

LIZ CUNNINGHAM

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www.lizcunningham.net



"I learned that the heart of hope is the passion of rescue."

That's what Liz Cunningham tells her audiences, whether it's at an inner-city high school or a university lecture series. She tells them how traveling the globe to study the oceans revealed the catastrophic consequences of the damage we're doing to the seas, including one of the most urgent crises—climate change.

"But I learned something else," she says, "something wholly unexpected and it changed who I am." Cunningham learned that "the passion for rescue" is inspiring communities as far

flung as Sulawesi and Papua to come together and defend the earth's waters that our lives depend on. As a conservationist, she is dedicated to cultivating the passion of rescue—engaging and empowering citizens.

In her award-winning book, *Ocean Country* (Foreword by Carl Safina, North Atlantic Books, September 2015), Cunningham writes of fishermen in Sulawesi who stopped dynamite fishing, courageously walking away from organized crime, of a renowned culinary institute in Paris that embraces sustainability and the global efforts of conservationists who buck the odds to save bluefin tuna from extinction.

"The ocean is our life-support system," she explains. "There's no life without water: *we all live in ocean country.*"

Over 50% of the oxygen in every breath we take comes from marine plants and algae. Because of climate change, overfishing and pollution, the health of the seas is so gravely endangered that it puts all life in grave danger. "But," Cunningham counters, "what we don't hear about enough is that there are millions of people working to do something about it all around the globe. And that movement is growing fast! Those people need our help. Every time one of us steps forward to help them, the needle pushes further toward hope."

Cunningham's great uncle, Kurt Hahn, was the founder of [Outward Bound](http://OutwardBound.org), an international network of schools in 33 countries, serving over 250,000 participants a year. Their outdoor programs are designed in Hahn's words, "to ensure the survival of these qualities: an enterprising curiosity, an undefeatable spirit, tenacity in pursuit, readiness for sensible self-denial, and above all compassion." The very qualities, Cunningham believes, we need to address the crises that have taken us to the brink of catastrophe.

Cunningham is also dedicated to cultivating the passion of rescue as one of the keepers of her great uncle's legacy. Along with her husband, Charles Costello, she founded the online archive for Hahn's work, KurtHahn.org, and serves on the board of the [Outward Bound Center for Peacebuilding](http://OutwardBoundCenterforPeacebuilding.org).

"The passion of rescue doesn't calculate the odds," Cunningham writes in *Ocean Country*. "Its risks are the one that make life all the more worth living, *risks with heart*. The passion of rescue is a lived, breathing hope."

"Conservation and community building go hand in hand," Cunningham says. "My mission is to inspire and empower others to join the effort to save our seas and forge a sustainable future—to make that a top priority. In the end it's really about inviting others to be a part of the hope on which our future hinges. Each and every one of us is needed. There's a role for each of us to play."

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE FOR SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS, INTERVIEWS, and AUTHOR-PENNEED ARTICLES

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MORE ABOUT LIZ CUNNINGHAM

LIZ CUNNINGHAM is the author of *Ocean Country: One Woman's Voyage from Peril to Hope in Her Quest to Save the Seas* (North Atlantic Books, September 2015), which has been lauded by leading figures in the environmental movement. She is also the author of *Talking Politics: Choosing the President in the Television Age* (Praeger), which features frank and probing oral-history interviews with top television journalists such as Tom Brokaw, Larry King, and Robin MacNeil. Her work has been published in journals, magazines, and newspapers such as *AlterNet.org*, *Earth Island Journal*, *GreenBiz*, *the Marin Poetry Center Anthology*, *The Outward Bound International Journal*, *Times of the Islands*, and *The San Francisco Chronicle*. She is active in the education field as founder, with her husband Charles Costello, of KurtHahn.org, the online archive for the founder of Outward Bound. She serves on the board of [Outward Bound Peacebuilding](http://OutwardBoundPeacebuilding.org). An accomplished public speaker she has spoken at schools, universities, and public venues such as the Commonwealth Club, The New York Times Building, and the New England Aquarium. Visit her at: lizcunningham.net.

Twenty-one percent of royalties are being donated to the New England Aquarium's [Marine Conservation Action Fund](http://MarineConservationActionFund.org). That percentage was chosen because it's the percentage of oxygen in each breath we take. Over half of that oxygen comes from plants and algae in the ocean. Every other breath is thanks to them.

MEDIA

[Lecture at the New England Aquarium](#) (YouTube)

[KALW's Your Call with Rose Aguilar](#) (February 2, 2015)

[KPIX-San Francisco Interview with Frank Mallicoat](#) (November 13, 2015)

["Women's Media Center Live with Robin Morgan,"](#) (December 5, 2015)

["Ladies We Love: Author and Ocean Conservationist Liz Cunningham"](#) (WomensMovement.com, 2015)

["Brace Yourself: Hope Is Taking the Upper Hand"](#) (GreenBiz.com, November 5, 2015)

["Hope Happens When We Get Out of Neutral"](#) (AlterNet.org, September 22, 2015)

["Berkeley Woman's Brush with Death Leads to Global Ocean Exploration."](#) (SF Gate/*San Francisco Chronicle*, September 10, 2015)

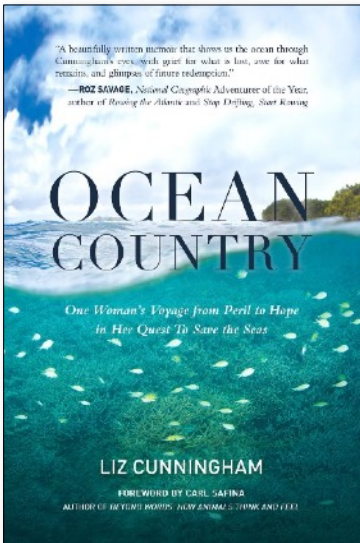
["Ocean Country 'Parent Pick' for the Season"](#) (Green Child Magazine, Fall 2015)

["Diving into Deep Blue"](#) *Sierra Club Magazine* (January 2016)

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**ABOUT *OCEAN COUNTRY: ONE WOMAN'S VOYAGE FROM PERIL TO HOPE*
IN HER QUEST TO SAVE THE SEAS BY LIZ CUNNINGHAM**



Ocean Country is an adventure story, a call to action, and a poetic meditation on the state of the seas. But most importantly, it is the story of finding true hope in the midst of one of the greatest crises to face humankind.

Ocean Country: One Woman's Journey from Peril to Hope in Her Quest to Save the Seas, with a foreword by Carl Safina, North Atlantic Books (2015)

"...With genuine emotion and great pragmatism, Cunningham makes passionate pleas for the continued health of the planet."—**Publishers Weekly**

"(Cunningham) ably conveys her enthusiasm to readers. A moving testament to the human spirit."—**Kirkus**

"*Ocean Country* is a great read—a moving memoir, a gripping adventure story and a work of committed advocacy all in one volume."—**San Jose Mercury News/Bay Area News Group**

"Powerful, impassioned, personal, and insightful. *Ocean Country* is part beautifully-written memoir, part stinging expose, and part thrilling adventure book. Gut-wrenching in its truth, it leaves readers with a taste of optimistic possibilities for the sea."—**Green Child magazine**

"*Ocean Country* is a heroine's journey of near-death and discovery, of hopelessness and rebirth. Cunningham's odyssey reveals how immersion into the problems that overwhelm us is a blessing of self-discovery. Where there is carelessness, we find our tenderness; where there is human suffering, we find our sense of compassion. Where there is damage and degradation, we find faith in ourselves and know that human beings can both resist and change all human ignorance."—**Paul Hawken**, author of *Blessed Unrest* and director of Project Drawdown

"Especially for those of us who live inland, this book comes as a great gift—an overwhelming reminder of the ocean planet on which we live, with its great wonders and the risks it faces."—**Bill McKibben**, author of *Eaarth: Making a Life on a Tough New Planet*

"As the ticking time bomb of our ocean crisis gets ever closer to detonating, Liz Cunningham brings us face to face with the hard facts. Her description of the transformation of a reef devastated by coral bleaching in just the space of a week, made me want to cry. And yet, even while aching with sorrow for the plight of our oceans, she pushes on through her despondency to find causes for hope. Common sense is breaking out around the world, as people come together to collaborate and build trust, to shift from short-term greed to long-term conservation. A beautifully-written memoir that shows us the ocean through Cunningham's eyes, with grief for what is lost, awe for what remains, and glimpses of future redemption."—**Roz Savage**, National Geographic Adventurer of the Year, author of *Rowing the Atlantic* and *Stop Drifting, Start Rowing*

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"I am full of awe and gratitude to Liz Cunningham for sharing her personal story interwoven with the joy and tragedy of the oceans, and account that is both intimate and universal. *Ocean Country* inspires me to take action to preserve our underwater wilderness. I hope it will have the same effect on many other readers who will enjoy this riveting narrative. A must read for those who want to preserve the beauty and diversity of our world both on sea and on land."—**Arlene Blum**, author of *Annapurna: A Woman's Place* and *Breaking Trail: A Climbing Life*

"Liz Cunningham, in the rich tapestry of her book, documents better than any scientific treatise could, what we stand to lose if we continue to let the oceans go."—**Daniel Pauly**, author of *Five Easy Pieces: The Impact of Fisheries on Marine Ecosystem*

"Thrilling adventure tale, searing exposé, and moving memoir rolled into one, *Ocean Country* charts Liz Cunningham's quest for healing after a near-death encounter with a rogue wave. The story of her odyssey sparkles with wit, wisdom, and excitement. Cunningham doesn't flinch from devastation and despair. Instead she finds meaning and inspiration in local but sometimes tectonic shifts: fishermen cooperating to reduce catches, citizens guarding ocean refuges, French chefs serving only sustainably-caught fish. Her heartrending—and heart lifting—tales eloquently capture flashes of insight when the dots connect and new options open up. Her book also did something rare and precious: it burnished my hope for the future of our oceans."—**Karen Garrison**, former codirector of the Natural Resources Defense Council's Ocean Program, recipient of the "Heroes of the Sea" Peter Benchley Award

"Cunningham has searched and found a powerful response to one of the greatest questions of our time from the deepest part of herself and expressed it with eloquence and wit and discernment, taking the reader along with her for a marvelous ride into a greater state of awareness."—**Susan Murphy**, author of *Minding the Earth, Mending the World*

"Wave after wave of gripping narrative—mysterious, funny, prophetic and profound—deftly delivers knowledge crucial to our times. You can give it as a gift to friends and family, you can assign it at any classroom level in any field. You can let it teach you how to take yourself seriously enough to make a difference."—**Catherine Keller**, author of *Cloud of the Impossible* and *The Face of the Deep*

"A stunning account of our endangered oceans—of vanishing coral reefs, collapsing fisheries, mindless exploitation and species loss. But that is only the beginning. Time and again, Cunningham discovers threads of hope in people committed to reversing these tragedies. Taken together, by the end, they unlock a hitherto unimagined and hopeful revelation. You can feel it in the author's heart. You will feel it in your own."—**Richard J. Borden**, author of *Ecology and Experience*

"The ocean is medicine. That's what Liz Cunningham's book shows us. It describes the winding, unpredictable neurological cascades that happen when we connect deeply with our waterways. We experience awe, wonder, purpose, insight, calm, excitement, solitude, romance, empathy, creativity. We become advocates, warriors, custodians, fixers, champions—we become unstoppable. In *Ocean Country* we meet people where they are as they heal and are reminded how much we all need such healing now."—**Wallace J. Nichols**, author of *Blue Mind*

"*Ocean Country* is a book about the art of the possible. How is it possible to protect the planet's glorious richness of sea-lives and the life of fisherfolk? How can we harvest the sea without emptying it? How is it possible to bear the oceanic consequences of run-away carbon catastrophe? How is it possible to write a book that both celebrates and informs, calling us to respond with hearts and minds to the crises of the life-sustaining seas? In her book of underwater adventures, Liz Cunningham shows us how."—**Kathleen Dean Moore**, author of *Great Tide Rising* and co-editor of *Moral Ground*