



Alexandra Cousteau makes a stop on her Blue Legacy tour.

blue crusader

In 2009 the environmentalist Alexandra Cousteau crisscrossed the globe, film crew in tow, to document the world's water crises, from the drought-stricken West Bank to India's polluted Ganges River. "When we came back," she says, "people were like, 'Wow, thank goodness we don't have those issues here in the United States.'"

An explorer, with the ocean in her blood, shines light on local water issues.

So Cousteau set out to show them otherwise. Last year, the granddaughter of the legendary ocean explorer Jacques Cousteau spent four and a half months

traveling through North America by biodiesel bus, documenting the devastation of water ecosystems and helping local conservation groups raise awareness and money. She followed the Colorado River, which no longer reaches the Sea of Cortez because its water is diverted for agriculture and the needs of desert cities like Las Vegas and Phoenix. She visited Kingston, Tennessee, where a disaster two years earlier had released over one billion gallons of toxic coal ash slurry, contaminating local waterways. She explored Florida's coasts, where coral reefs are threatened because carbon dioxide emissions are affecting the acidity and temperature of the ocean.

Cousteau and crew shared what they learned from the road via social networking and the website of her nonprofit, Blue Legacy (alexandracousteau.org). "My hope is that we'll be able to help people understand that the global water crisis isn't something that's happening in Africa," she says. "It's happening in our backyards. And we absolutely have to change that." ANNA DUBROVSKY



in your backyard

Get involved in local efforts to protect your watershed.

>> Founded by grassroots activists including Robert F. Kennedy Jr., the **Waterkeeper Alliance** helps citizens join together to fight for clean water in their own backyards. Go to waterkeeper.org to con-

nect with a group in your area and choose your own adventure: Patrol your local waterway, track down pollutants, lobby for better laws, and mobilize your community to protect the water near you.

