



ANNUAL REPORT 2017



LEADERSHIP

Leadership Council

Randi Fisher, Founder
Pisces Foundation

Angel Braestrup
The Curtis & Edith Munson
Foundation

Susan Byrd
Lampert Byrd Foundation

Susan Ford Dorsey
Sand Hill Foundation

Amy Morrison Heinrich
Harold M. and Adeline S. Morrison
Family Foundation

Stephen Lockhart
David and Lucile Packard Foundation
and REI

Julie Packard
David and Lucile Packard Foundation

Veronique Pittman
Pittman Family Foundation

Laura Turner Seydel
Turner Foundation and
Captain Planet Foundation

Liz Storer
George B. Storer Foundation

Mary Jo Veverka
Veverka Family Foundation

Steering Committee

Jason Morris, Chair
Pisces Foundation

Lois Morrison, Vice Chair
Harold M. and Adeline S. Morrison
Family Foundation

Nancy Bales
Gray Family Foundation

Kathleen Doffermyre
George B. Storer Foundation

Rachel Leon
Environmental Grantmakers
Association

Taldi Walter
REI

STAFF

Angie Chen
Director

Christina James
Program Coordinator

Dear Colleagues,

Three years ago, a few funders came together with a vision to grow philanthropy that promotes environmental literacy and strengthens the connection between people and nature. As so many of you have expressed over the past year, the work that we all support—building a broad constituency for people and nature, empowering the next generation of leaders, and ensuring that all communities have access to healthy spaces to learn and play—feels more important now than ever before.

This year, our members and advisors identified the increasing need to engage in efforts that will unify and strengthen the field that connects people and nature. Blue Sky’s steering committee is actively pursuing strategies to help do just this through a shared messaging project. We look forward to your partnership in these efforts as we continue to explore opportunities to amplify our impact together.

As we head into another year together, we are thrilled to share our highlights from 2017 with you. This year, in addition to hosting three sold-out convenings, we worked with our advisors and partners to offer ten online programs and published our first report on environmental literacy funding. We expanded our partnerships with regional funder networks, welcomed new advisors and partners, and identified collaborative opportunities. On top of this, we were pleased to celebrate the great work that our members are doing and applaud the victories that our partners are winning for people and nature.

We are grateful to our many inspiring leaders, members, advisors, and partners who make this work possible and advance our collective vision to strengthen the connection between people and nature in all communities.

Onward!

Angie Chen
Director
Blue Sky Funders Forum

Jason Morris
Steering Committee Chair
Blue Sky Funders Forum

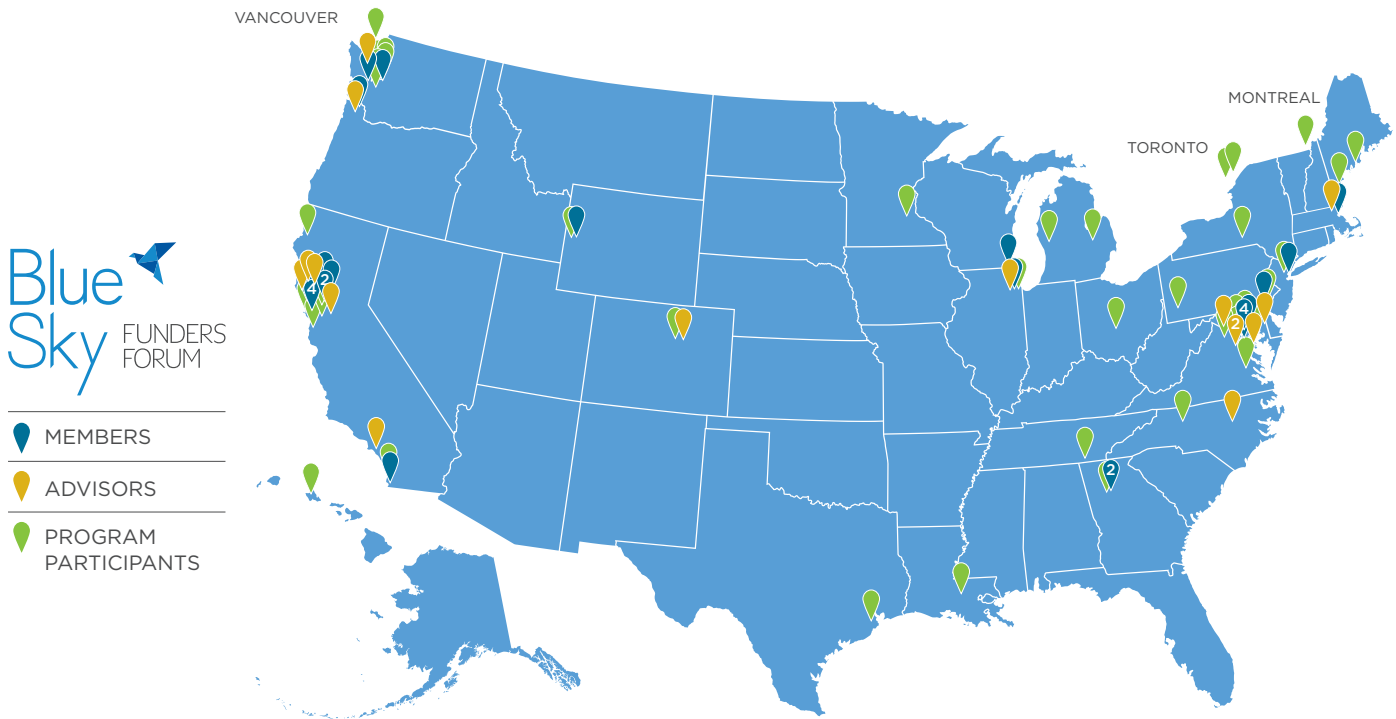


Blue Sky steering committee and staff in Seattle, September 2017



Angie and Jason in Vancouver, April 2017

BY THE NUMBERS: GROWING OUR COMMUNITY



MEMBERS:

28
members

11 NEW MEMBERS

MEMBER LOCATIONS:

ATLANTA, GA • BETHESDA, MD • BOSTON, MA • CHICAGO, IL • GIG HARBOR, WA • JACKSON, WY • KENT, WA • LAKE FOREST, IL • LOS ALTOS, CA • MCLEAN, VA • MENLO PARK, CA • NEW YORK, NY • NOVATO, CA • OAKLAND, CA • PALO ALTO, CA • PHILADELPHIA, PA • PORTLAND, OR • SAN DIEGO, CA • SAN FRANCISCO, CA • WASHINGTON, DC

CONVENINGS & WEBINARS:

47
attendees

Convening with Chesapeake Bay Funders Network

46
attendees

Convening with Canadian Environmental Grantmakers' Network

101
attendees

Blue Sky Funders Forum National Convening

24 participants
Understanding Your Impact learning series

141 participants
Policy webinar series

WEBSITE ENGAGEMENT:

2,300+
pageviews per month

4,600+ USERS



SOCIAL MEDIA:

300+
Twitter followers

SOCIAL MEDIA IMPRESSIONS

49.5K

NEWSLETTERS:

602
recipients, including 325 funders



THEORY OF CHANGE



John Flicker

Trustee, George B. Storer Foundation
President, Prescott College

The Blue Sky Funders Forum has the potential to be a true game-changer. This field, more than any other, empowers individuals and communities to create the type of society that we all want—with healthy ecosystems, shared prosperity, and thriving communities for everyone.”



Tools

- National convenings
- Regional meetings
- Online learning opportunities
- Case studies
- Member and advisor directories
- Grants database
- Curated research and policy resources
- Communications guides

Core Strategies

ENGAGE

Connect and convene funders, providing opportunities and resources for learning

ACTIVATE

Create opportunities for regional and national funder collaboration, facilitate partnerships between members, and promote opportunities to leverage funder assets beyond grantmaking

SHOWCASE

Highlight successful and innovative projects, facilitate sharing of lessons learned, and improve the tracking and knowledge of funding for connecting people and nature

Outcomes

As a result of our work, we contribute to these outcomes for funders:

- Greater motivation to fund environmental literacy
- More contact with practitioners and funders, deepening relationships and increasing the flow of information
- Greater ability to coordinate funding for environmental literacy
- More coherent strategies for achieving impact
- Access to a centralized knowledge bank of approaches that successfully achieve environmental literacy outcomes
- Increased understanding of environmental literacy, including best practices and promising approaches

ENGAGE

Blue Sky connects and convenes funders, offering opportunities for grantmakers to learn, network, and collaborate. In 2017, Blue Sky hosted two regional convenings with partner funder networks and a national convening.

REGIONAL CONVENINGS

Blue Sky hosted regional convenings in partnership with the Chesapeake Bay Funders Network and the Canadian Environmental Grantmakers' Network. Featured speakers included **Nicole Ardoin** (Stanford University), **Jackie Ostfeld** (Sierra Club), **Mayor Gregor Robertson** (City of Vancouver), **Laura Turner Seydel** (Turner Foundation and Captain Planet Foundation), **Jessica Wahl** (Outdoor Industry Association), and author **Florence Williams** (*The Nature Fix*).



Convening with the **Chesapeake Bay Funders Network**

March 2, 2017 | Washington, DC



Convening with the **Canadian Environmental Grantmakers' Network**

April 18, 2017 | Vancouver, British Columbia

BLUE SKY FUNDERS FORUM

September 27, 2017 | Seattle, WA

Blue Sky's 2017 national convening brought more than 100 funders and partners together to explore the value of a shared message and call to action to strengthen the connection between people and nature.



FEATURED SPEAKERS



Lise Aangeenbrug
National Park Foundation



Rue Mapp
Outdoor Afro



Nancy Bales
Gray Family Foundation



Kristen Ragain
REI



Chip Giller
Grist



Mike Sukle
Sukle

ACTIVATE

Blue Sky offers online learning opportunities that allow Blue Sky members, advisors, and partners to deepen their understanding of the field and discuss opportunities to coordinate strategies for greater impact. In 2017 Blue Sky developed two learning series in response to members' interests in policy and advocacy and impact evaluation.

POLICY WEBINAR SERIES



Following the 2016 election, Blue Sky partnered with experts from the **Sierra Club's Outdoors Alliance for Kids** and **NAAEE** to develop a series of policy webinars. Blue Sky offered four webinars highlighting federal programs that connect people and nature, potential impacts resulting from budget cuts, and opportunities to collaborate to advance policies for people and the outdoors at multiple levels.

The series also featured case studies and recent policy victories, highlighting the REC Act, the Every Student Succeeds Act, the Every Kid Outdoors Act, and Oregon's Outdoor School for All Measure. Blue Sky was honored to feature **Congresswoman Niki Tsongas** and **Congressman John Sarbanes**, as well as leaders from **REI**, the **Gray Family Foundation**, and the **National Park Foundation** over the course of this series.



The Honorable Niki Tsongas

Representative of the 3rd District of Massachusetts

"We need to build a new and more diverse generation of public lands stewards, given the great, ever-growing diversity of our country."



The Honorable John Sarbanes

Representative of the 3rd District of Maryland

If you connect young people to the outdoors, if you build environmental literacy into instructional programming across the country—the benefits that yields in terms of [academic] performance are tremendous. It enhances critical thinking skills, and it puts young people on a career path to success."



UNDERSTANDING YOUR IMPACT



In summer 2017, Blue Sky hosted an interactive learning series designed in partnership with evaluation experts from **Stanford University** and **Blue Lotus Consulting & Evaluation**. This series of webinars offered funders the opportunity to reflect on their organizational goals, strategies, and measures of success and explore learning practices to inform their grantmaking and help build the field. Through expert instruction, funder case studies, and group discussion, funders were invited to identify strategies to increase the effectiveness of their grantmaking and strengthen their partnerships with grantees and one another.

FACULTY



Nicole Ardoin
Stanford University



Kelly Keena
Blue Lotus Consulting & Evaluation, LLC



Kathleen O'Connor
NatureBridge and Stanford University



Corrie Colvin Williams
Blue Lotus Consulting & Evaluation, LLC

SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

SESSION 1

Research and Evaluation laid the groundwork for shared learning, beginning with the importance of research and the fundamentals of program evaluation.

SESSION 2

Grantmaking Strategy highlighted theories of change and logic models as tools to inform the development of a grantmaking strategy and evaluation plan.

SESSION 3

Grantmaking Process offered funders the opportunity to reflect on how grant proposal and reporting guidelines can support funders' understanding of their impact.

SESSION 4

Growing our Impact focused on opportunities for funders to collectively build the capacity and knowledge base of the field through research and evaluation.

Blue Sky members can access webinar materials and recordings on Blue Sky's website.

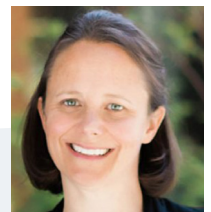
FEATURED SPEAKERS



Fabiola Greenawalt
The Russell Family Foundation



Steven LaFrance
Learning for Action



Jessica Mancini
The David and Lucile Packard Foundation



Lindsay Matush
Vario Consulting



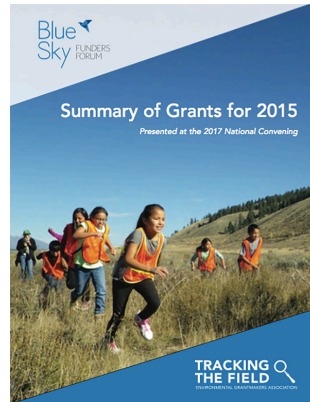
Jason Morris
Pisces Foundation

SHOWCASE

Blue Sky highlights innovative programs and partnerships that connect people and nature and works to monitor and share knowledge on funding for the field.

TRACKING THE FIELD

In 2016, Blue Sky undertook an exciting project with the **Environmental Grantmakers Association's (EGA) *Tracking the Field*** program to better understand and track grantmaking for environmental literacy. Blue Sky and EGA published the first *Tracking the Field* report on environmental literacy giving in September 2017. This report summarizes more than \$72 million in environmental literacy giving made by Blue Sky and EGA members in 2015.



Nancy Bales
Executive Director
Gray Family Foundation

[This report] will be a helpful tool to share with other funders and with my board to better understand the support for this work.

SPOTLIGHTING MEMBERS' WORK

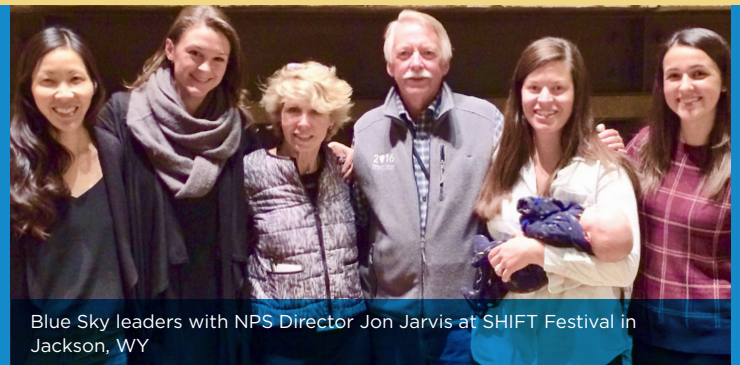


Reception celebrating victories for people and the outdoors in Washington, DC

REI and the **National Park Foundation** partnered with Blue Sky to host a reception in February 2017 celebrating legislative victories for people and the outdoors. Funders, partners, and congressional staffers toasted to the passage of the REC Act and the National Park Service Centennial Act.

The **Harold M. and Adeline S. Morrison Family Foundation** supported *The Nature of Americans* study, released in April 2017. This study draws on information collected from 12,000 adults and children throughout the country and provides valuable knowledge on Americans' values, attitudes, and beliefs about nature and its benefits.

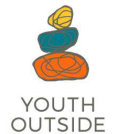
NEEF teamed up with the NBA to launch the NBA Green Energy All-Star campaign in April 2017. Featuring Hall of Famers Bill Walton and Dikembe Mutombo, and NBA and WNBA legends Jason Collins, Felipe Lopez, Swin Cash, and Ruth Riley, the campaign highlighted the simple, everyday actions to save energy, save money, and have a positive impact on the environment.



Blue Sky leaders with NPS Director Jon Jarvis at SHIFT Festival in Jackson, WY

The **George B. Storer Foundation** partnered with 1% for the Planet, Silicon Couloir, and Blue Sky to support SHIFT for the Planet in November 2017. Bringing together innovative leaders and entrepreneurs working at the intersection of outdoor recreation and conservation, SHIFT for the Planet kicked off the annual SHIFT Festival in Jackson, Wyoming.

MEMBERS



ADVISORS

Nicole Ardoin
Stanford University

Anupama Joshi
National Farm to
School Network

Don Baugh
Upstream Alliance

Kelly Keena
NEEAC

Judy Braus
NAAEE

Rue Mapp
Outdoor Afro

Tim Carter
Second Nature

Juan Martinez
Children & Nature
Network

Milton Chen
George Lucas
Educational Foundation

Jaime Matyas
SCA

Kevin Coyle
National Wildlife
Federation

Jackie Ostfeld
Sierra Club

Curt Ellis
FoodCorps

Allison Price
Lincoln Park Zoo

Chip Giller
Grist

José González
Latino Outdoors



PHOTO CREDITS

Photos courtesy of Bay Area Wilderness Training, Big City Mountaineers, Children & Nature Network, FoodCorps, Gray Family Foundation, Latino Outdoors, Lincoln Park Zoo, Office of Congressman John Sarbanes, Outdoors Alliance for Kids, Ryan Sheets, and Teton Science Schools.