

About Waterlust



While completing a PhD in Applied Marine Physics at the University of Miami, Patrick Rynne had an idea. Surrounded by talented scientists that were discovering fascinating things, he noticed that often their work wasn't reaching the general public in creative and engaging ways. It seemed like a missed opportunity with big implications. In order to address the environmental crisis, he surmised that everybody needed to be involved, informed and motivated to lend a hand...and to achieve that, folks first needed to understand the science. He decided to start a company dedicated to this pursuit, and in 2011, Waterlust was born.



Early on, Patrick engaged with students and researchers at UM, focusing on the production of film and photography to tell science stories in creative ways. Despite no formal background in media, he discovered a passion for weaving science and life experiences into compelling media. He soon met Fiona Graham (now Fiona Rynne), a marine biologist earning a masters degree in Marine Affairs

& Policy. The two hit it off, with Fiona's talent for photography and precise website design complementing Patrick's love of a well-crafted story.

Waterlust's early media work earned broad attention, from film festival features and science communication awards to an ever-growing and passionate following on social media. But despite this early success, it became clear that in today's digitally plugged-in world, watching a video or liking a photo is an extremely fleeting experience. In one ear, out the other. Even in more formal settings like school, what is learned in the classroom, if not reinforced and engaged with repetitively, is easily forgotten. As graduate students, Patrick and Fiona experienced this first hand and decided that if they truly wanted to achieve the goal of bringing science into people's lives and have it stick, it would need to be through a process that is frequently repeated, fun, and functional. Clothing, it seemed, offered a perfect solution!

Everybody puts clothing on everyday, and while most execute that behavior without thinking, it's an opportunity for critical thinking and reflection. As a company, if Waterlust could somehow incorporate science into people's clothing, it could transform a daily routine into much more. The problem was, nobody on the team knew anything about designing clothing or the apparel industry. They needed help, but luckily, knew who to ask!

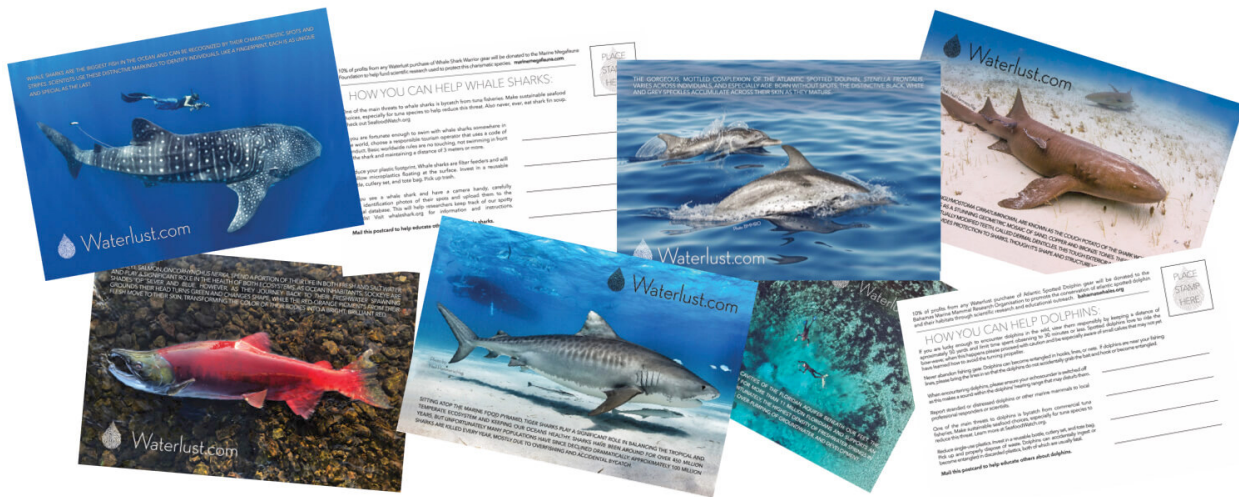


Left to right: Laura Graham, Patrick Rynne, Fiona Rynne

Fiona's sister, Laura Graham, was a talented seamstress and designer in New York City. With a degree in fashion merchandising and an expertise in

environmental and social responsibility, her blend of talent made her uniquely qualified to lead Waterlust in a new direction: clothing as a science communication tool. They called the concept advocate apparel, and started designing fun and functional clothing that visually represents species and ecosystems in need of advocacy.

Each design is paired with a research or education organization that is leading their field, with 10% of profits donated annually to support their work. This scientific expertise, whether management of a fishery or research of an endangered species, is disseminated to customers in a variety of ways. From call to action cards that ship with each product, to educational and engaging emails, customers are empowered to think critically about the subject their new gear represents from the moment of discovery and purchase, through to each time they wear their clothing. Besides the repetitious benefits to the wearer, infusing science into clothing is also effective at spreading knowledge to other people. When people wear Waterlust gear, it's just a matter of time before somebody asks them about their bright, funky designs. That moment is incredibly special because it creates an intimate opportunity for the wearer to share what they've learned with another.



Call to action postcards that ship with each product.

Today, when these authentic interactions are aggregated over Waterlust's tens of thousands of customers in over 100 countries, the power that clothing can have as a science communication tool comes into focus. A rapidly growing international e-commerce brand, Waterlust's team includes talented scientists, designers, and educators who all share a passion for addressing the environmental crisis using unorthodox tools.