

PCCF, BAA, and Acterra History Timeline

Updated August 2020

- 1970** **Peninsula Conservation Center Foundation — a precursor to today's Acterra** — was founded by **Janet Adams** and **Claire Dedrick**, its first Executive Director (1970–1974). The Center provided a work space where several environmental organizations could meet, have offices, hold public programs, and archive their materials. The first office was located in Menlo Park at the corner of El Camino Real and Santa Cruz Avenue, upstairs in a building now occupied by the British Bankers Club.
- 1971** Opened the **Peninsula Conservation Center Environmental Library**, which in pre-Internet days grew to be the largest environmental library in Northern California. **Ellie Huggins** was the first volunteer librarian, cataloging the personal collection of **Claire Dedrick** and Center volunteers who donated materials.
- 1972** **Dreka Hunter, Mary Paine, Karen Nilsson** and others organized an **Environmental Auction** that raised \$10,000 to support the work of the Peninsula Conservation Center.
- The Center's first spin-off, the **Environmental Volunteers**, was established by **Karen Nilsson, Christy Holloway**, and others with the mission to offer educational lessons and field trips for elementary school children.
- 1974** Launched the **Conservation Store**, which sold green products, books, and gifts, including items made from recycled materials, decades before they became available in stores.
- Rose Beatty** was hired as Executive Director (1974–1975).
- 1975** **Barbara Silberling** was hired as Executive Director (1975–1979). **Lucile Spurlock** was hired to manage the Conservation Store; she later became president of the Peninsula Conservation Center Foundation Board and then the organization's long-term Business Manager.
- 1977** Started as a program of the Peninsula Conservation Center Foundation, **The Harbinger File** was an ambitious project to publish a directory of all the environmental organizations in California. It then became the first of many **Fiduciary Projects** whose finances were handled by the Peninsula Conservation Center Foundation and operated within the Foundation's tax-exempt status. Over time, dozens of organizations were served in this way, including both small projects with no staff and large organizations that spun off to manage significant funds and projects, such as Canopy: Trees for Palo Alto and the Cleantech Open, a national business plan competition.
- Began publishing information about local issues, Center events, and volunteer opportunities in **The CenterView**, Peninsula Conservation Center's quarterly newsletter.
- Started the monthly (and later weekly) **Brown Bag Lunch lecture series**, bringing in local and regional experts to talk about conservation issues ranging from wetlands protection to recycling to toxic chemicals and more.
- 1979** **Barbara Zeitman** selected as Executive Director (1979–1980).
- 1980** Through the **two-week Coastal Crossroads** program in March, PCCF offered naturalist-guided educational field trips to coastal areas, and, to highlight California's "Year of the Coast," PCCF issued a "Coastal Crossroads"

report which called for a San Mateo County coastal plan that would protect beaches and agricultural uses, prohibit offshore oil development, and stop inappropriate development.

With funds from the State Department of Water Resources, Peninsula Conservation Center installed a demonstration **Water Conservation Garden** (one of three statewide) at its Park Avenue site with workers from the California Conservation Corps and volunteers led by **Rip King** and **Maggie Gage**. Regular garden tours were offered for a number of years, and a brochure mapping all the plants was given to visitors.

The PCCF joined with other organizations in a successful campaign to defeat the Redwood City **“South Shores” development plan** for the wetland areas adjacent to Bair Island.

Ann Warren Smith named Executive Director (1980–1985).

1981 Organized the **South Bay Wetlands Coalition** to preserve local wetlands through applying the federal Clean Water Act and other legal means.

1982 With leadership from Program Director **Malka Kopell**, Peninsula Conservation Center activists organized against the South Shores development plan in the Redwood City Baylands.

Offered several **weekly classes** on three topics to educate the community about pressing issues: “Meet the Life of Earth,” “Global Ecology and You,” and “Water: What’s the Solution?”

1983 Published **“State of the Environment, 1983,”** a report of discussions with 50 community leaders from San Mateo, Santa Clara, and Alameda Counties, including businessmen, planning officials, and elected representatives that found heightened concern about handling of toxic materials by industry and the need for better land use planning. Air and water quality and coastal protection were also critical issues.

The Trail Information and Volunteer Center opened as a new organization within the Peninsula Conservation Center, offering maps, information about trails, and trail-building and maintenance opportunities throughout San Mateo, Santa Clara, San Francisco, and Santa Cruz Counties.

Held **“Living in a Chemical World,”** a daylong community forum at Foothill College, to educate about the use, transportation, and disposal of toxic chemicals by local industry. Physicians and safety specialists from Silicon Valley companies also spoke about the health hazards of chemicals, while State regulators, attorneys, and the Palo Alto Fire Chief discussed how local communities are protected.

Offered a solar design workshop at Peninsula Conservation Center, followed by a hands-on workshop on **Building a Solar Hot Water System.**

1984 Organized the **South Bay/Peninsula Environmental Conference** to offer local activists, planning officials, elected representatives, and business leaders a day to examine current concerns such as wetlands preservation, land use planning, transportation issues, and toxic contamination.

1985 Distributed the first Peninsula Conservation Center membership **Action Alert!** asking members to write to Governor George Deukmejian to approve funds to include the 4,000-acre Cascade Ranch on the San Mateo coast into the California State Parks system.

Created the **Citizens Committee to Complete the Refuge** to expand the federally owned San Francisco Bay Wildlife Refuge to protect remaining wetlands throughout the Bay Area.

Jacquelyn Brown hired as Executive Director (1985–1987).

1986 Organized the **State of the California Coast Conference**, attended by 250 people and held in Half Moon Bay, to highlight threats to the coast, such as spills from oil drilling, chemical pollution, loss of natural

habitat, and inappropriate land development.

1987 Started the **Annual Conservationist Award**. Over the years, winners included **Emily Renzel, Florence and Phil La Riviere, Trish Mulvey, Ward and Mary Paine, Ford Nichols, Wim De Wit, Jim Baer, Byron Sher, Peter Steinhart, Ernie Gotein, and Olive Mayer**.

Received a **San Francisco Foundation** grant to educate South Bay residents about the need to protect their wetlands that were threatened by proposals, including a plan to build a horse racetrack in Hayward.

Patty McCleary named Executive Director (1987–1988).

1988 **Moved the Peninsula Conservation Center to 2448 Watson Court** in Palo Alto because the City of Palo Alto determined that the 2253 Park Boulevard site was needed for a low-income housing development.

Volunteer **Trish Mulvey** convened the first of many meetings at the Peninsula Conservation Center to organize **CLEAN South Bay**, a coalition of wetlands and water-quality advocates who ultimately filed a lawsuit against the three water treatment plants in Palo Alto, Sunnyvale, and San Jose because their discharge water contained heavy metal pollutants from Silicon Valley factories and was contaminating the water and fish throughout the South Bay.

Debbie Mytels became Executive Director (1988–1994).

1989 Sponsored the June **Water Festival** at the Palo Alto Baylands, with leadership by community member **Virginia Anderson DuPraw**. With a goal to celebrate the value of water and educate local people about the importance of conserving it and preventing water pollution, the event included informational tables and exhibits, art displays, and a community dance performance by the Dymaxion Dancers.

With leadership from East Palo Alto community leader **Trevor Burrowes**, the **East Palo Alto Historical and Agricultural Society** was founded as a Peninsula Community Center Foundation–sponsored program to honor the agricultural heritage of the East Palo community, preserve its open space, and create a community plan, including trails to the Baylands Nature Preserve. The Peninsula Community Center Foundation and the National Parks Rivers and Trails Conservancy were among the program’s funders.

1990 With funding from **PG&E**, organized the “**Earth Day is Your Business**” conference, bringing together leading Silicon Valley companies so they could showcase their programs in recycling, water conservation, and pollution prevention.

Through the initiative of Executive Director **Debbie Mytels**, Peninsula Conservation Center launched **Business Environmental Awards**, one of the region’s oldest and most respected environmental award programs, and offering its 30th annual awards in 2020.

Partnering with commercial property owner **Jim Baer**, whose Premier Properties controlled about 20% of the commercial real estate in downtown Palo Alto, and Paul Madsen, owner of **Palo Alto Sanitation Company**, the city’s contracted waste collector, the Peninsula Conservation Center Foundation began the **Downtown Environmental Action Project (DEAP)** to organize volunteer block captains for two dozen areas throughout the commercial district. The block captains identified outside locations for recycling bins and internal collection systems within scores of buildings and offices, creating the first commercial district system for collection of recyclable paper, glass, and aluminum cans. After a successful pilot year, the program was incorporated into the City’s official recycling contract with the sanitation company.

Volunteer **Maija McDonald** started the Peninsula Conservation Center Foundation’s **Magazine Recycling program**, which kept tons of paper out of the landfill and generated up to \$3,000 per year in revenue for the organization until the function became part of the City of Palo Alto’s expanded recycling program in the 2000s.

Bay Area Action was founded on Earth Day, April 22, by staff and volunteers of the International Earth Day 1990 campaign that had its offices in downtown Palo Alto. Among the original founders were **Kathy Armer, Owen Byrd, David Coale, Beth Delson, Peter Drekmeier, Jeff Hoover, Amy Peters, David Smernoff, Susan Stansbury,** and **Bill Weber.**

The **Beat the Back-Up Campaign** raised awareness of commute alternatives by organizing a parade of alternative vehicles in downtown Palo Alto. One of the entrants was a convertible VW that was pulled through the parade by a team of bicyclists! The women of Bay Area Action waved a sign from the back of the car saying “**Why Not Car Pull?**”

Bay Area Action recruited hundreds of people to participate in **Redwood Summer** in Northern California with the goal of preserving the state’s remaining unprotected ancient redwood forests. The **Headwaters Forest Project** was active until the Headwaters Forest was federally protected in 1999.

Under the leadership of **Kathy Armer** and **Sue Nicholls**, the **Bay Area Action Schools Group** was created to provide students with a forum to address environmental concerns and develop leadership skills.

1991 Launched the **Business Environmental Network**, an ahead-of-its-time resource where local companies met monthly to share best practices and new ideas about environmental responsibility.

Bay Area Action established the **Bay Area Earth Day Coalition** and celebrated **Working Earth Day** by helping employees take measures to make their workplaces more environmentally sound, producing a “Workplace Environmental Audit” and a “Guide to Starting a Workplace Recycling Program.”

The **Bay Area Environmental Peace Action Network**, under the leadership of **Owen Byrd**, played a major role in environmental opposition to the First Gulf War.

Bay Area Action’s **Butano Forest campaign** worked to protect ancient redwoods and Douglas fir trees in San Mateo County.

Under the leadership of **Mike Hogan**, Bay Area Action organized its first of dozens of clean-up events along San Francisquito Creek.

Inspired by **Bob Valdez**, Bay Area Action launched the **BAA Café**, a monthly event featuring environmental presentations, live music, food, and drinks.

Susan Stansbury organized the **Festival for the Forests** at Fort Mason in San Francisco.

1992 The **Recycled Paper Coalition** was established as a Peninsula Conservation Center project, with funding from Bank of America, Pacific Gas & Electric, Hewlett Packard, and other large corporations, to promote the corporations’ use of recycled paper by operating a paper recycling program and pledging to use recycled paper in their operations.

Bay Area Action worked closely with **Rick Springer** to coordinate the **Hundredth Monkey Project to Stop Nuclear Testing**, including a weekend concert and awareness-raising festival, a five-day walk to the Nevada Test Site from Las Vegas, and a weekend of direct action. In its aftermath, President Clinton signed a moratorium on underground nuclear testing, and in 1996, 168 countries signed the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty.

The **Electric Vehicle Project** began when **Will Doolittle** donated an MG Midget with the stipulation that it be converted to run on electric power. **David Coale** led the team of Bay Area Action members who did the conversion, with the goal of showing the viability and benefits of electric vehicles. With a range of 25 to 30 miles and a top speed of 65+ mph, this sporty vehicle can still be seen traveling local streets. A second car, a VW Rabbit, was later converted to electric power by members of the **Bay Area Action Schools Group.**

Earth Day 1992 celebrated **Voting Earth Day** by encouraging citizens to make environmental issues a priority when voting. Bay Area Action distributed information about ballot initiatives and candidates to educate voters about their choices.

The **Earth Summit Festival** was an eco-performance organized by **Bay Area Action** and **Earth Circus** in San Francisco's Federal Building to draw attention to the importance of the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro.

1993 Began protecting **San Francisquito Creek** by organizing and funding a multiagency **Coordinated Resource Management and Planning (CRMP)** program, which evolved into the **San Francisquito Creek Watershed Council**, whose work continued until 2012 [? check this date].

With support of the **Trust Fund for the Peninsula Conservation Center**, headed by **Mary Davey**, the Peninsula Conservation Center Foundation moved with nine local environmental organizations into the cooperatively managed **Peninsula Conservation Center building at 3921 East Bayshore Road in Palo Alto**, which was purchased by the Trust Fund for the purpose of supporting local environmental action.

Bay Area Earth Day 1993, under the leadership of **Holly Kaslewicz**, **Cindy Russell**, and **Kathy Armer**, brought together thousands of people from throughout the Peninsula for an **Eco-Fair at Stanford University**. Speakers included **Congressmember Anna Eshoo** and **John Robbins**, president of **Earth Share**, and performers included **Peter Apfelbaum** and **Michelle Shocked**.

Jim Steinmetz and the **Bay Area Action Schools Group** established the **Weeks Street Community Garden** in East Palo Alto as an organic food garden with plots for community members.

Chuck Peterson and **Erica Little** launched Bay Area Action's **Project on Indigenous Nations and the Environment (PINE)**.

1994 **Stephanie Hughes** was hired as Executive Director (1994–1996), replacing **Debbie Mytels** (1988–1994), who shifted over to head the San Francisquito Creek Coordinated Resource Management and Planning program.

Earth Day 1994 focused on **Watershed Protection** with a **Youth Environmental Summit** and a 30-minute video entitled "**A Creek Runs Through It: The Story of San Francisquito**," produced by **Peter Drekmeier**. Nearly 100 people participated in a creek clean-up that removed 11 dump-truck loads of trash and garbage from the creek.

Decadent Dinners was launched by Bay Area Action member and chef **Laura Stec**, who started the **Environmental Eating Action Team (EEAT)** to raise awareness about the impact our food choices have on the natural world.

Bay Area Action moved to **Midtown Palo Alto**, and **Jim Steinmetz** and other volunteers established the **Midtown Organic Garden** in a vacant lot behind the Palo Alto Co-Op Market.

Bay Area Action hosted the "**Anne Frank in the World**" exhibit in Menlo Park, bringing attention to human rights issues and organizing field trips for local schools to visit the exhibit.

1995 With support of major donor **Bob Brown**, the mortgage was paid off for the Peninsula Conservation Center's East Bayshore building, which was renamed the **Robert V. Brown Peninsula Conservation Center**.

Under the leadership of **Peter Drekmeier**, Bay Area Action joined the **Devil's Slide campaign** aimed at bypassing an unstable section of Highway 1 on the San Mateo Coast by using an environmentally responsible alternative to the proposed plan of a freeway over Montara Mountain.

Earth Day 1995's theme was **Habitat Restoration**, and Bay Area Action formed a coalition of 25 environmental groups to organize 14 hands-on restoration projects around the Bay Area and held the launch event for the **Habitat Restoration Project** that continues to this day with Grassroots Ecology's work on local restoration efforts.

Congressmember Anna Eshoo hosted Bay Area Action's public forum on the Endangered Species Act.

The Bay Area Action **Schools Group** organized its first annual **Deep Green Global Training** and was recognized with the **1995 Bay Area Youth Service Award**.

A dozen Bay Area Action members participated in a weekend peace encampment near Needles, California, to successfully protest against the proposed **Ward Valley nuclear waste dump**.

1996 **Jorie Rose** was hired as Executive Director (1996–1997).

Earth Day 1996 focused on **Food and the Environment** with a coalition of 40 organizations and 100 restaurants offering events to educate people about connections between food and the environment. Restaurants served "Earth Day Specials" during Earth Week, and 20 community gardens offered workshops and work parties.

Under the leadership of **Sue Nicholls**, Bay Area Action's **Youth Environmental Action project** was established to educate young students about local environmental issues.

Voters approved the **Devil's Slide Tunnel Initiative** with 74% of San Mateo County voters putting to rest the ill-conceived plan for a freeway over Montara Mountain.

1997 Kicked off a partnership with City of Palo Alto's 600+ acre **Pearson-Arastradero Preserve** where thousands of volunteers over the years have continued to restore, monitor, and maintain the preserve's ecological health to today.

Laurie Mueller was hired as Executive Director (1997–2000).

Earth Day 1997's theme was **Forests for the Future** and included three campaigns: the **3-Point Paper Pledge** encouraged use of tree-free and recycled paper; the **Phonebook Forest** educated people about the destruction of old-growth forests to produce disposable phone books; and the **Adopt-a-Forest campaign** encouraged people to take steps to save our national forests.

Under an agreement with the City of Palo Alto, **Jim Steinmetz** and **David Smernoff** launched the **Arastradero Preserve Stewardship Project** where staff and volunteers began to restore, monitor, and maintain the ecological health of this 609-acre preserve. The project began by dismantling and repurposing materials from a house and barn on the site and then restoring the native landscape. Today, the Arastradero Preserve Stewardship Project has expanded to more than 23 locations throughout the Peninsula with a staff of over 20 people and has become an independent nonprofit called **Grassroots Ecology**.

To improve Stanford University's development plan for the Sand Hill Road corridor, Bay Area Action helped launch **MPACT**, a citizens' group that **sponsored Measure M** and a ballot initiative campaign to promote an alternative plan. Although Measure M received only about 40% voter support and Stanford's project was eventually approved, the campaign brought together new allies and spawned new thinking about local land-use issues.

1998 **Earth Day 1998** celebrated **A Sense of Place: Bringing Earth Day Home**, and a broad coalition of over 70 organizations and hundreds of schools and faith-based organizations used Bay Area Action's resource packets to incorporate Earth Day into their lessons. In addition, 250 people attended a **Sunrise Ceremony**

at **Ohlone Field** on the Stanford campus, while over 100 hands-on activities were offered to give people a chance to restore their sense of place.

Green Teams were born when Bay Area Action leader **David Coale** organized groups of friends, neighbors, and co-workers to learn how to live a more sustainable lifestyle by following a six-week curriculum.

Under the leadership of **Mark Bult**, Bay Area Action's **Headwaters Forest campaign**, still at work eight years after Redwood Summer, continued efforts to protect 60,000 acres of Headwaters Forest. Citizen demonstrations in a dozen cities called for public acquisition of this ancient forest, and in 1999, it was purchased by the federal government for permanent protection.

1999 Bay Area Action's **Schools Group** held up life-sized letters spelling out "**Why Not Carpool?**" for freeway drivers to see on the Embarcadero Road bicycle bridge over Highway 101.

Earth Day 1999 put out the message **Shape a Sustainable Society**, and over 400 schoolchildren participated in an art contest and held creek clean-ups and trail maintenance days.

Bay Area Action and Peninsula Conservation Center Foundation helped launch the **Stanford Open Space Alliance**, which helped establish greater protections for the Stanford Foothills.

Bay Area Action's **Schools Group's Gap Campaign** called attention to Gap clothing company's use of sweatshop labor and its ties to clear-cutting of the remaining old-growth forests of Mendocino County.

2000 Under the leadership of Board member **Walt Hays**, a 2.37 kW **demonstration solar PV system** was installed on the Peninsula Conservation Center roof at a cost of \$33,000, about half of which was paid for by a grant from City of Palo Alto Utilities. The installation included informational posters on solar energy and a real-time display of the electricity generated by the system so that visitors to the Center could easily see the benefits of using solar energy. At the time, the cost per watt was \$11.40 — considerably more than today's going price of \$2.00 per installed watt.

Organized by Peninsula Conservation Center Foundation, a **Sustainable Home Tour** showcased a newly built all-renewable energy home in downtown Palo Alto and a remodel in Barron Park among others, in collaboration with Hidden Villa and the Northern California Solar Energy Association.

Earth Day 2000 saw Bay Area Action members gather for another **Sunrise Ceremony**, promote a **CFL lightbulb giveaway** at Palo Alto Hardware, start spring planting at the **Midtown Organic Garden**, and restore a section of creekbanks along San Francisquito Creek.

The **Bay Area Environmental Forum** program, led by **Cindy Russell**, brought speakers and timely discussions to scores of people each month at the Peninsula Conservation Center.

Bay Area Action members **distributed "parking tickets" to SUVs** parked in downtown Palo Alto and at Mountain View's CalTrain station "citing" drivers for owning vehicles that release irresponsible levels of pollutants.

Acterra: Action for a Healthy Planet is formed through the merger of **Peninsula Conservation Center Foundation** and **Bay Area Action**. For the first year, they used the name "**BAA + PCCF**".

Peter Drekmeier, David Smernoff, and Holly Million were hired as a three-person Executive Team (2000–2002).

2001 Without a formal name for nearly a year, **Bay Area Action** and **Peninsula Conservation Center Foundation** unveiled its new name during a dramatic evening event when two people rappelled down the side of the

Peninsula Conservation Center building to unfurl a huge banner with the name **Acterra** and a new logo, designed by **Mark Bult**.

Acterra's **Native Plant Nursery** (started in an Atherton backyard in 1998) moved to a city-owned area adjacent to Foothills Park in Palo Alto. Now run by **Grassroots Ecology**, the nursery provides public agencies throughout the region with more than 33,000 plants annually for their restoration projects.

Acterra was selected as a member of the **Environmental Solutions Forum**, a collaborative of 15 environmental education organizations in the region with funding provided by the Peninsula Community Foundation.

2002 Coordinated the **Earth Day Bay Walk** — a five-day trek along the Bay Trail from Shoreline Park in Mountain View to San Francisco City Hall — to deliver a petition to Mayor Willie Brown to encourage him not to support filling more of San Francisco Bay to expand San Francisco International Airport.

Coordinated more than 60 environmental groups, local governments, colleges, and businesses to "**Celebrate the Bay**" on Earth Day with over 125 events throughout the region.

Became Santa Clara County's first nonprofit organization to be certified as a **Green Business**, reducing energy use by 50%, reducing the waste stream, and conserving water.

Acterra's Building Manager **David Coale** installed the Peninsula Conservation Center's first electric vehicle charging station. After 2014, a level-2 charging system was also installed.

The **Schools Group** organized a "**Deep Green Global Training Conference**," at the Marin Headlands Center for youth throughout the Bay Area who were inspired by speakers such as tree protection advocate Julia Butterfly Hill, human rights activist Van Jones, and youth leader Ocean Robbins.

2003 **San Francisco Magazine** named Acterra among 10 "**incredibly effective** local groups recommended by our experts."

Karen Cotter acted as Interim Executive Director; **Michael Closson** was hired as Executive Director (2003–2013).

2004 To explore new options for funding residential and commercial solar installations, Acterra began the **Acterra PV** project to develop concepts for a solar lease program and a crowd-funded large-scale commercial installation. While these projects were ultimately not funded, project participants later put the concepts to work at **Solar City** and other renewable energy start-ups.

Acterra's Environmental Forum lecture series included a special session in June on "**Green Careers: The New Frontier**," co-sponsored with the Women's Environmental Network.

2005 Launched **Be the Change**, an environmental leadership training program, where by 2011, over 165 participants graduated from a 10-month curriculum, including environmental information, leadership skills development, and social change processes, and completed an individual project to put what they learned into action.

Created the **Sustainable Living Project**, a series of classes available to the public on sustainable living using a workbook prepared by the **Empowerment Institute**.

With a reception catered by Acterra's **Laura Stec**, Acterra sponsored a grand opening of **Green Citizen**, a computer recycling company headed by **James Kao** as an environmentally responsible means of handling otherwise hazardous e-waste.

- 2006** The **Stewardship Program** held its first annual **Habitat Restoration Workshop**, attended by dozens of restoration professionals, researchers, and land managers from agencies throughout the Bay Area.
- Began offering carbon offsets for purchase through the **Cool It!** program, developed by Acterra Board member **David Coale**.
- Distributed hundreds of flyers to people lined up to see Al Gore's award-winning film "**An Inconvenient Truth**," giving them tips on reducing their carbon emissions. Acterra then **convened a meeting** in August of over 60 people who explored program ideas to address the emerging climate change challenge.
- Two major programs were added to Acterra's fiscally sponsored projects: **Cleantech Open**, a business plan competition, and **Volunteers for Outdoor California**, recruiting volunteers for trail building and habitat restoration throughout California.
- 2007** Under leadership from **Claire Elliott**, Acterra kicked off the **Young Earth Stewards (YES)** program, connecting middle and high school students to the ecology of their neighborhoods by restoring a piece of land on their school campus or in their community.
- Launched a pilot of the **Green@Home** program in Palo Alto, which trained volunteers to install energy-saving devices and educate homeowners about easy ways to reduce their energy use.
- Organized a **Solar Home Tour** with funding from **City of Palo Alto Utilities**, with **Emily Quan** as a consultant to coordinate this event.
- Helped **Volunteer Center of Silicon Valley** to organize the **Green Challenge 2007**, a volunteer effort to distribute energy-saving info and free compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs) to thousands of households in Sunnyvale.
- As her **Be the Change** program project, Acterra librarian **Ellen Wilkinson** began the **Cool Campaign** to educate and incentivize families at Menlo Park's Peninsula School to save energy and resources in their homes.
- 2008** Received funding from the **Bay Area Air Quality Management District** to start the **Green@Home** program in Redwood City and Sunnyvale. From 2008 to 2014, the Green@Home program also received funding from City of Palo Alto Utilities, San Francisco Foundation, Redwood City, Menlo Park, Cupertino, Mountain View, Silicon Valley Energy Watch, and Foundation for Global Community, serving residents in those cities plus several San Jose neighborhoods.
- With funding from the **Grove Foundation**, the **Cool Campaign** was rebranded **ActerraGreen** and expanded to several schools in Menlo Park as well as a half dozen local faith-based congregations.
- Laura Stec**, Acterra's Membership Director, and Eugene Cordero, a meteorology professor at San Jose State University, published **Cool Cuisine: Taking a Bite Out of Global Warming**, an innovative cookbook and global-warming primer.
- 2009** The **Stewardship Program** signed an agreement with Los Altos to monitor, maintain, and restore the **Redwood Grove** near downtown Los Altos.
- Started the **Urban Ecology Project**, educating city dwellers on ways to create landscapes that work in harmony with nature by conserving water, using natural methods of pest control, creating healthy soil with compost, and reducing the use of non-native plants.
- Acterra's **Library & Resource Center** launched **Find Answers**, an online resource for common environmental questions about home care, green jobs, solar energy, and much more.

Because of **Be the Change** class participant **Frances Farrell**'s course project, Acterra began a two-year **Climate Heroes** program, which used local print media and other outreach channels to publicize "ordinary extraordinary" people taking actions to protect our Earth's climate.

The **U.S. Environmental Protection Agency** honored Acterra at its 11th annual Environmental Awards ceremony for "outstanding achievement in protecting the environment."

2010 The **Business Environmental Awards** program celebrated its 20th anniversary, having recognized over 150 businesses around the Bay Area for exemplary and innovative programs to save resources and prevent pollution.

In partnership with **Home Energy Analytics**, began the **High Energy Homes** program with funding from the California Energy Commission to provide online energy analysis and energy-saving recommendations based on SmartMeter data of participating high-energy use residents in Atherton, Los Altos Hills, Monte Sereno, Portola Valley, and Woodside.

Nearly 140 independent local climate change experts surveyed by **Philanthropedia** selected Acterra as one of the **top 15 outstanding nonprofits** working toward reducing climate change.

2011 Organized **The Sharing Revolution**, a conference highlighting new economic models made possible by emerging social media that allowed people to share resources such as cars, homes, tools, etc. Some of these businesses later developed into mega-corporations, such as Uber and AirBnB, while others, such as Next Door, facilitated the reuse of household goods.

To encourage water conservation and habitat for local pollinators, Acterra published a first-of-its-kind guide, **Bay Area Native Plants for the Garden**, in which full-color photos showcased the beauty of native plants. In 2012, it was made available for free on iPad and iPhone.

Received for the fifth time a top, four-star rating from **Charity Navigator**, the nation's largest independent charity evaluator, placing Acterra in the top 5% of charities nationwide for its excellent financial management and high percentage of funds used for programs.

Graduated the sixth and last class of **Be the Change**, Acterra's yearlong environmental leadership training program.

2012 The **Stewardship Program** took on watershed stewardship responsibility for **Stevens Creek and Permanente Creek**, incorporating the Stevens and Permanente Creeks Watershed Council as part of the program.

Co-hosted the **Silicon Valley Watershed Summit**, bringing together 200 people at Foothill College to focus on creek and watershed restoration.

Through a partnership with **Home Energy Analytics**, Acterra concluded a successful two-year test of **High Energy Homes**, a software program provided that helped homeowners reduce their high-energy use with an online analysis of SmartMeter data.

In collaboration with **SunWork**, a nonprofit solar installation company, Acterra organized a free **Solar Home Tour** in Palo Alto; a similar tour was organized in 2013 also.

The **Green@Home** program prevented more than 2 million pounds of CO₂ per year from entering the Earth's atmosphere.

- 2013** Staff member **Elizabeth Sarmiento** was awarded a \$10,000 scholarship to attend **Together Green**, a year-long series of leadership training programs for people of color, sponsored by Toyota, to help her become a more effective Acterra leader.
- Adam Stern** hired as Executive Director (2013–2018), replacing Michael Closson (2003–2013).
- 2014** Completed seven years of the **Green@Home Program**, which trained over 500 volunteers to perform over 2,000 home energy assessments, installing energy-saving devices and educating residents about how to reduce their carbon emissions by saving energy and raising over \$1.22 million from local cities, state funds, and the national Stimulus Program of 2009.
- 2015** Acterra was selected as one of 25 organizations statewide to be **Energy Upgrade Ambassadors** and received a grant of \$64,000+ to attend community fairs and give presentations to community groups about how to save energy at home and at work (this program continued for two years).
- Working with the summer program of **Youth Community Service**, Acterra trained 20 secondary school students to perform **basic home energy audits** for their families.
- Received the **Tall Tree Award** from the Palo Alto Chamber of Commerce.
- 2016** The **Green@Home to Grid Ready** program, funded by Palo Alto Community Foundation, began to identify homeowners in East Palo Alto and Belle Haven eligible for free rooftop solar installed by Grid Alternatives with funding from California’s cap-and-trade program.
- The **GoEV! Program** kicked off in August with an event for volunteer EV Ambassadors at **Sven Thesen’s Project GreenHome** in Palo Alto and held its first **EV Ride’n’Drive event** at the Peninsula Conservation Center as part of National Drive Electric Week in September.
- 2017** The first **East Palo Alto “Block Party”** was a collaborative event with Acterra, Grid Alternatives, Habitat for Humanity, Canopy, neighborhood leaders, and other groups in the Kavanaugh neighborhood working together to improve their homes with solar panels and energy-efficiency devices, grow the urban forest, and build community.
- The **Green@Home** program was funded for one year in Sunnyvale, utilizing **Home Energy Analytics’** online software analysis and recommendations for home energy savings.
- The **Public Lecture Series** included **Adam Stern’s** interview with **George Shultz**, former U.S. Secretary of State.
- For the first time, the **Bay Area Air Quality Management District** was the major sponsor of Acterra’s 27th annual **Business Environmental Awards** event held at Intuit.
- Silicon Valley Clean Energy**, the region’s new Community Choice Energy provider, funded Acterra to do community outreach in commercial business districts throughout Silicon Valley.
- The **GoEV! Program** held a workshop and **EV Ride’n’Drive event** at St. Francis of Assisi Church in East Palo Alto, highlighting the extra rebates and economic and environmental benefits of electric vehicles for low-income drivers.
- 2018** The **Energy & Climate Program** worked with residents and staff from the **City of Sunnyvale** to put on a daylong workshop, **“Innovate Climate Action in Sunnyvale,”** in March to gather community input for Sunnyvale’s Climate Action Plan update.

Grassroots Ecology, the spin-off of Acterra’s previous Stewardship Program, attained its own 501(c)(3) nonprofit status and left Acterra’s fiscal sponsorship on July 1.

The Business Environmental Awards 28th annual event was sponsored by the Bay Area Air Quality Management District and was held for the first time at their new San Francisco headquarters.

At the **Climate Friendly Cuisine conference** organized by Acterra’s **Business Partnerships for Sustainability** program, 140 people from 70 organizations came together at LinkedIn in San Francisco in September to explore how the food service industry can reduce carbon emissions — an official event of Governor Brown’s Global Climate Action Summit.

“**Clean Energy Access for All**,” a day-long design sprint organized by the **Energy & Climate Program**, brought together 45 people including funders, government agencies, businesses, and organizations serving low-income communities with the goal of identifying barriers to expanding access to renewable energy.

The Resilience by Design competition chose Acterra’s new **Climate Resilient Communities Program** in East Palo Alto as one of its Bay Area locations for community engagement regarding sea level rise education.

In honor of Karl Knapp, the late Stanford instructor and electric vehicle champion, the **GoEV! Program** was renamed the **Karl Knapp Go EV! Program** and received significant financial support for the next three years.

Matt O’Grady was named Interim Executive Director (2018–2019).

Peninsula Clean Energy, the CCA for residents in San Mateo County, awarded Acterra a community grant for outreach to low-income households.

2019 **Lauren Weston** was hired as Executive Director. Under her leadership, mapped the organization’s **Theory of Change**.

Participated in the first-ever **Bay Area Electrification Expo**, organized by the City of Palo Alto, the City of San José, and partner organizations.

2020 **50th Anniversary of Acterra** and its predecessors.

30th Anniversary of the **Business Environmental Awards**.

Compiled by Debbie Mytels and Jerry Hearn with assistance from Mark Bult, David Coale, Linda Elkind, Sudhanshu Jain, Cindy Russell, Rob Shelton, David Smernoff, Lucile Spurlock, and many others. Edited by Gloria Geller.

© Acterra August 2020