



2022 IMPACTS



IMPACTS

BY THE NUMBERS



8,644

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

3,005

people trained and educated through **89** events

\$316,864

in direct support to **157** local groups

6,817

discussions and engagements among **915** users in our Online Community

109,381

people connected through our website, newsletter, and social media

144

groups engaged on policy advocacy, reaching **96** decision-makers at all levels of government

1,087

hours provided in direct consulting with local groups

50+

groups and individuals supported to engage in Clean Water Act public participation opportunities

Since 1988, River Network has been at the forefront of national attention around protecting the waters of our country, encouraging equity, diversity, and inclusion in the environmental movement, and helping community members and local organizations protect and restore their waters.

Our work is always evolving and growing, and this year was no different. We spent time reflecting on our role as we engaged in a strategic refresh process and navigated the leadership transition following Nicole Silk's departure in June 2022.

Through it all, our work has continued and deepened, as this report shows.

We are excited to share our annual report and how we **connect, strengthen, and transform** our national network of water protectors!

Below you'll learn about the return to an in-person River Rally, the launch of the State Policy Hub, advocating for equitable distribution of historic investments in water infrastructure, a bold step into trust-based philanthropy, and so much more.

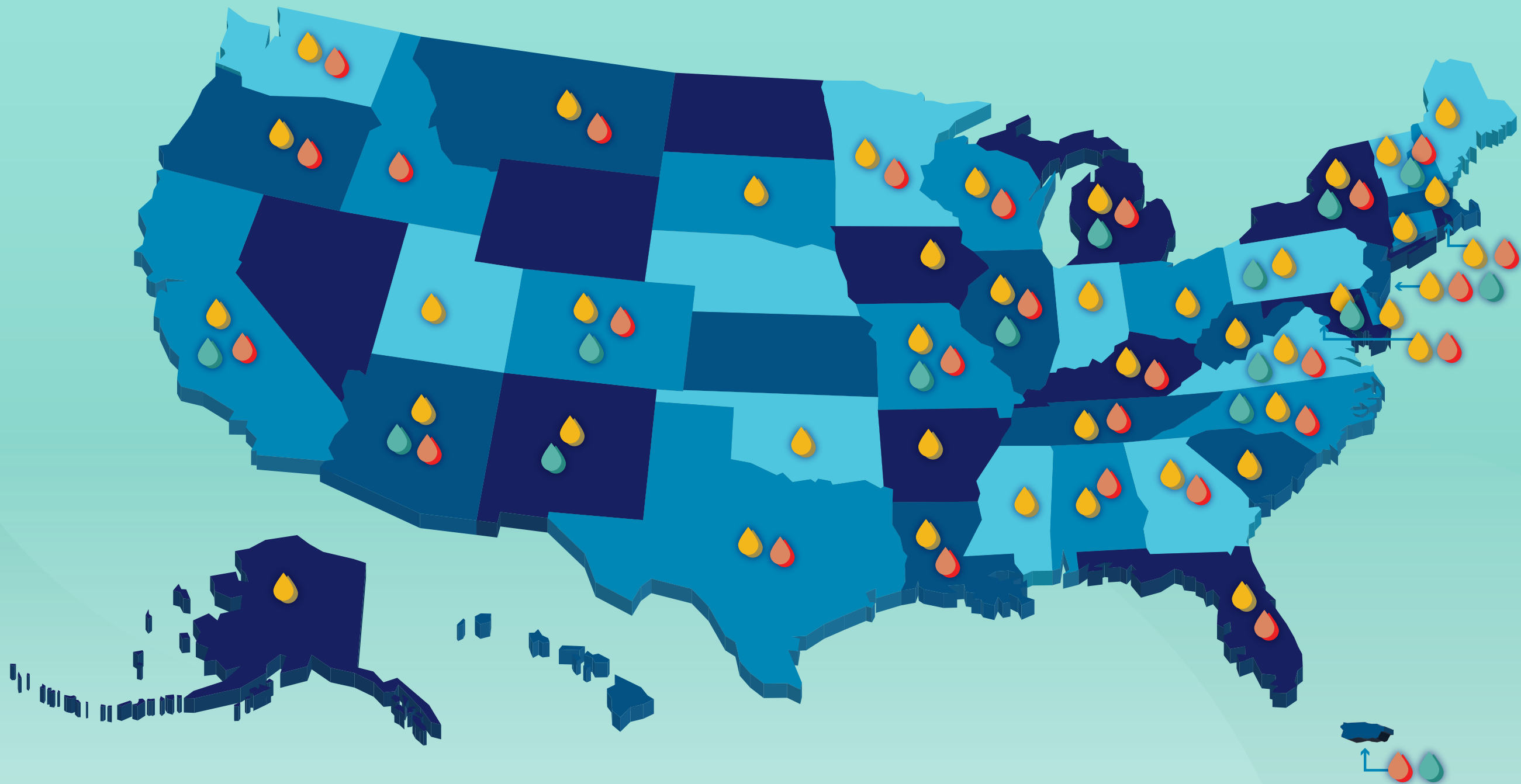
I am continuously inspired by staff and board collaboration on our strategic refresh, the ways we are embracing our values and taking time with a leadership transition, and how our team shares leadership and supports each other.

We look forward to the year ahead when we will launch an updated strategic plan, introduce our new leadership, and work with you on all else that is to come. **We are grateful for our work together. We couldn't do it without you.**



JUMANA VASI
RIVER NETWORK BOARD CHAIR

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jumana Vasi".



WE CONNECT

Our work brings together the nationwide network of water advocates, leaders, and protectors, to share solutions, advance equity, and build trust.

WE STRENGTHEN

Groups and individuals across the network impress us daily with their power and passion. We are honored to strengthen their work through financial support, skill development, and community events that bring a future of clean water for all closer each day.

WE TRANSFORM

We transform the scope and scale of the network through comprehensive, fresh solutions that drive organizational change, relationship change, data transformation, and policy translation, for a holistic movement that goes above and beyond just water.

“As a woman of color, an Iranian, a Kentuckian, I was one of few, but certainly not alone. The individuals, conversations, and thoughts I’ve had in the last three days will stay with me. I’ve felt validated and challenged in ways I don’t typically experience in my day-to-day.”

–Mahtaab Bagherzadeh



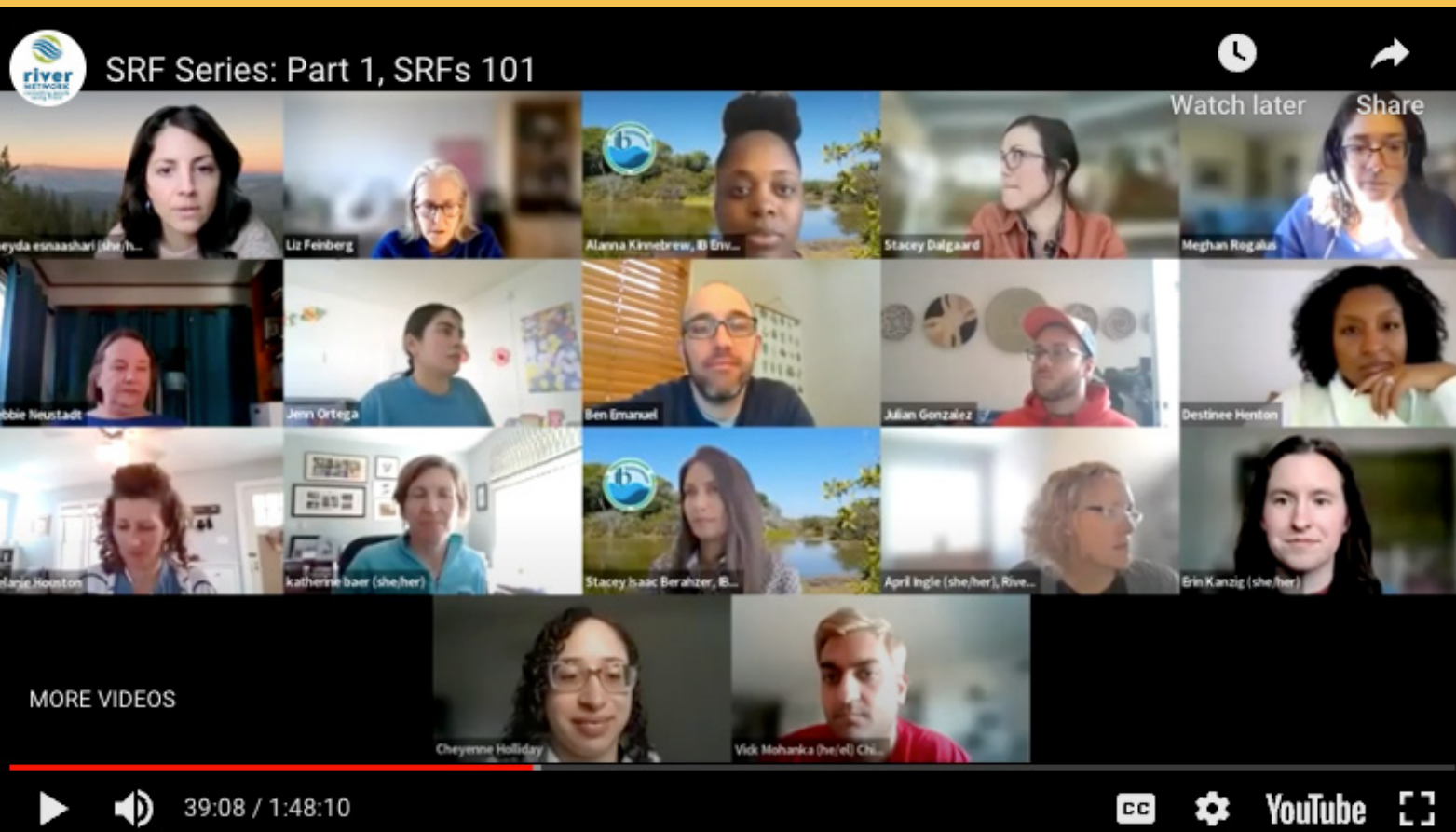
WE CONNECT AT RIVER RALLY

After two virtual years, River Rally returned to an in-person event, gathering 482 individuals in the heart of DC, on the ancestral lands of the Nacotchtank (or Anacostan) people. The excitement was palpable and sharing space once again allowed for renewed connections and a deepening of community, especially for the Leaders of Color cohort, which met in-person for the third time.

Read River Rally 2022: The Power of Connectivity and reflections from James Mills

“[This] was by far the most BIPOC inclusive and youngest conservation gathering I’ve ever attended. Well done. The nurturing of new and younger leaders was a powerful aha moment.”

–Anonymous Attendee



WE CONNECT

FOR EQUITABLE INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING

With the passage of IIJA/BIL, historic levels of federal funding are flowing to states to address critical water infrastructure needs via the State Revolving Loan Fund (SRFs). River Network is connecting groups nationwide to learn about opportunities available through SRFs and to advocate for equitable implementation of these dollars. Our trainings, convenings, and direct support means our network can better navigate and improve the SRF process and ensure the most impacted communities receive the support they need.

“This historic opportunity to invest in our water infrastructure and more specifically, our communities, is only meaningful if the communities impacted by historic disinvestment are centered in this process and advocates are equipped with the critical information they need to advocate for more equitable and transparent processes and implementation of SRF dollars.”
 – [Sheyda Esnaashari, River Network’s Drinking Water Program Director](#)



[Read more from our staff.](#)



WE CONNECT TO ENSURE EQUITABLE DEVELOPMENT

What do displacement and gentrification have to do with local waters? Everything. Overburdened, disinvested, environmental justice communities feel disconnected from decision-makers and threatened by new development. Through the Urban Waters Learning Network, we're connecting these communities to resources and each other to ensure that their efforts to improve their local water ways and make their communities resilient to climate change center the existing local communities and don't result in pushing out longtime residents.

“Leaders from our network—separated by geography yet connected by experience—have found a space to connect and converse. We learn from one another and have been able to share successes and challenges that resonate with the broader network.”

—Renée Mazurek, River Network's Resilient Communities Manager

[*Read more in our story map.*](#)





WE CONNECT BY BUILDING TRUST

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In collaboration with WaterNow, we're connecting community groups and their water utilities to build authentic, trusting relationships. With water utilities playing key decision-maker roles about local water, creating and maintaining trust between them and community organizations who represent those who drink that water is critical for successful decision making and investments that lead to safe, clean, and affordable water for all.

“When we receive support from organizations like River Network, it puts tangible assets into our community, and it's what residents say they want and need in their communities. Through education and outreach, the buy-in is there, and residents take ownership of this work. That's what makes this work—the community.”

—Dr. Angela Chalk, Healthy Community Services

[Learn more from our staff.](#)



# WE STRENGTHEN THROUGH FLOW FUNDING

Over the last year, River Network humbly and with curiosity explored trust-based philanthropy through our Climate Justice Flow Fund Circle, enabling democratized and collaborative giving by strengthening local leaders to step into the role of funder. We distributed funds with no strings attached to four Flow Funders, working as philanthropists for the first time, who then sent those funds out into their communities, to folks working on climate and water justice.

“It was shocking to receive the funds. I know sometimes we have conversations, and [my recipient was] like, ‘I still don’t believe this is happening.’ But it’s just been such a blessing to see the altruism extended. And she took some of those funds and allocated it to community folks to make sure that they can continue to show up. That’s mitigating barriers in all of those spaces.”

—Teresa Davis, Flow Funder

Watch the [\*River Rally plenary panel highlights\*](#) and [\*hear from our staff\*](#) to learn more.



**WE STRENGTHEN**

# THROUGH COMMUNITY LITTER MANAGEMENT

Thanks to generous corporate partners, including Anheuser-Busch, Ball Corporation, and Coca-Cola Company North America, Inc., we're building strength in communities across the country to address their unique litter challenges. Whether through in-stream litter capture devices or by providing resources for local river cleanups, these programs give local groups extra strength to meaningfully engage the community and ensure their local waters are trash-free.

“Little Falls is so enriched by Anheuser’s Busch active contribution to environmental sustainability for these many years. The natural riverfront has curtailed flooding and we owe our thanks to Anheuser Busch and River Network for making this so successful.

–John Veteri, Little Falls, NJ, resident and Trustee of the Passaic River Coalition



**WE STRENGTHEN**

# WILD & SCENIC RIVER PROTECTION

Now in its fourth year, the Wild & Scenic Stewardship Partnership program provides additional financial strength to groups protecting their local Wild & Scenic rivers. Ranging from river clean-ups to invasive species management to improving river access, this program gets federal funding directly to local groups, ensuring Wild & Scenic rivers are protected and restored.

“River Network is the reason that our Wild and Scenic programs exist and are growing.”  
—Oak Rankin, Glacier Peak Institute

[Learn more.](#)



# WE STRENGTHEN BY DEVELOPING LEADERS

How does a small, volunteer-run organization transition into a fully-fledged nonprofit? Where do new Executive Directors turn for guidance and development? For many, River Network fills these roles, strengthening leaders and organizations to be the best versions of themselves. Providing consultation to organizations, coalitions, and leaders only strengthens the impact of the local and regional work they carry out: effective change-making work comes from organizations with strong foundations.

“Our team benefitted from the time [River Network] took to learn our organization and team dynamic... The resources and training they provided will pay dividends.”

–National Parks Conservation Association  
Staff Member

[Learn more.](#)

“Going from a loose-knit group of nature-lovers to a grant-supported community activist, advocacy and educational program required a huge leap in organizational structural development and capacity increase. And it needed to be done in one year. River Network provided us with the tools, info, and hands on guidance to move forward.”

–Partners for Environmental Justice Board Member



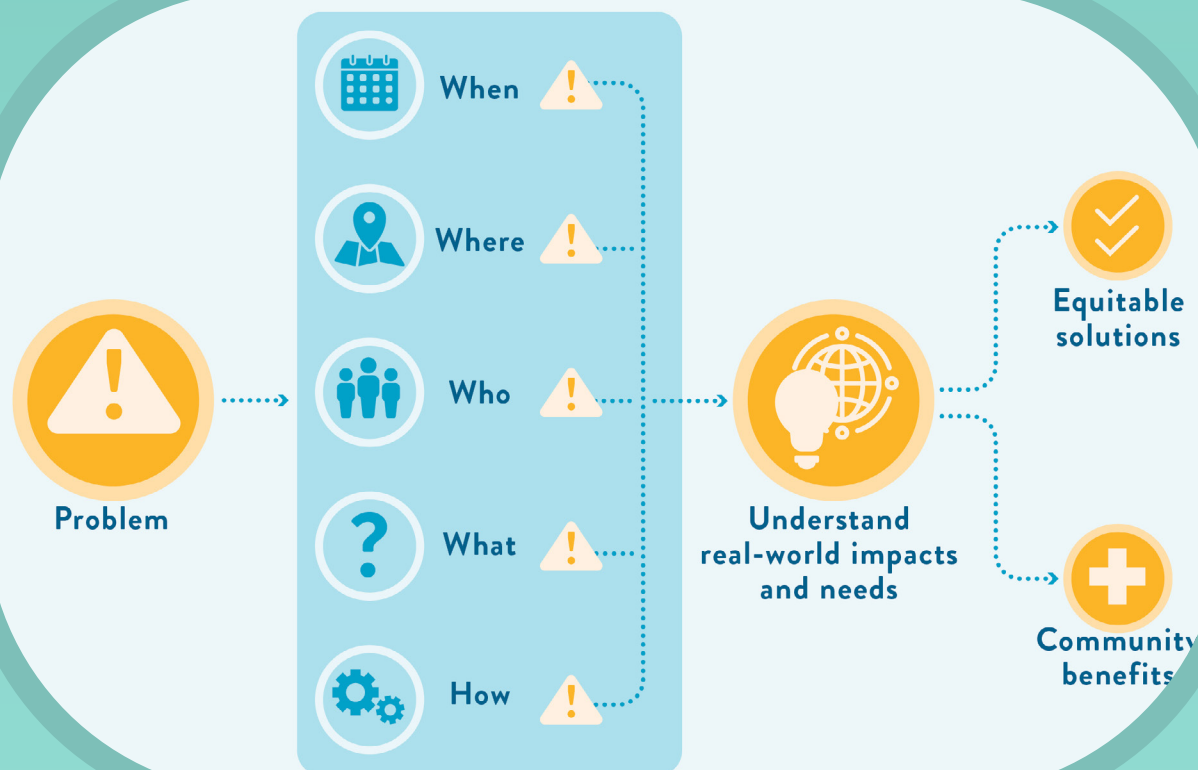
# WE TRANSFORM WITH COMMUNITY-LED RESEARCH



Partners in our community-led research work are stepping into new territory, and it's transforming their organizational identities. By inviting community members to define the problems these groups should address, they're discovering holistic definitions for their work, which stretch beyond water and require them to navigate tough questions: What is their work? How do they show up for their communities? How can their work expand to support affordable housing, workforce development, and unhoused communities? As they move through these challenging, often uncomfortable questions, we're watching them transform and evolve, broadening their roles to show up for communities that depend on rivers in new ways that advance equity.

“Fostering these relationships in communities across Baltimore enables us to learn from each other. We gain a better understanding of the impact sewage back-ups have on not only quality of water, but also of life, and we can share our expertise as we work together towards a solution.”

–Blue Water Baltimore Staff Member



Read more in [Grist](#) and in our [story map](#).

## Overview of the State Policy Hub



sheyda esnaashari (s...

A one-stop-shop on key policy language, lessons from advocates, and additional resources.

### Online Database

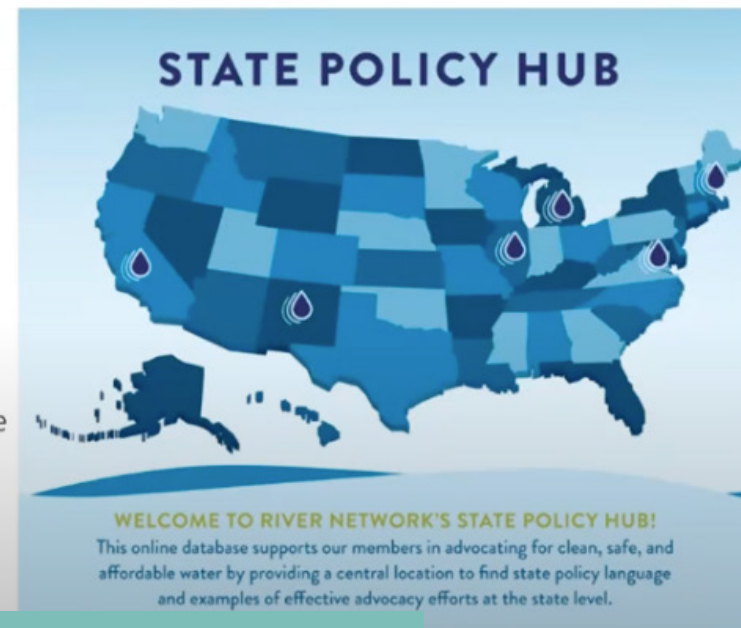
- Searchable inventory of policies, resolutions, and plans from across the country.

### Introductions to Major Issues and Policies

- Digestible explanations of issues and snapshots of state action. Features lessons from water advocates across the network.

### Deep Dives

- Key policy language



# WE TRANSFORM THROUGH THE STATE POLICY HUB

The State Policy Hub jump starts advocates into knowledgeable policy experts across the country and transforms state-level policy wins from siloed legislation to applicable lessons learned across state lines to protect drinking water, advance environmental justice.

“The State Policy Hub provides up-to-date, easily accessible policy examples at your fingertips and spotlights the impressive legislative wins and insightful advice of network members. It’s an ever-evolving tool and I hope it continues to inspire and connect groups across the country.”

–Erin Kanzig, River Network’s River Programs Policy and Research Associate

[Explore the Hub.](#)

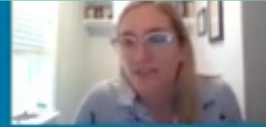


# WE TRANSFORM AGRICULTURAL AND CONSERVATION RELATIONSHIPS

Across Colorado we're transforming local stakeholder groups into strong regional cohorts and local experts into regional leaders. By bringing conservation and agriculture into collaboration in the Yampa river basin, a four-year watershed planning process is now complete, providing clear direction for the future of this free-flowing river and the communities that depend on it. Also in the Yampa basin, and poised to be scaled across the state, Agriculture Coordinators are using their local expertise and ensuring that relationships are transforming for the benefit of rivers and food and fiber production.

Read more about the [\*\*Yampa Integrated Water Management Plan\*\*](#) and [\*\*from our staff.\*\*](#)

## LOCAL DATA ARE VALUABLE



# WE TRANSFORM COMMUNITY DATA INTO WATER POLICY

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Many local groups collect data on the quality of their waters, but then what? We help them transform it into action and change, informing water policy at all levels of government. Our resources on data visualization tools and techniques, and how to tell stories with data are key tools in supporting groups to transform their analysis into action.

“Community collected data can be such a powerful tool in outreach and advocacy. I love seeing how groups put their data to action through data management and visualization and leverage it in different planning and policy contexts, such as better protecting streams used for recreation under the Clean Water Act, converting river clean up trash counts for litter control, and creating sound river management plans. The whole team is excited to expand this work in more geographies and in more innovative ways in the coming years!”

– Colleen Walters, River Network’s Delaware River Basin Program Manager

[Learn more.](#)

OUR TEAM

STAFF

Katherine Baer, Amy Boal, Diana Toldeo, Carly Schmidt, Sheyda Esnaashari, April Ingle, Chelsea Silva, Kala Megrđichian



Donyel Johnson, Lisa Runkel, Grace Fullmer



Renée Mazurek, Hannah Mico, Erin Kanzig, Tim Nicosia (2022 intern)



Barbara Long, Colleen Walters, Brenna Goggin



Brian Murphy (left), Nicole Seltzer (far right)

BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Greer Tidwell, Gary Collins, Raj Shukla, Bill Brandt, Ellen Gilinsky, Ronda Lee Chapman (Vice Chair), Jumana Vasi (Chair), Joya Banerjee, Sandra Postel, Bob Sproull, Kim Milligan, Julian Gonzalez, Scott Miller (Treasurer), Julia Blatt, Andrew Fahlund (Secretary), Rebecca Wodder.
Not pictured: G. Tracy Mehan III, Mekayle Houghton, Richard Roos-Collins.

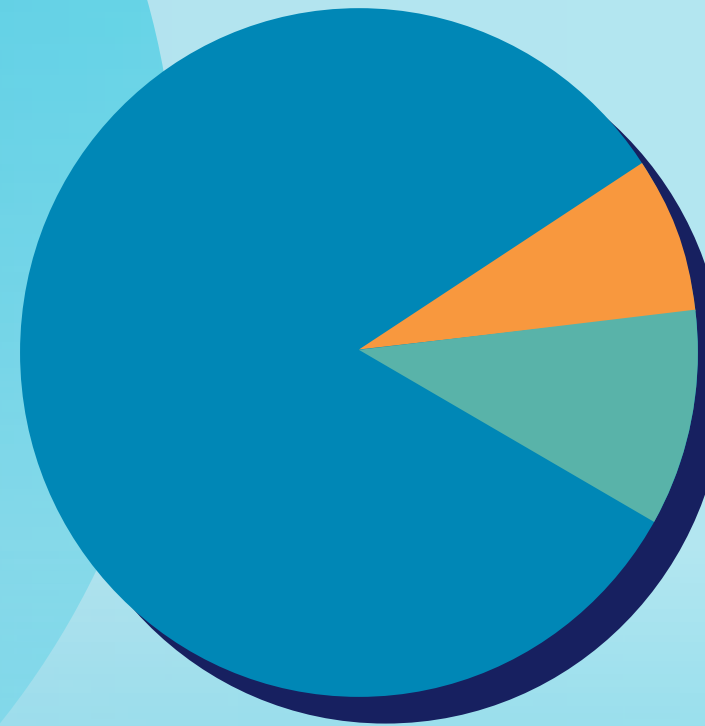
Board of Directors during fiscal year 2022.

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.

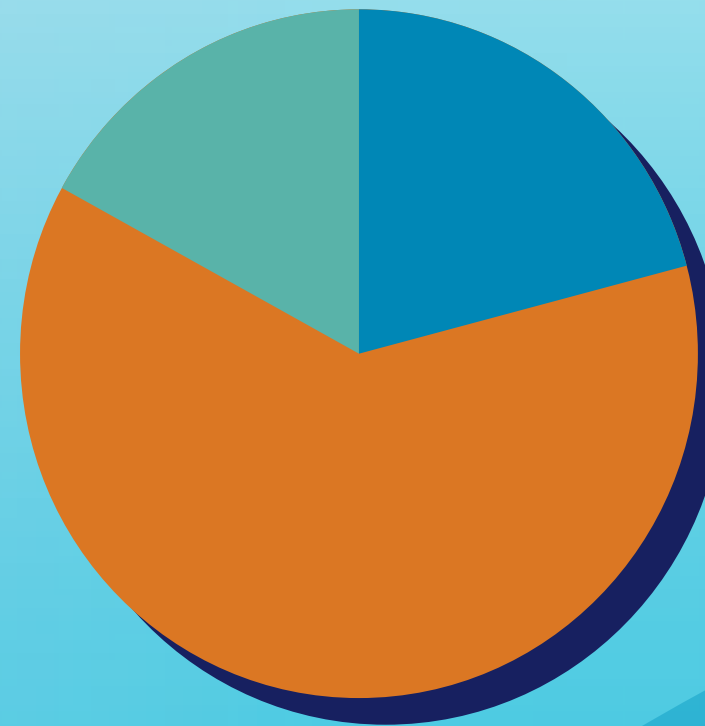


FINANCIALS



EXPENSES

- Fundraising — 7%
- Management & General — 10%
- Program — 83%



SUPPORT & REVENUE

- Individual — 21%
- Grants — 62%
- Earned Revenue — 17%

Unaudited financials as of November 2022.
See rivernetwork.org for full financial reports.

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*
 American the Beautiful for All
 C.S. Mott Foundation*
 Chatfield Watershed Authority
 Chesapeake Bay Trust*
 Colorado Parks and Wildlife
 Colorado Water Conservation Board*
 Community First Foundation*
 David and Katherine Moore Family Foundation*
 Eaglemere Foundation*
 Earth Share of Oregon*
 Fresh Sound Foundation*
 Georgia Wildlife Federation
 Groundwork USA*
 Hudson River Watershed Alliance
 Keel Haulers Canoe Club*
 Lower Grand River
 Organization of Watersheds

National Association of Clean Water Agencies*
 National Park Service*
 National Parks Conservation Association
 National Wildlife Federation*
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 PolicyLink
 Spring Point Partners
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 The Keith Campbell Foundation for the Environment*
 The Kresge Foundation*
 United States Fish and Wildlife Service*
 United States Forest Service*
 Upper Oconee Watershed Network
 Walton Family Foundation*
 Water Foundation*
 Wege Foundation*
 William Penn Foundation*

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 The Keith Campbell Foundation for the Environment*
 The Kresge Foundation*
 The Nature Conservancy
 The Trust for Public Land
 The Wege Foundation*
 United States Environmental Protection Agency*
 United States Forest Service*
 Walton Family Foundation*
 Wild & Scenic Film Festival*
 Xylem



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

OUR SUPPORTERS

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
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Ellie Young
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Robert Zimmerman*

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 2022 fiscal year.

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Margo Farnsworth and Jim Pascoe*	Jumana Vasi*
Valerie Gates	Tillie Walton
Ellen Gilinsky*	Suzi Wilkins Berl*
Melinda Kassen	Rebecca Wodder and James Van Erden*

****River Network extends immense gratitude for the bequest from Katherine C. Moore and late husband, David E. Moore, given in memory of daughter, Kate C. Moore.**

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



River Network envisions 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