

Grist

FY2022 AND FY2023



ANNUAL REPORT

25 YEARS ON THE
CLIMATE BEAT

Introduction

A Letter from our CEO

Nikhil Swaminathan, Grist CEO

Grist's Impact and Influence in 2023

From 27 awards and nominations to a monthly audience of 2 million+

A Timeline: 25 years on the climate beat

Celebrate 25 years of Grist by looking back at all we've accomplished

“

Grist gives me hope in a news-world of environmental doom and gloom!

A Letter from our CEO

I would like to take a moment to look back at 25 incredible years of Grist, as we prepare for a pivotal year for our organization. Grist has grown in every way over the last 25 years, and more specifically, Grist had an instrumental 2022 and 2023: We took home a record number of awards and nominations, our stories reached new audiences far and wide, and we produced the highest-quality climate journalism during a time when that couldn't be more important to climate progress or to a functioning democracy.

I could go on, but I hope our work speaks for itself. We have our eyes on becoming the most influential voice on the issues of climate, justice, and solutions. There's much more excitement to come!

Nikhil Swaminathan
CEO



2023 Impact & Influence

850+

Grist stories

2 million+

audience per month
on Grist platforms

4,700+

stories republished
in partner outlets

27

awards and
nominations

1,023

Imagine 2200
submissions from
98 countries

50

new Grist 50 Fixers
identified and elevated

6

journalists graduate
the Fellowship
Program

750+

BIPOC journalists
and allies comprise
the Uproot Project's
membership

25 years on the climate beat

1999

- Grist launches. Founded by Chip Giller with staff of 1.5, the “Daily Grist” newsletter reaches 100+ readers

2005-2009

- Grist wins two Webbys, including the “People’s Choice” Award
- Hosts influential “Death of Environmentalism” debate
- Popular “How to Talk to a Climate Skeptic” feature launches
- Publishes book “Wake Up and Smell the Planet”
- Grist wins Heinz Award
- Irreverent “Screw Earth Day” campaign launched
- Staff reaches 16

2015-2019

- New partnerships: MSN, Vox, Fusion
- Launch of inaugural Grist 50 Fixers list
- Grist launches the nation’s first Environmental Justice Desk
- Grist partnered to produce the first-ever Presidential Forum on Environmental Justice during the Democratic Primary
- Team grows to 50

2000-2004

- Inaugural April Fool’s edition launches and is covered by USA Today
- Grist wins Utne award for online political coverage
- Grist wins Lehman Award for Excellence in Public Advocacy
- Circulation reaches 30,000.
- Staff at 12

2010-2014

- Grist forms Climate Desk with Mother Jones, Slate, and others
- Launch of “40 people redefining Green” feature
- “Death of a Climate Bill” feature nets widespread acclaim
- Grist hires one of the nation’s first full-time reporters dedicated to environmental justice
- Launch of Grist Fellowship Program and in-house video team
- Staff reaches 35

2020-2024

- Grist launches the first environmentally focused Indigenous Affairs Desk
- Grist wins prestigious National Magazine Award for General Excellence
- In 2024, Grist turns 25 with 60 staff across the country!

Getty Images

Agenda-setting Journalism

The leading source for climate news

A few examples of Grist's intersectional work
that drives change and inspires action

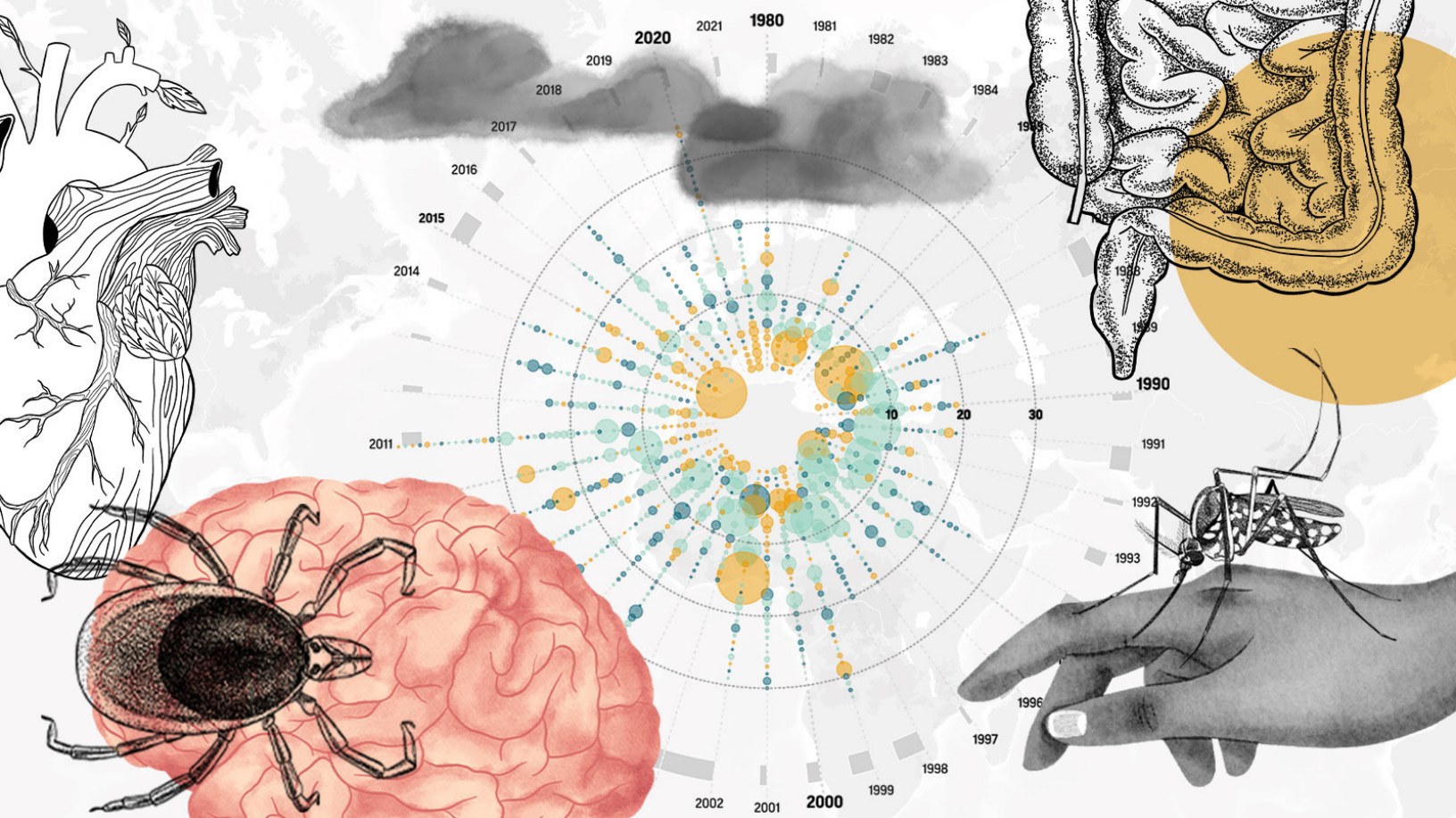
25 Years of Innovation

- + Indigenous Affairs Desk
- + Grist Local
- + Data Journalism



Partnerships: Reaching Beyond the Choir

*Image at right from Climate
Connections, a series of articles
copublished with The Associated Press.
Illustration by Amelia Bates*



The leading source for climate news

Winner of



• National Magazine Award for General Excellence 2023

• Edward R. Murrow Award for Best Small Newsroom 2022

• [Full list of awards](#)

Our award-winning team of reporters, editors, illustrators, and video producers informs readers on the latest climate policies and impacts, gives equitable solutions the exposure they need to scale, draws attention to injustices, and inspires meaningful action.

Our goal is to be the most culturally relevant voice on climate change. We believe: (1) that media and narrative shape culture, public opinion, and policy, creating an environment for change, and (2) that the messenger is as important as the message. We've evolved Grist from a blog into an authoritative digital magazine, boosting our impact and influence on readers and policy. You could say we're working to become a Climate Desk for the nation.



Kat Bagley
Editor-in-Chief

Toxic Churn

- **2023** Sigma Award for Data Journalism
- **2022** Online News Association's Knight Award for Public Service
- **2022** Online News Association's Excellence in Social Justice Reporting Award
- **2022** Institute for Nonprofit News Breaking Barriers Award

[Read the series](#)

Grist's investigation examines how the legacy of former industrial sites pollutes American cities today, particularly neighborhoods in which people of color reside. Through a collection of 1,600 soil samples, Grist uncovered how lead-contaminated soil in the Logan barrio of Santa Ana, California was the result of racist zoning practices and redlining, causing unsafe levels of lead in the blood of the mostly Latino residents, especially children. We also chronicled how the residents are building power and fighting back. The piece was co-published by the Voice of Orange County.



The Santa Ana City Council passed an ordinance to remediate lead from the soil in the Logan barrio and nearby neighborhoods.



Oil pumpjacks operate near a home in Santa Ana's Logan neighborhood. *Photo by Grist / Daniel A. Anderson*



Climate Connections: A warming planet, pathogens, and diseases

[Read the stories](#)

Copublished with The Associated Press, this multi-story series explores how a changing climate is accelerating the spread of infectious diseases around the world and how mitigation efforts demand a collective, global response.



Any Way the Wind Blows

[Read the story](#)

Copublished with the Houston Chronicle and the Beaumont Enterprise, this story investigates how a Koch-owned chemical plant in Texas spent years running from the Clean Air Act, with new evidence that it bent the law until it broke. Winner of a Sigma Award for Data Journalism.



To get off fossil fuels, America is going to need a lot more electricians

[Read the story](#)

Copublished with Post Script Media and Canary Media, this story dives into how a shortage of skilled labor could derail efforts to “electrify everything”.

25 Years of Innovation

✚ Indigenous Affairs Desk

As an extension of our Environmental Justice Desk, Grist launched an Indigenous Affairs Desk to produce a steady stream of stories by and about Indigenous people, communities, and issues – from sovereignty to disproportionate impacts to Indigenous knowledge and stewardship. Led by award-winning journalist Tristan Ahtone, this is the first environmentally-focused Indigenous Desk at a national publication.



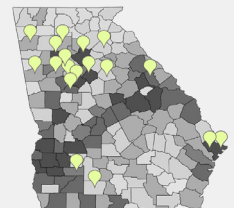
Fortress Conservation: A Legacy of Violence

From California to the Congo, policymakers have long sacrificed Indigenous peoples in the name of conservation.

By Gord Hill

✚ Local News Initiative

In 2022, we successfully piloted our Local News Initiative in **Georgia**, and in 2023 we expanded to **Illinois** and **Michigan**. Our LNI model embeds local climate journalists who produce culturally relevant news and information for host outlets and their audiences, and Grist distributes those stories through statewide syndication networks that reach and engage ideologically diverse audiences. The result is a significant increase in local climate stories published across an entire state, through just one climate journalist, powered by Grist's extensive network of partnerships. After a strong proof of principle in three states, we're now ready to scale.



In the map of Georgia above, each pin represents a different local outlet republishing Grist as of September 2024.

✚ Data Journalism and Visualization Unit

Grist built one of the nation's premier data journalism and visualization units focused on climate change. Through static and dynamic data visualizations, this unit provides accountability on the progress being made to tackle the climate crisis and holds governments and other institutions and businesses accountable.



Clayton Aldern
Senior Data Reporter

Partnerships: Reaching Beyond the Choir

Our goal is to reach broad and diverse audiences wherever they consume their news, whether it be on Grist, social channels, or the platforms of our partners. Because we don't put our stories behind a paywall, we can leverage partnerships to distribute our content far and wide.

Syndications

In 2023, Grist articles were published on outlets other than Grist over 4,700 times. Our syndication partners range from national, regional, and local outlets to ethnic and international publications, and include some of the biggest names in media (e.g. The Associated Press, The Guardian, and TIME).

Third-Party Aggregators

Every week, Grist is featured on third-party aggregator sites like Apple News, Flipboard, Smartnews, Microsoft Start, and others, bringing our stories to millions more people.

Radio

Grist is featured weekly on the nationally syndicated NPR show Here and Now. We have a partnership with Public News Service to turn Grist stories into radio segments that run on a broad network of local stations. And our journalists regularly appear on a variety of programs, stations, and podcasts.

Commercial and Residential Buildings

We became the first nonprofit media partner to an advertising group that shares Grist headlines on over 20,000 screens placed in residential and commercial buildings across the country.

Special Initiatives

The Grist 50

An annual list of the top 50 climate leaders across the U.S. who are tackling some of the most pressing problems of today in innovative and exciting ways.

Climate Fiction Initiative

Imagine 2200: Climate Fiction for Future Ancestors is an invitation to writers from all over the globe to imagine a future through climate fiction short stories, in which solutions to the climate crisis flourish and help bring about radical improvements to our world.

Events and Partnerships

Grist produces events that bring its journalism off the page to live audiences, and partners with influential institutions on events to reach new and broad audiences.

“

I honestly was unbothered by climate change until I came across [Imagine 2200], and now I caution anyone I meet about the things we can do to better our planet ... writing about climate change has definitely changed me.



The Grist 50

The Grist 50, an annual list of 50 emerging climate and justice leaders and their stories, that provides an annual dose of inspiration, and a reminder that the stories we tell about climate change are incomplete without the narratives of those fighting back, bringing change to their communities, and inventing a better future. Diverse in every way, members of the Grist 50 (aka “Fixers”) are people at the cutting edge of change. In 2022 and 2023, the Grist 50 reached millions of people and was launched in partnership with The Weather Channel and its new platform Pattn, and the 2023 Grist 50 was launched during Climate Week NYC in partnership with the Clinton Global Initiative.



Jessica Stahl
Executive Editor,
Special Initiatives

Climate Fiction Initiative

The Metamorphosis of Marie Martin

A Jamaican woman takes more than she gives, until the sea teaches her a valuable lesson with implications for everyone around her.

Author:

Nadine Tomlinson

Illustrator:

Amelia Bates



Bottom , L-R

And Now the Shade

A bioengineer grappling with a challenging problem finds the answer in the dreams of her dying grandmother.

Author:

Rich Larson

Illustrator:

Carolina Rodríguez

Fuenmayor

Sweet Water From Salt

A grieving son protects his family's beehives as he steers them home aboard his parents' ship.

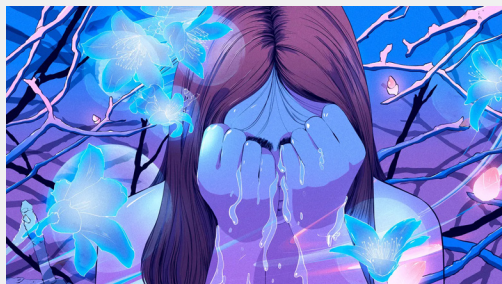
Author:

Jeremy Pak Nelson

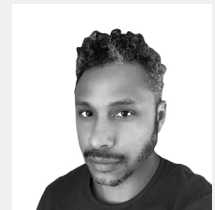
Illustrator:

Carolina Rodríguez

Fuenmayor



In 2021, Fix launched a climate fiction contest, “Imagine 2200: Climate Fiction for Future Ancestors,” with an open call for story submissions and an all-star panel of judges. In a genre dominated by dystopian stories and white male authors, our goal has been to flip the script by inviting diverse voices to imagine more clean, green, and just futures. In the contest’s first two years, we received over 1,700 story submissions from 91 countries. We published dozens of stories and a paperback anthology. We won awards. Numerous universities incorporated our work into course curricula. This work has attracted widespread attention within traditional climate spaces, and perhaps more importantly, among communities not traditionally affiliated with climate work.



Tory Stephens
Climate Fiction Creative,
Brand Partnerships
Manager

Events and Partnerships

Grist highlights Fixers throughout the year through high impact partnerships and events. In 2023, Grist designed programming for Fixers at the TED

Countdown Summit, Climate Week NYC, and other major events, putting these sustainability and justice superstars, and Grist, in front of new audiences.



In 2022, Grist hosted an event for the Ethic and Grist communities featuring Grist 50 Fixers Rollie Williams (Climate Town) and Kristy Drutman (BrownGirlGreen, The Green Jobs Board). The event included a conversation about climate media and screening of two episodes of Ethic TV's climate talk show, Day Before Tomorrow, followed by a happy hour on Ethic's TriBeCa rooftop. The event was hosted by Rachel Bouton (Grist) and Kylie Holloway (Ethic TV) and the host of Ethic's Co-founder, Jay Lipman.

Talent and Representation

The Fellowship Program

Grist's Fellowship Program works to cultivate and train the next generation of environmental storytellers.

The Uproot Project

The Uproot Project is a network by and for journalists of color that's dedicated to bringing diverse voices to the forefront of environmental reporting. Uproot connects its member journalists with publications, offers training, and builds community to strengthen racial representation in environmental media.

“

My time at Grist was honestly one of the most transformative periods in my professional journey.

Chad Small,
Data Fellow, 2022

The Fellowship Program

Grist's Fellowship Program fills a unique need in the media landscape by working to cultivate and train the next generation of environmental storytellers. It is a paid opportunity for budding journalists to hone their skills at a national news outlet and deepen their understanding of environmental issues. The program is designed to offer real-world experience at a fast-paced news site, training in a variety of skills key to a journalism career, and exposure, to the leading sustainability thinkers and theories of our time.



Teresa Chin
Executive Editor,
Data and Design

After a year of working full-time at Grist and gaining key skills in environmental journalism, fellows have won awards for their work and gone on to outlets including The Atlantic, Capital B, Politico, Investigate Midwest, The Verge, Wirecutter, Outside, Atlas Obscura, Greentech Media, and of course, Grist.



Blanca Begert

California reporter, Inside Climate News. As the News Fellow, Blanca reported on critical issues nationally and internationally, including traveling to Peru to report on Indigenous Affairs stories.



Jena Brooker

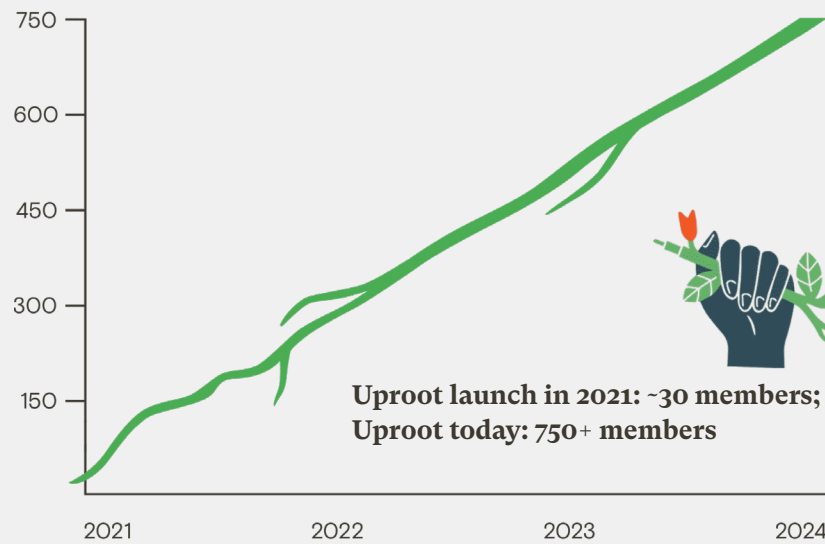
Environmental reporter at Bridge-Detroit. Jena was Grist's inaugural Midwest Fellow, covering issues of local and national relevance. Her work was widely syndicated by regional and national outlets alike.

The Uproot Project

The Uproot Project is open to journalists of all races, ethnicities, and backgrounds who share its goal of uplifting and supporting journalists of color, who have been underrepresented in the journalism industry for far too long. Our priority is building a community of storytellers who can transform the narrative of one of the most pressing issues of our time.



Lucia Prisela
Director
The Uproot Project



“ I just wanted to say THANK YOU to The Uproot Project. Since the member database was launched, two climate editors have reached out to me about assignments. I've been around the block as a freelancer and added myself to various freelance-for-hire spreadsheets/sits in hopes of getting assignments, and this is the only time it has worked.

— Uproot member

Looking Forward

At Grist, we aspire to become the most culturally relevant and influential voice for the climate. We've grown from an up-and-coming blog to an authoritative media outlet, all during a time when our work couldn't be more important to the climate – not to mention democracy itself. In our next phase, we're aiming to become not just a publisher but a hub for climate media that advances narratives of solutions and justice throughout the U.S. and the world, and that serves journalists, fiction writers, other media outlets, event producers, climate leaders, and the public. That is how we see our unique brand of mission-driven media meeting the urgency of climate change. Here's to significant climate progress in our next 25 years.

“

Climate is an important topic for our audience and for our newsroom. Grist's partnership has allowed us to take on more stories and dig deeper into complex subjects.

Molly Samuel,
Managing Director,
WABE

Operational Excellence

- ✚ Financials
- ✚ Donors
- ✚ Staff & Board

Our Financials

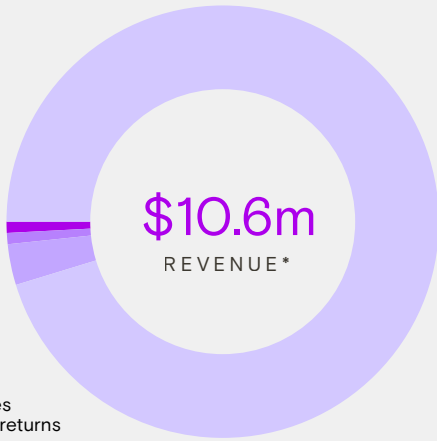
95%
Grants and
Contributions

3.3%
Advertising

0.6%
In-kind

0.8%
Miscellaneous
Income

*Revenue total includes
-\$540k in investment returns



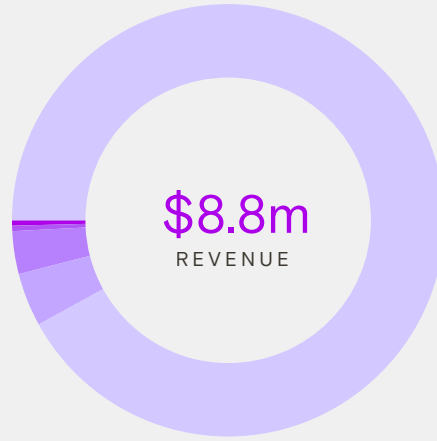
92%
Grants and
Contributions

4.0%
Advertising

3.2%
In-kind

0.4%
Investment

0.4%
Miscellaneous
Income



78.8%
Program

12.3%
Fundraising

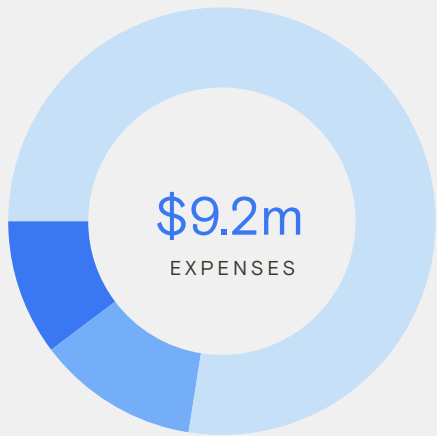
8.9%
Management and
General



77.6%
Program

12.3%
Fundraising

10.1%
Management and
General



FY22

FY23

Our Donors

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Alida and Christopher Latham	Newman Family Charitable Fund
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Miami Foundation	U.S. Energy Foundation
MiiR	Wilburforce Foundation



Photo by Mike Hitchner, Aspen & Cedar

Our staff and board

“ Something I’ve learned over the years is that organizational culture is equally, if not more, important than strategy. The culture we’ve built at Grist is truly something special, and I want to work with my colleagues to continue improving it. The root of it is to ensure that everyone who works at Grist feels valued.

— Nikhil Swaminathan, Grist

Grist Staff

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Director, Membership

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Director, Development

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Senior Editor

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Indigenous Affairs Reporting Fellow

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Executive Editor, Special Initiatives

Tory Stephens
Climate Fiction Creative & Brand Partnerships Manager

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CEO

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Writer & Comedian

Dr. Benjamin Strauss
*CEO & Chief Scientist,
Climate Central*



When I found Grist, it was such a lightbulb moment. Finally a source where I could get in-depth, trustworthy journalism exploring the intersection of climate and justice to inform my own work in a deeper way. I love what you all do!

DONATE

Reader support helps sustain our work. Please donate today.

