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Christopher Oakes is a marine biologist who specializes in deep-tech product commercialization and corporate development. Oakes holds a B.A. and M.A. in Biology from Occidental College. Oakes has dedicated his career to molecular tools and diagnostics, robotics, sustainable aquaculture and venture building. As CEO of Reefgen, he is setting the company's vision around mechanizing nearshore planting operations and strategic direction to meet the scale of ecosystem restoration market needs in the face of climate change. During his time at Occidental, Chris worked with the Vantuna Research Group focusing on life history studies of nearshore marine fishes, marine environmental monitoring, time series analysis and spatial modeling.

He also developed laboratory procedures and analytical techniques for morphology studies of gastropods. Former companies and roles include: COO Sustainable Ocean Alliance, VP Product and Market Development NovoNutrients, Development Manager Liquid Robotics, Regional Manager Laboratory Corporation of America, and Director of Strategic Alliances and Venture Portfolio at Deep Science Ventures, and running senior partnerships at SynBioBeta, the leading synthetic biology convening body and conference in the world. Chris is also a long-time board member and R&D chair at the non-profit Marine Applied Research and Exploration (MARE).