in repetitive fashion, the conveyer belt whipping each of the boys into dreamy tube after dreamy tube. Joel's alternative act is in perfect balance to everything Chile has to offer and Warren, a new school surf artist, refines his aerial impulse into one of steep drops and heaving, sandspit tubes.



What you don't see in this photo is the hour-long paddle-out, the 12-foot, 10-wave cleanup sets and a northward current measuring straight to Peru. Jesse Faen, *www.waves*



Local Campesino attending the mass services and protest against the Celulosa Mill, April 6, 2006.



Thankfully, the Nueva Aldea pulp mill controversy has struck a chord with many dedicated to exposing a short-term economic growth policy that favors Chile's old-school, hands-in-pocket political network and a suspect environmental policy. "That the water quality and pristine

marine environment is under siege is nothing compared to the 45,000 local inhabitants whose lives will be directly affected," says Matias Lopez, founder of *Manejada*, Chile's first legitimate surf mag. "Farmers' water will be polluted, winemakers are facing acid rain dilemmas, a consequence of the toxic air pollution associated with these mills, and local fishermen are expecting the inevitable diminishing of sea-life...a whole environment and its local traditions are going to be lost forever!"

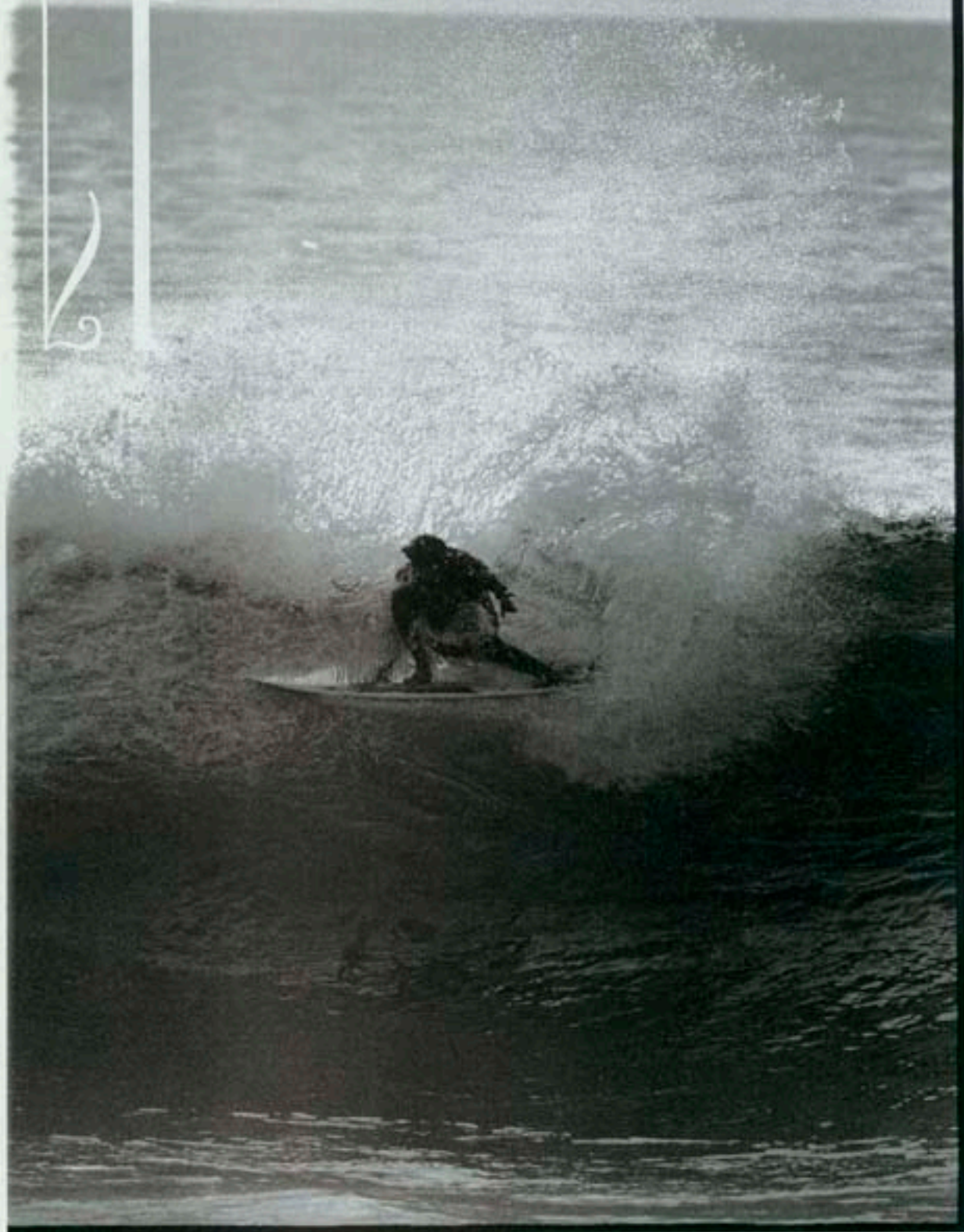
In a worst-case scenario, the air and water pollution associated with these plants will effectively contaminate not only the local communities but the entire region along with its coastline. And the Celulosa's proposal to build a pipeline to the ocean and dump their toxic mess a mere half-mile offshore and upcurrent of the prime surf zone has been the obvious red flag to those with vested interests in the local surfing community.

These "emissions", notably two of the most toxic substances known to man — furans and dioxins — are produced in the burning processes of pulp mills and are serious carcinogens which, if not effectively filtered, pose immediate health risks. Coupled with equally high doses of aluminum, phosphorus, nitrogen and chlorine which will be dumped straight into the Itata river basin and eventually the Pacific, there is no questioning the fact that the Celulosa's toxic discharge will jeopardize one of Chile's most pristine natural environments.

With grass-roots groups like Greenpeace, Save the Waves and Proplaya helping to mobilize various local groups in a unified voice of opposition, there is reason for hope. "Chile has a unique opportunity to set an example for the rest of South America and developing nations to follow," says Will Henry, director of Save the Waves. The question is: are they up to the challenge?

In Chile, the concept of actually having a voice is a rhetorical science the public is just starting to understand. This is a society where the old-school conservative right holds the cards and most local groups feel they have little say in such pressing matters. "When the elite of a country decides to trade the future of their natural resources and the precious heritage of their own children, it is difficult to be optimistic," says Will.

The tubes are so relentless in these parts, sometimes you just have to put your foot down. Warren stamps one. *PHOTO: WARREN*





Every time Warren paddled back out the claim was the same: "I just got the best barrel of my life — again!" Photo: [www.fishbase.com](#)

celco no más

Thank God for Greenpeace. Celulosa Protest, April 6th, 2006.



"That a new, female, democratic leader has been recently elected certainly brings anticipation of change," Proplaya's Joshua Berry notes. "But the reality is that Michelle Bachelet's appointed environmental cabinet and advisory board is stacked deep with forestry industry executives and a Latin American good-old-boy network of credit-fueled cowboys and industry developers who are as deep into each other's pockets as ever before." In effect, Angelini's benefactors are the same individuals who set environmental policy and precedent.

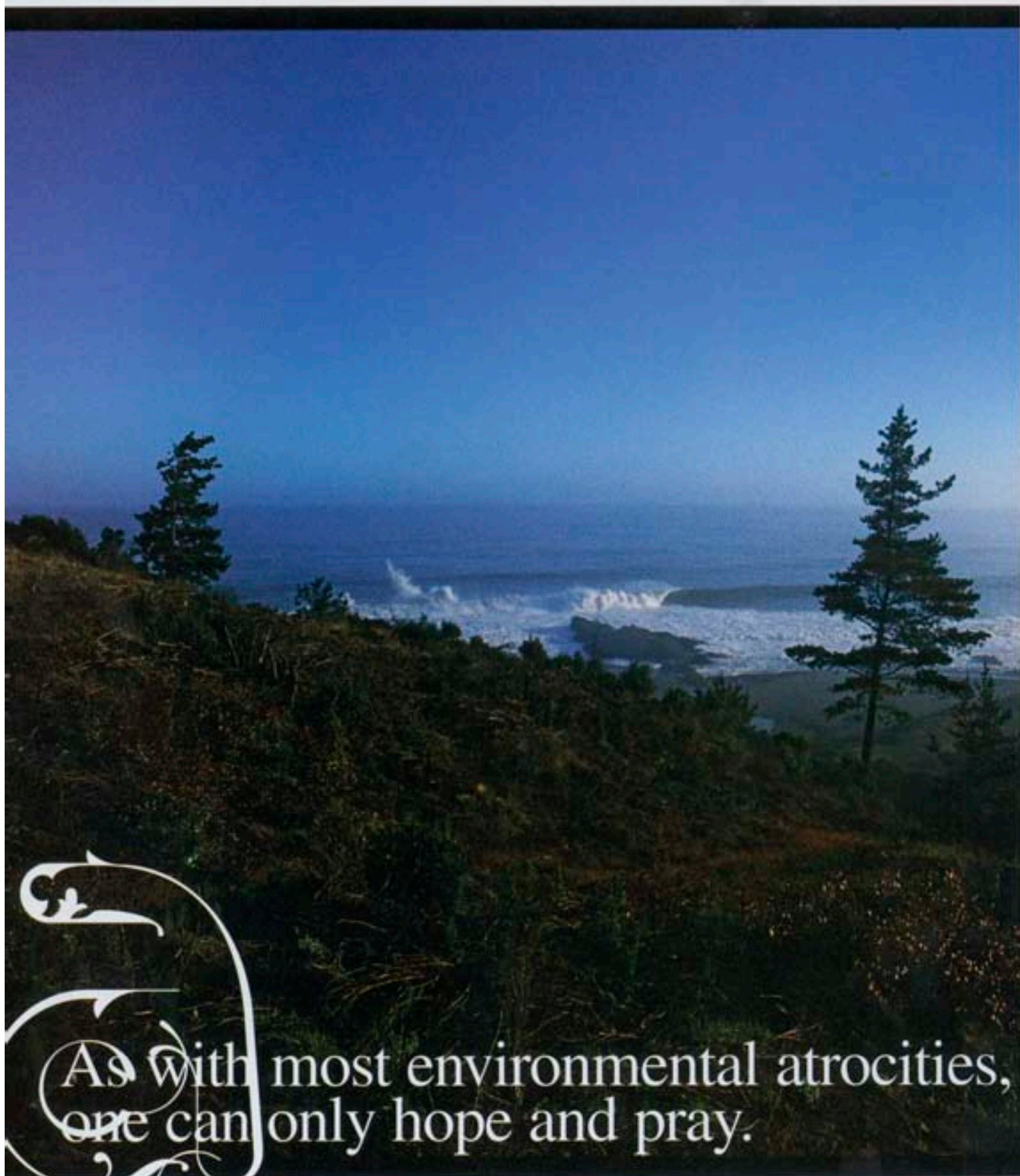
But waves of change are in progress. In April, Joshua Berry from Proplaya, one of Chile's most influential environmental groups, local activist Chris Evans, eco-warrior James Pribram (who first exposed this situation in *Surfer's Path*) and Will Henry attended a huge protest along the banks of the Itata River. Indigenous campesinos, local farmers, fishermen and surfers came from across the region to show support and voice their opposition — with over 2,000 peo-

ple in attendance, the issue had finally been politicized.

To date, there has been no concession from Celulosa officials to spend the estimated \$100 million to create an internal-closed-circuit mill, which would bring the plant up to international standards of operation and reduce its impact on the environment. One would think it a small expense considering the plant's estimated million dollars in daily earnings and 30-year life expectancy.

"In Chile, most feel as though they can't affect policy," says one local activist wishing to remain anonymous. "But with some recent atrocities and negligence in Celulosa's Valdivia plant being exposed, the Celulosa industry has lost its credibility. People are sick and tired of the blatant disregard for the health and livelihood of their communities and have decided that enough is enough."

"Our goal," continues Berry, "is to ensure that the Nueva Aldea pulp mill abides to all Chilean environmental laws. We hope to achieve implementation of



As with most environmental atrocities,
one can only hope and pray.

The World As We Know It. Just another 10-foot day at another no-named left-point. Following three days of gray skies and dumping rain, the boys woke to one of the best surfing days of their lives. PHOTO: SCOTT

an independent water monitoring program and timely government enforcement of all relevant laws and to ensure the latest clean technologies are used by these industries, which exist, but are not used by Angelini's Celulosa industry. We have been extremely successful in rallying support against Nueva Aides plant — everyone is against this project — but in the real world of Chilean politics, where a small army of well-paid journalists, publicists and lawyers filter public opinion, the Celulosa's PR machine is a tough nut to crack."



The lure of solitude has been known to drive men insane. In Jesse's case, this constitutes an insatiable appetite for anything resembling a heaving, sucking pit. It doesn't really matter if it's breaking on the rocks, in front of the rocks or over the rocks; Jesse seems unfazed. And with a myriad of points to choose from, each day brings with it another adventure in the making.

That it's rather bleak and miserable here come winter makes the notion of a mass exodus more or less irrelevant. A monochromatic shade of gray seems to be the daily backdrop to our rambling exploits and since my arrival we've been on a constant search for just the right sand and swell combination.

Following Jesse's lead, Warren has settled into the understanding that

aerials are pretty much out of the question. Joel claims to have had a few memorable sessions which rate right up on his list of best ever. Dropping into another slingshot approach to a backdoor pit, soul arch imitating the wave's varied contours, Joel's thoughtful interpretations flow with little wasted movement. That in a few short months this all may become a polluted mess is a sickening thought.

Our last days spent are glorious ones. The storm front which has been with us the past few days has finally given way to clear skies and offshore winds — by all accounts we'll be scoring — and pulling up to the point we're once again shocked by a 10-foot swell rolling straight out of the southern latitudes. It's offshore and epic; save the non-stop sets making a total wash of the lineup. With too much swell, our mission continues, checking various points of interest in hopes of finding the goods.

We arrive at yet another secluded point and it's all Jesse and Warren can do to paddle from the beach — an incredible task given the hour-long endeavor just to make it out the back. Freight-train tubes suck their way into visual memory banks. It's off the chart and Jesse nabs a few daunting sections before calling it quits. Warren's effort, while worthy of applause, is more or less an exercise in frustration as Joel's vocal applause from the cliff can attest. A perfect metaphor to the experience, surfing here is about forging new frontiers.

A sacrifice is in order and it is with resignation that Joel and I leave, knowing the following day will probably be off the chart. Reflecting on

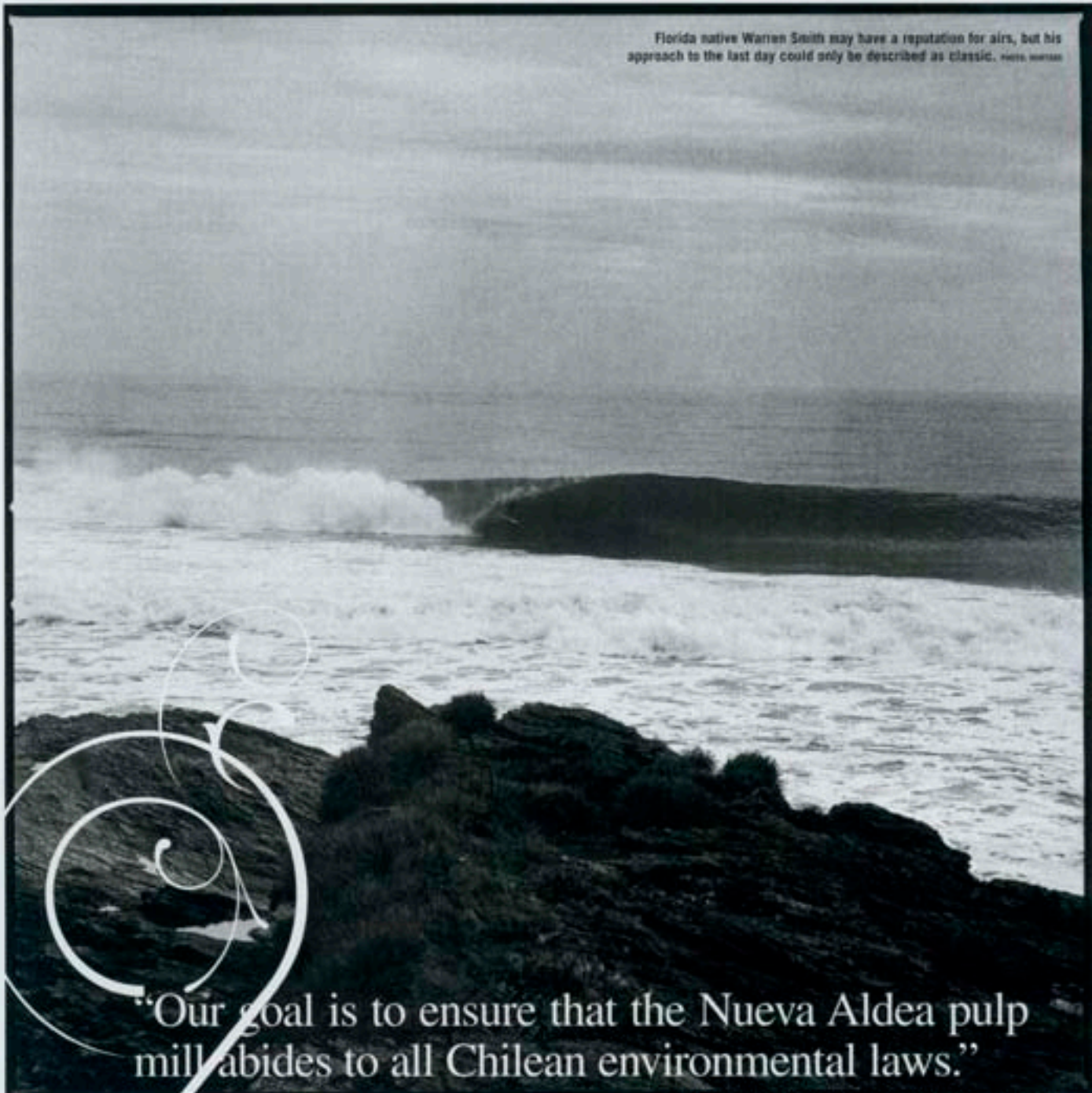


Joel Tudor's eclectic quiver was well suited to the task at hand. Deep-drop fades or stuff-in-the-pit pocket time, Joel's act is a perfect match to everything Chilean. www.warrentyler.com



Finn's Retreat. www.warrentyler.com

Florida native Warren Smith may have a reputation for airs, but his approach to the last day could only be described as classic. PHOTO: WARREN SMITH



“Our goal is to ensure that the Nueva Aldea pulp mill abides to all Chilean environmental laws.”

The Celulosa Mass Protest: Chileans are now feeling empowered – let's hope it's not too late.

The Rio Itata, imagine thousands of pounds of toxic waste being dumped straight into this river and on to the ocean.





The Constitución Pulp Mill. Chile's future depends on its politicians' understanding that the continued neglect of its natural resources will only bring economic and environmental ruin for future generations. PHOTO: ANDY WEAVER

another glorious stay in God's country, I can only hope that the grass-roots efforts being made by Will Henry of Save the Waves, Joshua Berry of Proplaya and Samuel Leiva of Greenpeace are enough to raise the consciousness of Chileans across the country.

There is a priceless heritage of natural splendor. That this heritage is being sold in a concession to one of the world's richest men who has demonstrated an utter lack of conscience with regards to any sort of environmental stewardship is truly a crime.

Perhaps local surfer/environmentalist Chris Evans put it best: "In the end, success will be contingent upon individuals who realize their involvement is crucial and that the issues we are facing are urgent. Chile's pulp mill controversy is emulative of many similar balancing acts, where a company gets away with whatever the government and community lets them get away with. Most companies will test the limits in exchange for increased revenue but will react to fines and out-spoken protest providing the fines are big enough and the protests loud enough. My hope is that more and more individuals get involved, more community groups, fishing co-ops, surfers, winemakers, land-owners and the tourist agencies who all have a vested interest in saving this precious resource for generations to come."

As with most environmental atrocities, one can only hope and pray. ☹

Please contact

www.savethewaves.org and make a donation referencing Chile. Every little bit will help and will go directly to fighting the cause...

For a Chilean slideshow with Jesse Fier's commentary and Warren Smith's words, go to www.surfingthemag.com/oct06

For more from Geoffrey Ragatz's Chile, go to www.geoffreyragatz.com

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EDITORIAL

Editor in Chief **EVAN SLATER** evan.slater@primedia.com
Managing Editor **NATHAN MYERS** nathan.myers@primedia.com
Senior Editor **MATT WALKER** matt.walker@primedia.com
Associate Editor **TRAVIS FERRE** travis.ferre@primedia.com
Photo Editor **STEVE SHERMAN** steve.sherman@primedia.com
Assistant Photo Editor **JEREMIAH KLEIN** jeremiah.klein@primedia.com
Creative Direction **JUSTIN HEIT** justinheit@cox.net
Art Director **CHATO** andre.aganza@primedia.com
Art Associate **BOB GILANYI** bob.gilanyi@primedia.com
Production Manager **DAWN TRIEMSTRA** dawn.triemstra@primedia.com
Global Editor **NICK CARROLL** ncsurf@ozemail.com.au
Online Editor **CODY WELSH** codywelsh@primedia.com
Project Coordinator **KEVIN MCCORMICK** kevin.mccormick@primedia.com
Web Video Producer **SCOTT TAYLOR** scott.taylor@primedia.com
Guiding Light **LARRY "FLAME" MOORE**

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

Mark Anders, Tim Baker, Jason Borte, Jamie Brisick, Ken Collins, Tim Donnelly, Daniel Ikaika Ito, Hagan Kelley, Andrew Lewis, Matt Pruett, Aaron Schmidt, Skip Snead, Jamie Tierney

STAFF PHOTOGRAPHERS

Aaron Chang, Jeff Flindt, Pete Frieden, Rob Gilley, Hank, Hotch, Kenny Hurtado, Nate Lawrence, Bill Morris, Daniel Russo, Pat Stacy, DJ Struntz

CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHERS

Doug Acton, Mike Antorietto, Don Balch, Peter Brouillet, John Callahan, Donald Crestello, Ron Dahlquist, Damea Dorsey, Tom Dugan/ESM, Mike Erickson, Mark Gordon, Russ Hennings, Pete Hodgson, Jeff Hornbaker, Don King, Ben Kottke, Dick Meseroll/ESM, Jason Murray, AJ Neste, Sammy Olson, Naki, Chris Owen, Anthea Paul, Lee Pegus, Ruben Pina, Tony Roberts, Jim Russi, Dan Russo, Chris Sardelis, Epes Sargent, Andrew Shield, Nathan Smith, Jon Steele, Fred Swegles, Chris Van Lennep, Anthony Warry, Mark Whitney, Chris Wilson, Jimmy Wilson, Scott Winer, Darrell Wong

PHOTOGRAPHERS

Scott Bauer, Andrew Buckley, Eric Chauche, Steve Conti, Aric Crabb, Steve Crovo, Joe Curren, Barry Curtis, John Eckmier, Michael Emo, Mike Findlay, Steve Fitzpatrick, Gordinho, Corey Hartung, John Hepler, Heather Holjes, Denise Hughes, Brent Humble, Robbie Johnson, Dr. John Jones, Tom Keck, Danny Kim, Kimiro Kondo, Jeff Kooskon, Dan Malloy, Mickey McCarthy, Sharon Marshall, Todd Messick, Mark Newsham, Chad Oakley, Patrick O'Leary, Patrick O'Keefe, Bill Parr, David Pu'u, Kevin Roche, Ron Romanosky, Carl Rucki, Moe Sanford, Todd Saunders, Peter Simons, Moses Slovatzki, Martin Tullemans, Jungsten

INTERNS

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PUBLISHING

Associate Publisher **ROSS GARRETT** ross.garrett@primedia.com

SALES

Senior Account Executive **TONY PEREZ** tony.perez@primedia.com
Senior Account Executive **JEREMY SCHLUNTZ** jeremy.schluntz@primedia.com
Account Executive **ADAM WARREN** adam.warren@primedia.com
Account Executive **BRYAN ELLIS** bryan.ellis@primedia.com
East Coast Executive **KEVIN WELSH** kevin@surfing.com
Sls/Mktg. Coord. **JAIME BECK** jaimbeck@primedia.com

NATIONAL SALES

Vice President, National Sales **JAMES LYNCH** james.lynch@primedia.com
Dir. Sales Planning & Research **RON SOLOMON** ron.solomon@primedia.com
National Sales Coordinator **CHRIS STORRER** chris.storror@primedia.com

DETROIT NATIONAL SALES

MAIORANA + PARTNERS, LTD.
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EAST COAST AND MIDWEST NATIONAL SALES

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ASG DIGITAL

Director, Digital Sales & Marketing **TODD JUNEAU** todd.juneau@primedia.com
VP, Internet Operations **JAKE HEFNER** jake.hefner@primedia.com

MARKETING AND EVENTS

Director of Event Ops **SEAN NIELSEN** sean.nielsen@primedia.com
Senior Event Consultant **DARREN BRILHART** brillo@socal.rr.com



ACTION SPORTS GROUP MANAGEMENT

President **DON MEEK** don.meek@primedia.com
Vice President, Group CFO **OWEN KLOSTER** owen.kloster@primedia.com
Business Manager **KEN LOCKWOOD** ken.lockwood@primedia.com
Director, Production **KASEY BOOHER** kasey.boother@primedia.com
Facilities Director **ERIN FOOTTE** erin.footte@primedia.com
Retail Sales Manager **CHUCK ELLIOTT** chuck.elliott@primedia.com
Retail Sales Associate **LUKE SEILE** luke.seile@primedia.com

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