

# Environmental Philanthropy



Fall 2009 Q&A

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Environmental philanthropy has seen a dramatic increase over the past 20 years, both in terms of the dollars invested and the returns those investments have generated. However, challenges like global climate change, the continued loss of the earth's remaining wilderness areas and the serious problems facing the world's oceans are more complex and require new approaches, the involvement of new stakeholders and new thinking at every level. Through its numerous campaigns and initiatives, the Pew Environment Group offers substantial opportunities for philanthropic engagement targeted at solving a number of threats to the national and global environment.

### **QUESTION: *How does The Pew Charitable Trusts address environmental issues?***

The Trusts' work on environmental issues is spearheaded by the [Pew Environment Group](#) (PEG). PEG has built a strong reputation for its timely, focused and effective campaigns on large-scale issues like climate change, wilderness conservation and the protection of fisheries and other living marine resources. Our campaigns are underpinned and informed by the best available science and public polling research, and we utilize a wide variety of communications strategies in our work to ensure that we effectively reach specific audiences that are critical to achieving our policy goals. We often work in coalition with other organizations representing diverse constituencies in order to maximize the impact of our human and financial resources. Our work is focused primarily on strengthening environmental policy at the regional, federal and international levels because victories in the policy sphere often lead to sweeping changes in environmental quality and provide the biggest bang for the philanthropic buck. Of course, none of this work is possible without the substantial philanthropic investments of our donor partners. These investments take many forms, but they are all rooted in Pew's 60-year tradition of sound fiscal stewardship and track record of success.

### **QUESTION: *What are some of the different types of investments you structure?***

We can customize philanthropic investments in virtually any way to meet the needs of our donor partners, typically following one of three broad models, all of which offer our partners the opportunity to take advantage of a highly experienced staff and ensure that policy goals are set in ways that are pragmatic and informed by the best technical and scientific information.

The first of these models is **named projects**, which are initiatives that bear the name of an individual philanthropist, a loved one or family member or another person being honored. The Lenfest Ocean Program is one such example. It was established by the Lenfest Foundation to advance scientific understanding of ocean issues and to ensure that ocean policy is being driven by sound science. Instead of trying to reinvent the wheel by assembling its own staff, the Lenfest Foundation recognized that Pew's existing in-house expertise made us an ideal partner to manage the program.

The **shareholder model** enables philanthropists to pool their funds while remaining highly engaged in the initiatives they support. This is the structure of our Global Ocean Legacy project, which seeks to protect millions of square kilometers of unspoiled oceans in the form of reserves where no extractive activity is allowed. Because of its ambitious scale, this is the type of project that benefits from multiple partners who are able to provide both financial support and are willing to play an ongoing and direct role in helping to guide the program. The project benefits not only from each shareholder's financial contribution, but also from their close involvement in helping to make strategic decisions about targets and strategy.

Finally, we also enter into **direct partnerships with individuals and organizations who provide financial support for work we are spearheading which enables them to leverage huge returns on their philanthropic dollars.** Our International Boreal Conservation Campaign exemplifies this approach. To protect one of the largest intact forest and wetland ecosystems remaining on earth, a number of individuals and foundations have contributed critical support to this highly successful program which has protected approximately 150 million acres (one and a half times the size of the state of California) over the past decade at an average cost of less than 35 cents per acre.

**QUESTION: *What are the distinct advantages of investing with the Pew Environment Group?***

Our select donor partners come to PEG for several reasons. These include the scope of our work, the breadth of our knowledge and expertise and our history of effectiveness. However, common in all our relationships is the assurance that each philanthropic investment will be managed in an individualized way and for maximum impact. Many philanthropists also choose to invest with PEG because of our tradition of efficiency and our track record of building and maintaining donor partnerships. Efficiency in the relationship comes in many forms. Overhead and startup costs are significantly reduced in PEG initiatives because of our low administrative expenses and the expertise of our operations staff in both the financial and programmatic aspects of campaign management. Additionally, intersections among our issues often enable us to significantly leverage partner investments.

**QUESTION: *How do I evaluate where my investment can do the most good?***

The problems facing the United States and global environment are great, as are the opportunities to make significant progress in reducing both their scope and severity through focused and creative work. To help guide your investment toward the most productive outcome possible – avoiding duplication of efforts and channeling your resources toward measurable results – we offer confidential, customized consultations with our financial and program specialists. To schedule a meeting, contact:

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