

2020 IMPACT REPORT



5 GYRES
SCIENCE TO SOLUTIONS

WELCOME

LETTER FROM ANNA

While the beginning of a new year is always cause for reflection, 2021 brings a new set of challenges, hopes, and thoughts about the role each of us can play in supporting a more just and livable world. On the heels of an exhausting finale to 2020, our team and Board often talk about the small yet important part we can play in working towards greater national harmony in the decades to come: engaging communities in science as the starting point for solutions.

In the case of our mission: we use science-based knowledge to inform solutions to the threats that fossil-fuel based plastics pose to our planet. Anyone reading this Impact Report - as well as global leaders, CEOs and policymakers around the world - are already well aware of these threats to ecosystems and communities. Where we may differ is on the most effective solutions. When these differences arise, we must use vetted science, not science for hire, or science paid for with specific outcomes in mind, as the basis for good decision-making. And we must be wide open to accepting information that might challenge our preconceived notions, or even our world view.

We are deeply grateful for your support in this effort - to engage next generation leaders with STEM as a common language, continue answering scientific questions around plastics' impacts and solutions, work with our corporate partners on amplifying business solutions, and support our global network of Ambassadors in advancing solutions within their own communities. We're hopeful that our commitment to truth, leadership, and science-based critical thinking can help push us a little further towards the values we hold in common - a healthier, safer and more equitable world for all beings.

-Anna Cummins

5 GYRES STAFF

ANNA CUMMINS | Co-Founder and Interim Executive Director

MARCUS ERIKSEN | Co-Founder and Director of Science & Innovation

MARINA IVLEV | Director of Communications

SARA MAIS | Development Manager

RACHEL LABBÉ- BELLAS | Foundation and Corporate Relations Manager

GINGER MUKHERJEE | Operations Manager

ALISON WALISZEWSKI | Programs Manager

ELISEO NEVAREZ | Education Coordinator

SCIENCE & INNOVATION

Science has always been the cornerstone of 5 Gyres' work, informing our solutions, strategies, and focus. We conduct primary research to better understand the global impact of plastic pollution, and to vet alternatives to petroleum plastics to ensure sustainability. Our research projects are collaborative, inviting other global scientists, thought leaders, and industry experts to partner with us, ensuring that we are asking and answering the right questions.

"Science has always been our North Star at 5 Gyres, providing vetted research that can help inform upstream solutions. As a Board member, I'm committed to continuing to find ways to elevate our capacity to highlight science as a way to drive greater impact."
- Casey Marshall, Board of Directors



PUBLISHED PAPERS IN 2020

LEAD AUTHOR | DR. MARCUS ERIKSEN

- Plastic in the Polar Regions ([read here](#))
- The Plight Of Camels Eating Plastic Waste ([read here](#))

IN COLLABORATION | MULTIPLE AUTHORS

- Future Plastic Waste Exceeds Mitigation Efforts ([read here](#))
- Factors Removing Plastic in the South Pacific ([read here](#))

UPCOMING STUDY / PHA WORKS: Understanding and communicating the degradability of different PHA products in varying environments over time

Our next research study, spanning **18 months**, will seek to understand the degradability of **PHA (polyhydroxyalkanoate)**. While we advocate first and foremost for a shift towards a reuse/refill economy, we will need transitional materials like PHA to get there. PHA is a truly **biodegradable alternative** to plastic at scale, but we need to better understand how it biodegrades in real environments over time. Bioplastics have a place in society, but there's a lack of consumer and market confidence in the environmental consequences of bioplastics as waste. In **BAN List 2.0**, we verified the misleading degradability claims of PLA bioplastic products, but one PHA product in that earlier study had very promising results. This new study will expand upon and attempt to verify those results so that we can provide critical validation of real alternatives to plastic.

EDUCATION ADVOCACY

"The next generation is the solution. We provide them with the tools, resources, and networks they need to become leaders. I'm excited to see 5 Gyres growing youth education by providing high quality STEM content to our nation's future leaders."
- Anna Getty, Board of Directors

TRASH ACADEMY & LA ACADEMIA DE BASURA SEASON 1

In response to COVID-19, we launched Trash Academy and La Academia de Basura utilizing our NGSS-correlated curriculum to create **short, actionable lessons** that families could enjoy together. By presenting in both Spanish and English, we are better able to provide cultural relevance to the plastic pollution issue as it relates to the environmental justice and local frontline communities impacted by plastic pollution. We also use 5 Gyres research in these lessons to increase public knowledge of the social, economic, and ecological harm caused by the toxicity of plastics as well as **promote scientifically-informed solutions** to the interconnected challenges we face in the plastic pollution crisis.

EXPANDLA PARTNERSHIP WITH LAUSD FUNDED BY THE ELI AND EDYTH BROAD FOUNDATION

Over 10 weeks in the fall of 2020, 5 Gyres taught and recorded **50 live classes** of environmental science courses to **150 students** and their families. These courses integrated education, advocacy, and citizen science with the 5 Gyres curriculum into a **multi-phased educational platform** that served the needs of K-5 students and their communities during the pandemic.

POLICY & COALITION WORK COALITION SPOTLIGHT:

We are proud of the local to global advocacy work we do in the plastic pollution policy sphere, we want to highlight the progress of a particular coalition - Reusable LA. As one of the Co-Chairs of Reusable LA, we drafted a model ordinance that garnered support at the city and county levels that would **drastically reduce the amount of single-use plastic** in California's takeout items. We found that there was an **88%** interest from restaurants to support a law that requires a fee for disposables which is great news for the future of this ordinance.



TRASHBLITZ

SPOTLIGHT: TRASHBLITZ DENVER, COLORADO

80 volunteers, **30** random sampling sites, **4500+** trash items, **1** snowstorm!
Thank you to our partners! CoPIRG, EcoCycle and Environment Colorado, Inland Ocean Coalition, Into the Sea, City of Denver, One World One Water, Women in Sustainability, and GFL Environmental.

TRASHBLITZ AT HOME

The TrashBlitz app was used for **'home audits'** where students from our ExpandLA group were able to demonstrate an increase in the baseline understanding of plastic pollution knowledge and ocean literacy in a **'learn by doing'** approach.

TRASHBLITZ GLOBAL

The TrashBlitz platform was used for **Break Free From Plastic's** Global Brand Audit and to calculate **global data** from our ambassador network during Coastal Cleanup Month!

AMBASSADOR NETWORK

2020 AMBASSADOR SPOTLIGHT:

Tess Parkhouse and Devon Beebe are friends, lifeguards in Long Beach, CA, and zero-waste advocates who fundraised over **\$9,000** for 5 Gyres via a **swim across the Catalina Channel** in October 2020.

Our global Ambassador Network has grown to **1,800+** individuals from **66** countries around the world. As our 'boots on the ground', these passionate people fundraise, participate in citizen science, post about the plastic movement (and us!) on social media, and much more. **We love our Ambassadors!**

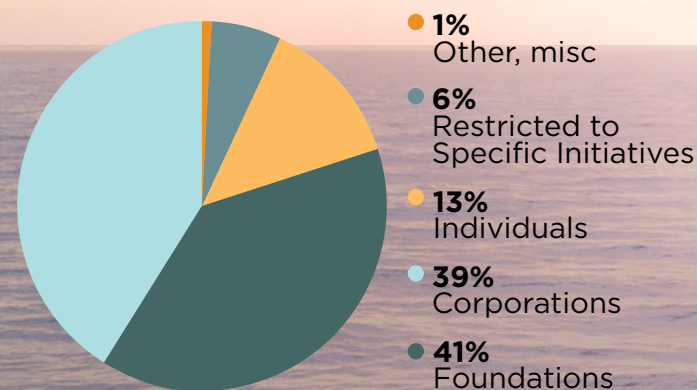


REVENUE & EXPENSES

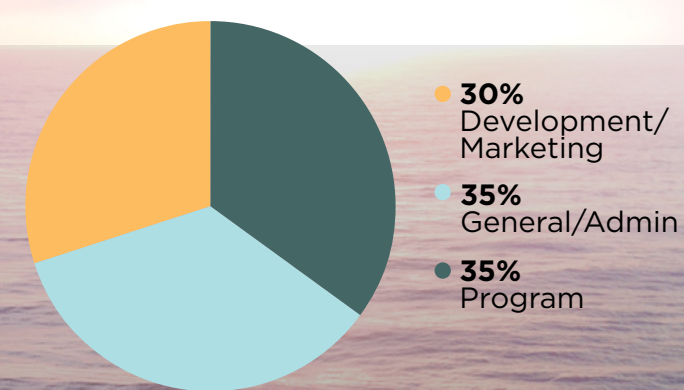
"Having been on 5 Gyres' board for 4 years, I'm thrilled to see the organization growing during a dynamic time in our world. We're looking forward to continued growth in our programs and supporters, and finding new ways to connect community members to a shared value - reducing plastic pollution on our planet." - Chris Gift, Board Treasurer

INCOME*

Restricted & Unrestricted Funding



EXPENSES*



*FY October 2019 - September 2020

DONOR LIST* / \$1K+

- 1% For the Planet
- 4ocean
- Ace of Air
- Angora Ridge Foundation
- Beauty Heroes
- Bee's Wrap
- Boeing Foundation
- Break Free From Plastic
- Chelsey Ring Giving Fund
- ChicoBag / ToGo Ware
- Claryti
- Costa Sunglasses
- Curtis and Edith Munson Foundation
- David Schwartz Foundation
- Dental Lace
- Draper Family Foundation
- Drumfire Public Affairs
- DuBose Family Foundation
- Dufour Family Foundation
- Eagle Creek
- Elbaz Family Foundation
- Everything But Water
- Formation Brands, LLC
- Fred Craves Family Foundation
- GAIA
- Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation c/o San Francisco Estuary Institute (SFEI)
- Grill Concepts
- Grove Collaborative
- Gwydion Fund for Wild Nature
- Highwave
- Hula
- Hull Family Foundation
- Jack & Sylvia Altman Foundation
- Jacques Weber Foundation, Inc.
- Jewish Community Foundation of San Diego
- Johnson Ohana Charitable Foundation
- Kablo
- Klean Kanteen
- Liquid Death
- Maison Marcel
- Marisla Foundation
- Mary G. Jameson Foundation
- Mental Insight Foundation
- Mericos Foundation
- Metropolitan Water District of Southern California
- Moen
- Moller Family Foundation
- Mon Coeur
- Nara Shave
- Natracare
- Nelson - O'Neil Charitable Fund
- Ohrstrom Foundation
- Outer
- Pangaia
- Patagonia Action Works
- PathWater
- PISTERZI
- Pixel & Timber
- Plaine Products
- PlayStation
- prAna
- Preserve
- Roberts-Preston Family Giving Fund
- Rose Foundation
- Shanahan Family Foundation
- Silicon Valley Community Foundation
- SIMA Environmental Fund
- Soludos
- Soul Buffalo
- Stasher Bag
- STS Foundation
- Sustainable Futures Fund
- The Eli and Edyth Broad Foundation
- The Emmett R. Quady Foundation
- The Final Co. LLC
- The Frances and Benjamin Benenson Foundation
- The Hopewell Fund
- The Monarch Foundation
- TheNobleNarwhal
- The Standard Club
- Trinity Property Consultants
- Verity Platforms
- Vos Family Foundation

*\$1,000+ within FY October 2019 - September 2020

NEW CORPORATE PARTNERS FROM ACROSS INDUSTRIES

Moen, 4ocean, Outer, Eagle Creek, prAna, Standard Club, PathWater, Pisterzi, Ace of Air, Maison Marcel, Verity Platforms, Mon Coeur, TheNobleNarwhal, and Claryti.



Corporate enterprises are increasingly under investor pressure from ESG and impact-weighted-accounting. 5 Gyres can be a huge lever in helping these enterprises to solve the plastic pollution problem at the source." - Kathleen Egan, Board Chair



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