

# BIODIVERSITY FUNDERS GROUP

2024 ANNUAL REPORT



Halfway through 2025, it feels like 2024 was a lifetime ago. But the theme of the 2024 Biodiversity Funders Group Annual Members Meeting in Maine, “Building Hope and Bridging Divides for Communities and Conservation,” still feels intensely relevant! So maybe we can trace a directional throughline in both the work and the relationships that support and enhance it.

As you’ll see throughout this annual report, members of the Biodiversity Funders Group consistently developed this theme in their environmental, conservation, and climate philanthropy. Funders got together across the United States and in Mexico, Colombia, and Bolivia. They participated in learning circles, webinars, workshops and field trips to engage with one another on topics ranging from Indian law and co-stewardship to agriculture’s role in climate mitigation, sparking powerful new initiatives like our emerging multiyear efforts to promote shared biodiversity targets and human rights principles.

Although our members are very serious about their missions and portfolios, it wasn’t difficult to find photos of them smiling broadly, whether they were out in nature or gathered in a conference room. Our annual convenings featured experiential excursions and lots of open time for table discussions and hallway conversations. Among this year’s highlights were a traditional seafood feast hosted by the Suquamish Tribe; a search for puffins in Penobscot Bay; and a celebration of conservation in Washington, DC.

Throughout 2024, BFG members and staff began developing a five-year strategic roadmap that we are launching this year. The final roadmap will honor the peer-driven networking that has been a hallmark of BFG since our founding nearly 40 years ago and will reflect many members’ desire for more for more active collaboration to meet urgent national and global polycrises. We look forward to implementing it with you!



Judy Hatcher  
Executive Director  
Biodiversity Funders Group



Jennifer Sokolove  
Director of Programs & Strategy, The Water Foundation  
President, Biodiversity Funders Group



# 2024 CONVENINGS

Land and Freshwater Conservation Annual Meeting  
March 5 - March 7  
Washington, D.C.

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BFG Annual Members Meeting  
June 10 - June 13  
Rockport, Maine

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Climate and Energy Funders Group Midwest Regional Annual Meeting  
August 20 - August 22  
Cleveland, Ohio

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Marine Conservation Annual Meeting  
October 8 - October 10  
Seattle, Washington

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Climate and Energy Funders Group Annual Meeting  
October 16 - October 17  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

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Mexico Conservation Funders Annual Meeting  
November 12 - November 14  
Merida, Mexico

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Funders of the Amazon Basin Annual Meeting  
December 3 - December 7  
Samaipata, Bolivia

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# PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS



## Chile Conservation Funders

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In 2024, the Chile Conservation Funders Program prioritized collaboration through dedicated workgroups on salmon farming, river conservation, and ECMPOs, meeting every six weeks to discuss key challenges, share knowledge, and engage with experts. The annual grantmaking analysis provided funders with a comprehensive overview of conservation funding in Chile, identifying distribution trends, gaps, and opportunities to maximize philanthropic impact. To further facilitate learning and strategy development, the program hosted a virtual convening December 3-5, bringing together funders to explore critical environmental issues and funding priorities.

Throughout the year, a revamped newsletter and an active listserv kept members informed about conservation challenges, policy developments, and emerging opportunities in Chile, strengthening connections across the funding community.

## Climate and Energy Funders Group

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The Climate and Energy Funders Group (CEFG) held high-impact gatherings, strengthened partnerships, enhanced collaboration, and used targeted research to equip funders with the knowledge and connections needed to navigate evolving challenges and opportunities in the field. Highlights of the year include CEFG's Annual Meeting in Philadelphia, which brought together over 130 funders and partners at a critical pre-election moment. The meeting featured discussions on security preparedness, equitable clean energy deployment, and strategies to counter fossil fuel expansion. Former Administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Michael Regan and Pennsylvania Voice's Salewa Ogunmefun led conversations on climate policy and federal funding implementation.

The Midwest Climate and Energy Funders convening in Cleveland further advanced regional collaboration, drawing over 50 participants for discussions on the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) implementation, utility accountability, and funding gaps, with site visits showcasing solar projects and brownfield restorations in underserved communities. Participants also explored efforts to develop the first fully solarized public transit rail line in the U.S. CEFG deepened partnerships with Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems Funders, Health and Environment Funders, and Funders for Regenerative Agriculture, co-hosting a Minneapolis gathering on agriculture's role in climate mitigation, policy frameworks, and community-led solutions. All of CEFG's convenings, partnerships, and workgroups discussed strategies and scenario planning to help funders respond to attacks on climate and clean energy progress.





## Funders of the Amazon Basin

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In 2024, Funders of the Amazon Basin (FAB) strengthened their sense of community by advancing a learning process on strategic priorities, revisiting their purpose, objectives, structure, and practices, and planning their 2025 activities together. Re:Wild and the Tenure Facility Program were welcomed as new members. FAB organized a webinar series on organized crime focusing on transboundary issues. These webinars allowed members to gain valuable insights into the impacts of crime on the environment and human rights and build a comprehensive overview of the causes, challenges, and opportunities across the Amazon biome. Additionally, FAB convened its annual meeting in Samaipata, Bolivia, December 3- 7, nine members attended the meeting. Sessions focused on active listening, collaborative learning, identifying paths to improve approaches, and recognizing strategic opportunities and actions towards 2025.



## Global Conservation

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In 2024, the Global Conservation program focused on funder participation in the International Conference of the Parties (COPs) on climate and biodiversity. BFG members were surveyed to assess their plans for future biodiversity and climate change COPs, and the results were shared in a virtual meeting. BFG and FAB staff coordinated funder participation in the biodiversity COP (COP 16) in Colombia, where funders gathered for a breakfast meeting. In addition, expert panelists discussed the implications of Global Biodiversity Framework Target 3 (30x30) in two webinars organized for funders. Over the past year, there has been a growing number of BFG member partners in Africa. BFG members were surveyed about their grantmaking in the region and joined a webinar on African community marine conservation. A tracking sheet for relevant events was developed, and the Africa funders had the opportunity to network during the Annual Members Meeting in June.

Near the end of the year, BFG launched a human rights funders cohort, offering funders a dedicated space to deepen their understanding of the Core Human Rights Principles for Private Conservation Organizations and Funders and explore practical strategies for applying them in their grantmaking. This was inspired in part by funder interest in a UNEP-hosted meeting for funders in New York City in late 2023, and championed by the David and Lucile Packard Foundation. The principles are pulled from existing international standards, organized by John Knox, the first Independent Expert on human rights and the environment appointed by the Human Rights Council in 2012 and a former UN Special Rapporteur. Cohort members will co-create the programming over the next two years, including sessions with high-level experts and sessions on how the principles are relevant to their funding practices.



# Land and Freshwater Conservation Program

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Funders, conservation leaders, and partners convened at the Land and Freshwater Conservation Program's Annual Meeting (formerly the Federal Policy Briefing) in March at the Reservoir Center for Water Solutions in Washington, DC. In partnership with Native Americans in Philanthropy (NAP), the gathering opened with a powerful Tribal-led Conservation Day. Members heard from leaders in the field on issues like tribal co-management, the transition to clean energy, and Indigenous lifeways. Sessions held the following days addressed collaborative action for Nature 2030, updates from the Bureau of Land Management, strategic planning for potential political changes, forest management and Clean Water Act Protections, and other topics.

To complement the work of the 30x30/America the Beautiful cohort, the Nature 2030 Initiative was started to spearhead a new way of thinking about conservation at large, toward a strategic and achievable "nature-positive" agenda. Extensive research highlighted the need to build durable support for conservation strategies at the local level and develop a broader, more inclusive set of conservation tools. With the counsel of an advisory group of nationally focused conservation funders, BFG launched a new initiative around a specific set of biodiversity targets over the next five years and shared national and regional priorities. This has resulted in a new pooled fund, the US Nature Initiative, which will implement the initiative, launched by a dozen BFG funders who committed their financial support.





## Marine Conservation Program

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In October, the Marine Conservation Program Annual Meeting brought together funders in Seattle, WA, in partnership with Oceans 5, for conversations on marine conservation, funder practices, and co-stewardship. Discussions centered around community engagement in grantmaking, applying human rights principles, and addressing the bycatch crisis in Alaskan fisheries. The Suquamish Tribe graciously shared their knowledge of traditional seafood practices, Suquamish history, and the cultural significance of Canoe Journey. They also organized a vibrant performance by the Sacred Water Canoe Family and a community-prepared seafood bake.

In partnership with Oceankind, the Packard Foundation, the Oak Foundation, and Oceans 5, BFG hosted a webinar series on pressing issues at the nexus of ocean conservation, policy, and climate change, highlighting opportunities for philanthropic engagement. Other webinars included a presentation on the Our Shared Seas analysis from CEA Consulting, giving an overview of the marine area-based conservation grantmaking and the state of global ocean funding; and ocean implications of the conservative Project 2025 from the Ocean Defense Initiative.



# Tribal Conservation Initiative

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In partnership with Native Americans in Philanthropy (NAP), the Tribal Conservation Learning Circle educates funders and fosters collaboration with Tribal leaders and staff. In May, close to 50 funders joined a webinar on collaborative capacity and its role in generating on-the-ground conservation and stewardship outcomes. In September, 45 funders participated in the Tribal Lands Restoration webinar featuring Tribal Leaders such as President Peterson of the Central Council of the Tlingit & Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska.

With the U.S. Department of Interior and NAP, BFG co-hosted a two-day Tribal Co-Stewardship Funder Workshop in Seattle, WA. Monte Mills, of the Native American Law Center, University of Washington School of Law, and Professor Martin Nie, Professor & Director, Bolle Center for People and Forests, W.A. Franke, College of Forestry and Conservation at the University of Montana, led funders through the history and current state of Indian law and co-stewardship within legal, frameworks. Government officials provided examples of successful co-stewardship agreements and potential areas for philanthropic support. The training concluded with a conversation between the 25 participating funders and NAP representatives on their Tribal co-stewardship strategies and the possibilities for collaborative action and support.





# Mexico Conservation Funders

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In 2024, the Mexico Conservation Funders (MCF) welcomed new Steering Committee member the Alumbra Innovations Foundation, and three new associate members: Fondo Mexicano para la Conservación de la Naturaleza, Oceans 5, and Harte Charitable Foundation. Four quarterly meetings were held, covering topics such as Oceana Mexico's presentation of the "Bajos del Norte" natural protected area, CEA Consulting's evaluation of Mexico's philanthropic ecosystem, and the presentation of the Mex30x30 project by Fondo Mexicano. In December, MCF's annual meeting featured Creatura's compliance with Mexico's "Anti-laundry law." Additionally, two webinars were organized: Fight Climate Change, Reduce Water Stress, and Cultivate Resilience Through Food!, and Shaping Mexico's Climate Future: Policy and Action Under the Sheinbaum Administration. The Annual MCF Meeting in Merida, Yucatan, included 27 funders and 19 speakers. A planning committee of more than 10 funders met 20 times throughout the year. MCF's 2023 Grantmaking analysis involving 17 funders assessed five years of contributions, while 24 initiatives were mapped using Kumu. Monthly newsletters were distributed shared key insights on conservation strategies, political developments, and research. MCF also coordinated working groups on Fishing Refuge Zones, Security for Defenders (P3N initiative), and coastal marine conservation.



## Rights of Nature Initiative

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In 2024, the Rights of Nature (RON) Initiative hosted a webinar series focused on the protection of turtles in Panama, whales in New Zealand, and the United Nation's declaration of the Rights of the Ocean. A lunch table at the BFG Annual Members Meeting brought together current RON members and new funders interested in the movement. The first grantmaking analysis of RON support was conducted with input from four funders. The analysis identified trends and gaps in RON support, with plans to expand it in the next semester. Program activities included monthly meetings with the core group to organize webinars and engage new funders, with two new members expressing interest. In March, a webinar led by Callie Veelenturf and Julia Jackson was attended by 22 participants and discussed the role of science in conservation, highlighting Panama's 2022 Rights of Nature law. In June, Michelle Bender and Johan Strid hosted a webinar on paradigm shifts, including the Universal Declaration of Ocean Rights and the legal recognition of whales, with eight funders participating. Monthly compilations of RON-related news were shared, showcasing efforts by communities, governments, and organizations to protect nature's rights.





# NEW MEMBERS

Alumbra Innovations Foundation

Builders Initiative

Gatinais Foundation

The Hawkins Family Fund

Hennecke Family Foundation

Metcalf Foundation

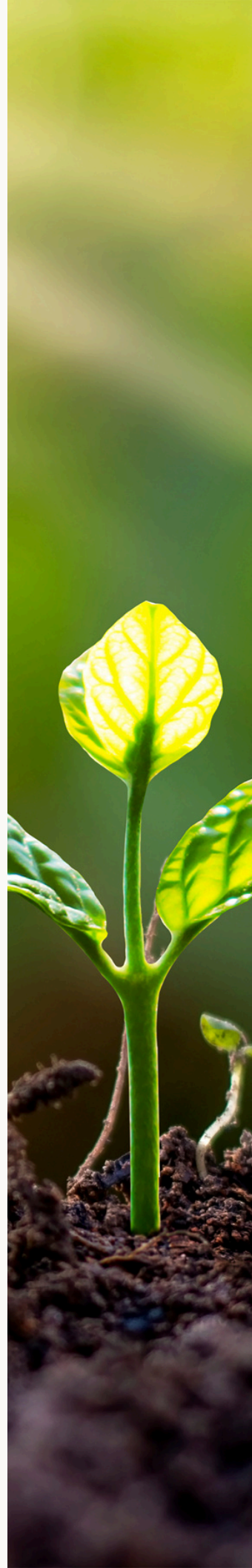
Mighty Arrow Family Foundation

Resources Legacy Fund

Rivian Foundation

Seal Bay Fund

Viridi Futuro Foundation



# 2024-2025 BIODIVERSITY FUNDERS GROUP BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Jennifer Sokolove, Water Foundation (President)  
Danielle Levoit, Doris Duke Foundation (Vice President)  
Troy Ettel, Turner Foundation (Treasurer)  
Renu Mittal, Walton Family Foundation (Secretary)  
David Secord, Edgerton Foundation  
Shelley Shreffler, Margaret A. Cargill Philanthropies  
Lisa Weinstein, Wilburforce Foundation  
Andi Pearl, Volgenau Foundation  
Mariko Powers, Oceankind  
Meaghan Calcari Campbell, Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation

## OTHER FUNDERS PROVIDING VOLUNTEER LEADERSHIP IN 2024 INCLUDE:

Audit Committee: Angel Braestrup (The Munson Foundation), Sybil Ackerman-Munson (Lazar Foundation), Rachel Leon (Park Foundation)  
Horizon Committee: Irene Krarup (V. Kann Rasmussen Foundation), Aileen Lee (Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation)  
Membership Committee: Amy Panek (Park Foundation), Chase Jaz (Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors)  
DEI Team: Denise Joines (Wilburforce Foundation), Kézha Hatier-Riess (Global Greengrants Fund)  
Global Conservation: Jessica Brown (New England Biolabs), Lillian Bigelow (Liz Claiborne & Art Ortenberg Foundation)  
Fundors of the Amazon Basin: Maria Franco Chuaire (Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation), Erika Yamada (Ford Foundation)  
Annual Members Meeting Planning Committee: Rachel Leon (Park Foundation), Andrea Keller Helsel (Hewlett Foundation), Kaylena Bray (Tamalpais Trust), John Daly (Wilburforce Foundation), Renu Mittal (Walton Family Foundation), Daniel Hildreth, (Seal Bay Fund), Betsy Hands (Broad Reach Fund), Parwana Ayub (Maxwell-Hanrahan Foundation)  
Chile Conservation Funders: Don Weeden (Weeden Foundation)  
Climate and Energy Funders Group: Deborah Burke (Rockefeller Brothers Fund), Cliff Chen (Tempest Advisors)  
Land and Freshwater Conservation: Andrew Fahlund (Water Foundation), Sacha Spector (Doris Duke Foundation)  
Marine Conservation: Liz Parissenti (Resources Legacy Fund)  
Mexico Coservation Funders: Daylin Muñoz-Nuñez (Walton Family Foundation), Cheri Recchia (Summit Foundation)

# BIODIVERSITY FUNDERS GROUP STAFF 2024

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