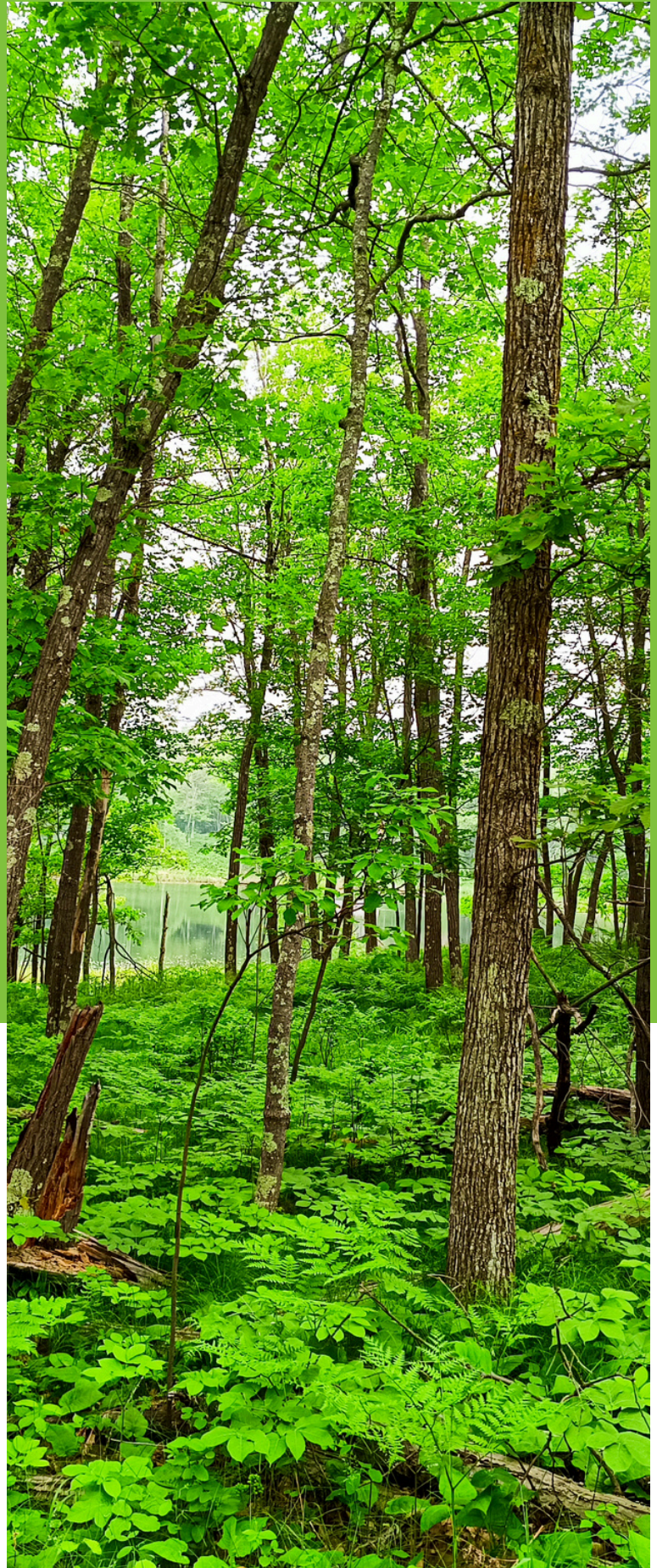


# 2025 ANNUAL REPORT

## BIODIVERSITY FUNDERS GROUP

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# MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT

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If 2024 was about “Building Hope and Bridging Divides for Communities and Conservation,” then 2025 tested whether those words would hold under pressure. The dismantling of USAID and sweeping policy changes under the new administration fundamentally altered the landscape for biodiversity, climate, and civil society. Long-standing assumptions about global cooperation and environmental leadership were shaken. For many of our members and partners, the ground shifted quickly and without warning.

And yet, when I reflect on this year, what stands out is not paralysis. It is resolve. I watched our board and staff respond with speed and steadiness. Within days and weeks of major federal changes, we convened members in trusted spaces to share information, compare notes, and confront difficult questions—about legal risk, grantee security, cross-border funding, and how to operate responsibly in a charged political environment. In moments that could have tipped toward discouragement, the instinct here was to organize, to connect, and to learn.

There is a particular kind of resilience in philanthropy that is easy to overlook. It is not loud or reactive. It is the disciplined choice to stay focused on long-term goals when short-term conditions are volatile. It is the willingness to coordinate rather than fragment. In 2025, I saw that resilience across this network.

We also continued implementing our five-year strategic roadmap, grounded in nearly four decades of peer-driven collaboration. The roadmap’s emphasis on deeper coordination and more active partnership proved not just relevant, but necessary. In a year defined by uncertainty, our commitment to shared learning and strategic alignment became even more important.

I remain deeply grateful to the board of directors, staff, and peer leaders of BFG. Their leadership ensured that this network did not drift in a moment of instability. Instead, it became a place of clarity, connection, and forward motion.

If 2024 was about building hope and bridging divides, 2025 was about holding that line—together—when it mattered most.



**Renu Mittal**

PRESIDENT



# MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

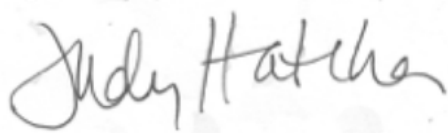
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The year 2025 was one that most of us will never forget. The basic tenets of philanthropy, civil society, social justice, and global cooperation were fundamentally challenged in unexpected places, leaving many funders feeling off balance and on edge. But there's never a perfect time, or an easy time, to do our work. This is just our time to act wisely and do the best we can with the resources at our disposal. I suppose that's the core message of the most overused phrase of the year, 'meeting the moment.'

How did the Biodiversity Funders Group 'meet the moment'? By coming together, over and over, in person and virtually, in working groups, cohorts, field trips, strategy calls, and annual meetings. Funders met monthly, across program silos, to share resources and strategies to quickly respond to legal and policy hurdles faced by their grantees and partners. Climate funders met in Wisconsin and Rhode Island. Global conservation funders discussed the effects of shuttering USAID, which was one of the first members of BFG. Funders supporting Indigenous-led conservation participated in quarterly learning circles. Many more examples of networking and alignment can be found in this annual report.

I am proud of what the Biodiversity Funders Group accomplished in the midst of so much change and uncertainty. We never lost track of our strategic goals. We supported our members' ability to learn, network, and cooperate across borders and issues in spite of everything swirling around us. We coordinated safe spaces for our members to discuss everything from legal matters to the security of their grantees and partners. As a result, new funders are flocking to our network and programs.

I'm grateful to the board of directors, staff, and peer leaders of the Biodiversity Funders Group. Their dedication to this network is the key to our success. Thank you!



**Judy Hatcher**

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



# 2025 CONVENINGS

Learning in the Field - California Desert  
February 3 - February 5  
Indio, CA

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Land and Freshwater Conservation Program Annual Meeting  
March 4 - March 6  
Washington, D.C.

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Annual Members Meeting  
June 9 - June 12  
Nisswa, Minnesota

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Climate and Energy Funders Group Annual Midwest Regional Meeting  
September 9 - September 11  
Madison, Wisconsin

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Marine Conservation Program Annual Meeting  
October 7 - October 9  
Newport, Rhode Island

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Climate and Energy Funders Group Northeast Regional Meeting  
October 9  
Providence, Rhode Island

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Mexico Conservation Funders Field Trip  
November 17 - November 20  
Baja California Sur, Mexico

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Funders of the Amazon Basin Annual Meeting  
December 9 - December 12  
Brasilia, Brazil

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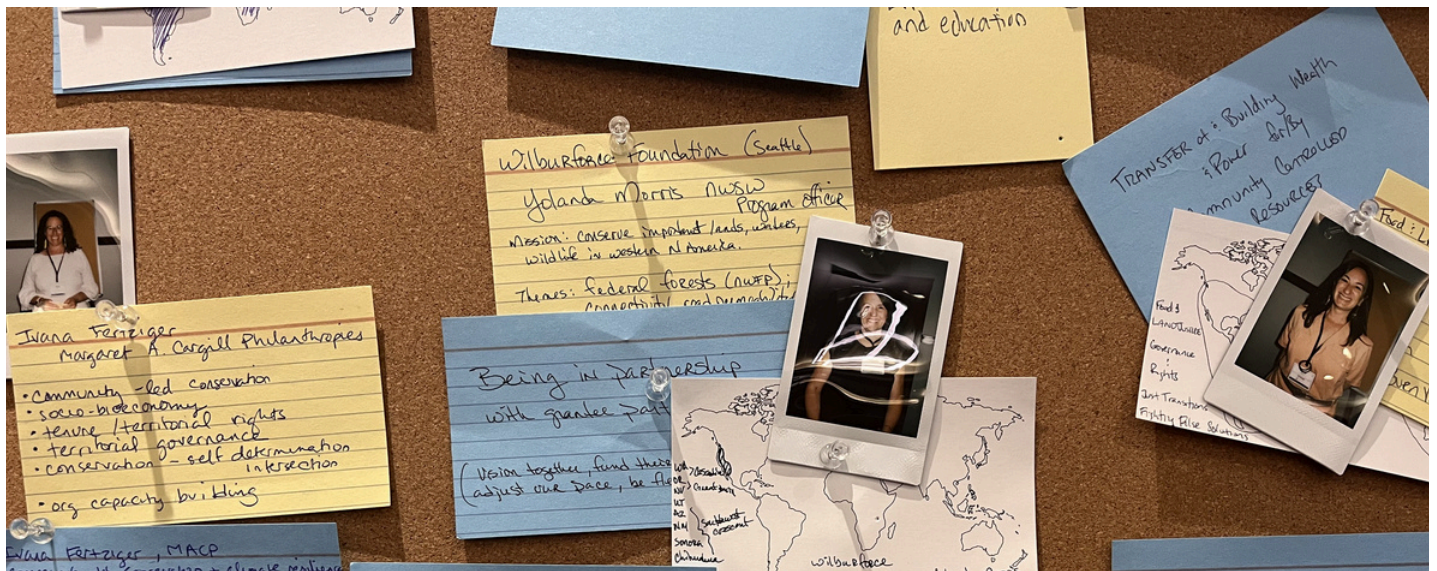
# PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS



# 2025 Annual Members Meeting

After spending the day in an optional immersive learning experience hosted by the Minnesota Humanities Center, BFG members enjoyed a gourmet dinner in Minneapolis at Owamni By The Sioux Chef, an award-winning restaurant featuring locally sourced food produced by Indigenous producers, without ingredients such as wheat flour, cane sugar, or dairy. The funders then travelled together to the Brainerd Lakes area of Minnesota to participate in three days of plenary sessions and field trips, under the banner of "Conservation and Kinship." The sessions highlighted stories of caring for ecosystems; investigated a variety of public/private partnerships between federal bodies, private funders, Indigenous Peoples, and local communities; building bridges between biodiversity and climate funders; and the effects of election outcomes around the world.

Leadership: Aria Gallo, Liz Claiborne and Art Ortenberg Foundation, and Claire Poelking, John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation



## Chile Conservation Funders

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The Chile Conservation Funders (CCF) served as a space for learning, collaboration, and strategic alignment among funders supporting biodiversity conservation in Chile. The program helped elevate Chilean priorities across BFG platforms, including highlighting partner work in Marine and Global Conservation convenings, both virtually and in person. CCF sustained three active working groups (ECMPOs, River-Land Conservation, and Salmon Farming), shifted quarterly calls to a more flexible, as-needed format to better respond to member interests, and produced an annual grantmaking analysis to track funding trends. Members received monthly newsletters to keep up to date on political dynamics, key environmental issues, and updates from partner organizations.

Leadership: Renu Mittal, Walton Family Foundation

## Global Conservation Program

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The Global Conservation program focused on cross-regional learning, rapid-response collaboration, and strengthening philanthropic leadership across a diverse group of funders with varied geographic and strategic priorities. The program convened funder strategy calls, facilitated targeted conversations around USAID in response to emerging challenges, and supported engagement in key international spaces such as the IUCN World Conservation Congress. Through close collaboration across BFG programs, we launched and began implementing two multi-part webinar series on OECMs and Transition Mining. The program strengthened its foundation for future growth to attract new participants and build a structured Africa Funders Cohort.

Leadership: Jessica Brown, New England Biolabs Foundation; Aria Gallo, Liz Clairborne and Art Ortenberg Foundation. Board Liaison: Mariko Powers, Oceankind



# Climate and Energy Funders Group

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The Climate and Energy Funders Group (CEFG) strengthened philanthropic coordination and strategic learning across the climate and energy field during a challenging political moment shaped by affordability pressures, federal funding rollbacks, and continued attacks on climate policy. Through regional convenings, targeted learning, and coordinated strategy discussions, CEFG supported funders in navigating risks and identifying opportunities for impact.

The Midwest Climate and Energy Funders met in Madison, Wisconsin, and the Northeast funders were hosted by the Rhode Island Foundation. CEFG members also participated in webinars and peer exchanges focused on federal funding shifts, regulatory threats, and state-level implementation. Together, these efforts explored energy affordability, data center-driven demand and grid impacts, strategies for advancing climate progress in politically complex regions, and cross-sector approaches linking climate, agriculture, and water. The Midwest cohort engaged in issue-based collaboration, including a Utility and Regulatory Accountability subgroup focused on regulatory strategy and rising electricity demand.

CEFG partnered with peer networks on a shared systems framework on the fossil economy, which will be released in 2026, and co-hosted programming on cross-cutting issues connecting climate to conservation, health, agriculture, and democracy.

Leadership: Cliff Chen, Tempest Advisors, and Deborah Burke, Rockefeller Brothers Fund, Steering Committee co-chairs



# Funders of the Amazon Basin

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Funders of the Amazon Basin (FAB) is enhancing innovative and collaborative approaches to grantmaking effectiveness across the largest tropical forest on Earth. This year FAB focused on a comparative analysis of the philanthropic strategies and financial mechanisms that have strengthened Indigenous Peoples, Afrodescendants, and Local Communities (IPADLCs) in the Amazon. This analysis will help better understand the impact of FAB's strategies on strengthening IPADLC's governance structures, advancing their effective land management and ownership, maintaining their traditional knowledge, innovations, and practices, promoting their advocacy and leadership, and advancing gender equity and inclusion. FAB also organized a series of webinars throughout 2025, leading up to COP30 (held in Belém, Brazil), addressing political, financial, human rights, and other aspects of how the climate talks would influence the Amazon biome.

Leadership: Erika Yamada, Ford Foundation and María Franco Chuaire, Gordon & Betty Moore Foundation





# Land and Freshwater Conservation Program

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The Land and Freshwater Conservation Program sharpened its focus to support the environmental movement at a time of uncertainty. This program served as a hub for emerging opportunities for US policy gains, re-envisioning governance and funding structures for nature and biodiversity conservation. Funders joined monthly rapid response calls to strategize around US policy, which catalyzed a partnership with the Conservation Capacity Project to further support NGOs in crisis. The program helped launch the US Nature Initiative and hosted a two-day field trip to the Southern California desert, highlighting the nexus of climate, conservation, and Tribal-led work.

Leadership: Sacha Spector, Doris Duke Foundation, and Jennifer Sokolove, Water Foundation



# Marine Conservation Program

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The Marine Conservation Program supported funders navigating urgent and evolving issues such as grantee capacity, litigation, and the future of US ocean governance. At a time when coordination and alignment were critical, the program prioritized working with other BFG programs – the Chile Conservation Program, the Human Rights Funder Cohort, and the Climate and Energy Funders Group – to encourage alignment around common concerns. The annual program meeting in Rhode Island, which featured sessions on 30x30, nature-based solutions, and deep-sea mining, was an opportunity for funders to engage in person on shared challenges and opportunities. The US monthly funder calls brought together marine, land, and freshwater funders to coordinate rapid response strategies around policy, litigation, and grantee support.

Leadership: Mariko Powers, Oceankind and Liz Parissenti, Resources Legacy Fund

## Tribal Conservation Initiative

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In partnership with Native Americans in Philanthropy (NAP), BFG's Tribal Conservation Initiative cultivated collaborative networks to strengthen philanthropic engagement with Indigenous-led conservation work, to build capacity for Tribes and Indigenous peoples to steward lands, waters, and oceans. This work was elevated through quarterly learning circle webinars, co-hosted "office hours," funder field trips, and a new white paper, "Tribal Co-stewardship and Co-management of U.S. Ocean and Marine Waters," which will be released in 2026. The initiative remains actively engaged with Tribal and Indigenous leaders, with whom we co-create a full day of Tribal conservation-focused programming with NAP at the annual Land and Freshwater Conservation Meeting.



# Mexico Conservation Funders

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The Mexico Conservation Funders (MCF) advances innovative financing and partnerships for conservation, sustainable fisheries, climate resilience, water management, protected areas, and environmental justice. The network fostered learning and strategic alignment through quarterly meetings, webinars, working groups (climate change, grantmaking analysis, and fishing refugia), and a field trip to Baja California that presented locally led models integrating biodiversity conservation with livelihoods, regenerative production, and circular food systems, while encouraging dialogue on scaling impact and systemic change. MCF updated its strategic framework to enhance governance. The group conducted its sixth year of grantmaking analysis, covering 2,800 grants implemented by more than 800 partners. Monthly communications are shared with the MCF community, highlighting relevant reports, news, and events that could be informative for their grantmaking.

Leadership: Daylin Munoz-Nunez, Walton Family Foundation; Yamilett Carillo, San Diego Foundation



## Rights of Nature Initiative

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The Rights of Nature initiative strengthened coordination and engagement through quarterly calls and a strategic shift from monthly to quarterly meetings, allowing for more substantive agendas and sustained participant involvement. A key milestone was a webinar on the Rights of Antarctica, co-hosted with the Global Alliance for the Rights of Nature (GARN), which brought together representatives of civil organizations and BFG funders, and demonstrated the value of cross-initiative collaboration in bridging diverse sectors around shared priorities. Participants also contributed by identifying Rights of Nature opportunities integrated into broader international events, helping expand the initiative's visibility.

Leadership: Linda Sheehan, Environment Now



# NEW MEMBERS

Alaska Conservation Foundation

Alaska Venture Fund

Environmental Defenders Collaborative

Fidelity Foundation

Hawaii Community Foundation

Oregon Community Foundation

Pisces Foundation

U.S. Endowment for Forestry and Communities

Volgenau Climate Initiative

Wild Lives Foundation



# 2025-2026 BIODIVERSITY FUNDERS GROUP BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Lisa Weinstein, Wilburforce Foundation (Vice President)

Meaghan Calcari Campbell, Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation (Secretary)

Troy Ettel, Turner Foundation (Treasurer)

Karen Harris, Tortuga Foundation

Amy Panek, Park Foundation

Andi Pearl, Volgenau Foundation

Claire Poelking, MacArthur Foundation

Mariko Powers, Oceankind

David Secord, Edgerton Foundation

Shelley Shreffler, Margaret A. Cargill Philanthropies



# BIODIVERSITY FUNDERS GROUP 2025 STAFF

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Albert Buixadé Farré, Director of Finance and Operations

Dubán Canal, Funders of the Amazon Basin Manager

Cristina Castiglioni, Data Analysis and Member Engagement Specialist

Monica Guerra, Membership Associate

Judy Hatcher, Executive Director

Lisa Jaguzny, Director of Programs and Initiatives

Kianna Pete, Tribal Conservation Program Fellow

Eliza Phillips, Program Coordinator

Gerald Reese, Communication and IT Specialist

Minerva Rosette, Program Manager, Mexico Conservation Funders & Special Projects

Megan Waterman, Program Officer, Climate and Energy Funders Group

