

2018 ANNUAL REPORT

We need to hit the streets to save our oceans.

What we know after sailing 60,000 miles across the world's oceans on 18 research expeditions is that the fight against marine plastic pollution starts on land. We have to reshape our relationship with plastic and stop plastic waste before it ever begins its journey to the sea.

Here are some of the ways we're engaging the **upstream solution** paradigm: Next summer we'll launch **TrashBlitz** to help Los Angeles define its plastic hot spots, where plastic slips through the cracks of waste management and recycling efforts to pollute ecosystems. After L.A. we take TrashBlitz on the road. Concerned about your city's plastic footprint? We can help.

We're giving corporations the chance to get in on the upstream action. In B.A.N. (Better Alternatives Now) List 2.0 we identified the top brands polluting U.S. waterways with single-use plastic. Next year in **B.A.N. List 3.0** we'll identify those trashing the waterways of Southeast Asia. What we're pushing for is **Extended Producer Responsibility**—when corporations take the end-life of their products as seriously as their profit margins. It makes perfect ecological and economic sense—we only have one blue planet!

B.A.N. List 3.0 outlines the **Zero Waste Cities** model because city by city, country by country we need to divert trash from the world's overflowing landfills. To achieve zero waste we'll need big systemic change: less plastic production, alternatives to plastic packaging as the world's major delivery system for goods, better product design and mandated recycled content in every plastic item made. Along with our global community we believe these changes can reverse the deluge of plastic trash reaching the ocean.

We're at a pivotal moment where awareness about problematic plastic is at an all-time high. Together let's build on the momentum.

Thank you for being part of the 5 Gyres ocean protection team!

Belinda Waymouth,
Director



5 GYRES
SCIENCE TO SOLUTIONS

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Photo credit: Alex Siegel



Our Co-Founders Anna Cummins and Marcus Eriksen

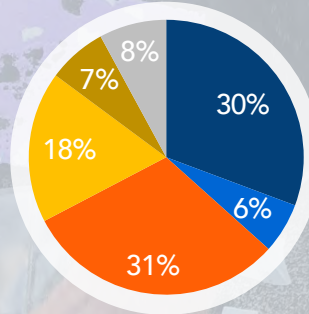


Celebrating the Ocean & 5 Gyres' 10th Birthday

350 people came to our second annual **Voices 4 Oceans** benefit at the Moss Theater in Santa Monica back in the spring. Twelve speakers shared stories about their connections to the ocean in the style of The Moth Radio Hour from NPR. Our storytellers included TIME magazine's "female Indiana Jones" Alison Teal, Pete Bethune of Earthrace Conservation, and Discovery Channel India's world record-breaking paddle-boarder Shilpika Gautam. Chris Douridas from KCRW DJ'ed the night. We also celebrated 5 Gyres' **10-year anniversary** of **Science to Solutions** by announcing an ambitious goal for the next decade: To stop the flow of plastic pollution from source to sea by 2028! We know it's bold, but it's what we're going for.

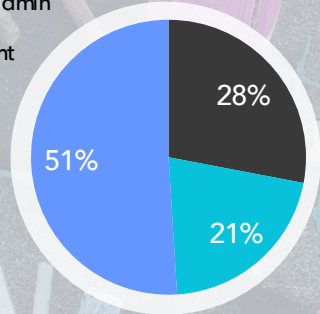
REVENUE

- Foundation Grants
- Government Grants
- Corporate Partnerships
- Individual Donors
- Research Expedition
- Other



EXPENSES

- General & Admin
- Development
- Program



THANK YOU TO OUR TOP SUPPORTERS!

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FROM OUR BOARD CHAIR

This has been a year of many changes and developments for 5 Gyres. We welcomed our new Director, Belinda Waymouth, to helm the organization in June and she's already accomplishing great things. We also added 2 full-time staffers to our ever expanding team. 5 Gyres is grateful for the support of our incredible community of donors, colleagues and ambassadors, without whom our organization would not be possible. The next decade will be big as we work to stop plastic at the source—together we can do this!

Elan Glasser,
Board Chair





TRASHBLITZ Calling all Citizen Scientists!



Photo credit: Alex Siegel

As ocean plastics experts we're going upstream to tackle the problem at the source. It's **Science to Solutions** pinpointing the best tactics to solve the plastic problem for good.

When we show an audience a jar of microplastics from the middle of the ocean, the first response is, "Wow, that's horrible!" quickly followed by "how do we clean it up?" People want to know how they can stop making the problem worse.

That's where **TrashBlitz** and you come in. With 5 Gyres' handpicked set of user-friendly plastic pollution measurement tools—beach and riverside surveys, roadside plastic trash categorization and brand audits—citizen scientists around the world can get a snapshot of their plastic footprint.

The solution half of TrashBlitz is the **prescription for change**. Here we transform data into action tackling a city's plastic problem head-on. Where there's a plastic hotspot, we'll work with local leadership on a customized mitigation plan; policy change, better waste management, or convincing a local company to invest in zero waste practices—whatever it takes.

☆ The **first TrashBlitz** will take place in **Los Angeles** next summer.



Photo credits: Carolyn Box

SFEI – SF Bay Microplastics Project

Preliminary results from **San Francisco Bay Microplastics Project** show microplastic fibers in water, effluent, sediment and fish, with particularly high concentrations in surface water. Conducted in partnership with the **San Francisco Estuary Institute** the project is moving from an intense data gathering phase—6 months of field work and 354 samples collected—to developing reduction strategies. We're gearing up for a **2019 symposium** that will provide the larger scientific, policymaker, industry and stakeholder communities, the chance to review study findings and recommended actions to **prevent microplastic pollution** from making its way into S.F. waterways and the Pacific Ocean.



Around the World with 5 Gyres

Our research expedition took us to Indonesia's Coral Triangle. Crew members from around the world joined in the adventure and data collection. Here's what we found:

Over **350** pieces of plastic/m² on 1 beach

Removed over **900** lbs of plastic

1 trawl had **120,000** pieces of microplastic/km² of surface sea water

Photo credit: Alex Siegel

This data will be incorporated into 5 Gyres' **Marine Plastic Master Directory**—a compilation of **10 years of research** and expedition findings. Coral Triangle data will also contribute to B.A.N. List 3.0; profiling plastic pollution in Southeast Asia and mitigation strategies.

Indonesian partners from the **Asian Pacific Action Against Plastic Pollution (APAAPP)** project joined our expedition. In collaboration with GAIA, Mother Earth Foundation and Yayasan Pengembangan Biosains dan Biotechnologi, and supported by the U.S. State Department, APAAPP resulted in three Indonesian and Filipino cities preventing 8,000 tons of plastic waste entering the ocean this year.

5 Gyres' Research Director, Marcus Eriksen, was in Thailand as part of a **United Nations GESAMP** team of marine science experts standardizing protocols for measuring ocean plastics. It's part of the U.N. Environmental Programme's **#CleanSeas** campaign which has **"declared war on ocean plastic."**



Photo credit: Annie McBride

Sharing the Love of Trawling

Citizen scientists involved in our TrawlShare program added over 210 new global data points to our microplastic database. The findings will be incorporated into the **5 Gyres Marine Plastic Master Directory**—a culmination of ten years of research resulting in **800 data points**—that will be available in 2019. One of this year's TrawlShare highlights was partnering with our friends at Greenpeace, who collected microplastic samples on both U.S. coasts, educating thousands of people in the process.

B.A.N. List 2.0

In **Better Alternatives Now** aka B.A.N. List 2.0—we itemize the top 20 single-use plastic items littering U.S. waterways and identify the brands responsible.

"Some corporations don't think they're the source of the problem, or know plastic is a problem but won't take responsibility. But data is data, we wanted to show them their brands are on the ground doing harm and hopefully nudge them to do the right thing."
Marcus Eriksen, 5 Gyres' Research Director.



B.A.N. List 2.0 also uncovers the truth about overhyped compostable and biodegradable plastics. We tested 16 such products over two years and only five of them biodegraded in both land and ocean conditions. Most of them behaved just like petroleum based plastic and fragmented into smaller pieces or remained completely intact!

Better Alternatives Now also provides a commonsense twofold **solution strategy**: a toolkit of readily available reusable and refillable products that contain NO disposable materials, and secondly that consumers must **demand better products** from manufacturers.



Mi Mar/My Sea

440 students joined 8 **one-day expeditions** with our **Mi Mar/My Sea** education program. Mi Mar provides a hands-on learning experience for diverse and underserved students from Title 1 high schools. Along with trawling for plastic aboard a boat off the coast near Newport, the students are challenged to reduce their plastic footprints. For these students there was one very obvious single-use item—the disposable plastic utensils used in the mess hall at their military-style school Sunburst Youth Academy. After seeing marine plastic firsthand the students pushed for more sustainable options, Sunburst listened and switched to stainless steel cutlery. With 220 students eating 3 meals a day, per 22-week semester, this **eliminates 203,280 single-use utensils** from the waste stream every year!



Photo credit: Alisa Craig

Our AMBASSADOR network is growing!

Since last year the 5G ambassador team has more than doubled.

In **64** countries around the globe and across **42** U.S. states, over **700** ambassadors are taking the fight against plastic pollution to the next level.

Our ambassadors cover the gamut—they're teachers, activists, artists, entrepreneurs, conservationists, and scientists. They range in age from **8 to 80-years-old** and are taking on plastic pollution in awesome ways. Take Dr. Max Liboiron, she monitors microplastics in the waters around Newfoundland with a contraption she calls **BabyLegs**. The ultimate D.I.Y. trawl, BabyLegs are made from toddler tights and can be used by anyone.

5 Gyres provides ambassadors with presentation materials to share with their networks, advocacy training so they can be part of driving policy change and webinars so they can stay connected with our work and the latest research.

This unprecedented growth tells us more and more people are looking to activate on this issue. From TrawlShare to TrashBlitz we hope our ambassadors will continue to be part of the exciting work in 2019 and beyond. Check out **#5GyresAmbassador** on Instagram, **get inspired** and join the movement!

Social Media Audience 2017-18

In 2018 we continued growing our actively engaged social media following with a combined **organic** monthly reach of **1.3 million** across all platforms. Year over year, our reach has **grown 30%**.



Photo credit: Carolyn Box