



IMPACT REPORT

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5 GYRES
SCIENCE TO SOLUTIONS

DEAR FRIENDS

During the pandemic, my daughter and I developed a routine of long, mommy-daughter walks accompanied by her imaginary friends, 2 small chickens and 2 baby elephants, for whom I do all the voices. On these walks, as I talk to her through these animals in a series of squeaky voices and chirps, I get a glimpse into her rich fantasy world. And in this world, plastic is noticeably absent. Her industrious little animals are constantly inventing new plant-based alternatives - edible packaging (often made from candy), mushroom vehicles run by solar power, machines that run on plastic garbage, and an endless list of inventions that I hope to see as commonplace someday.

But sadly, as our supporters will know, the pandemic has threatened this fantasy world on an even deeper level. In the ultimate act of cynicism, the plastics industry took advantage of the pandemic to sow misinformation and doubt about the safety of reusables. The results of this are evident: an increase in single-use plastics by upwards of 250%, 26,000 tons of PPE polluting our oceans, mounting pressures placed on marginalized communities cited near incinerators or production facilities, and ever rising stressors from climate change.

So, as we look to a return to normalcy, we need even more creativity, collaboration, and innovation to counter these threats. We need to ensure that these solutions are grounded in credible science. And we need to continue nurturing the next generation of innovators, to bring their fantasies to life.

This is where 5 Gyres continues to place our focus. We are turning our scientific lens towards vetting innovation and answering key scientific questions about plastic pollution through new studies. We continue to utilize science to drive policy change with our TrashBlitz platform and coalition work. And we maintain our childlike ability to dream by engaging next generation leaders through our digital education series, Trash Academy.

All of our work is made possible by you - every single dedicated person in our community with the vision of a planet free from plastic pollution.

Thank you for your continued partnership,
Anna Cummins
Executive Director and Co-Founder

SCIENCE & INNOVATION

GROWING OUR SCIENCE TEAM

This year, we welcomed Lisa Erdle as our Manager of Science & Innovation to work alongside Dr. Marcus Eriksen. Lisa is a PhD Candidate in the Rochman Lab at the University of Toronto and brings 7+ years of experience investigating sources, fates, and effects of microfibers in the environment.



STATE OF THE SCIENCE WEBINARS

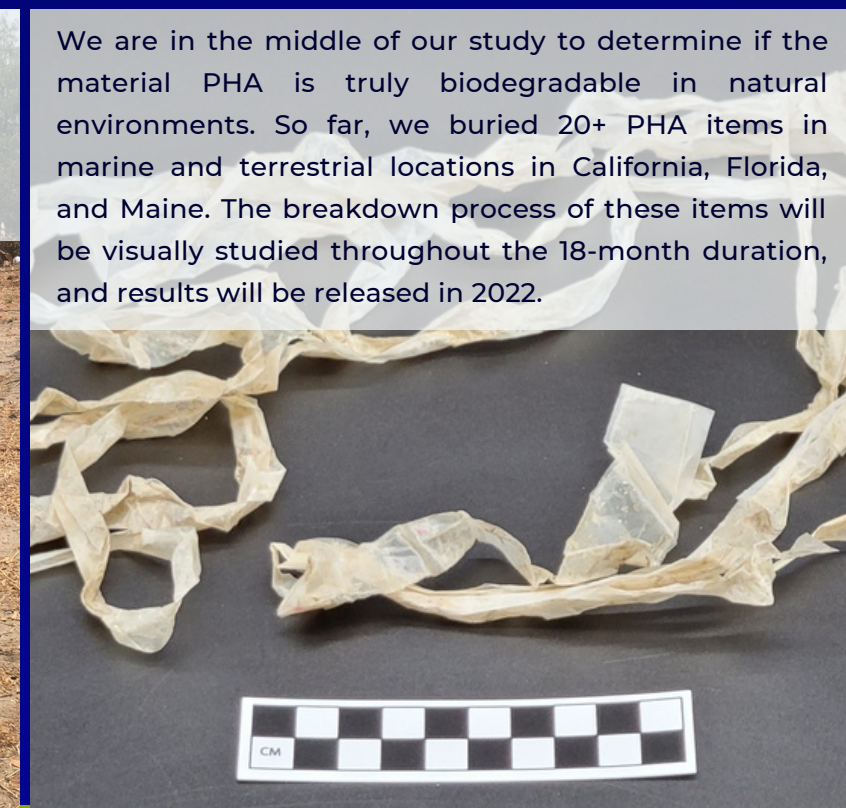
We hosted two "State of the Science" panel discussions focusing on our new scientific focus. We are excited to continue investigating plastic in more environments, capacities, and sources. Check out our science team's discussion with colleague Dr. Scott Coffin [here](#) and the second panel with PhD candidate Timnit Kefala and Dr. Ezra Miller, on their thoughts on the future of plastic science [here](#).

STUDIES IN PROGRESS

We created a study to determine if repaving roads with microplastics in the bitumen is safe to the environment (or not). The study was executed at three sites in Los Angeles with the data analysis currently in progress.



We are in the middle of our study to determine if the material PHA is truly biodegradable in natural environments. So far, we buried 20+ PHA items in marine and terrestrial locations in California, Florida, and Maine. The breakdown process of these items will be visually studied throughout the 18-month duration, and results will be released in 2022.



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EDUCATION & POLICY

EDUCATION

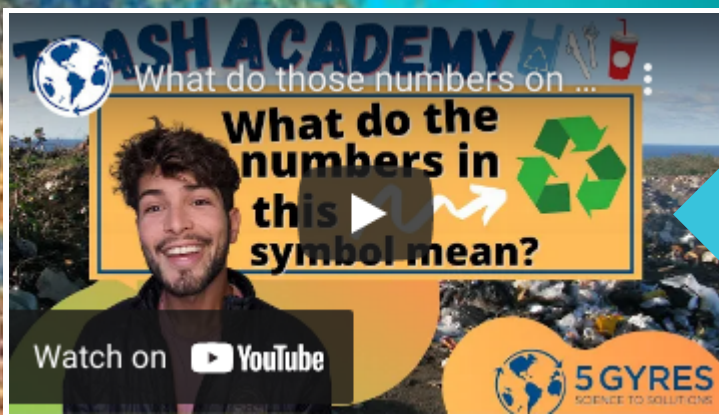
We have spent a lot of time reflecting on science informed solutions and how our existing programs help us achieve our scientific goals. Our **Education, Community Science, and Ambassador Action Fund** programs amplify and disseminate our findings in order to educate the next generation and inspire industry for change. Our primary education efforts are through our **digital Trash Academy videos**. Available to our online global community via Youtube, these videos aim to educate on the plastic movement and provide projects for additional at-home engagement in both **English and Spanish**.

2020/2021 STATS:

- 17 short educational videos
- 200+ hours of Live and Pre-recorded teachings
- Taught 800+ students in the Los Angeles Unified School District in collaboration with ExpandLA's City of STEM
- Shared with 3,000+ San Diego Unified School District students

WHAT'S NEXT FOR 2022?

Season 2 will focus on our sector approach and help us develop networks with Southern California teachers for stronger student outreach and program feedback.



POLICY & ADVOCACY

Policy is an ever-changing and slow moving process, but we are thrilled to be on the front lines of using science to inform real change by participating in coalition building networks and advocating for upstream solutions in our local, national, and global communities. This year's work led to impressive progress made at the Local, State, and Federal levels.

LOCAL

Reusable LA led a local #SkipTheStuff campaign which resulted in two foodware accessories ordinances passed in LA County and LA City.

STATE

As part of Clean Seas Lobbying Coalition, we advocated for a Circular Economy Package of bills in the California Legislature that passed in October 2021, including AB 1276 (#SkiptheStuff) and AB 962 (reusable beverage bottles).

FEDERAL

The Break Free from Plastic Pollution Act was reintroduced in Congress earlier this year. There are currently 121 co-sponsors in the House (H.R. 2238) and 13 co-sponsors in the Senate (S. 984).



After validating the need for this new program with TrashBlitz Los Angeles in 2019 and TrashBlitz Denver in 2020, we brought TrashBlitz Austin to life with our project partners and 18 participating partners on the ground.

Over 3 weeks, **168 volunteers** gathered **6,656 pieces of trash** and found "Food and Drink" to be the largest identified category where **70% of all trash was plastic**. The Top 3 brands of this plastic waste were Coca-Cola, Marlboro, and McDonald's.

WHAT'S NEXT?

We are staying in Texas, y'all! "Blitzing" is important in major inland cities given the preemptive legislations that often exist which "ban the bans" on plastic!



These issues with waste are heavily impacting locals like volunteer and organizer, Jasmin Rostamnezhad, stating, "my favorite thing to do in Austin is walk the Lady Bird Lake Trail. It is so sad to see the amount of trash that covers the trail, our outdoor spaces, and our communities. TrashBlitz was crucial to gather data in Austin and understand where to start with our waste problem. Now is a critical time - do we use what we found to create change? Or do we continue to hurt the natural environments we love most about our city?"

AMBASSADOR PROGRAM & CORPORATE PARTNERS

AMBASSADOR ACTION FUND

Our first year of the Action Fund program followed a six month cycle with eleven Ambassadors who each received small grants of up to \$1,000. The aim is to elevate their organization's efforts with financial support and mentorship. From Ghana to Brazil, our awardees continue to impress us as they make an impact in their local communities.

Goodlet Owusu Ansah from [RecycleUp Ghana](#), used the Action Fund support to set up this pickup vehicle for recovery of plastic waste. Goody works to provide environmental education to instill a culture of waste reduction, source segregation, and recycling among the Ghanaian youth. With the overarching goal of providing proper waste management models in plastic waste hotspots around the country, the project seeks to achieve long-term inculcation of waste management within the Ghanaian educational curriculum.



CORPORATE PARTNER HIGHLIGHTS

Together with our corporate partners, we work on sharing knowledge for educational outreach, product design and innovation, while acknowledging that no company is perfectly plastic-free.

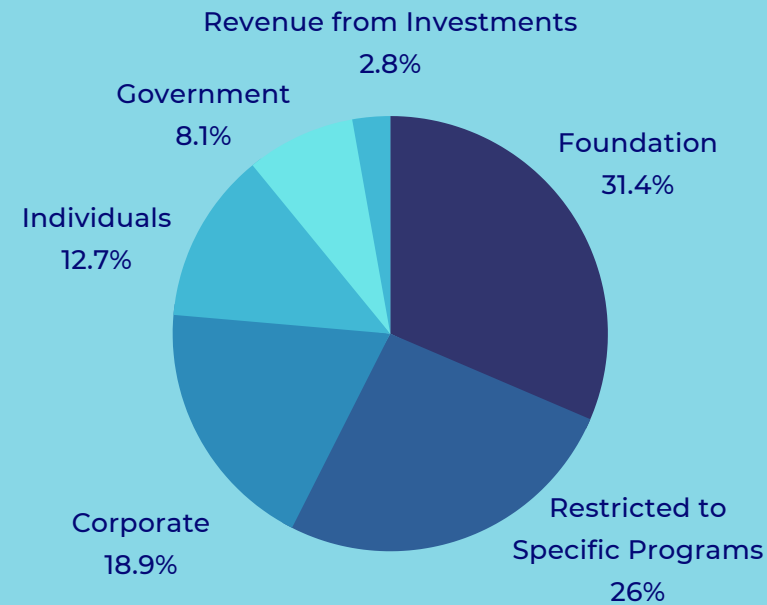
prAna has led the way to rethink packaging with their **Responsible Packaging Movement**. This movement has convened over 100 brands to join them to #ReshapePackaging by eliminating excess plastic and virgin forest fibers from their supply chain.



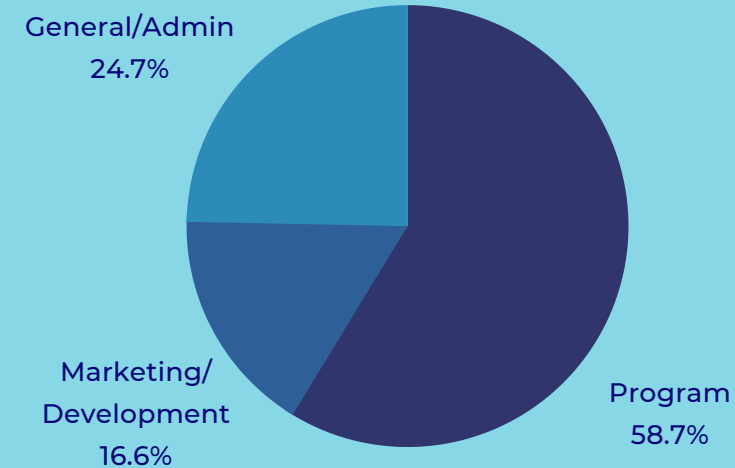
REVENUE & EXPENSES

INCOME*

Restricted and Unrestricted Funding



EXPENSES*



*FY 2021: October 2020 - September 2021

"As the founder of Lifefactory bottles and a pediatric and neonatal physical therapist, I've long been passionate about reducing plastic pollution and protecting public health. Having first met 5 Gyres eight years ago, I'm excited to now join the Board of Directors, to support the organization's mission and growth. And as an enthusiast of blockchain technology, I'm thrilled that 5 Gyres is now accepting crypto!"
- Pamela Marcus, Board Member

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- Verity Platforms
- William Jacob IV
- Wonderful Giving / The Wonderful Company Foundation Inc.

*\$1,000+ within FY 2021: Oct. 2020 - Sept. 2021



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