

COMMUNITY



SCIENCE



LAW



The tools we use to restore the Hudson.

Riverkeeper protects and restores the Hudson River from source to sea and safeguards drinking water supplies through advocacy rooted in community partnerships, science and law.

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PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Bring your passion



It's a thrill to introduce our Annual Journal as I begin my role as President and Hudson Riverkeeper.

My pathway to this role has been a non-traditional one, through art, community organizing, storytelling and science. One of the keys to Riverkeeper's success is our openness to all types of voices and talents – a collaboration between the highly trained and

the self-taught; the experts and the passionate organizers. This allows us to be innovative and nimble in pursuit of our mission.

As you'll read in these pages, we've reached a true milestone for the river with the shutdown of the dangerous and destructive Indian Point nuclear plant. We're confronting other challenges, like the climate extremes affecting our waters and our communities, and the invasive species threatening to further disrupt the fragile ecosystems of the Hudson.

Everyone who cares about the Hudson River and values clean water can contribute to this work, bringing their own skills and passion to the cause, as I have. There are so many ways to engage – through science, art, climate activism,

justice movements, and local efforts to protect your nearby stream, drinking water reservoir or wetland, to name a few.

The problems can feel overwhelming, but Riverkeeper offers ways to take action – locally, where and when it counts – to get tangible results. In this Journal, we're spotlighting our primary tools, which have proven powerful and effective time and time again: community partnerships, science and law. I urge you to engage with us in this work, sign up for our email updates at Riverkeeper.org, follow us on social media and use what you learn to engage in solutions in your own home and community.

My own love for the river, and my thirst for taking direct action to protect and restore our natural places, led me to Riverkeeper and changed the course of my life. At this moment of increasing climate impacts and awareness, we need everyone's unique voices. We need to strengthen our collective will, working toward our shared vision of a sustainable, healthy, resilient Hudson River Valley. Please lend your voice and your passion, and we'll see what we can get done together.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tracy Brown". The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a professional but personal style.

Tracy Brown, President & Hudson Riverkeeper

"The Hudson River is really where my heart is."

Tracy Brown returned to Riverkeeper in November as President and Hudson Riverkeeper. She is the fourth person to serve as President in the organization's 55-year history, and the first woman in the role. She shared her thoughts at this milestone moment.



How does it feel coming back to Riverkeeper?

It feels exciting and heartwarming to be welcomed back to Riverkeeper in this new role. I had a great experience for the past seven years working on Long Island Sound. Now I'm excited to bring what I've learned back to the Hudson, back to my home watershed.

I'm also looking forward to working where I live, again. There's nothing like working to protect the watershed that you live in, and the river that you swim in and paddle on and sail on, and that you raised your family enjoying. The Hudson River is really where my heart is. So it's a privilege to get to come back to Riverkeeper for a second chapter in my new role.

Tell me about your passion for the Hudson.

When did it start?

When my husband and I were starting our family, I knew that the Hudson River and the river valley was where I wanted to live. We started looking, and some friends introduced us to Sleepy Hollow, and they brought us down to our little neighborhood beach club. That really sealed the deal for me. We raised our two kids swimming in the river, paddling in the river, sailing on the river.

The Hudson really is deeply woven into the fiber of our family life, and our sense of place. If we're home, walking in Rockefeller Park, or having a swim, we can feel that connection to the river. Also, if we're down in New York City and we see the Hudson, or if we're up by Albany, or any other place within the Hudson Valley, when we're near the river, we always feel that connection, and that sense of home.

When you were with Riverkeeper earlier, what did you work on? What achievements are you most proud of?

I was at Riverkeeper for seven years, from 2007 to 2014, and it was a very productive time for me. I started out as the first Director of Communications for Riverkeeper. I wanted to help the environmental movement tell their story better, and cut through the noise and cut through the partisanship, and unify people around our shared interest in a healthy, clean environment and clean water in particular.

Back in those days, a lot of the focus was on targeting pollution and reducing pollution, which is still a priority for Riverkeeper. But we weren't answering the question as much – how's the water, how's the river, how are the fish, how are the fowl, what is the state of the river? So in pursuit of that

answer, I got more involved with John Lipscomb, the boat captain, and the work he was doing partnering with scientists on Columbia University's Lamont campus on the Hudson, to start to answer those questions.

Once we documented the sources of the problems, including sewage discharges in particular, then the work was engaging in solutions. One of the highlights for me of that period of work was initiating and working for passage of the New York State Sewage Pollution Right to Know Law, which is the law that requires public notification when sewage has been spilled anywhere in New York State.

What kind of impact are you seeing from the Sewage Pollution Right to Know Law?

We got it passed in 2013, and at that time there was almost zero visibility into the state of disrepair of the pipes that run underneath all of our communities and our homes and businesses, moving our wastewater out to sewage treatment plants.

Once we started to see how often those systems were failing, and the locations where they had really high failure rates, then it mobilized a statewide effort – and dollars – to start to address the problem. It stimulated hundreds of millions of dollars in investment – billions at this point – as we move forward. The state grants continue to be made available to communities who need it. And none of that would have happened if public notification of sewage spills wasn't required.

What in particular are you excited to work on?

I think one of the pieces that I'll be able to bring in more emphasis and experience on is leaning into

ecological restoration projects and strategies that we can bring to the Hudson Valley to help our communities prepare for a changing climate, and its impact on their ecosystems and their communities. Things like dam removal and green infrastructure, increasing the ability of rivers to manage flood conditions and heavy rain conditions. There's expertise at Riverkeeper to do this work. I'm interested in helping to bring it to a larger scale, and getting it out to as many partners as we can reach.

What are the biggest challenges right now?

The biggest challenges that we're facing are all stemming from climate change. Climate change is the driver of a cascading set of issues. Because of the impacts of climate change, and the stress it's putting on our environment and our communities, it's not even enough to continue to do the good work that we've been doing at the pace and scale we've been doing it at. We actually have to do it at a faster pace, and a larger scale.

This means working very hard to get projects on the ground that focus on ecological restoration and preservation; holding on to the critical habitats that we already have in place, like our coastal marshes, our inland wetlands, all of our connected river systems. It also means focusing – as Riverkeeper has so successfully – on blocking old, polluting energy installations and projects. Really holding New York State accountable, and the federal government accountable, to achieving targets that are set for greenhouse gas reductions, and making sure that the energy that is sited on the river, and delivered to the river towns and Hudson Valley communities, is from renewable sources.

What advantages does Riverkeeper have in meeting these challenges?

Riverkeeper is an organization that really came from the people, from communities. In our case it was the fishing community, stepping forward through the Hudson River Fishermen's Association, to protect their way of life and their love of the river and the creatures in it. And while we've developed great areas of expertise among staff – such as lawyers and scientists and professional lobbyists and advocates – we still are very much rooted in community, and reliant on community partnerships to do the work that we do. It's our goal to amplify and support local voices, adding extra muscle and visibility where needed for communities that are under threat, and when the river itself is under threat, to be that voice. That approach has served Riverkeeper well, and I think it will continue to serve Riverkeeper very well.

I think we also have the great advantage of working for a river that is iconic, and so much a part of the American story. It's gorgeous. The Hudson Valley is spectacular, and beloved, and full of so many amazing natural and cultural assets, and gems. People care, and people want to help the Hudson.

It's also one of the success stories, some of what motivated the creation of more than 300 other Waterkeepers on waterways all around the globe. We want to keep being that example, and share what we learn, and spread those models of success – as well as learning from other Waterkeepers and other groups. I think we have a great team and great momentum, and I look forward to all the tremendous work that we're going to get done in the coming decades.

A Year of Victories



**1 MILLION BASS
TO BE SAVED**

through education on better
catch & release practices

**60
MILES
OF RIVER**

designated as park –
Hudson Eagles State
Recreation Area



23

**HUDSON RIVER
COMMUNITIES**

to benefit from
enhanced drinking water
protections

2,607

VOLUNTEERS
cleaned trash from
the river at 146 locations
in 1 day



1

**DANGEROUS
NUCLEAR PLANT
SHUT DOWN**

2

**FRACKED
GAS PLANTS**
defeated by
coalition



212

TIRES REMOVED
from the river in 1 day

3,684

**WATER QUALITY
SAMPLES**
collected



425

**TREES
PLANTED**
to restore
healthy streams



**\$500
MILLION**

secured for wastewater
and drinking water
infrastructure

Annual Journal

2021-2022

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the healing begins



PHOTOS BY LEAH RAE (THIS PAGE) AND JOHN LIPSCOMB (FACING PAGE)



JAMAICA BAY We made our first patrols to Jamaica Bay in 2021. This is NY/NJ Baykeeper territory, and our patrols are intended to support them. Jamaica Bay is an amazing place. Salt marsh islands on the very edge of a huge metropolis. There are some very effective environmental groups working in this region, and we hope to work with them. One possible case to pursue: Two abandoned barges in Vernam Basin. We know who owns them. The trick will be getting the state or feds to enforce.



PHOTOS BY JOHN LIPSCOMB AND KARENNA GORE (THIS PAGE, LOWER RIGHT)

ON THE WATER



Riverkeeper Patrol

John Lipscomb, Patrol Boat Captain

The patrol boat is Riverkeeper's presence on the river, on behalf of the river, from the Mohawk and Upper Hudson down the Estuary to New York Harbor. The boat provides a deterrent to polluters, a platform for research and a means of educating the public. It also carries a steady reminder: This river needs keeping.



FIRST MATE This was Batu's third season patrolling with me. He is such a joy. A wonderful companion. When it gets chilly sometimes I give him my coat. Awwwww.

UPPER ESTUARY In June we patrolled south from Albany to Hudson with (left to right) Karenna Gore and Ellen Kozak, members of Riverkeeper's Board of Directors; Owl Smith, a member of our Advisory Board, and Leah Rae of our communications team. We brainstormed some really grand opportunities for habitat restoration on that 30-mile reach of the river and a "Rights of Nature" campaign.



HUDSON RIVER Wrecked and abandoned recreational boats are scattered throughout New York Harbor and the Hudson River Estuary. Some were stranded in storms, others were just abandoned by their owners. We have partnered with the City of Hoboken on a NOAA grant to remove 17 of them. It's a nice interstate partnership between a municipality and an environmental NGO. If this works out we'll go after wrecks in other parts of New York Harbor next.



ESOPUS CREEK When we're on patrol we periodically get a glimpse, when the tide is really high, of what the future will look like.

ON THE WATER



HUDSON RIVER When our water quality monitoring program began in 2008, I installed our first lab aboard the patrol boat to process samples from the main stem of the Hudson. The program has grown tremendously, with partner labs and citizen science partners monitoring water quality throughout the watershed. In 2021 we contracted with our longtime friend Walter Garschagen of Sea Tow Central Hudson and moved our lab to one of his boats. This frees up our patrol boat to pursue opportunities and initiatives we have not had time for. It's working out very well, but I miss my patrols with my longtime friend Carol Knudson, scientist at Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory. Carol continues to gather and process samples from the Hudson aboard Sea Tow's boat.



MOHAWK RIVER

I always enjoy my Mohawk patrols. Even the mysterious foggy days, like this one at Erie Lock 10. After seven years of patrols, our relationships with the lock operators are really solid. That's important, because they know and love the river. We're confident now that if they see some harm to the Mohawk, they'll say something.

PHOTOS BY JOHN LIPSCOMB



MID-HUDSON Back in 2014 we found some badly degraded rail bridges on the CSX freight rail line which runs down the west shore of the Hudson. Here's another one, across from Poughkeepsie. The freight trains crossing this bridge are sometimes a mile long, carrying 3 million gallons of petroleum products or liquid chemicals. A derailment and spill here would be almost impossible to contain and recover because of the tides. And the

drinking water intakes for the Town of Lloyd and City of Poughkeepsie are about 2.5 miles away. Longitudinal steel beams supporting the rail line have sagged downward and wooden shoring has been installed. The bridge was temporarily reinforced in 2020, and in 2021 we were surprised to see that the bridge was still jury rigged. Local elected officials and Sen. Chuck Schumer joined our call for an independent engineering inspection.



End of an era

INDIAN POINT On April 30, 2021, decades of effort by Riverkeeper and allies achieved the permanent shutdown of this dangerous nuclear plant, ending a major threat to the region's safety and the slaughter of 1 billion fish, eggs and larvae each year by the plant's outdated cooling system. Riverkeeper helped negotiate an agreement on Indian Point's decommissioning that guarantees adequate funding, opportunities for public participation, an expedited timeline, and the creation of a Decommissioning Oversight Board that includes Riverkeeper.

PHOTOS BY ROB FRIEDMAN (FACING PAGE) AND DOUG REED (THIS PAGE)

VICTORIES

Wins for the water

How the Hudson River community is making a difference.

Mitigating & adapting to climate extremes

GAS PLANTS Helped defeat two new fracked gas power plants – Astoria NRG in Queens and Danskammer in Newburgh. Riverkeeper argued successfully that greenhouse gas emissions from the two proposed facilities would prevent New York State from meeting the critical goals of its landmark climate law.

ENERGY SUPPLY Commissioned a report by Synapse Energy Economics, *Replacement Energy for Indian Point Energy Center*, detailing how wind, solar, and energy efficiency improvements are driving New York's energy future and rendering fossil fuel plants like Danskammer unnecessary and obsolete.

COASTAL RESILIENCY Pressed for proper implementation of major reforms to the Army Corps of Engineers' approach to coastal flood protection. The Water Resources Development Act of 2020 directs the Corps to revamp its NY-NJ study to address future flooding from sea level rise, not just storm surge. The reforms mark significant progress in our campaign to promote equitable, ecologically sound solutions to climate extremes – and against giant storm surge barriers, which threaten catastrophic damage to the river's ecosystem while failing to protect against flooding from sea level rise.

Preventing water pollution

COAL TAR Won a ban on toxic coal tar in pavement products in New York State – the result of a decade's worth of advocacy in Albany. Coal tar, a thick black sludge,

is extremely high in PAHs, which are hazardous to human health and aquatic life.

ANCHORAGES LAW Supported passage of a federal law to restrict industrial shipping interests from establishing new anchorages in the Hudson River, reducing risks from the transport and storage of crude oil and other hazardous substances.

WESTCHESTER SEWERS Worked with Save the Sound, Bronx River Alliance and Center for the Urban River at Beczak to ensure the public and advocates have a voice in Westchester County's sewer consolidation study, which if implemented would reduce the risks of leaks in municipal sewage systems and help improve conditions in the Saw Mill, Bronx and Pocantico rivers and other Hudson River tributaries.

STATE INVESTMENTS Worked in coalition to ensure New York State resumed annual investments of \$500 million or more in wastewater and drinking water systems that had stalled during the pandemic, and committed \$300 million to the state's Environmental Protection Fund.

NYC WATERS Pursued litigation to force EPA to enforce the Clean Water Act by updating water quality standards by 2022 to better protect people who swim, boat and fish in NYC waters. (P.24).

RENEWABLE RIKERS Supported a coalition effort to pass landmark NYC legislation that will close the disgraced prison on Rikers Island by 2027 and study the feasibility of replacing it with needed renewable energy and wastewater treatment infrastructure.



Protecting fish, habitat & free-flowing rivers

STRIPED BASS Led advocacy for stronger state restrictions to reduce mortality of striped bass from recreational catch-and-release fishing, including a new requirement for circle hooks, which cause less injury and give stripers a better chance of surviving after being caught and released. Helped launch the Save A Million Bass campaign, in partnership with board member Steve Liesman, to promote best practices in catch-and-release fishing.

DAM REMOVAL Reached agreements for the removal of three dams in the Hudson River watershed, in our ongoing campaign to take down obsolete dams and restore habitat, including for river herring and American eel. The next step is to secure funding for their removal.

LIFE RETURNS The first year following our dam removals on the Quassaick Creek and Furnace Brook saw a return of freshwater life – trout, eels, herring, blue crabs and other species returning to tidal creeks that had been cut off from the estuary for centuries. (P.26).

HYDRO DAMS Led advocacy in our region for better fish protections for nine hydroelectric projects in five Hudson River tributaries, as ongoing licensing decisions are made that will influence their operation over the next 40 to 50 years.

Cleaning up toxic threats

GOWANUS CANAL Continued to press responsible parties to fund the full remediation of the canal and to reduce sewage overflows, as 35,000 cubic yards of “black

mayonnaise,” the toxic goop that fouls the canal, were removed in the first year of Superfund cleanup.

NEWTOWN CREEK Led the Newtown Creek Community Advisory Group to defeat an industrial group's plan for a lax cleanup of the lower 2 miles of the creek, paving the way for EPA to evaluate this NYC creek holistically and determine the appropriate level of cleanup for the entire Superfund site, a process we continue to watchdog.

WAPPINGER CREEK Successfully pushed EPA to begin work on a stalled Superfund cleanup in the tidal mouth of the creek, where 180 years' worth of industrial contaminants in creek sediments pose a risk to river life.

PCB CONTAMINATION Pushed EPA to turn its attention to legacy PCB contamination in the Lower Hudson. EPA is now taking steps towards a remedial investigation of this stretch of river. In the Upper Hudson, we continue to advocate for full cleanup of PCBs, armed with language from a recent federal court ruling that will help us hold EPA accountable if the cleanup does not adequately protect human or environmental health.



Fostering community stewardship

BIGGEST SWEEP EVER More than 2,600 volunteers teamed up on 146 projects along the Hudson on May 1 as part of the 10th Annual Riverkeeper Sweep. They removed 29 tons of debris – 212 tires and 2,056 bags of trash. Over the course of a decade, Sweep volunteers carried out 951 projects throughout the Hudson Valley and NYC, clearing 305 tons of debris, including 32 tons of

recycling and 1,675 tires. Volunteers also cleared invasive species and planted or maintained thousands of trees and native plants.

COMMUNITY SCIENCE Coordinated and supported a network of partners and volunteers who gathered samples at least monthly from the Hudson River and its tributaries, to provide information about where and when these waters are safe for recreation, and completed projects that will inform drinking water source protection efforts in Newburgh and update state water quality assessments for Sparkill Creek and Saw Mill River.

WATER JUSTICE LAB Teamed with Media Sanctuary to launch the testing and processing of Hudson River water quality samples in Troy, by Youth Science Fellows in the Sanctuary's new Water Justice Lab.

Promoting public access

FLUSHING BAY Succeeded with local partners in halting a LaGuardia AirTrain project that would damage parkland along Flushing Bay – an environmental injustice to neighboring communities. Riverkeeper and partners mounted a legal challenge of a biased environmental review that unlawfully eliminated viable transit alternatives, after suing to obtain damning evidence (P. 22).

TROY Supported Friends of the Mahicantuck, Troy community groups, Indigenous leaders and organizations calling for a full environmental review of a 240-unit housing development being proposed on a 5,000-year-old sacred Indigenous site on the Hudson.

EAGLES RECREATION AREA The state announced an early investment in creating the Hudson River Eagles Recreation Area, which will promote public access and habitat restoration opportunities in the upper third of the Hudson River Estuary.

Stopping industrial pollution

JAMAICA BAY Joined residents of Jamaica, Queens, and fellow environmental advocates in a lawsuit under the Clean Water Act to require two waste transfer facilities to clean up their act. Mismanagement of waste at these facilities caused discharges of untreated industrial, chem-

ical, and biological pollution into the bay and burdened residents of the predominantly Black community with air emissions, odors, traffic and noise. New York Lawyers for the Public Interest and Super Law Group LLC represent residents, Riverkeeper and NY/NJ Baykeeper in the suit.

WAPPINGER CREEK Prompted NYS to stop numerous stormwater violations at Peckham Quarry.

TOXIC TIRE BURNING Supported a community-led effort to prevent tire-burning in cement kilns at the LaFarge facility in Ravenna. Particulates released from tire burning are hazardous for both air and water.

Protecting drinking water at its source

STATE PROGRAM Advocated successfully for a state Drinking Water Source Protection Program that will help dozens of communities, including 23 in the Hudson watershed, create plans to protect their reservoirs, wells and other water sources.

NEWBURGH Working with community activists and Congressional leaders, secured priority status for the remedial investigation at Stewart Air National Guard Base – a key next step toward ridding Newburgh's drinking water of toxic PFAS. Also successfully lobbied for greater community involvement in the cleanup process, and advocated for the first upgrade in 30 years for a failing wastewater treatment plant affecting the city's Browns Pond reservoir.

PFAS In addition to our work in Newburgh, supported Rockland County residents in their efforts to ensure a health-protective response to drinking water contamination, and advocated for the remediation at Westchester Airport where PFAS contamination could threaten the Kensico Reservoir, an important NYC drinking water source.

TESTING Pushed a bill to jumpstart testing for additional PFAS and other unregulated contaminants through the state Legislature. The bill awaits the Governor's signature.

PUMPED STORAGE Joined a broad coalition to defeat plans for a poorly conceived pumped storage hydropower facility that proposed utilizing water from New York City's Ashokan Reservoir and building a new reservoir in the Catskills that would have threatened drinking water quality and which was fiercely opposed by local communities.

PHOTOS BY RACHEL TIEGER (THIS PAGE) AND SCOTT SNELL (FACING PAGE)



COEYMANS We are pursuing lawsuits against Coeymans Industrial Park to prompt the Port to bring its stormwater management plan in compliance with the Clean Water Act.



COMMUNITY, SCIENCE & LAW

These time-honored tools can bring positive change for the Hudson - no matter the odds.





If you catch a round goby

- DO NOT return it to the River. Dispose of it ashore, dead.
- Photograph the fish from different angles, record the date and location of capture.
- Email the photos and information to: isinfo@dec.ny.gov

ERIE CANAL Sea smoke is illuminated by light coming through the doors of a lock. The round goby is the latest invasive species to arrive in the Hudson via the canal. Native to the Black and Caspian seas, they likely arrived in the Great Lakes in ship ballast water. Among other things, they eat the eggs of native species like the smallmouth bass and walleye.

PHOTOS BY JOHN LIPSCOMB (FACING PAGE), USFWS (INSET), DEC (THIS PAGE, UPPER RIGHT) AND RYAN HAGERTY/USFWS (LOWER RIGHT)

PROTECTION

Beneath the surface



Science is warning of troubling trends for the Hudson River's fish. Will we listen?

THE ROUND GOBY, A SMALL FISH WITH FROG-LIKE eyes, might not seem like much of a threat. But when the state Department of Environmental Conservation captured four of them in the Hudson River last summer, it set off an alarm.

The DEC found them during routine fish sampling in July, in the upper estuary south of the Troy dam. Since then, more have been captured, indicating that round goby are now well established in the Hudson. This means that a new invasive species has made its way from the Great Lakes into the Hudson River Estuary via the Erie Canal, threatening to disrupt the ecosystem. More importantly, it signals that another invasion is inevitable if we don't take action.

Round gobies are voracious feeders, and outcompete native species for food and spawning habitat. Their discovery in the Hudson "should remind us of our failures in invasive species management and spur us to do better," wrote David Strayer, freshwater ecologist and longtime researcher at the Cary Institute. "We do not know how gobies will affect the Hudson ecosystem, but large, harmful effects are possible. The Hudson's imperiled sturgeons, the fishes of rocky shores, and fish-eating waterbirds are especially at risk."

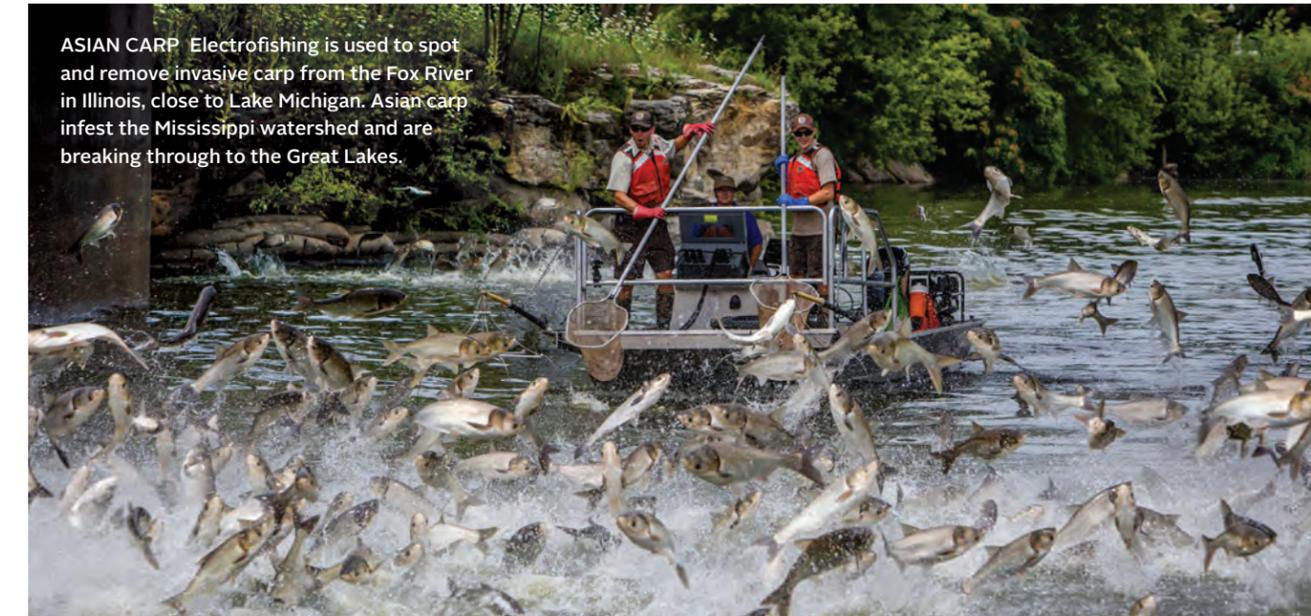
The nightmare scenario is that other invasives, like Asian carp, are not far behind. It's a giant ecological problem that scientists have warned about for many

years, and difficult to face up to. This threat comes on top of so many others. Overfishing and loss of critical spawning and nursery habitat have already reduced native Hudson River fish to a fraction of their earlier numbers. Invasive carp, like the Hudson's river herring and shad, filter plankton from the water to feed, and they are known to out-compete native species. If they are allowed to reach the Hudson, it is far less likely that our native species will ever recover.

To protect the Hudson, we need to take big steps, as soon as possible. New York State is investigating ways to separate the Great Lakes watershed from

the Mohawk-Hudson watershed – re-establishing, in a way, the two distinct watersheds. A modern engineered "barrier" could involve electric fields, sound or light in the water, or closing a portion of the canal and carrying boats over the divide while cleaning their hulls and water systems.

With careful analysis, we can find engineering solutions that stop invasive species, preserve Erie Canal as a historic and recreational waterway, support the communities along its path and protect sport fishing. All of us who love and appreciate the Hudson should share in this responsibility.



ASIAN CARP Electrofishing is used to spot and remove invasive carp from the Fox River in Illinois, close to Lake Michigan. Asian carp infest the Mississippi watershed and are breaking through to the Great Lakes.

Help nature thrive

We're about to make two historic investments in Hudson River habitat - if the public rallies support.



IN 2022, WE HAVE A CHANCE TO INVEST IN THE Hudson River's recovery like never before.

Two separate measures – one federal, one state – can generate critical financial support and set in motion a new wave of science-based, consensus-driven projects that restore natural habitats, reduce pollution and help us prepare for the impacts of climate change, throughout New York Harbor, the Hudson and its headwaters. We can remove more obsolete dams and restore habitat for river herring

and eel; restore shallow water habitats that serve as a nursery for shad and other species in the Upper Hudson, and so much more.

Neither measure will pass without strong public support.

The New York - New Jersey Watershed Protection Act, introduced by Congressman Paul Tonko, authorizes \$50 million a year in federal funds to protect and restore the Hudson-Raritan watersheds. This grant program, facilitated by the National Fish & Wildlife Foundation, would support essential and long overdue projects in habitat restoration, flood management, protection of drinking water supplies, community access to waterfronts, environmental education and recreation.

It's a chance to put into action the plans that Riverkeeper and numerous government agencies and partners have collaborated on – including the Hudson River Estuary Action Agenda and Mohawk River Basin Action Agenda, developed by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, and restoration plans developed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

The Hudson lacks this level of investment, even while we see such efforts succeeding in Long Island Sound, Chesapeake Bay, and the Great Lakes.



Please ask your representatives in Congress to co-sponsor this act – or thank them for already doing so. You can send a message easily through our website.

The Clean Water, Clean Air and Green Jobs Environmental Bond Act, up for a vote on New Yorkers' November 2022 general election ballot, authorizes \$3 billion dollars for a multiyear investment in clean water, air, wildlife and the environment. If Governor Hochul is successful, an additional \$1 billion will be added to the bond act for a total of \$4 billion, pending legislative approval.

This can provide long-term and dedicated funding for New York to prepare for the worsening impacts of climate change and invest in restoring wildlife habitat. Just one example: The funding can help rid the Hudson Valley of obsolete dams that no longer serve any purpose. Free-flowing streams along the Hudson can support the migration of fish and reduce unhealthy conditions that fuel harmful algal blooms.

The state will be tasked with directing over a third of the funds for the benefit of environmental justice communities. Green roofs, open space preservation, urban tree plantings and community cooling centers are other projects eligible for support by the bond.

You can help spread the word: Vote yes on the bond act!

PHOTOS BY NPS/BRIAN FEENEY (THIS PAGE, LEFT), JOHN LIPSCOMB (THIS PAGE, TOP), AND LEAH RAE (FACING PAGE)



Use your voice

- To stay informed, sign up for email updates at [Riverkeeper.org](https://www.Riverkeeper.org)
- To reach decision makers when it counts the most, visit [Riverkeeper.org/takeaction](https://www.Riverkeeper.org/takeaction)

UPPER ESTUARY The northern reaches of the Hudson River Estuary look natural and pristine. Look more closely and you'll see evidence of how a vast region of islands and shallows were destroyed for navigation and commerce. Tens of thousands of timber pilings (facing page) were installed to constrict the flow and deepen the river. Restoring shallow-water habitat can help support fish and other life. The Lewis A. Swyer Preserve in Stuyvesant (this page) is an example of a rare, remaining freshwater tidal swamp.



MUDDY WATER More frequent, intense storms are causing a cascade of problems for local waterways, like the Lower Esopus Creek in the Catskills. New York City is managing excessive turbidity in the Ashokan Reservoir by dumping massive amounts of mud into this creek. The city needs to "stop the mud" and design a better solution that balances the need for high quality drinking water with protection of its downstream neighbors.

PHOTOS BY DAVID KIDD / GOVERNING (FACING PAGE), REBECCA MARTIN AND LEAH RAE (UPPER RIGHT, THIS PAGE) AND MICHAEL NELSON (LOWER RIGHT)

RESILIENCY

Going to extremes

The cascading effects of climate change demand extraordinary efforts to protect our rivers, streams & water supplies.

THE UNITED NATIONS HAS SAID THAT "WATER is the primary medium through which we will feel the effects of climate change." Our region is living that truth, as the awful parade of climate extremes marches on relentlessly: Elsa, Fred, Henri and Ida, following in the shadow of Sandy, Irene, Lee and their many unnamed siblings.

Records set by one storm are re-set, sometimes only days later by the next storm. People drown in their basement apartments, as paved-over streams and wetlands suddenly swell with horrifying consequences. Highways named for rivers fill with water and carry away cars. Raw sewage spills out of hundreds of pipes designed to overflow with even routine storms. Drinking water supplies are overwhelmed with eroded sediment, or taxed by toxic algae fueled by waves of polluted runoff. Poisons are disturbed at hazardous waste dumps. Derelict dams and undersized culverts back up or wash out, exacerbating flooding.

We're all suffering the impacts, but those with the least power to influence policies are the most affected. Fossil fuel executives aren't the ones dying in illegal basement apartments, and the family that stretched its budget to buy a home in a floodplain has no lobbyist working the halls of Congress.

The pipes we laid a century ago and the treatment plants we built a generation ago are crumbling. Our drinking water supplies are still inadequately protected in too many cases. Yet, we can't just deal with current threats. We have to withstand the extremes of the next century's climate. That means we need higher water quality standards and policies to ensure that new infrastructure is right-sized to future conditions. We have to meet the challenge of not only sea level rise or storm surge or flooding, but



all three simultaneously. Meeting these challenges means working together to replace fossil fuels with clean energy, adapt to the multi-dimensional impacts from climate extremes, and ensure that the people most affected are empowered to define solutions. It also means confronting tough decisions with nuance, avoiding false choices, and reaching for the best solution, even when it's more difficult.

Riverkeeper has a unique voice in dealing with climate realities without compromising on our longstanding commitments to thoroughly explore alternatives to avoid impacts, and to protect and restore the Hudson River.



Following a Christmas 2020 storm, releases of turbid water from Ashokan Reservoir turned the 32-mile Lower Esopus Creek a chocolatey brown over the course of four months, into April 2021.

Protecting places of refuge

At either end of the estuary, communities unite to protect their shorelines.



RIVERKEEPER'S NEW COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS Program is reimagining our service to the Hudson River and its 13,400 square miles of watershed – with grassroots partners at the forefront.

Our team is working together on visions and policies, centered around the water – protection, remediation, restoration, recreation and resilience. We're sharing legal and legislative tools. The value of this approach is evident in two projects where Riverkeeper is supporting local communities in preventing the spoiling of shorelines in Troy, at the northern end of the estuary, and in Flushing Bay, Queens, far to the south, near the ocean.

Since 2018, Riverkeeper has advocated for a credible and transparent review of Port Authority's proposed \$2.05 billion AirTrain from Citi Field to LaGuardia Airport in Queens. The project would take Flushing Bay waterfront parkland along a 2,100-foot stretch of Malcolm X Promenade in the historically Black community of East Elmhurst, Queens. Our advocacy is grounded in the partnerships that, over years, formed the Guardians of Flushing Bay, and focused on intersectional organizing and stewardship of Flushing Waterways – the bay, creek and shorelines in the area.

One advocate shared between the two organizations – Rebecca Pryor, the NYC Civics and Community Stewardship Manager – works to support local stewardship, nascent community organizations and citywide advocacy. With this partnership, Riverkeeper was better positioned to hear and address the concerns of local community leaders over the AirTrain. As a result, Riverkeeper played a key role in spearheading the Sensible Way to LGA grassroots coalition, whose concerns lie at the intersection of environmental racism, transit equity and park equity.

After sustained advocacy – and a legal challenge by Riverkeeper, Guardians of Flushing Bay and Ditmars Blvd. Block Association, represented by

Pace Environmental Litigation Clinic – the proposal came to a halt, and Gov. Kathy Hochul promised a thorough review of alternatives.

In Troy, Rebecca Martin, the Director of the Community Partnerships Program at Riverkeeper, is collaborating with the Friends of the Mahicantuck, a coalition of residents, Indigenous leaders and organizations trying to protect the last patch of untouched forest, a sacred site on the Hudson River. “Mahicantuck” is the Indigenous name for the Hudson River meaning “great waters in constant motion,” or more loosely, “river that flows two ways.” The name highlights this waterway as more than a river – a tidal estuary, an arm of the sea where salty sea water meets fresh water running off the land. A developer envisions three buildings, three to four stories high, with 240 housing units on 11 acres. The coalition advocates finding a more appropriate site for the development, and preserving the riverfront land by placing it into a local trust.

The Community Partnerships Program has helped community members and coalition partners understand complicated steps throughout the environmental review. By doing so, we can help to bring civics to the forefront and assure a more transparent process, with a broader range of community members engaged.

PHOTOS BY SARAH BÄCHINGER (THIS PAGE), WALTER WŁODARCZYK (FACING PAGE) AND D. RANDOLPH FOULDS (INSET)



FLUSHING BAY State Sen. Jessica Ramos speaks out alongside members of the Sensible Way to LGA Coalition in October, raising concerns over the proposed LaGuardia AirTrain along Malcolm X Promenade in Queens.

FLUSHING CREEK Sewage overflows persist in many areas with antiquated infrastructure. Even a tenth of an inch of rain an hour can overwhelm the system and send raw sewage into NYC waters – 2 billion gallons a year in Flushing Bay and Flushing Creek alone. Rebecca Pryor, of Riverkeeper and Guardians of Flushing Bay, works with community members and leaders to identify problems and solutions. At right, sewage plume, East River.



Be a watchdog

Members of the public can help serve as eyes, ears, and voice for the Hudson River. Visit [Riverkeeper.org/watchdog](https://www.riverkeeper.org/watchdog) to find out how to report potential pollution violations, algal blooms, invasive species, dead sturgeon or other conditions of concern. You can learn about signs of normal activity to help determine what is unusual or concerning. Reports are confidential.

ENFORCEMENT

Let's reinvigorate the Clean Water Act

'Fishable and swimmable' remain elusive goals. Here are ways to fill the gaps and fully enforce the Clean Water Act during its 50th anniversary year.

IN 2022, WE MARK THE MILESTONE OF THE 50TH anniversary of the Clean Water Act, a foundation for much of Riverkeeper's work. The Clean Water Act set goals of reducing and eliminating water pollution so all waters would be safe for swimming and fishing, and it granted some rights to citizens to help enforce it. The act ultimately ended the egregious pollution that prompted rivers to catch fire, and led to remarkable improvements to water quality in the Hudson.

But health advisories are in place because many of our fish are still unsafe to eat due to PCBs and other contaminants. Our own testing data show we're far from meeting the goal of making all waters safe for swimming. Diffuse sources of road salt, nutrients and other pollutants are degrading many of our streams and lakes. New contaminants, from pharmaceuticals to PFAS, are threatening the health of the ecosystems of which we are a part. Climate change is magnifying many of these risks.

Why these failures? The legal structure that the act set up has proved insufficient to deal with a number of persistent and emerging problems like these. It deals only with pollution discharges into

surface waters "of the United States," a definition that is vague enough to have allowed a multi-decade political ping pong match that has prevented full enforcement. And, it only deals effectively with "point source" pollution – discharges from discrete pipes where treatment can be engineered. It's relatively toothless when it comes to pollution from diffuse "non-point" sources like farm and lawn fertilizers. Finally, regulating new contaminants – and even updating regulations for existing contaminants like the nutrients phosphorus and nitrogen, as we learn more about their impacts – is slow and contentious, when it happens at all.

Other weaknesses stem from the implementation of the act. First, there are no hard deadlines to ensure that impaired waters are improved to meet standards. For example, New York State has only in the last decade begun the process of reducing the discharge of raw sewage from most communities with combined sewers, and these overflows will never be fully eliminated under current rules. Further, states have become increasingly adept at sidestepping requirements to avoid the expense of

bringing certain waterways into compliance with the fishable and swimmable goal. Riverkeeper is battling in federal court in an attempt to get New York City and its federal and state regulators to acknowledge that waters around the city should meet modern safe-swimming standards.

The EPA could improve compliance by imposing meaningful sanctions on states to boost compliance, publicizing comparative data to show which states are and are not doing a good job with enforcement, and requiring states to improve water quality standards. In addition, EPA should require states to improve water quality standards over time, something it has failed to do with nutrient standards, for example. New York State could fill in gaps by improving its efforts to monitor where pollution problems exist, allocating more resources to remedying those problems, and prioritizing regular review of existing permits.

In short, the CWA has brought us a long way over the last 50 years, but now we need to reinvigorate it to reach at least its first goal – fishable and swimmable waters.



PHOTOS BY WALTER WLODARCZYK (FACING PAGE) AND INTERSTATE SANITATION COMMISSION (THIS PAGE)

Hands-on help

When dams come down, the healing begins.



IN THE FALL OF 2020, RIVERKEEPER AND THE state Department of Environmental Conservation teamed up to remove two dams, on Quassaick Creek in Newburgh and Furnace Brook in Westchester County. A year later, we returned to replant the banks.

Our campaign to remove centuries-old, long-forgotten dams in the Hudson Valley is still in the beginning stages. Following up on our 2016 dam removal on Wynants Kill in Troy, these were the second and third dams removed expressly for fish passage in the history of the Hudson Valley. At least 1,700 dams fragment the rivers and streams of the Hudson Valley. Most are obsolete, and many are hidden from view, yet they continue to cause profound damage by stifling life in the streams and blocking fish from reaching their ancestral spawning grounds and habitat.

Removing these dams helps restore habitat in the Hudson Valley at a time when freshwater life is imperiled worldwide. Migratory species like river herring, severely depleted in number, rely on tributaries like these to renew their populations. American eel, also decimated by overfishing and habitat loss, seek out these streams to live out their lives before returning to sea to spawn and die.

Removal of these dams, one by one, will help inspire the next.

On Furnace Brook, we found mussel shells scattered on the banks, left by raccoons feeding on them. Creek chubs, white suckers, brown trout and other fish were finding their way through, where they were once blocked. Blue crabs were a lovely surprise, Riverkeeper's George Jackman says. "We may have forgotten that crabs use our freshwater creeks, but these are a migratory species, as much as a river herring or an eel."

The stream itself is moving too, forming a sediment bank where the dam used to be and making a peninsula around a sapling that had stood by itself on an island below the dam. "The stream has a choice, where it never had a choice before," Jackman says. The trees and shrubs, provided by DEC's Trees for Tribs program, will help stabilize the new bank, prevent erosion and create shade that helps cool the water so that fish can thrive.

Furnace Brook was known to Native Americans who lived in the area as the Jamawissa Creek, meaning "Place of Small Beaver" – which it is. The stream, in Westchester County's Oscawana Park, has begun to recover its natural state, with the removal of debris, an old bridge, and the dam.

Further upstream, a much larger dam – 25 feet high and 160 feet across – is slated for removal next.

RESTORING STREAMS Life is returning to two Hudson Valley tributaries after the removal of two dams in 2020 on Quassaick Creek in Newburgh (this page) and Furnace Brook in Westchester County. Volunteers Anthony Grice and Allan McClain Jr. (facing page, far left) plant trees along Quassaick Creek, and Riverkeeper's Katie Leung (facing page, top right) plants along Furnace Brook in 2021. Mussels, blue crabs and eels (inset photos, this page) are among the creatures living in the creeks.

PHOTOS BY JESS DEITZ (FACING PAGE) AND RIVERKEEPER



One year after removing two obsolete dams in the Hudson Valley, volunteers return to protect the stream and nurture its new life.

RIVERKEEPER SWEEP Volunteers gathered piles of trash from the Sing Sing Kill in Ossining on May 1 – one of 146 locations where teams gathered to haul debris and restore healthy vegetation along the shorelines. It was the 10th Anniversary of our annual day of service for the Hudson. Riverkeeper Sweep has grown into a monumental, community-powered effort that stretches from Brooklyn to the Adirondacks. Once-neglected areas have gained year-round stewards, and some locations no longer need massive cleanups – the focus now is on ecological restoration.



PHOTOS (THIS PAGE) BY BETH ALLEE (TOP RIGHT), LINDE OSTRO (BOTTOM RIGHT) AND LEAH RAE

COMMUNITY

Better, together

A gradual return to in-person events has us feeling energized, hopeful, and grateful.



COLD SPRING On September 24, our friends at Hudson River Expeditions guided Riverkeeper staff members on a paddle through Constitution Marsh Audubon Center and Sanctuary. What a pleasure to be on the water together. Paddling and other kinds of recreation are on the rise, and that can help draw attention to the river's needs. "People are going to protect a thing that they love and engage with," says Community Science Coordinator Sebastian Pillitteri, pictured above. "And hopefully by enjoying the river, they're going to fight for it at a later point in time."



RIVERSIDE PARK In one of our service projects during the year, volunteers from Indus celebrate October 20 after clearing a swath of invasive plants and planting 25 native shrubs to help stabilize the hillside from erosion and maintain a healthy shoreline on New York City's Upper West Side.



PEEKSKILL On October 1 we blissed out on live music and lots of love for the Riverkeeper cause. Stella Blue's Band, featuring Riverkeeper board member Steve Liesman, performed a spectacular show at Paramount Hudson Valley surrounded by the psychedelic artistry of Liquid Light Lab. Thanks to all involved in this beautiful benefit concert, including sponsors John and Rachel Cahill and the Lanza Family Foundation. We had a great time, and we are ever "grateful."

FISHERMEN'S BALL

A NEW VISION FOR THE HUDSON

After a year filled with challenges and triumphs, we held our annual Fishermen's Ball online for the second time in a row. Over 200 friends of Riverkeeper convened on June 17 to look to the future with a new vision for the Hudson River and clean water for our communities. **Paul Gallay** received the Big Fish Award in honor of his outstanding 11-year tenure as President and Hudson Riverkeeper. The Big Fish Award was also presented to **Catherine Coleman Flowers**, an internationally renowned advocate for clean water and environmental justice who has spent her life righting historic inequities across the United States. We enjoyed special musical performances from **Jackson Browne**, **Debbie Harry**, and **Dar Williams**, and a spotlight on the Riverkeeper team in the field courtesy of National Geographic filmmaker **Jon Bowermaster**. The event also marked the debut of Home Along the Hudson, a short film produced by the **Water Justice Lab** which tells the story of young people in Troy, N.Y., who use science to protect and heal their community.



"This job has meant the world to me. It's been the greatest opportunity of my professional career. And it's really proved the power of combining science and law with the courage of your convictions, and not flinching when the going gets tough."
- Paul Gallay



"Because water is life, we have to work to bring environmental and climate justice to communities that sit along rivers."
- Catherine Coleman Flowers

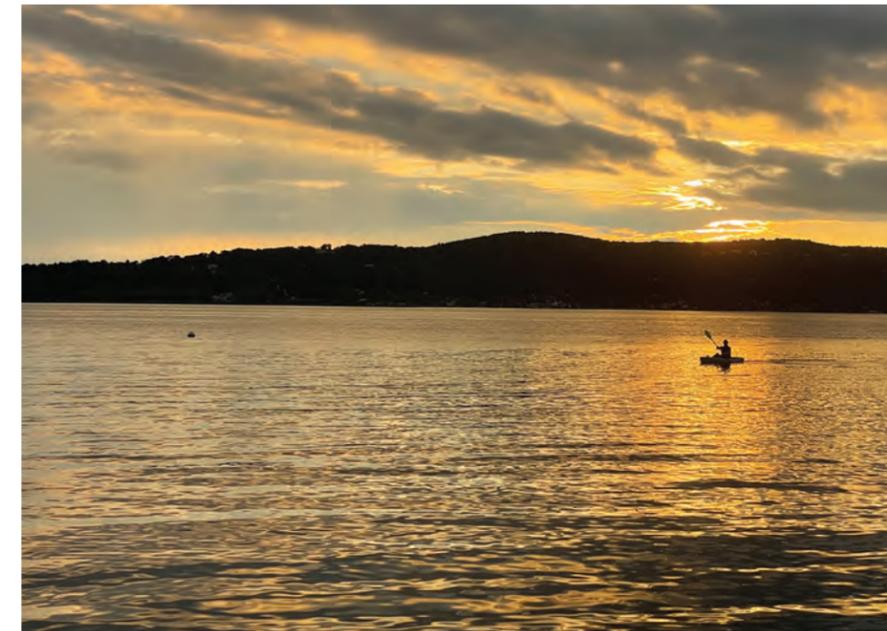
PHOTO BY GWENDOLYN CHAMBERS (FACING PAGE)

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

Fiscal Year 2021

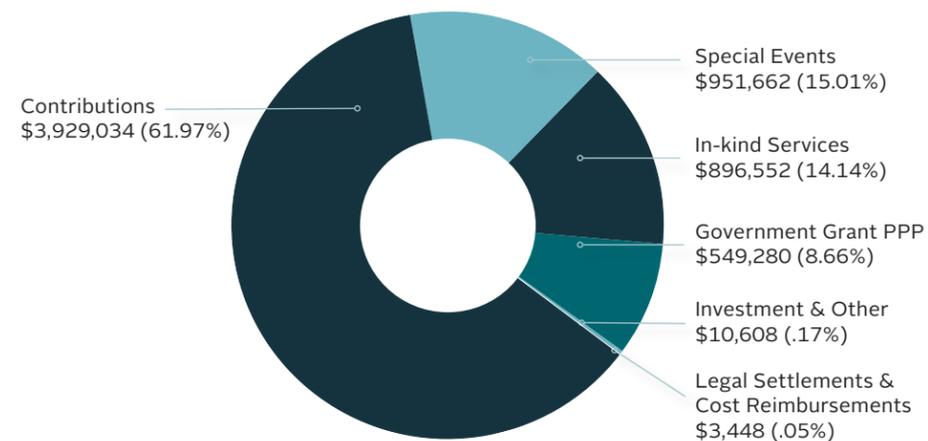
RIVERKEEPER INCREASED BOTH ITS TOTAL SUPPORT AND REVENUE DURING the fiscal year ending June 30, 2021. We gratefully acknowledge the generous contributions of our private, corporate, and public supporters and thousands of members. Without your generous support, we would not be able to continue to carry out our important work on behalf of the Hudson River, New York City's drinking water supply and the communities that rely on the health and protection of these waters. We hope you will take pride in all that we have accomplished together and all that we plan to accomplish.

For a detailed Statement of Financial Position and Statement of Financial Activities for Fiscal Year 2021, please visit riverkeeper.org/financials



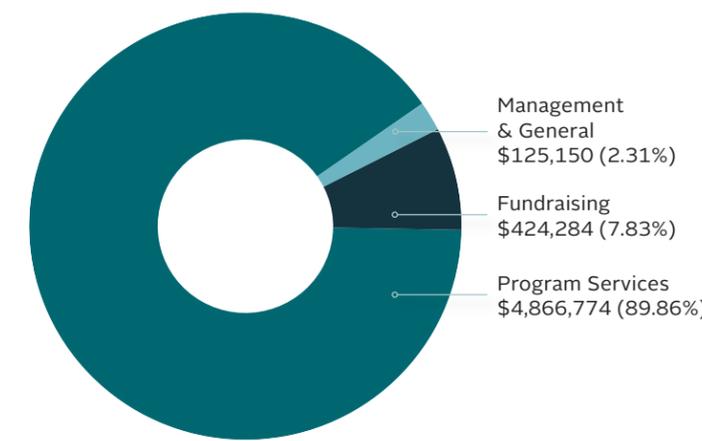
SUPPORT AND REVENUE

Total \$6,340,584



OPERATING EXPENSES

Total \$5,416,208



Riverkeeper is a not-for-profit, tax-exempt membership organization incorporated under the laws of the State of New York in 1984 and a top-ranked 501(c)(3) charity.

Get Involved

As a member-supported organization, Riverkeeper is an independent voice for the Hudson. And therefore, we can stand up to anyone.

We are powered by a wide range of supporters and partners, and that's our greatest strength. Facts, science, community voices, and a love for the river are the foundation of our work. Your partnership is essential – our work literally depends on your involvement and your support. Help spread the word, and help achieve results. We are nothing without you.

Members provide the financial resources that fund our campaigns, and their membership gives us standing when we bring cases in court and to the state legislature. A gift of any amount makes you a member, and full membership benefits start with annual donations of \$50. Sustaining Riverkeeper members make monthly donations – the most valuable kind of gift because we can count on your continued support while reducing overhead costs. Contact Monica Dietrich at ext. 222.



Gifts of stock and qualified charitable distributions from your IRA

Riverkeeper accepts gifts of appreciated stock, which are sold upon receipt to support our work and programs. You may also make us the beneficiary of Qualified Charitable Distributions from your 401(k) or IRA. Contact Linde Ostro at ext. 229.

Storm King Legacy Society

Planned giving is a lasting way of ensuring our clean water mission endures for generations. Special gifts can be achieved through bequests or charitable trusts, and can include real estate, retirement assets, insurance policies, bonds or other tangible assets. Contact Linde Ostro at ext. 229 and visit www.givingdocs.com/riverkeeper-ny to create or update your will online, for free.

Workplace giving

Employees at major corporations and government agencies may have access to EarthShare New York or other matching gift options making it easy to designate Riverkeeper as the

beneficiary of charitable giving via payroll deduction. Contact Monica Dietrich at ext. 222.

Business membership

Businesses support Riverkeeper in a variety of ways, including through direct donations, sponsorship of Riverkeeper events, purchase of tickets to our Fishermen's Ball, and participation in service projects and engagement programs. Contact Beth Allee at ext. 228.

Young Advocates Council

The Young Advocates Council is an active group of young professionals who serve as Riverkeeper ambassadors and are dedicated to increasing Riverkeeper's visibility through events, social media and fundraising. Contact Monica Dietrich at ext. 222.

Volunteers, activists, fans and friends

When it's time to make a big noise, Riverkeeper needs its supporters. Sign up to stay informed about issues and special events, and to take action, by visiting our "Get Involved" page on Riverkeeper.org.

Contact us

Phone: 914-478-4501

Email: info@riverkeeper.org

Mailing Address:

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PHOTOS BY JOHN LIPSCOMB (THIS PAGE) AND LEAH RAE (FACING PAGE)



RIVERKEEPER.

Defending New York's waterways since 1966