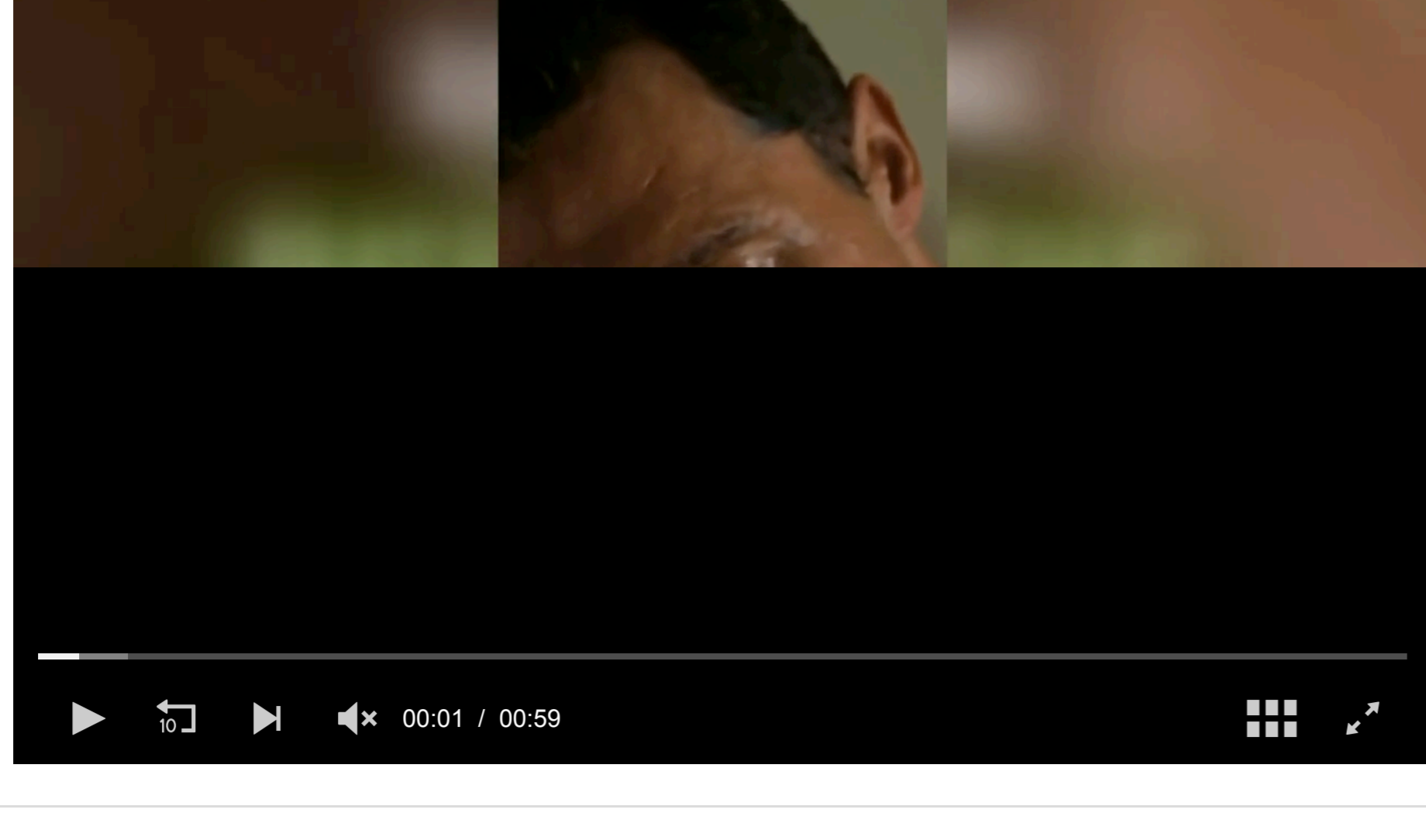


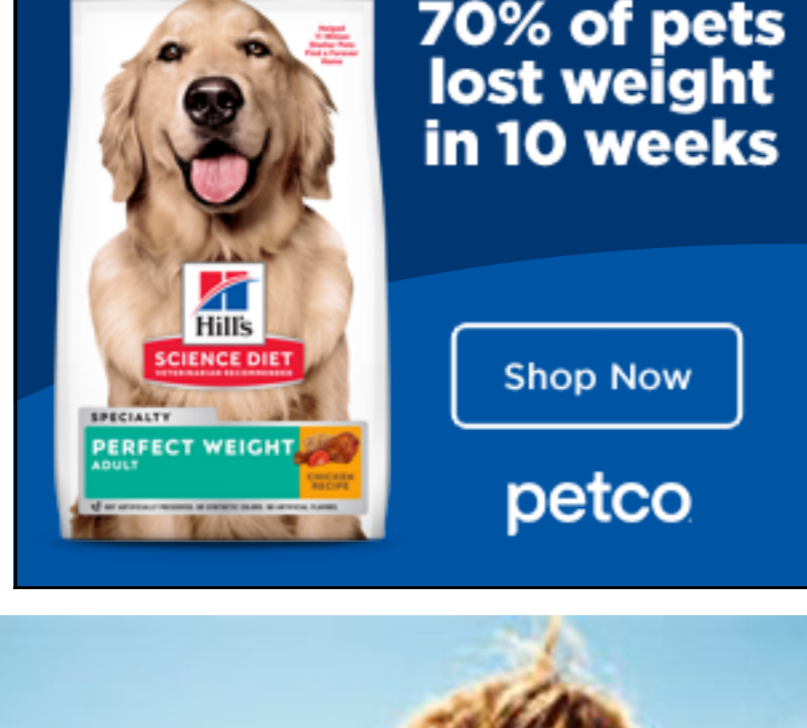
Laird Hamilton Speaks Out for Ocean Preservation

Reinventing the Outdoors contest: The legendary surfer has achieved amazing feats on water, but has also seen pollution getting worse along the way.

By Amara Holstein
May 1, 2011



UPDATED! Launched on Monday April 4, *GOOD* and the 2011 Ford Explorer will be devoting six weeks to the [Reinventing the Outdoors Contest](#), which showcases amazing organizations like this one that are redefining the way we live, work, and play outside. Check in every day for a new story about the people, celebrities, and programs behind each organization. Help your favorite group win the \$50,000 grand prize by voting for them starting Monday, May 16 through Friday, May 20.



A world-class surfer widely regarded the best in the world at taking on big waves, Laird Hamilton ventures where few dare to ride: monster waves topping out at more than 35 feet tall. Not only is he a world class board rider, he's a little bit of a renaissance man with water sports. He works on preservation with the Surfrider Foundation and is also credited with inventing the foilboard, windsurfer, kitesurfer, and stand-up paddlesurfer (an ancient Hawaiian technique). He's married to retired professional volleyball player Gabrielle Reece and, along with their two daughters, divides time between their homes in Malibu and Kauai.

GOOD: How did you first become involved with Surfrider Foundation?

Laird Hamilton: I first heard about Surfrider Foundation through friends on Maui who were involved on a grassroots level. I saw how they were able to make a difference through the local chapter by raising both money and awareness. In my travels across Europe, particularly in France, I have seen Surfrider Foundation operating locally on a global level.

G: There are so many challenges affecting the world's oceans. Which issues do you feel need to be at the forefront of the conversation?

LH: A true understanding and compassion for the fragility of ocean life is the issue I feel is most crucial to any conversation about the ocean. On a micro level, individuals should feel a sense of both responsibility and empowerment to doing all the little things that matter to the coastline—pick up trash, stop littering, recycle—scores of small contributions can quickly lead to large scale change. On a macro level, it is important that we hold corporations and politicians accountable to understanding the needs of our ecosystem—they represent us, and we are all dependent on that ecosystem—we possess the power and capability to prevent its destruction.



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G: Over the course of your surfing career, how have you seen pollution affect the sport?

LH: Quite simply I have seen the water pollution get worse and worse. The problem has evolved from trash on our beaches to a real lack of awareness for the quality and health of our ocean water.



G: Is it a tough sell to get surfers to care about conservation?

LH: No. I feel that surfers are especially caring about conservation. I believe those who engage with and in nature are most likely to care about it and want it nurtured.

G: Where's your favorite place in the world to surf and why?

LH: Hanalei, Kauai, Hawaii. I grew up on the island and many of my earliest surfing memories are tied to Hanalei. I have the pleasure now of paddling on the Hanalei River with my daughters. It is a special place.

G: People often forget that ocean health affects the life on land, too. You and your family live along some of the most beautiful coastlines in the world; how are you and Gabby teaching your kids about the link between the oceans and life at home?

LH: Gabby and I are believers in the interconnectedness of us all—to each other, to the water, to the land. It is an important goal that our daughters understand this interconnectedness and share a sense of belonging to its maturation and resiliency.

GOOD: Describe your perfect day out on the water.

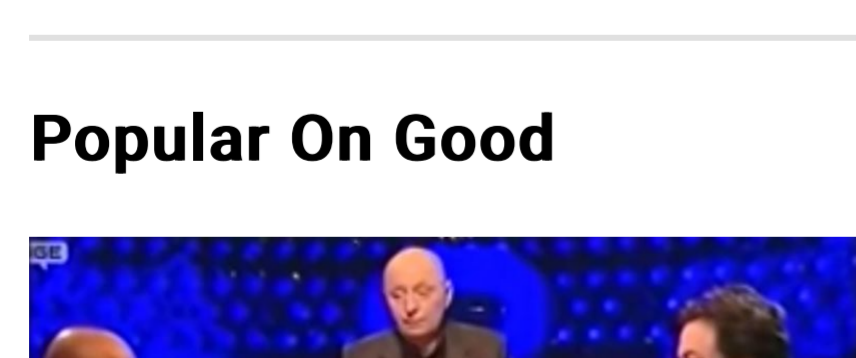
LH: With family and friends catching waves—of any size.

Image 1 by [Michael Muller](#)

Image 2 by [Tim McKenna](#)



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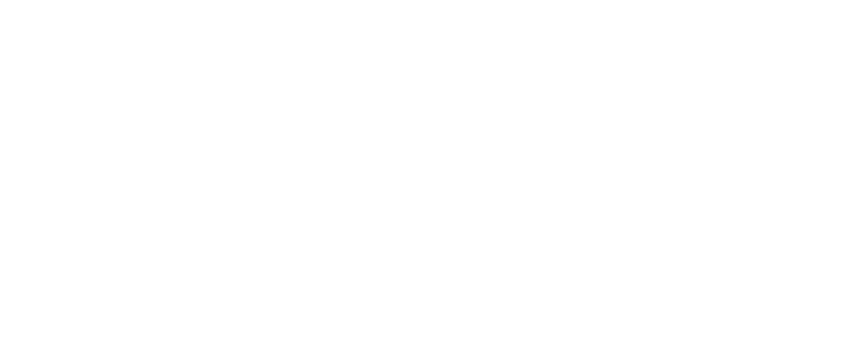
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