

2021 IMPACTS



ALIGNING FOR ACTION

2021 IMPACTS

8,634

groups in the national network of water protectors across all **50** states

\$428,304

in direct financial support to **123** local groups

94,563

people informed through our website, newsletter, and social media

99

customized consultations

3,872

people trained and educated through **243** events

34,225

discussions and engagements among **649** users in our new Online Community



River Network is unique in our role to connect and strengthen the diverse network of over 8,500 local groups, agencies, tribes, and utilities working for healthy rivers and clean water across the US. We are the ‘glue’ that makes this network a community, the creative force that sparks novel ways to gather, and the constant that is always seeking tools and resources that can make a difference to this nationwide network of water protectors creating lasting and sustainable change at the local level.

We push ourselves to deliver results, to be present for and with this community, and bring our deep-rooted conviction to examine and address the disproportionate harm of floods, droughts, and contamination experienced by low-income and Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) communities. What this humble team of less than 20 staff accomplishes annually is awe-inspiring—as this report shows. By leveraging the magic and power of this network, we . . .

. . . expanded connections and increased actions nationwide, using our Drinking Water Access Exchange group to leverage the newly passed low-income home water assistance program,

. . . launched agriculture coordinator positions to help stakeholders collaborate to identify, develop, and fund projects that benefit producers and the river,

. . . moved community groups across the country into action to implement Tools for Equitable Climate Resilience, amplifying the voice of those most impacted by climate change,

. . . spurred action and advocacy for equitable water infrastructure through our new Equitable Infrastructure Toolkit and meetings with policymakers.

As we reflect on the year behind us, we are proud of the resilience of our team and this community to stay the course. Together, we expanded access, safety, quality, and affordability for all, even amidst an ongoing pandemic and so many other social, economic, and environmental challenges. We are grateful you have joined us on this journey and hope you share the pride we feel for what we achieved together in 2021. We continue to devote our heart, mind, and energy into ensuring everyone has a seat at the table as we plan for, and work towards, a strong and sustainable water future for all.

With gratitude,


Nicole Silk
President


Jumana Vasi
Board Chair



NICOLE SILK



JUMANA VASI

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ALIGNING FOR ACTION

The COVID-19 pandemic underscored the importance of our role as the “glue” binding the national network of water protectors together. In 2021 we built on this momentum further aligning the network through new ways to collaborate and take collective action for our nation’s waters.

3,140
group or individual
River Network
memberships

INTRODUCING OUR ONLINE COMMUNITY

Launched in January 2021, [River Network’s Online Community](#) is already the go-to platform for water protectors. We have seen discussion threads grow into Zoom meetings and facilitated the flow of knowledge and resources from member to member. The network knows first-hand that no victory is achieved alone, and that has been exemplified in this first year of online connectivity.

649 Online Community
Members

RIVER RALLY

At the second virtual River Rally our team brought the very best in online engagement forward. Hosted within our Online Community platform, the event was highly interactive to stimulate and engage participants, including live content, on-demand workshops, open access to movies, small group engagement, and networking.

450
registrants and
presenters from **45**
states and **5** countries

27%
of registrants
identify as
racially diverse

“
River Network kept us strong, creative—ever optimistic—through this hard time. We’re excited to be back in the river with youth with bright vistas ahead.”

—Beth Stewart, Cahaba River Society



“
This was simply amazing. Despite not being together... people cleaned up tens of thousands of pounds of litter everywhere from local parks, streams, and beaches to streets and playgrounds. What a wonderful week!”

—Kristin Webb, Clean the Bay Day Coordinator

INNOVATIVE RIVER CLEAN-UPS

This year, we built on our long history organizing community clean-up events by utilizing the Litterati app and offering our partners a COVID-safe approach. We hosted a two-site, in-person clean-up with Colorado’s Breckenridge Brewery, drawing over 75 participants and partnered with Arizona’s Rio Reimagined for a hybrid Litterati and in-person clean-up along the Salt River, doubling the event’s impact.

2,981
volunteers engaged at
virtual and in-person
cleanup events

212,873
pounds of litter removed
from communities
and waterways

UNDERCURRENTS

These approaches provide the foundation for all our work, flowing through our programs in unique ways.



CENTERING EQUITY

This moment in history calls us to expand our equity, diversity, and inclusion work to ensure our network is well-equipped to increase its impact for the benefit of US waterways and communities. We also have work to do within our own organization. This year, led by a staff committee, we developed internal land acknowledgment and pronoun usage policies, updated our employee handbook, and worked with the Avarna Group to examine and address the ways traits of white supremacy culture show up in our organization.

TRANSFORMING DATA INTO ACTION

Thousands of local groups are collecting data and information on the nation's water resources and their communities. This year, we encouraged groups in the Delaware River Basin and beyond to use their data for action, showcasing how our partner, Bartram's Garden, leveraged community-collected information to improve state water quality protections. Moving forward, we hope to spur data to action for rivers across the country.

BUILDING STRONG LEADERS

To effectively address the issues facing our waterways, water conservation leaders, organizations, and networks must be sophisticated in their strategies, well-funded, and smartly led. This year, we revamped our Leadership Development programs to deliver what network leaders need, including a new professional development program and in-depth training to help three local groups build community-centered leadership programs.

68%
of trainings
addressed EDI topics

49%
of digital storytelling
included diverse
perspectives



“

Today, I and one half-time staff person with board members and volunteers have built Cayuga Lake Watershed Network into an effective watershed-wide organization... thanks in large part to my River Network education.”

—Hilary Lambert, Cayuga Lake Watershed Network

DRINKING WATER FOR ALL



OUR IMPACT

When funding for the low-income home water assistance program (LIHWAP) became available this year, River Network was poised to help the network parse, understand, and leverage this federal funding to advance water affordability in their communities. Our Drinking Water Access Exchange group began as an informal cohort to discuss water shutoffs at the onset of COVID-19, but has now pivoted and deepened into an organized, leading-edge community rallying together to ensure local communities can equitably access these new federal funds.

484

individuals educated
at 24 trainings

\$29,500

in direct financial support
to 12 local groups

17

articles and new online
resources including a new
[Drinking Water 101 video series](#)

“

This group has been an invaluable resource... When we were preparing our analysis of the implementation of the LIHWAP program, members helped identify which states had issued their plans. This alignment was critical to our being able to analyze as many plans as possible.”

–Alexandra Campbell-Ferrari, *The Center for Water Security and Cooperation*



OUR COMMITMENT

Drinking water is fundamental to our health, economy, and well-being, yet across our nation, access is not equal or equitable. By equipping local groups with the knowledge and capacity to advocate for their needs and influence water utilities, we can help guarantee that no one will be deprived of access to this crucial resource.

COLLABORATION

A FUTURE WITH FARMS

OUR IMPACT

Across Colorado, a shift is underway: agricultural stakeholders want to become effective advocates for local water projects. River Network is a driving force in bringing together the agricultural and conservation communities—supporting planning efforts and identifying water challenges—and now we are taking the next step, actively supporting solutions that benefit farms, ranches, and the river. In 2021, we partnered with Steamboat Springs’s Community Agriculture Alliance and the Mancos Conservation District, hiring two new “Ag Coordinators,” to help stakeholders take aligned action to identify, develop, and fund water projects. The first two Coordinators are off to an impressive start; so impressive that we’re already expanding the program across the state of Colorado.

289

individuals educated
at 9 trainings

\$18,250

in direct financial support
to 2 local groups

7

articles and new
online resources

“

Agriculture needs water and the land to survive... I think they need to be at the front of the table, leading the conversation. Our outreach has sparked some real interest, with producers that have never traditionally been involved in river health. Seeking them out and saying, ‘I want your opinion,’ perhaps gives them enough power to start sharing.”

–Ben Wolcott, Wolcott Ranches & Mancos Conservation District Agricultural Consultant



OUR COMMITMENT

Members of our network want to build partnerships with farmers and ranchers to improve the health of rivers throughout the US, but many don’t know where to begin. We see an opportunity to forge these partnerships, including with those who have been excluded from financial and other opportunities due to race, ethnicity, and gender.

BUILDING RESILIENCE

OUR IMPACT

This spring saw the launch of our [Tools for Equitable Climate Resilience](#), the first step in a direct, involved, supportive program to move community groups into action. Our team put the tools to work, granting 11 organizations funds, planning resources, and direct consulting time with River Network staff to support their implementation of Community-Led Research (CLR) and the design and planning of custom Leadership Development programs. While each organization's project unfolded in a unique way, they shared a common goal: build community members' skills and confidence to actively participate in their local decision-making landscapes, giving a voice to those most impacted by climate change and lack of investment.

607
individuals
educated at
18 trainings

\$95,484
in direct financial
support to **30**
local groups

20
articles and
new online
resources

“

River Network support was crucial to us getting this program off the ground. It pushed this work from a community-driven idea to a reality that is just over the horizon.”

–Steve Anderson, Ellerbe Creek Watershed Association



TOOLS for EQUITABLE
CLIMATE RESILIENCE

FOSTERING
COMMUNITY-LED
RESEARCH AND
KNOWLEDGE



river
NETWORK
connecting people-saving rivers

TOOLS for EQUITABLE
CLIMATE RESILIENCE

FOSTERING
COMMUNITY
LEADERSHIP



river
NETWORK
connecting people-saving rivers

OUR COMMITMENT

Communities across the US face increasing risks of flooding and other weather-related natural disasters, whose impacts disproportionately affect low-income and communities of color. River Network is a trusted and valued partner for grassroots groups and key federal agencies working towards climate resilience, with a critical role to play in continuing to bring diverse stakeholders together for the future of our local communities nationwide.

A VOICE FOR WATER



OUR IMPACT

With a new Administration and Congress in place this year, River Network's policy work was perfectly positioned to pivot from defense to offense. The word of the moment? Infrastructure. We partnered with American Rivers to create Action Days, resulting in more than 75 virtual face-to-face meetings between network members and their Congressional representatives, where advocates highlighted the need for equitable water infrastructure investment. For other advocates across the country, we released our [Equitable Water Infrastructure Toolkit](#), a crash course on water utilities, affordability, and infrastructure basics, along with practical advice on influencing decision-making processes. Now, we're supporting six community groups to put the toolkit to work and planning the next series of Action Days—in Washington, DC, after River Rally 2022.

EQUITABLE WATER INFRASTRUCTURE TOOLKIT

EQUITY

918
individuals educated
at **28** trainings

75+
people connected
to **50+** members of
congress across **27**
different states

36
articles and new online
resources including a
new video on the
Clean Water Act



“

The training introduced a person new to advocacy in a way that showed them, pretty clearly, how to play a valuable role.”

—2021 Action Days participant

OUR COMMITMENT

Over 50% of US rivers, streams, and lakes fail to meet clean water standards. We must, in continued partnership with national and regional coalitions, provide a dynamic policy approach and stay on the leading edge of all levels of water policy, equipping local groups and advocates with the tools they need to design and implement effective advocacy campaigns that center civic engagement and equity.

OUR TEAM



Hannah Mico, Community Organizing Associate;
Sheyda Esnaashari, Drinking Water Program Director



Kala Megrđichian, Philanthropy Associate & Executive Assistant;
Tiffany Harrower, Fellows Group; Mikhaela Mullins, Science and Policy Associate;
Nicole Seltzer, Colorado River Basin Program Director; Carly Schmidt, Membership & Communications Manager; Amy Boal, Brand & Communications Director;
Lisa Runkel, Philanthropy Director; Katie Murphy, Vice President, Philanthropy



Lisa Runkel, Philanthropy Director;
Nicole Silk, CEO/President



Sheyda Esnaashari, Drinking Water Program Director; April Ingle, Policy Director; Nicole Seltzer, Colorado River Basin Program Director;
Katherine Baer, Vice President, River Programs; Diana Toledo, Senior Director, River Programs



Brenna Goggin, Leadership Development Manager; Colleen Walters, Delaware River Basin Program Manager; Karla Noboa, Community Engagement Manager

87%
of River Network staff
have received training
related to power,
privilege, and racism

27%
of River Network Board
Members and
22%
of River Network staff
identify as BIPOC

It is River Network's practice to begin meetings and gatherings by recognizing and acknowledging the Native peoples whose traditional territory includes the land and waters on which we meet. Here, we would like to recognize the following tribes, the original caretakers of the lands on which our staff are located:

Arapaho, Anishinabewaki, Cherokee, Cheyenne, Eno, Kaskaskia, Keyauwee, Kickapoo, Leni-Lenape, Lumbee, Myaamia, Occaneechi, Peoria, Potawatomi, Saponi, Shakori, Sioux, Sissipahaw, Skaruhreh/Tuscarora, Ute, Yuchi

BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND OFFICERS

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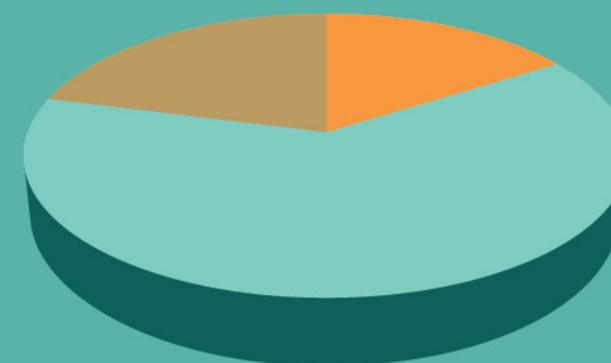
SUPPORT A STRONG NETWORK



As we near the end of our 2018–2022 strategic plan, we look back with a sense of gratification for the meaningful accomplishments we have made to align and empower our network toward collective action—and we look forward to charting the next five years’ focus to amplify our network’s voices, increase its connectivity, and strengthen our influence. Thank you for being a part of our journey, and we invite you to join us as we forge our bold and ambitious path ahead.

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

SUPPORT & REVENUE

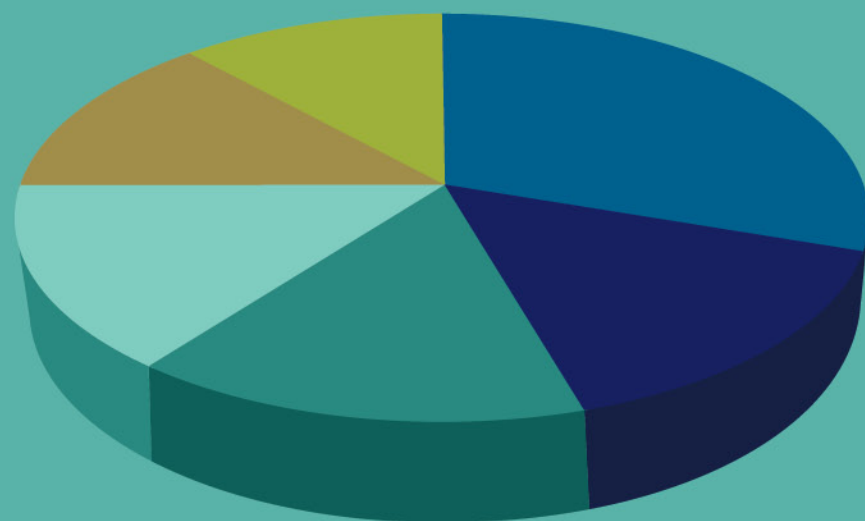


- Individual — 16%
- Grants* — 62%
- Earned Revenue** — 21%

* Includes Foundation, Corporate, and Government Grants

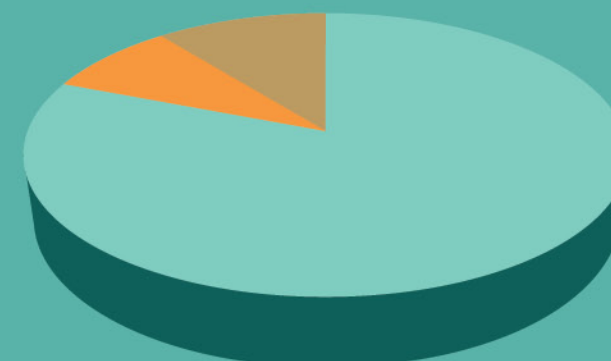
** Includes Registrations, Membership Dues, and Technical Assistance Fees

KEY ISSUES SPEND



- Resilient Cities and Communities — 30%
- Clean, Safe & Affordable Drinking Water — 15%
- Healthy Rivers in Agricultural Landscapes — 15%
- Strong Organizations & Leaders — 15%
- Water Science — 13%
- Robust & Effective Water Laws & Policies — 12%

EXPENSES



- Program — 78%
- Fundraising — 8%
- General & Admin — 13%

OUR SUPPORTERS

Support from our corporate and foundation partners allows us to continue to innovate and provide impactful resources and programs for our nationwide network. In a year filled with so much uncertainty, we want to express our deep gratitude to our funders—both new and old—who sustained our work, including those who have been with us for five or more years, indicated with an asterisk.

FOUNDATIONS, GOVERNMENT, AND NONPROFITS

Alan and Jane Lehman Foundation*
 Amazon Smile Foundation*
 Anonymous Foundation
 Arkay Foundation*
 Bullitt Foundation*
 C. S. Mott Foundation*
 Chesapeake Bay Trust*
 Chesapeake Commons
 Colorado Water Conservation Board*
 David & Katherine Moore Family Foundation*
 Eaglemere Foundation
 Friends of the St. Clair River
 Fresh Sound Foundation*
 Gates Family Foundation
 Groundwork USA*
 Keel Haulers Canoe Club*
 Keith Campbell Foundation*
 National Park Service*
 National Wildlife Federation*

Park Foundation*
 Partners for Environmental Justice
 Pisces Foundation*
 Spring Point Partners
 Steven Leuthold Family Foundation
 The Kresge Foundation*
 The Sweetgrass Foundation*
 Turner Foundation*
 United States Fish and Wildlife Service
 United States Forest Service*
 Walton Family Foundation*
 Water Foundation
 Waterkeeper Alliance*
 Waterkeepers Chesapeake
 William Penn Foundation*

BUSINESSES

Anheuser-Busch Foundation*
 Ball Foundation
 Fetzer Vineyards
 Mountain Dew
 Patagonia*

Tenkara USA
 The Coca-Cola Foundation*
 Tonic
 Your True Nature, Inc.*

RIVER RALLY SPONSORS & SUPPORTERS

ABAHAC
 Alliant Insurance Services, Inc.
 American Rivers
 American Water Works Association
 Anheuser-Busch Foundation*
 Bridgestone Americas, Inc.*
 C.S. Mott Foundation*
 Fresh Sound Foundation*
 Groundwork USA*
 Litterati
 National Association of Clean Water Agencies*
 Osprey Initiative
 PRADCO Outdoor Brands*
 San Antonio River Authority
 Storm Water Systems, Inc.*
 Tenkara USA

The Fellows Group*
 The Kresge Foundation*
 The Nature Conservancy
 The Trust for Public Land
 United States Environmental Protection Agency*
 United States Forest Service*
 Walton Family Foundation*
 Water Foundation
 Wege Foundation*
 Wild and Scenic Film Festival*

Special recognition to these partners who helped significantly advance our work at the intersection of water, equity, and justice:

C. S. Mott Foundation
 Fresh Sound Foundation
 Groundwork USA
 Kresge Foundation

Spring Point Partners
 United States Environmental Protection Agency



*Fundors who have supported River Network for five or more years.

OUR SUPPORTERS

New this year, River Network's "Climate Justice Flow Funding Circle" promises to disrupt traditional philanthropy and enable the flow of resources to where they will make the greatest difference locally. We are incredibly grateful for the trust our donors place in us to make such innovation possible.

We recognize there are many worthy and important causes and are honored and humbled by the individuals and family foundations who choose to support River Network. Supporters new and old have helped catapult our work and create impacts that ripple throughout the nationwide network of water protectors. We recognize our stalwart supporters who have provided support for five or more years with an asterisk.

INDIVIDUALS (UNDER \$1,000)

Anonymous Donors
Katherine Angier
Hilary and Seth Arens*
Katherine Baer*
Margery Bare*
Guy Bateman*
Liza Berdnik*
Jill Bergman
Curtis Berkey and Cameron Brown
Elizabeth Birnbaum
Tania Blahitka
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David Deen*
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Cheryl and David Fellows
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Amy Kaminer*
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Tommy and Eva Latousek*
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Elena Rosenfeld

Peter Rouzaud
Lisa & Ted Runkel
Cynthia Sarthou*
Taylor Schollmaier
Terri Schulz
Chi Ho Sham
Llyn Sharp*
Jonathan Simpson
Albert and Catherine Spottke*
Lizabeth and Bob Srinivasan
Beth Stewart*
Tom Stuart*
Cody Tanner
Harry Teague
Heather Thomson
Diana Toledo*
Amy Tully
Joanna Vandenberg
Pam Vaughan
Charles and Margaret Wanner
William Brad Webb
Jerry Welker
Karen Wogsland and Linda Pratt
Max Yano
Cathryn Yeagan

HEADWATERS DONORS

Headwaters Donors are individuals and families who contribute \$1,000 or more annually to River Network. We thank the following Headwaters Donors for their generous support during our 2021 fiscal year.

Anonymous Donor*
Anonymous Donor*
Anonymous Donor*
Todd Ambs and Beth Wentzel*
Catherine and Paul Armington*
Paul Bauman
Ennalls Berl IV
Katherine Borgen
Bill and Joanne Brandt*
Lynn Broaddus and Marc Gorelick*
Dell Brooke*
Susan Clark*
Sally Davidson*
Margo Farnsworth and Jim Pascoe*
Valerie Friedman*
Valerie Gates
Douglas Giancoli*
Ellen Gilinsky*
Mary McFadden and Dr. Lawrence Stifler*

G. Tracy Mehan, III
Clay Moorhead
Rafe and Lenore Pomerance*
Sandra Postel
Margaret Purves*
Elizabeth Raisbeck and Zell Steever*
Joan Rechnitz*
Cary Ridder and David Alberswerth*
Richard Roos-Collins*
Raj Shukla and Victoria Frank*
Thomas Silk and Kathleen Foote*
Arlene Silk*
Nicole Silk*
Greer Tidwell*
Jumana Vasi*
Suzi Wilkins Berl*
Rebecca Wodder and James Van Erden*

*Donors who have supported River Network for five or more years.



River Network empowers and unites people and communities to protect and restore rivers and other waters that sustain all life. We envision a future with clean and ample water for people and nature, where local caretakers are well-equipped, effective and courageous champions for our rivers. We believe that everyone should have access to affordable, clean water and healthy rivers.

www.rivernetwork.org