

Summary of Tracking the Field, Volume 2: A Closer Look at Environmental Grantmaking



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INTRODUCTION

The second volume of “Tracking the Field” represents a major step forward in better understanding environmental philanthropy. Building on the findings of the first volume (2007), this year’s report analyzes significantly more grants made by 202 members of the Environmental Grantmakers Association (EGA), and with a new level of detail and rigor. “Tracking The Field Vol. 2” reports for the first time how EGA members’ nearly 10,000 grants were distributed geographically, identifies the 50 organizations that receive the most support from EGA members, and describes how the field looks compared to a few years ago. It also sets EGA members’ giving into the larger context of environmental philanthropy by incorporating data collected and analyzed by the Foundation Center. These undertakings bring new insight into EGA’s members’ collective priorities and strategies.

EGA worked with its counterparts in Australia, Canada, Continental Europe, and the United Kingdom to develop the uniform categories used in the report. Given that many of our most severe environmental challenges do not respect national boundaries, this unprecedented type of collaboration will be essential going forward.

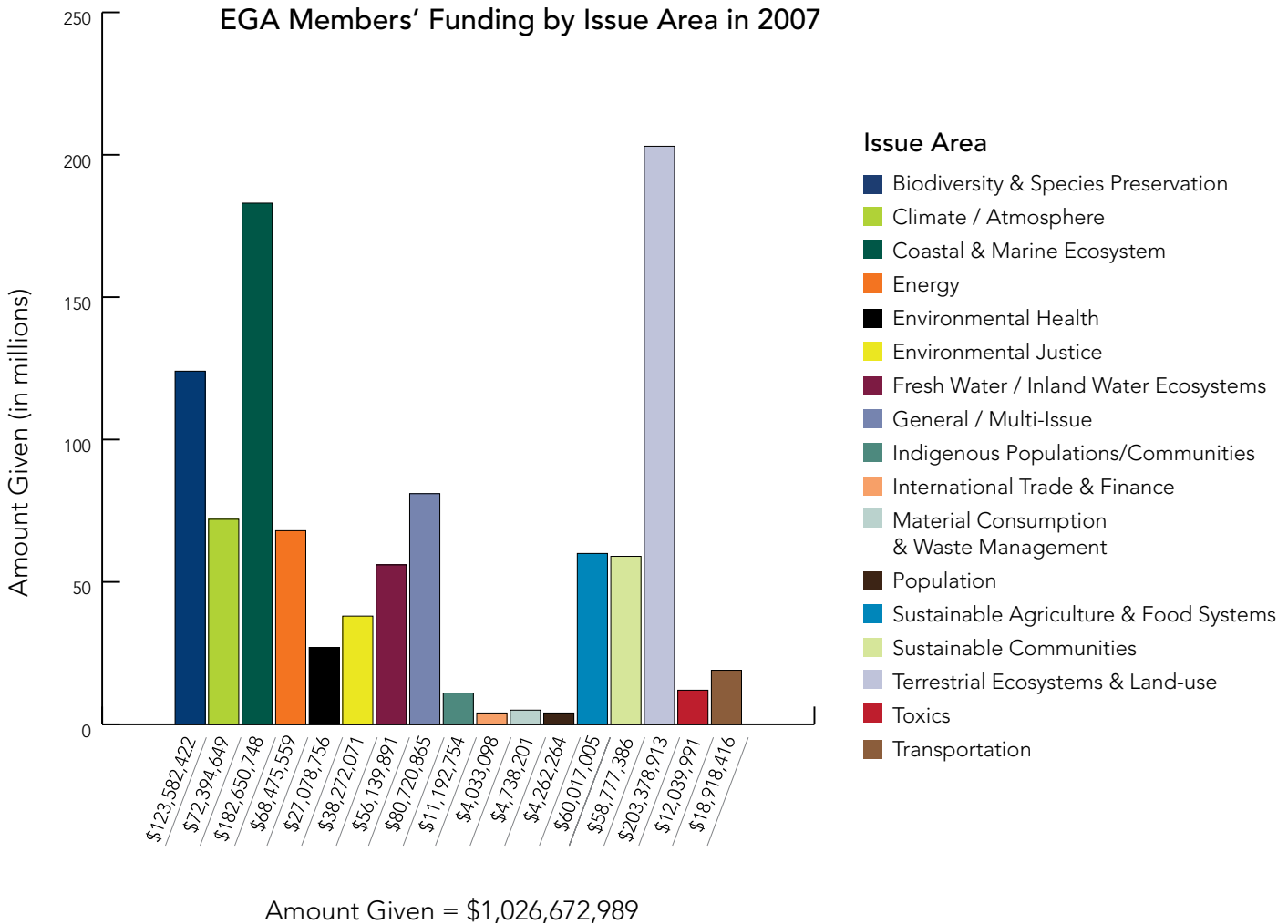
While the report should prove to be a valuable resource for environmental grantmakers, continuing to improve the quality of the data and analysis is an ongoing priority in our work. We welcome your input.

Finally, EGA gratefully acknowledges its members’ essential support, which made this research possible.

KEY FINDINGS

Below are some of the more salient findings in “Tracking the Field Vol. 2: A Closer Look at Environmental Grantmaking.”

- Total philanthropic giving to environmental issues was approximately \$2.7 billion in 2007.
 - Environmental issues constituted just over 6% of total philanthropic giving.~
- EGA members awarded just over \$1 billion in grants, or 38 percent of total environmental philanthropic giving in 2007.*
- Almost one-third (32 percent) of EGA members’ grants were for less than \$10,000.* This represented a specific grantmaking strategy/philosophy.
- The preservation of land, water, and species remained a high priority for environmental grantmakers: 55.1 percent of EGA members’ grants (\$565,751,974*) were in this area, as was 62.9 percent of non-EGA members’ grants (\$1,004,060,414~).
- EGA members provided more funds to environmental health, justice, and toxics issues (7.5 percent or \$77,390,818*) than non-EGA members (2.9 percent or \$51,582,409~).
- EGA members provided more funds, proportionally speaking, to climate, energy, and transportation issues (15.6 percent or \$159,788,624*) than non-EGA members (10.3 percent or \$164,561,015~).
- Non-EGA members provided more funds to populations issues (1.4 percent or \$23,019,281~) than EGA members (0.4 percent or \$4,262,264*).
- Non-EGA members provided more international support (42 percent or \$672,923,003~) than EGA members (34 percent or \$349,705,376*).
- The vast majority of the funds given by EGA members domestically supported West Coast (44 percent), East Coast (25.6 percent), or federal level (22.5 percent) environmental issues.*
- The top 50 environmental funders accounted for three-fourths of total grant dollars for the environment.~
- The 50 largest funders within EGA – 24.7 percent of the membership – accounted for 89 percent of all environmental giving from the total membership (more than \$900 million). This group’s used a variety of tactics to distribute grants (i.e. the size and number of grants made) in 2007.*
- Both EGA members and non-EGA members primarily funded traditional environmental organizations. However, a considerably larger portion (18 percent) of the top 50 recipients of EGA members’ funds were educational institutions.*



A third section of the “Tracking the Field Vol. 2: A Closer Look at Environmental Grantmaking” provides more detailed information on a three specific areas: environmental funding to indigenous peoples from 2004 through 2006 (EGA in collaboration with International Funders for Indigenous Peoples); environmental education funding from 2003 through 2007; and EGA members’ attitudes and actions towards leveraged asset strategies in 2008.

A few key findings were:

- In 2006, environmental giving to Indigenous Peoples was almost \$6.5 million.*
- While environmental issues became a larger portion of the philanthropic pie, funding of environmental education remained proportionately stagnant.*
- At least 40 EGA member foundations engage in one or more leveraged asset investment strategies: program related investment, shareowner action, and/or using mission criteria in their investment strategy.*

~ Source: Foundation Center

* Source: Environmental Grantmakers Association

METHODOLOGY

To create “Tracking the Field Vol. 2: A Closer Look at Environmental Grantmaking,” EGA developed a database that categorized the environmental grants made by 202 EGA member foundations in 2007, regardless of size, except those given to individuals or described as association fees. This process entailed reviewing 9,987 grants, principally from IRS 990 forms, and recording key information on the foundation, grant recipient, and grant. In coding the data, the (nine) researchers used a uniform list of environmental issues and geographic regions based on a taxonomy that EGA created with similar organizations from across the globe. If the issue area could not be discerned then the grant was categorized as “general environment/multi-issue.” Some discretion was required to categorize grants given environmental grantmaking’s highly interrelated nature.

The research team took many careful steps to collect the most accurate data possible. The Research and Data Coordinator trained each of the data researchers; reviewed foundation and recipient names, correcting for abbreviations and misspellings; merged the data; and spot-checked entries for both accuracy and consistency of coding. All of the grants listed as general environment/multi-issue were reviewed numerous times to confirm that they could not be categorized according to a specific environmental issue area.

Once the grant data were finalized, they were loaded into a customized relational database. This database was used to filter and group the data for analysis by EGA staff and the Tracking the Field Editorial Committee.

The full report was released at EGA’s 2009 Fall Retreat in Anchorage, Alaska.

EGA staff continues to explore new ways to collect, analyze, and present the environmental grant data to be most useful to our members and the broader funder community. Please let us know your ideas.

Tracking the Field Editorial Committee

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The mission of EGA is to help member organizations become more effective environmental grantmakers through information sharing, collaboration and networking.



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