



council fire
REDEFINING PROFIT

Annual Impact Report

2023



A Letter from Our President



Council Fire was created for one reason, to play an important role in driving one of the greatest transitions humankind has ever experienced: moving from destructive, carbon-intensive behaviors that support an inequitable and short-sighted existence to a regenerative approach propelling a restorative economy that works for all. We're fortunate to work with public, private, and philanthropic organizations of all sizes who are leading this transition.

This past year bore witness to our increasing reach and impact as our efforts took us around the globe to engage in critical movements of change. We saw growth in our staff, service offerings, sector coverage, and geographical footprint. We also grew our understanding of who we are and what we can be, sharpened our culture and governance, increased accountability and transparency, and made strides as a corporate activist and anti-racist organization. We recertified for the fourth time as a B Corporation since our original certification in 2010, measuring ourselves against the highest business sustainability standards in the world and independently re-affirming the depth and breadth of our impact. Membership in this community and working with like-minded companies to drive collective impact remains one of our most important outlets for achieving our purpose.

We hope you enjoy this snapshot of another year of positive social, environmental and economic impact accomplished in collaboration with our clients, partners, and stakeholders. If you believe your organization is ready to transition to a brighter future and are moved by what we offer, reach out. Together, we'll write a new story, one of redefining profits and creating shared successes.

The Challenge

March 20, 2023 marked the release of the latest installment of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report, which detailed highly discouraging realities regarding the state of our planet and confirmed what we intuitively already knew - these impacts are not borne equitably across societies and geographies. At the same time, the report provided reasons for hope that, with a rapid transition away from fossil fuels and major investment in system-wide transformations utilizing existing technologies, we can still avoid the worst of the predicted catastrophic impacts.

The risks of inaction are immense, and the way forward requires change at a scale not seen before. Fortunately, we already have many of the answers and the transition presents the greatest economic opportunity of our lives. We know the unbridled pursuit of financial profits has been a principal driver in this downward spiral. The time has come to “redefine profit” in ways that also prioritize social and environmental returns. Can we amass the global will and engagement of every sector across the globe? We’re dedicated to meeting that challenge head on.



GOOD + GOOD

Good for your organization + Good for the world

Our company is fully committed to helping organizations redefine and reap new profits for themselves and their stakeholders. Our innovative approach combines comprehensive sustainability expertise, deep collaboration, and inspiring stories in a manner that is both good for your organization and the world, producing critical social and environmental benefits and robust financial returns.

Our 30+ member team of lawyers, economists, financiers, scientists, marketers, and communicators are dedicated to demonstrating how these redefined profits can drive shared successes. Working together, we help foster the organizational and systemic changes needed to rise to the world's greatest challenges.

And we do more than talk the talk. As both a Benefit Corporation and a long-time certified B Corporation, we are completely committed to success for people and the planet. The B Impact Assessment independently assesses and quantifies our economic, environmental, and social impacts and helps us to pursue continuous improvement across the breadth of our corporate existence.



B Impact Assessment



Mission & Values

We're on a mission to tackle some of the world's greatest challenges in partnership with our clients. Our Culture Code and values serve as our North Star, guiding us in this effort:

Collaboration

Always collaborating, being accountable to ourselves, our partners, and the world, and equitably sharing benefits to enhance the well-being of all. We are stronger together.

Creativity

Fostering creativity through diversity and always innovating with the understanding that failure is the foundation on which success is built.

Curiosity

Building curiosity founded on empathy and belonging by listening first, learning from history, and continuously striving to understand one another and the world around us.

Intention

Taking intentional action informed by clear vision and explicit purpose.



Our Approach

Driving positive environmental, social, and economic outcomes requires a highly strategic approach grounded in expertise, collaboration, and shared stories.

We partner with our clients to:

- Develop a science-based, systematic methodology for organizational success supported by a comprehensive understanding of impacts.
- A detailed planning process that aligns market needs, sustainability goals, stakeholder demands, and human and financial resources.
- Create inspiring, strategically on-point communications assets that bring stories to life and move stakeholders to constructive action.
- Integrate analyses, planning, and creative work to design and implement deep and meaningful stakeholder engagement collaboration that fosters opportunities, collaboration, trust, and mutually beneficial outcomes that fuel long-term success.



We have organized a collection of emblematic engagements that bring to life our 2022 year of impact as we continuously work to steward our environment, uplift voices, engage communities, and foster collaboration.



Stewarding Our Environment

Worked to enhance the sustainability and resiliency of the iconic New England lobster fishery by assessing the carbon footprint of this visionary seafood company's key products. Recommended reduction strategies and supported industry engagement in the process.



Supported data modernization and sustainable fisheries management improvements by providing funding and guidance to various stakeholders such as Conservación ConCiencia, a non-profit in Puerto Rico implementing fishing tracker technology.  **NET GAINS ALLIANCE**

Expanded the breadth and utility of a world-renowned ecosystem report carding tool by developing and assessing innovative economic and social indicators in the Chesapeake Bay, Michigan, and other United States watersheds.



Achieved our Net Zero carbon emissions goal by implementing reduction strategies and offsetting 100% of our already low emissions through the purchase of Gold-Standard carbon credits.  **council fire**

Uplifting Voices



Led a filming expedition in the Amazon to document the important work of Dr. Thomas Lovejoy, the "Godfather of Biodiversity" and founder of the Thomas Lovejoy Amazon Biodiversity Center, to capture footage as part of a documentary on climate change.

Gave voice to small-scale fishers by spotlighting their key role in feeding the world. In United Nations venues from Rome to Sharm-el-Sheikh, we drafted policy statements, organized public events, negotiated text in international agreements, and supported EDF's interactions with national governments and multilateral institutions.



Provided a platform to elevate diverse perspectives on the need and value of modernizing information management and data systems to enhance the sustainability of our ocean resources.



Launched our Future Leaders Program to open a critical career pathway for diverse candidates in the highly competitive sustainability consulting field and admitted our first cohort.



Engaging Communities

Planned and executed a year-long series of engagements bringing together this Baltimore maritime institution and its stakeholders from around the world in celebration of the company's 100-year anniversary.



Developed a plan for creating equitable access to the United States' first Urban Wildlife Refuge, a unique location where neighbors, wildlife, and maritime industry can co-exist to the benefit of all.



Enabled the delivery of 150+ hours of community non-profit support by providing employees paid time off for volunteer activities.



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Fostered critical workforce development efforts by promoting and executing two Hiring & Career Expos that create pathways to job opportunities in the STEM and maritime industries.



Fostering Collaboration

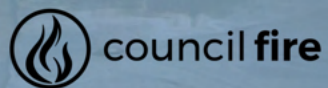
Led a collaboration amongst a consortium of global and local nonprofit organizations to foster sustainable fisheries management in South America that has resulted in \$20M+ in funding from WFF and USAID.

WALTON FAMILY
FOUNDATION

Developed a series of metrics and communications strategies to measure and bring to life the impact of this non-profit group of lawyers working to use the power of the law to protect the Chesapeake Bay.



More than 55% of our outsourced services were contracted to woman-owned businesses or female sole proprietors.



Designed and led a unique process to engage public interest organizations across the State of Maryland to provide unified recommendations to the incoming Governor on key societal issues.



Vision For the Future

We're fully committed to achieving the change that we seek and are continuously working to improve all aspects of our services and operations. A few of our key initiatives for 2023 include:

Joining 1% for the Planet

Creating positive impact is in our DNA, including supporting our communities through our services, volunteer activities, financial contributions, and leadership activities. In 2023, we plan to formalize our philanthropic commitments by joining 1% for the Planet. We will contribute at least 1% of our gross revenue, through financial donations and pro bono services, to diverse partners working collaboratively to address the world's greatest challenges.

Expanding Our Local Commitments

Think globally, act locally. As an advocate for building locally-based, diversified economies that work for all, we have always known that local action delivers the greatest impact. In 2023, we'll further enhance our commitments to our home communities through direct advocacy efforts and volunteer/pro bono support for local public interest groups working on preserving biodiversity, elevating disadvantaged voices, and growing the sustainable business movement.

Extending Our Reach

We're proud of our engagement across multiple industries and sectors but are acutely aware that all aspects of society must quickly adapt sustainability measures. 2023 will see us continue to deepen and extend our reach with directed efforts to improve climate resilience planning, sector decarbonization, fresh water access, and sustainable food systems.

Further Reducing our Carbon Footprint

We began with a commitment to being a Net Zero carbon emitter and have successfully combined reductions and gold standard carbon offsets to achieve that goal since 2020. In 2023, we'll continue our reduction efforts and seek out better tools to help us measure and reduce our Scope 3 emissions, all with an eye to continuing our journey toward becoming a climate-positive company.





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Redefining Profit.

www.councilfire.org | info@councilfire.org | (410) 921-0244

Photo Credit: Zach Chmael