

The State of the Network 2022

GROUPS IN THE NATIONAL NETWORK OF WATER, JUSTICE, AND RIVER ADVOCATES...

SPAN THE COUNTRY

752 organizations, including nonprofits, tribes, government agencies, and business make up the network, including **148** respondents to this survey

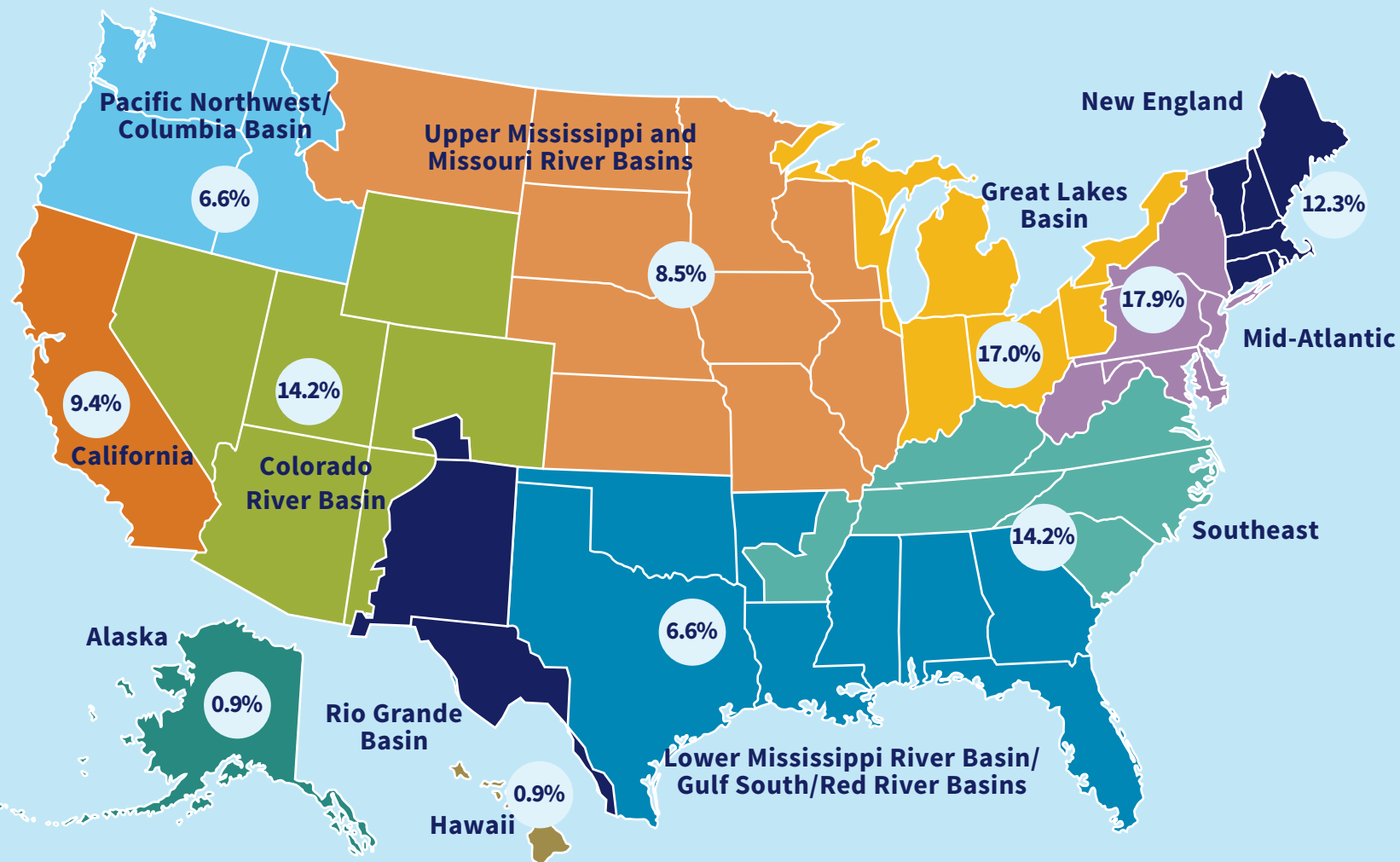
ARE SMALL BUT MIGHTY

45% of respondents have **1-5** staff

14% are completely **volunteer** run

WORK LOCALLY & REGIONALLY

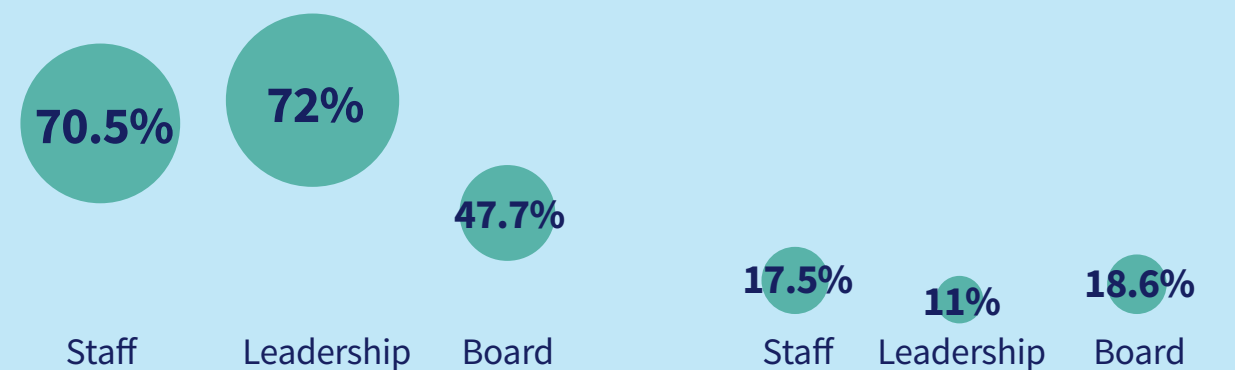
83% of respondents worked for local or state/regional nonprofits



HAVE DIVERSE STAFF AND BOARDS, WITH MORE PROGRESS TO MAKE

Staff, Leadership and Board positions held **by women and non-binary individuals**

Staff, Leadership and Board positions held **by BIPOC* individuals**



*Black, Indigenous, and People of Color

THEIR WORK...

"[We] advocate for state policies that improve surface water quality and protect groundwater."

ADVANCES WATER POLICY

72% of respondents work on water policy

"[We] assist coastal municipalities conduct coastal sustainability assessments and provided recommendations to improve master plans and zoning ordinances to address climate change."

ADDRESSES CLIMATE CHANGE

70% of respondents are working to build community resilience and mitigate the impacts of climate change

"[We do] stream cleanups, trail cleanups, water body restorations, streambank restorations, green infrastructure installation, invasive removal/native planting."

HAS ON-THE-GROUND IMPACTS

83 respondents work on at least **4** projects per year

"[We do] cleanups, paddles, water quality sampling, permit monitoring by air, litter-getter/trash trout projects, eco-tours, fish migration construction, water quality citizen science, summer camps."

We have been gutting and tarping hurricane damaged housing.

"Through educating, community organizing, restoring creeks, shorelines, and native plant communities, and implementing powerful green infrastructure projects, we are building environmental resiliency and equity in the Bay Area... And we give top priority to greening in urban communities most heavily impacted by environmental injustices, like revitalizing the Richmond Greenway."

BUILDS STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

80% of respondents engage their communities, collaborating with a variety of partners

- ### TOP PARTNERS
- 1** Community Organizations
 - 2** Universities
 - 3** Water Utilities
 - 4** Local Governments

IS DONE IN COALITION

nearly **ALL** organizations work as part of coalitions and nearly **3/4** led or participated in policy and advocacy campaigns

COLLECTS DATA THAT INFORMS LOCAL & STATE POLICY, EDUCATES THE PUBLIC & MONITORS TRENDS

92% of respondents who collect data use it for educational and awareness building purposes

"We are working to provide usable water quality data to the community and decision-makers."

RIVER NETWORK SUPPORTS BY...

"I'm really grateful for RN. We're a kind of odd fit, I suppose, because we work on a wide spectrum of issues, not just or even primarily water or rivers. But we love being a part of RN and benefit from the capacity building and networking you do for your members as a whole."
- North Carolina Conservation Network

"Thank you for your support. RN is the reason that our Wild and Scenic programs exist and are growing."
- Glacier Peak Institute

- Hosting convenings, offering training, and providing access to resources, including on policy topics
- Facilitating learning sessions, publishing written toolkits and guides
- Providing funding opportunities
- Strengthening organizations and leaders
- Building connections through peer calls, River Rally, and topic-based working groups



THE NETWORK NEEDS MORE...

Foundational support, primarily in the areas of fundraising, communications, and justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion (JEDI).

[A top challenge is] "not putting the funds and trust into hands of community leaders... gatekeeping information and opportunities for community leaders/experts to engage in high level discussions."



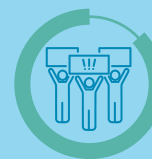
90% of respondents need **Communications Support**

"In addition to focusing on science, facts and information, lets focus workshops and content on talking to people [who] disagree with us, how to build coalitions with people across the [aisle], ... how to devise and implement a social media campaign from top to bottom..."



88% of respondents need **Fundraising Support**

"The way foundation funds reinforce issue silos and limit environmental groups' ability to engage on relevant social issues."



84% of respondents need Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (**JEDI**) Support

"[We need] deeper understanding of communities as ecosystems in relationship to the natural world, and thus, the need for interdisciplinary and intersectional approaches to conservation. The water movement must be an environmental justice movement."

TOP AREAS OF GROWTH

- 1 Engaging authentically and respectfully with diverse communities
- 2 Building inclusive and equitable organizational culture
- 3 Integrating JEDI into programmatic work

The inaugural State of the Network Survey was sent to network members via email and posted through River Network's website and social media channels during March and April 2022. River Network partnered with Inform Evaluation & Research, a consulting firm specializing in program evaluation and research to develop the survey questions and launch the State of the Network Survey. Inform Evaluation & Research analyzed the data in July 2022.

A total of 148 people representing our national network of 752 water, justice, and river organizations responded to the survey, with 102 complete responses (the survey was comprehensive—our gratitude to all who completed in part or in full!). The data was not analyzed to ascertain statistical significance but helps to build our understanding of network member successes, priorities, needs, and barriers and to shape the next five years of River Network's programs and offerings.

