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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**SECOND ANNUAL PLASTIC-FREE PARKS TRASHBLITZ LAUNCHES AHEAD OF EARTH DAY,  
TRACKING PLASTIC POLLUTION TRENDS IN U.S. NATIONAL PARKS**

***The 5 Gyres Institute Unveils New Mobile Application to Collect Volunteer Data***

**SANTA MONICA, CALIFORNIA (April 21, 2023)** – The 5 Gyres Institute announces the second annual Plastic-Free Parks TrashBlitz project, a community science initiative to track plastic pollution trends in U.S. National Parks and on federal lands.

Volunteers around the country can participate by collecting trash at any land managed by the National Park Service and logging their findings. This data will contribute to a report that reveals the top items, materials, and brands of waste found across U.S. national parks and federal lands and outlines recommendations on the federal, local, and individual levels.

“Picking up trash helps the local environment, but it’s data that can really drive change,” said Andra Janieks, Marketing Director at 5 Gyres. “Data has an ongoing ripple effect by informing real solutions, and it’s something we can all contribute to on an individual level to have a huge impact further upstream.”

A new mobile application, TrashBlitz ([currently beta testing](#)), aims to make data collection easy, no matter where a clean up is taking place. Volunteers can test the app and provide feedback, or use alternate data collection tools, including a [physical data card](#) and the [web-based app](#). This data is essential in developing focused solutions to address plastic pollution in parks.

Plastic made up 81 percent of all trash recorded during last year’s campaign<sup>1</sup>. Food and drink-related items made up the bulk of the waste, with cigarette butts, food wrappers, plastic bottles, bottle caps, and textiles topping the list of the most common items found.

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<sup>1</sup>

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5522e85be4b0b65a7c78ac96/t/635ff5d2f634f81b7143c4eb/1667233443661/Plastic-Free+Parks+TrashBlitz+Report+2022.pdf>

These findings can be used to push for legislation, like the *Reducing Waste in National Parks Act*<sup>2</sup>, or as a tool for local parks to identify problem areas and implement changes.

Plastic-Free Parks TrashBlitz will run from April 21 - September 30. For more information and to sign up, visit [5gyres.org/PlasticFreeParks](https://5gyres.org/PlasticFreeParks).

Nonprofit and brand partners supporting Plastic-Free Parks TrashBlitz include 5 Gyres, Active San Gabriel Valley, Azulita Project, Bay Foundation, Break Free From Plastic, Center for Environmental Health, ChicoBag & To-Go Ware, Culture of Cleanliness, Epson America Inc., Grove Collaborative, Habits of Waste, Inland Ocean Coalition, Klean Kanteen, Last Plastic Straw, Micah Six Eight Mission, Mission:Clean Beaches, No Trace Trails, Oceana, Plaine Products, Plastic Free Future, Plastic Pollution Coalition, Preserve, Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility, Ray Brown's Talkin' Birds radio show, Save Our Shores, Shark Stewards, Student PIRGs, Sway, The Last Beach Cleanup, Toad&Co, and Upstream.

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#### About The 5 Gyres Institute

The 5 Gyres Institute (5 Gyres) is a leader in the global movement against plastic pollution, with more than 10 years of expertise in scientific research, engagement, and education. With the original goal to answer a few key scientific questions about ocean plastics, co-founders Marcus Eriksen and Anna Cummins led 19 research expeditions in all five subtropical gyres, as well as many of the world's lakes and rivers. 5 Gyres continues to lead with scientific research to drive upstream solutions through education, advocacy, and community building.

#### About TrashBlitz

TrashBlitz is a data collection platform and community-focused research project created by The 5 Gyres Institute. The community-based project is designed to engage local stakeholders in measuring plastic pollution and other trash across various cities - from shorelines to riverbeds to urban neighborhoods - and utilizing data to generate relevant action plans. TrashBlitz provides robust research protocols, a web-based platform that identifies problem products and brands, and a network to bring diverse stakeholders together to co-create solutions to stop plastic pollution at the source.

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<sup>2</sup>

<https://quigley.house.gov/media-center/press-releases/quigley-re-introduces-reducing-waste-national-parks-act>