

**5 GYRES**

SCIENCE TO SOLUTIONS



**IMPACT REPORT**  
**2023**



Dear Friends of 5 Gyres,

Thank you for faithfully following along with us this year as we navigate the sometimes tumultuous waters of science, advocacy, and education in the plastic pollution space. You and your support are what keep us forging ahead, and we are so grateful for your steadfast belief in a plastic-free future.

We are proud of the progress we have made in the span of a year, but as you know, there are many challenges ahead to reach our goals of a sustainable fossil fuel-free future. Therefore, we partner with brands, scientists, policymakers, and communities to address plastic pollution at the source. Our relevant and accessible science educates and influences decisionmakers across the globe to make industry wide change. With your continued support, we know record-breaking, needle-moving change is possible.

Thank you for being part of the solution, and we look forward to having you by our side in 2024.

With gratitude,  
Anna Cummins  
Co-Founder & Executive Director

## OUR 2023 IMPACT

- 23,194**  
Items Tagged in TrashBlitz
- 5,964**  
Advocacy Actions Taken
- 26**  
Bills Supported/Engaged
- 8**  
Research Papers Published
- 150+**  
Media Mentions/Articles
- 94**  
Countries Represented by Ambassadors

## 5 GYRES BOARD

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## 5 GYRES STAFF

- ANNA CUMMINS | Co-Founder & Executive Director
- DR. MARCUS ERIKSEN | Co-Founder & Scientist
- DR. LISA ERDLE | Director of Science
- ANDRA JANIEKS | Director of Marketing
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- GINGER MUKHERJEE | Operations Manager
- RACHEL LABBE-BELLAS | Foundation & Corporate Relations Manager
- HANNAH TIZEDES | Community Manager

Science has always been the cornerstone of 5 Gyres' work, informing our solutions, strategies, and focus. 5 Gyres strives to ask questions and choose study topics that are not only relevant and relatable, but ultimately provide the public, policymakers, and brands with the information they need to make better buying, sourcing, designing, and end-of-life decisions for their products. We take our role as the "honest broker" of scientific research seriously!



## PLASTIC SMOG ALERT

Almost a decade after the first Global Estimate of Marine Plastic Pollution, we published an [updated paper](#): more than 170 trillion plastic particles, weighing approximately 2 million tonnes, are afloat in the world's oceans. This research made waves around the world, with more than 100 articles published in various languages, reaching millions of people and sparking conversation ahead of the Global Plastics Treaty negotiations.



## BETTER ALTERNATIVES 3.0

As promising research continues to emerge around alternative materials to single-use plastic, our [Better Alternatives 3.0](#) report offers greater transparency around their real-world behavior in the environment. We hosted a [State of the Science webinar](#), where leading experts discussed the role novel materials can play in plastic pollution solutions and where we need to exercise caution.



## SECTORS FRAMEWORK

There are many unique sources of plastic pollution, such as microfibers from textiles, microplastics from agricultural practices, floating ocean plastics from fishing gear, and everyday single-use packaging. Solutions for each of these require specific designs, policy approaches, and innovation. We published a [sector-based framework](#) that will guide our research and solutions in the coming years.



## Tiny Polluter, Big Environmental Impact

Plastic microfibers shed from our clothes when we wear, wash, and dry them, making their way into our air, waterways, ocean, food, and bodies. 5 Gyres continues to narrow the focus on this microscopic polluter through expeditions and symposiums with experts in the field, policy work backed by our science that proves filtration is a viable solution, and joining hands with cause partners in the sustainable fashion space to create a multi-pronged approach to tackle this problem.

## Local Data Driving Real Change

TrashBlitz supports community science volunteers around the world in collecting data on trash that has entered the environment. Our brand new mobile app makes it easier than ever for volunteers to take part and offers greater functionality, like geotagging specific locations. This localized data helps to paint a data-driven picture of a region's trash footprint and informs 5 Gyres' science-based recommendations that help reduce plastic pollution.



### SETTING SAIL FOR SOLUTIONS

Leaders from the textiles sector joined us on a tall ship in September as we raised our sails and embarked on an expedition in San Francisco Bay to chart microfiber pollution solutions. An intimate crew of changemakers in the textile industry came on board with two important goals: conduct scientific research on microfibers, and foster open discussions about potential solutions.



### PLASTIC-FREE PARKS

In the second year of our national parks-focused campaign, we had nationwide volunteers log more than 8,000 pieces of trash from 32 national parks and federal lands. This data helps to identify which materials, items, and brands of waste are most common in order to work toward solutions that protect our parks. This data was even used to support the New York Attorney General's lawsuit against PepsiCo!

### LEADING LEGISLATION

Our research shows that filtration is an effective, near-term solution to reduce microfiber emissions from laundering clothing. We co-sponsored AB 1628 (McKinnor), which would have required new washing machines in California to contain a microfiber filtration system by 2029. While Governor Newsom vetoed this bill, we will continue to advocate for this solution - and more - in 2024.



### OFFICEBLITZ

Insight Global joined us in piloting the very first OfficeBlitz, a spinoff of our TrashBlitz program that identifies data-informed solutions to reduce waste in corporate cultures. OfficeBlitz measures the plastic pollution footprint in corporate offices and gives companies the data they need to design specific solutions.



### BUILDING A ROADMAP IN 2024

WOVEN is an upcoming series of convenings that will bring together leading researchers, industry innovators, and policymakers to develop comprehensive strategies for microfiber pollution. Following productive discussions on our sail, WOVEN will continue this momentum to build a roadmap for reducing microfiber emissions to the environment.



### TRASHBLITZ COMMUNITY FUND

Big change starts at the community level, and TrashBlitz is a proven tool to increase environmental stewardship, build coalitions, and drive policy change. Through our Community Fund, we provided funding and support for two groups to implement a TrashBlitz in their region, bringing TrashBlitz to New Orleans and the Winyah Bay Watershed in South Carolina.



## Advocating for Real Solutions

We believe that with better policies in place, the next generation will have a fighting chance to see climate change balanced through innovative product and packaging solutions, dedicated corporate accountability, and better consumer behavior. The 5 Gyres advocacy team engages in policy work through coalition-building on local, regional, national, and global scales. Through these networks, we advocate for better regulation of plastic usage and disposal worldwide by providing scientific data to further policy change.

### TESTIFYING BEFORE CONGRESS



5 Gyres' co-founder, Dr. Marcus Eriksen, testified before Congress about the efficacy of biomaterials and where they can play a role in the shift away from fossil fuel-based plastics, stating, "The innovation and entrepreneurship in this space gives me hope for the future."

### GLOBAL PLASTICS TREATY

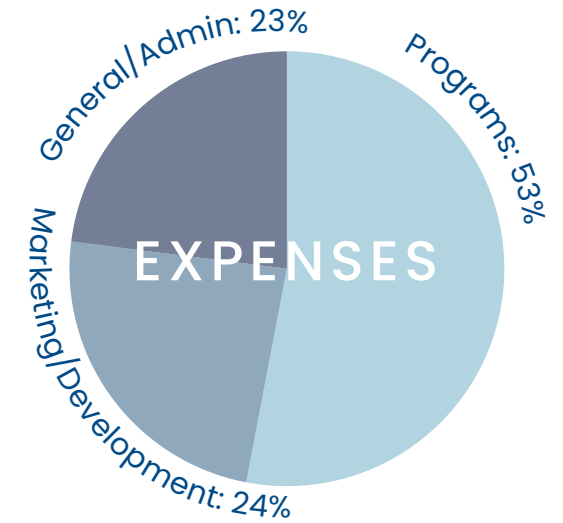
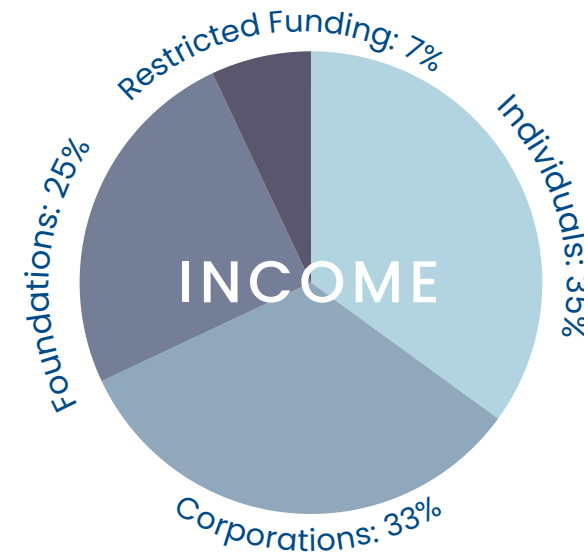
To guide negotiations for an effective Global Plastics Treaty, we contributed peer-reviewed science, including our updated Global Estimate of Marine Plastic Pollution. Additionally, 5 Gyres participated in meetings with U.S. environmental NGO stakeholders to discuss strategies and supported the establishment of a potential science-policy panel.



### REDUCING WASTE IN NATIONAL PARKS



5 Gyres supported and secured 63+ co-sponsors for the Reducing Waste in National Parks Act, which would reduce and eliminate the sale and distribution of single-use plastics in national parks. This bill would address some of the most common items found across national parks during our Plastic-Free Parks campaign, including plastic bottles, bags, and utensils.



Thank you to our donors & supporters!

- Aaron Harris
- Amanda Runkle
- American Endowment Foundation
- Andrew Klump
- Angora Ridge Foundation
- Aspect Consumer Partners
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- Virginia Wellington Cabot Foundation
- Wildwoods Foundation

\$1K+ during FY 2023: October 1, 2022 - September 30, 2023





*Art made of plastic collected from the Great Lakes by 5 Gyres Ambassador and team member [@HannahTizedes](#)*



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