

Philanthropists' Letter – June 2021

In the summer of 2019, you may have received a letter from leading scientists in the UK encouraging you to support action on climate and our environment urgently. We wholeheartedly agree with them that this is the moment to seize. Collectively we, among many others, are committing meaningful philanthropic funds to addressing the threats we face from climate change and biodiversity loss. We are at a tipping point: without concerted and radical action, the current trends of extreme weather, increasingly hostile living conditions and ailing nature will accelerate.

We are writing to invite you to join us in making such a commitment.

This year, with the UK hosting the COP26 international climate talks as well as the G20, and with the UN Biodiversity and Ocean conferences also taking place, we have an unparalleled opportunity to make a difference. What we do, or don't do, in the coming months will set the terms of the future for everyone, now and for generations to come.

The environment is humanity's life support. Yet the human systems we have collectively established – economic, industrial, even political – are changing our climate, endangering our fellow species, and diminishing our health and wellbeing. Whatever causes you care about and already fund will undoubtedly be impacted by climate change. There are myriad proposals for redesigning these systems in ways that support life, not degrade it, but the funds currently available for that work are a fraction of what they need to be. Estimates indicate that environmental philanthropy represents less than 4% of total giving from UK trusts and foundations; less than 2% goes to climate. We need much more to fund the solutions that exist but urgently need scaling: supporting civil society and social movements to protect our atmosphere, forests, seas and rivers; green research and innovation; strategic litigation; public education and much more, from the local to the global level.

We are calling on you to join us in a movement that changes this. Together, we can substantially increase funding for environmental and climate solutions – both through donations and investments – as well as raising the profile of the work already underway.

Philanthropy and charitable giving at all scales provides the most flexible capital and support for civil society. It funds vital work that cannot be undertaken by governments and the private sector, and can be used to take risks, to fund transformative solutions and to push for change. There are numerous environmental organisations doing brilliant work at all scales and levels, and even comparatively small amounts of funding can have a tangible impact. Environmental philanthropy has made a huge difference so far – it has saved species from extinction, changed national legislation, improved air quality in our cities, encouraged the movement of capital away from fossil fuels and into climate solutions, restored vast areas of land and the sea, revolutionised industries, and safeguarded the health and livelihoods of millions of people. With our investments too, we have the opportunity to drive positive change by focusing on the long-term impact they have on the environment and society. Philanthropists using their donations and investments to protect life on Earth are leaving unparalleled legacies.

Whether you already support environmental causes or are unsure of how to start, there are programmes that can connect you to other funders and support you to develop the most impactful and meaningful environmental philanthropy strategies – further information is overleaf.

The moment is now to get involved in the challenge of our lifetimes: to restore our climate and nature. With your efforts joining ours, we are confident that we can change the course of the future together, for the better. We can think of no higher calling for our wealth. Thank you for taking the time to hear us.

Yours sincerely,

André Hoffmann, MAVA Foundation • Ben Goldsmith, The Ecology Trust •
Bill Carman, Carman Family Foundation • Devika Waney Mokhtarzadeh, Savitri Trust •
Greg Skinner & Suneil Setiya, Quadrature Climate Foundation • Heather Stevens, Waterloo Foundation •
James Arbib, Tellus Mater • Jessica Sweidan, Synchronicity Earth • Kristian Parker, Oak Foundation •
Lisbet Rausing and Peter Baldwin, Arcadia Fund • Sam Roddick, Roddick Foundation • Sarah Butler-Sloss, Ashden •
Sophie & Nick Marple, Gower Street • Stephen Brenninkmeijer, European Climate Foundation

Further resources, information and connections

- **Please join us at an exclusive online event** at 5pm on 22nd June, with world-leading scientist Professor Johan Rockström, to discuss his new book and Netflix film *Breaking Boundaries: The Science of Our Planet*, and the role for philanthropy in plotting a new course for our future (invitation enclosed).
- **These organisations can give pro-bono support**, advice and resources about environmental philanthropy, and connect you to other funders. They are all funded by environmental philanthropists, who recognise how overwhelming the environment may seem, and want to make it as easy as possible for foundations and individuals to start or develop their giving:
 - o Environmental Funders Network: UK-based network of foundations, family offices and individual donors supporting environmental causes. [Jane Cabutti, jane@greenfunders.org]
 - o The Climate Leadership Initiative (CLI) helps philanthropists get started by providing guidance on high-impact climate solutions and connections to peers and experts. [Ulla Erhardt, ulla.erhardt@climatelead.org]
 - o Impatience Earth: a team of climate and philanthropy experts providing advice to donors who are new to climate philanthropy and looking to commit £1 million to £10 million to addressing the climate crisis. [Jouja Maamri, Jouja@impatience.earth]
 - o Active Philanthropy: organises expeditions to Greenland to learn about the climate crisis and potential solutions, and supports philanthropists, donor families, and philanthropic organisations with strategy building and grant management services. [Felicitas von Peter, vonpeter@activephilanthropy.org]
- **Responsible investing:** DivestInvest is a diverse, global network of individuals and organisations using their collective influence as investors to divest from fossil fuels and invest in climate solutions. [Sian Ferguson, Sian.Ferguson@sfct.org.uk]
- **The Funder Commitment on Climate Change** is open to foundations working on all issues, not just environmental. It is based on the recognition that for all foundations, whatever their charitable mission and field of expertise, climate change is a serious risk to the pursuit of their aims, and can play a part in addressing the causes of climate change and supporting adaptation to its effects. [Joanna Pienkowska, climate@acf.org.uk]
- **For more information about environmental philanthropy** and any of these resources, please visit: www.greenfunders.org/EarthLegacy