



IMPACT REPORT

2025



Photo: Erik Boomer
Cover photo: Justin Harris

EARLY IN 2025, MORE THAN \$500,000 IN EXPECTED grants and contracts were suspended, delayed, or cancelled due to government action and economic uncertainty among some of our foundation partners. This was money we had counted on to leverage your contributions and fund access improvements on Taylor River in Colorado, enhance access on the Smith River in California, advance our river safety program, expand national policy work, and simply to help keep the lights on. For months, real outcomes for rivers hung on decisions outside our control.

Member renewals and additional donations kept our team focused and our budget stable through that stretch. The steadiness of this community made the difference. The work continued where it could and allowed us to pivot and make progress. Your support provided critical resilience and 2025 ended up being a strong year for some of your favorite places and this organization.

On the Klamath in Oregon and California, the public began experiencing what dam removal made possible. Boats navigated waters that hadn't run free in generations. On the Green River in Vermont, a state Supreme Court ruling affirmed public boating access in a decision with reach beyond that watershed. In West Virginia, we completed our land acquisition on the Big Sandy, securing permanent access to one of the East's most beloved runs. We pushed back hard on threats to stream access in North Carolina, and put a stop to the worst impacts on the Nolichucky in Tennessee. The details of these efforts, and many others, appear throughout this report.

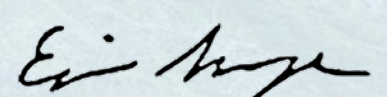
What connects them is less about any single action than about what sustained effort actually looks like. Some of this year's outcomes took fifteen years to arrive. Others required moving fast when an opportunity emerged. And some of the ground work laid in 2025 may not bear fruit for a decade to come. All demand the same thing: a team with deep enough roots to stay with an issue and a membership community steady enough to keep them resourced while they do.

Our members are our most important stakeholders, and everything we do is in service to your priorities. Thank you. You showed up when we needed it most. As the financial report will show, we have come through in strong shape, and our ability to keep fighting for the rivers you love remains solid.

That is only true because of your generosity and commitment to making a difference. Thank you.

Sincerely,


Clinton Begley
Executive Director


Erin Savage
Board Chair

PROTECT

PREVENTED PUBLIC LANDS SELL OFF

15,000 Letters Sent to U.S. Representatives

STOPPED RIVERBED MINING

Protected 9.2 miles, Nolichucky Gorge (TN/NC)

PURCHASED RIVERSIDE LAND

Protecting Recreation Access and Watershed, Lower Big Sandy River (WV)

RIVER PROTECTING LEGISLATION

Helped Introduce Bills That Would Protect 6k River Miles & 200k Acres

RESTORE

REACHED AGREEMENT TO RESTORE AQUATIC CONNECTIVITY

Dam Modification for Boat & Fish Passage Reconnecting 8 Miles, Poudre River (CO)

COMPLETED FLOW STUDIES TO RESTORE FLOWS

Penobscot (ME), Merrimack (MA), and Beaver (NY) Rivers

PROTECTED INSTREAM FLOWS FOR RECREATION & RIVER HEALTH

Colorado River Shoshone Water Rights Transfer (CO, UT, NV, AZ)

ENJOY

DEFENDED LEGAL STREAM ACCESS IN COURT

Right to Float Protected, North Carolina

STEWARDED SAFE RIVER ACCESS

New / Improved Access at 7 Sites, Tuolumne & Klamath Rivers (CA, OR)

SAFER RIVER RUNNING THROUGH IMPROVED TECH

New & Updated Mobile App & Online Gage Services

Member Highlights

ANNA BRUNO

Bingen, WA

Years as an AW Member: Hmmm ... no idea? I have a vague memory of signing up at a Gauley Fest back in 2008 or so, but recently upped my membership to be a lifetime member.

Why American Whitewater? As a boater, how could you not? I didn't realize how crucial a role AW played in navigating releases and access until I worked as a raft guide on the Kennebec, Maine. Now I recognize that a lot of what I've been able to do in whitewater, whether guiding or for fun, and a lot of the access to and health of places I've paddled is largely because of AW's advocacy and efforts. And, for all the amazing things the AW crew makes happen across the country, the team is much smaller than you would think. I see it as investment in a sport and community I love, as well as standing up for an environment and resource (rivers, free-flowing and not) that are essential to our health and well-being as a people, even if you have no interest in whitewater rafting or kayaking.

JOHN KOBAK

Westlake, OH & Bruceton Mills, WV

Years as an AW Member: 50 or more

Why American Whitewater? The only organization that fights for paddlers, river access, dam removal, and promotes river safety

What is your "home river"? The Upper Yough near my cabin in West Virginia

SUZANNE AND TOM WELANDER

Atlanta, GA

Years as an AW Member: Let us count the t-shirts. I believe we hail back to the Shimoda administration.

Why American Whitewater? The dedication and talent of the staff, and their conservation ethic. We love how AW preserves access on behalf of whitewater paddlers, a distinct constituency that no other organization is focused on.

What is your "home river"? The downtown Atlanta neighborhood in which we live drains to the South River. That's our favorite half-day run. It's completely forested and undeveloped and it has the world's best bike shuttle; a paved trail through the woods parallels the entire run. We paddle the Chattooga or the Ocoee a lot, too, because we can squeeze in a weekday run while our son is at school.

What is your "home river"?

The White Salmon River, in Washington. Summer slice laps on the Lower and Bottom White Salmon (restored thanks in part to AW after the removal of the defunct Condit Dam in 2011) is my fave.



What piece of gear will you not get on the water without? A

PFD! Also, the White Salmon is cold year-round. I love my skull cap. Paddling would be a lot less enjoyable without it.

What's your boating motto? Have fun, go kayaking. Get creative, make Class III Class V. Try to find or do something new every time you paddle. Take each day for what it is, with the right boat, crew, and attitude, you can have a great time no matter what class of whitewater.

What piece of gear will you not get on the water without? PFD



What's your boating motto?

Stay young by paddling.

What piece of gear do you not get on the water without?

We've got that one divvied up real good. Tom brings stuff. Always head-lamps because we've had day runs inadvertently continue past daylight. Suzanne brings brains, especially situational awareness. For example, "Let's not camp on that game trail with bear footprints."



What's your boating motto?

Suzanne to wary raft customers: "Whitewater canoeing: It's the next big thing!" Tom: "My boating is going downhill."

Engagement 2025

CHAMPIONS: 100+
Board members
Key volunteers
Regional coordinators

PATRONS: 2,500+
Major donors
Upper-tier partners
Affiliate Clubs
Enduring River Circle
Members

CONTRIBUTORS: 5,420+
Members and
small donors
Contributing partners
Volunteers
Web contributors

ENDORSERS: 49,000+
Newsletter subscribers
AW web user accounts
Action takers
Event attendees

FOLLOWERS: 150,000+
Social media followers
Unique website visitors

Lower Big Sandy Creek (WV)
Photo: Jeff Macklin



NATIONAL

Public lands are at the heart of whitewater paddling across the American West. The vast majority of whitewater runs in the region are on public lands, and American Whitewater helped defend those lands from a significant threat of privatization in 2025. With our guidance, boaters sent over 15,000 letters to the US Senate in opposition to selling off public lands. For us, protecting public lands means we are protecting public waters.

Photo: Cataract Canyon, Colorado River (UT) by Thomas O’Keefe

SOUTHEAST

Throughout 2025, American Whitewater defended the right to boat North Carolina rivers in court after a high-end fishing-themed housing development sought to undermine that right. Thanks to our pro bono counsel and the state standing up for outdoor recreation, the case was resolved with our rights intact. American Whitewater is one of very few groups that defends the right to recreate on rivers when that right is challenged, forming a critical backstop against losing access.

Photo: Watauga River (NC) by Trip Kinney



MID-ATLANTIC

American Whitewater’s growing lands program scored two huge wins in 2025, thanks to the generosity of the boating community. We purchased two parcels on the Big Sandy River (WV), one that protects scenery and access to the river right side of the core gorge, and another that will one day be home to a river access site. These lands were added to our prior purchase a year earlier, and will be protected in perpetuity so future boaters will get to enjoy the awe-in-spiring beauty of the Big Sandy.

Photo: Lower Big Sandy Creek (WV) by Jeff Macklin



NORTHEAST

In 2026, we'll mark the start of a new era on the Deerfield River (MA), a gift to the next generation of boaters who will enjoy kayaking, canoeing, tubing, and rafting Fife Brook for the next 40 years. FERC issued a new license this year for the Bear Swamp hydro-electric project, requiring Brookfield Renewable to continue to provide 106 scheduled boating releases that for the past three decades have been the centerpiece of the paddling community in the Northeast. Each year, tens of thousands of paddlers spend the summer enjoying the rapids, the scenery, and the wildlife along the river. Whitewater boating on the Deerfield has spawned an outdoor recreation economy in the region, drawing outdoor enthusiasts from New York to Maine.

Photo: Deerfield River (MA) by Evan Stafford

MIDWEST

While hydropower licensing moves slowly, we made meaningful progress on the Montreal River (WI/MI) with the release of an Environmental Assessment evaluating whitewater boating opportunities on the Montreal Canyon and West Branch Montreal. The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission analyzed measures including at least two scheduled flow releases each year, improved access infrastructure, and better information on project operations and instream flows so boaters can also take advantage of additional runnable conditions outside scheduled releases.

Photo: Montreal Canyon (WI/MI) by Paul Lange



NORTHERN ROCKIES

In a year when new river protection legislation was rare, American Whitewater and our partners worked with Congressman Ryan Zinke (R-MT) to introduce the Greater Yellowstone Recreation Enhancement and Tourism Act, the GYREAT Act for short. This bill would designate the Gallatin and Madison rivers (MT), as well as Hyalite and Cabin creeks, as new Wild and Scenic Rivers, ensuring they remain free-flowing and protected for future generations.

Photo: Madison River (MT) courtesy of Mike Garcia



SOUTHERN ROCKIES

In spring of 2025, the Fort Collins, CO, City Council voted to include boat passage in modifications being made at the Gateway diversion on the Cache la Poudre River. This dam creates a seriously dangerous hydraulic and, along with the Monroe Diversion upstream, blocks off a few miles of otherwise beautiful class II-III paddling on the Poudre. This dam modification has also encouraged the dam owner at Monroe to start looking into modifications there as well, permanently reconnecting over 80 boatable miles on the Cache la Poudre.

Photo: Gateway Diversion Dam, Cache la Poudre River (CO) by Thomas O’Keefe



Enduring Rivers Circle

The Enduring Rivers Circle honors and recognizes supporters dedicated to continuing their support of American Whitewater's river stewardship efforts indefinitely through a gift to American Whitewater in their legacy/estate planning. To join the Enduring Rivers Circle, contact bethany@americanwhitewater.org

If you need help setting up your will, we invite you to use FreeWill, an online estate planning tool that makes it 100% free to write your will and designate American Whitewater as a beneficiary of your legacy. Scan the QR code to get started.



Barry Adams
Rich and Stephanie Bowers
Bob Brewer and Jonna Hussey
Campy Campton
Thomas Christopher
Scott Conley
Duncan Cottrell
Breau Daniel
Stephen Daniel
Melissa and Joe Driver
Susan and Adam Elliott
Kent Ford
Marilyn Freedberg
Michael Gaines
Susan and Robert Glanville
Jennie Goldberg
Rorie Gotham
Denise and Scott Gravatt
Joseph Greiner
Teresa Gryder and Will Gehr
Andy Held
Christopher Hest
Bill and Joan Hildreth
Chris Hipgrave
Arwyn Hood
James Hunt
Dennis and Ginny Huntley
Craig Irwin
Brian and Maria Jacobson

Emma Johnson
Seth Kallman
Sandy Kobrock
Karl Koenig and Jo Ann weber Koenig
John Lawson
Trevyn Leighton
Kevin Lewis
Dave and Peggy Mainer
Jill Marshall
David Mason
Edwin Roland McNutt
Megi Morishita
Brian Morris
Carol Nelson and Douglas Wallower
Mark Noltimier
Bethany and Jenks Overfield
Douglas Pineo
Rebecca Post
Sam Rindal
Paul Schelp
Norwood Scott
Peter Skinner
Peter Stekel
Mark Taratoot
Nick Troutman and Emily Jackson
David and Margaret Van Cleve
Wick and Laura Walker
Sally Wetzler
M'Leah Woodard



CALIFORNIA & PACIFIC NORTHWEST

Five new and improved river access points on the Klamath River in Oregon and California opened to the public in 2025, giving the public access to a newly restored river corridor following the removal of four hydroelectric dams. When state agencies announced plans to seasonally close these access points for more than four months during the winter boating season, American Whitewater worked to ensure they would remain open year-round. We continue working with Tribes, landowners, and state agencies to support site management and public access on the undammed Klamath.

Photos: Top – Paddle Tribal Waters first descent, Klamath River (CA/OR) by Erik Boomer. Left: Klamath River access improvements (CA/OR) by Thomas O'Keefe.



Lifetime Members

Lifetime Members include a group of folks dedicated to supporting American Whitewater at the highest level. We are grateful for the support of these generous donors, many of whom contribute to our work on an annual basis.

Michael and Susan Abernathy	Larry Brammer	Lora Cox	Nathan Fey	Keith Grieser
Russell Abney	Hunter Branstetter	Kevin Coyne	Frank Fico	Shaun Griffin
David Ackerman	Brant Brantley	Jon Crain	Bill Finger	Robbie Griffith and Jeff Redding
Russell Adams	David Brauer	Adam Cramer and Jen McCadney	Graham Fitter	Barry Grimes
Derek Ahl	Charles Bray	Tom Cromartie	Terri Fitter	Andrew Grizzell
Milt Aitken	Jeffrey Brennan	James Cross	Charles Fiveash	George and Barbara Gronseth
Charlie Albright	Alan Bressler	Joshua Crossman	Troy Fleisher	Kate Gross-Whitaker
Jon Almquist	Charles Brewer	Kendall Crosswell Harousseau	Jacob Fleisher	Teresa Gryder and Will Gehr
Dick Almquist	Brian Briant	Shannon Crosswhite	Ian Foley	Matthew Guertin
Chase Ambler	Barbara Brock	Robin and Triel Culver	Blain Foley	Mike Gunter
Doug Ammons	John Broker	Chris Culver	Kent Ford	Wendy Gustafson
Jay Anderson	Peter Bross	Randy Cummings	David Ford	Trevor Haagenson
Leif and Natalie Anderson	David Broun	Bryan Cunitz	Robert and Andrea Forster	H. Hancock
Aubrey Anderson	Ian Brown	Magdalena Dale	Jason Fortner	Tracy Davis and Mara Hancock
Walt Andry	Gordon Brown	Chris Daly	David Fosdick	Greg Hanlon
Christian Appel	Alex Broun and Vanessa Campbell	Rebecca Dameron	Terry Foxuworth	Robby Hansen
David Aries	Raymond Brugger	Stephen Daniel	Gary Franks	Hanzlik- Green
Mike Aronoff	Bary Bruner	Mike Daniel	Stuart Fraser	James Hardee
John Arthur	Elizabeth Buck	Lyle Danielson	Ken Frederick	Christopher Harjes
David Asbell	Ian Buckley and Debra Kadner	Terry Davis and Thea Zelle	Marilyn Freedberg	Marc Harkness
Brian Aubin	Katie and Bradford Buddenberg	Brent and Dawn Davis	Joel Freedman	Justin Harmon
Brent Austin	Mike Buechler	Leland and Andria Davis	Allen Freeman	Robert Harris and Jody Schaeffer
Stephen Bachelor	Kelly Bulkley	Andrew Davis	Michael French	Charles Harris
Sutton Bacon	Paul and Laurie Bunce	Christopher Dauson	David Wallace and Betsy Frick	Bert Harris
Chris Baggott	Buffy and Curtis Burge	Jennifer de Bruijn	Meadow Fries	Robert Harrison
Bess and Rod Baird	Macy, Wylie, Amanda and Azalea	Andrew de la Torre	James Fore and Debbie Frye	Peter Harvey
Colton Baker	Burnham-Marusich	Matt Deacon	Mort and Sue Fuller	John Harvey
Jack Baker	Mike Burns	Rick Decker	Damon Gabriel	Eric Harvey
Joseph Baranski	Clay Bush	Austin Deitz	JD Gaffney	Eric Hayes
Christopher Barker	Victoria Butler	Bill Dempsey	Nathan Galbreath	Ron Healy
Jack Barker	Brian Byrd	Downing and Paul Denison	Sean and Mary Gallivan	David Hearn
Scott Barnes	Stewart Caldwell	Lisa and Tad Dennis	John Gangemi	Francheska Hebden
Jordana Barrack	Margaret Caldwell	Mary and Phil DeRiemer	Evan Garcia	Jacob Hedrick
Pope Barrow	Alp Can	Jack Ditty	Albert Garcia	Paul Heffernan
Allison Barth	Stephen Canale	Jim Dobbins	Holley and Brian Gardel	Chad Heidtke
Kim Bates	Jason Carey	Jamie Dolan	Walter Garms and Claire Greene	Robert Heineman
Robyn Battaile	Chris Carr	Andrew Dolian	Ken Garrison	sasha heinen
Robert Baudoux	Bryan Carrington	Mary Dombey	Louis Geltman	Andy and Skye Held
Keith Beck and Hedy Chung	John Carter	Bryon Dorr	Bruce Genereaux	Alex and Charlene Hellman
Steve Becker	Les Case	Patrick Dougherty	Bill Gentry	Eric Henrickson
Craig Bedard	Sandra Catt	Stratford Douglas	Ross George	John Hereford
Kemper Begley	David and Mary Cernicek	Kenneth Ferguson and Dawn Dow	Keith Gershon	Alex Herr
Conor Bell	Christian and Angela Chabot	Jack and Barbara Doyle	Ken Gersten	Martha Herzog
Chris Bell	Matthew Chadbourne	Peter Dragon	Edward Gertler	Christopher Hest
Roger Belson	Yvon and Malinda Chouinard	Sam Drevo	Claire Gesalman	Jason Hightower
Davis Benfield	Thomas Christopher	Melissa and Joe Driver	Steven Getz	David Hillman
Suzanne Benson	HellBender Paddle Boards Christo-	Chip Duckett	Ken Gfroerer and Aileen Lampman	George Hodges,Jr.
Brian Berg	pher Fox	Phil Duff	Morgan and Elise Giddings	Todd Hoffman
Julie Berg	Ed Clark	Scott Duffens	Nancy Gilbert	Dan Hoheim
Geoffrey Bergmark	Candice Clark	Kenneth Duncan	Rob Gilchrist	Andrew Holcombe
William Bergstrasser	Emerson Clauss	Bo Duyyer	Matt Gillum	Charlotte Holmes
Alison Bermant	Ed Clerke	Todd Echan	Brian Ginsberg	Ann S. Hopkinson
Peter Bernstein	Jeff Clewell	Christine Eckel	MacKenzie Gipe	Richard Hopley
Matt Bernstein	Chuck Cloninger	Susan Eckerly and Terry O'Donnell	Megan Glaab	Jason Huber
Eric Bessette	Friends Cloud Mountain Foun-	Robert Eckhardt	Paul Glasscock	Werner Huck
Edward (Ted) Bilek	dition	Alison Edmiston	Saul Gleser	Watts Hudgens
William Bishop	Cal Coetzee	Ben Edson and Emily Mahowald	David Glickerman	Rick Hudson and Joyce Vann
Mark Bishop	Peter Coha	Clint Edwards	Josh Goldbach	Ben Huneycutt
Brian Bivens	Christy Coleman	Anthony Edwards	Jennie Goldberg	Thomas Hungar
Alan Blado	Trey Coleman	Karen Egbert and Jon Hitchings	James Good	Marc Hunt and Cat Potts
Preston Blake	Zachary Collier	Mike Eiseman	Jacob Goodkin	James Hunt
Scott Blase	David Elliott	David Elliott	John Goodwin	Dennis and Ginny Huntley
Tom Blue	Kim Collins	Benjamin Ellis	George and Clarice Gordon	Lester Hurrelbrink
Harlan Blynn	Daniel Collins	Michael Elovitz	Karl and JoAnn Gordon	Kyle Irby
Leigh Boike	Morgan Colonel	Ted Engelhardt	Stephen and Karen Gowins	Jon Irlbeck
Patty Bolden	Jordan Combs	Donna Ennis	Christopher Gragtmans	Adrian Ishee
John Bonn	Hope Concannon	Lee Eudy	Shaun Graham	Jarred Jackman
Abe Boomer	Terry and Lesley Conning	Laura and Vann Evans	Gregory Grant and Paula Haynes	Robert Jackson
Bruce Bordelon	Julian Cooper	Stephen Fabrey	Lee Green	Kristine and Eric Jackson
Rich and Stephanie Bowers	Brian Copanas	David Fallside	Brian and Caroline Green	Nick and Kate Jacob
Dave Bouman	Belton Copp	Hermann Family	Joni Greenberger	Brian and Maria Jacobson
Sandra Boynton	Jeremiah Copper	Lisa Farin	Anne Greer	John Jamnback
Steve Braddom	Gretchen Cornell	Mike Farrell	Joseph Greiner	John Jerger
Chuck Bradley	Jesse Costello-Good	George Feinberg	Gary Grenda	Jody Jett
Brandon Jett				
Hattie Johnson and Jonathan Snodgrass				
Jeff and Susan Johnson				
Mike Johnston				
Casey Johnston				
Susie and Paxton Jones				
Brandon Jones				
Brandon Jones				
Trevor and Jenni Jostad				
Daniel Kanner				
Stacy and Dale Karacostas				
Alex Karakosta				
Eric Kaufmann				
Joseph Keck				
Phillip Keck				
Teresa Gryder and Will Gehr				
Jeff Keim				
Carrie and Jerry Keller				
Pat Keller				
Robb Keller				
Charles Keller				
Stephen Kelly				
Chris Kelly and Nanette Laughrey				
Matthew Kelly				
Jennifer Kenne				
Jay Kenney				
Dave Kersey				
Mark Kerwood				
Patrick Kessler				
Don Kiely				
Jim Kilkenney				
Kai Kinder				
Leah Kindree				
Robert King				
Earl King				
Trip Kinney				
Don and Nanci Kinser				
Keith Kishiyama				
Mike Klaiber				
Hank Klausman				
Nathaniel Klema				
Cameron and Kerri Klingner				
Brian Knight				
Scott and Devan Koehn				
Karl Koenig and jo ann weber				
koenig				
Chris and Caron Koll				
Eric Kollwitz				
Carolyn Komar				
Clinton Koontz				
Wendy Krause				
Sarah and Austin Krissoff				
Bill Krissoff				
Austin and Mac Kriz				
Graham Kriz				
Jack Krupnick				
Gary Kuehn				
Bradley Kulbaba				
Kestrel Kunz				
Andy and Wendy Laakmann				
William LaFayette				
George Laird				
Jeanne Langan				
Troy Langley				
Mike Larimore				
Caroline Laroche and Jakob Uecker				
Reed Larson				
John Lawson				
Matt and Nicole LeBlanc				
Greg Lee				
Marcus Lees				
Brent Lehman				
Ann Lehr				
Debbie and Todd Leonard				
Ben Levy				
David Lew				
Kevin Lewis				
Marc Lewis				
Stephen Lex				
Charles Ligocki				
Kevin Lindberg				
George Lindemann				
Douglas and Marie Liu				
James Lloyd				
Ron Ladders				
Ben Loeffler				
Frank Lorch				
Quentin Lummen				
Tony Lunt				
Tracy Luther				
Brooks Lutterloh				
Andrew and Will Lyons				
Ian MacDermut				
Mike and Michelle Mahaffey				
Greg Mallory				
Marilyne Marchand-Gouin				
Mimi Margulies				
John Marshall				
Nicholas Martin				
Geoffrey Martin				
Robert and Debora Martz				
David Mason				
Ron Mastalski				
Bill and Anne Masters				
Ryan Masterson				
Sadie and David Mathison				
Nick Matisse				
Mikenzie Matteson and Asa Dalton				
Graham Matthews				
David May				
John McClester				
Bob McConachie				
Beth McCullough				
Michael McDonald				
Joanne McGrew				
Mike McKay				
Scott McKay				
Mark McKinstry				
Kurt Konolige and Janet McLaughlin				
John McLaughlin				
Huston McMillan				
Darin McQuoid				
Steven MD				
Dawn Meekhof and Victor Kress				
Kevin Melvin				
Gharett Meng				
Scott and Patty Mengel				
Hunter Merritt				
Bob Metzger				
Carol and Mike Meyhoefer				
Donald and Audrey Millard				
Travis Miller				
Jayber York Miller				
Robert Mingus				
Lindsey and Brad Modesitt				
Turtle Modesitt				
Daniel Mongno				
Mary Lou Montagna				
Phil Montgomery				
Susan Moore				
Robert Moore				
Joshua Moore				
Pete Morey				
Charles Morgan				
Megi Morishita				
Alex Morris				
Arianne Morrison				
Stephen Muck				
R Murray				
Timothy Narron				
Mark Neitenbach				
Chris Neuenschwander				
Bradley Nichols				
Douglas Nicholson				
Eric Nies				
George Noe				
Ted and Karen Northup				
Roger Nott				
Laura Nugent and Ian Bailey				
John Nutt				
Thomas O'Keefe, Rie Yamazaki and Aki and Taka O'Keefe				
Philip O'Rourke				
Frank Ohrt				
Anne and John Olden				
Keith Oldham				
Eing Ong				
Benjamin Orkin				
George Orr				
Tim Overland				
James Oxford				
Steve Pack				
Anne Pagano and Luke Hopkins				
Eric Panebaker				
Janet and Dave Panebaker				
Aida Parkinson				
Bill and Donna Holmes Parks				
James Parks				
Russell Pascoe				
Thomas Pasquarello				
Scott and Maureen Patton				
Nicholas Paumgarten				
Tim and Annie Payne				
James Pepin				
Jeff Perizzolo				
Stephen Perkins				
Benjamin and Melissa Peters				
Roderick Peterson				
Lance Petrack-Zunich				
William "B.J." Phillips				
Nonny Phillips				
Nancy Pietroski and David Smith				
Don Piper				
Alex Placzek				
Graeme and Debra Plant				
David Plott				
Patrick Polan				
Rebecca Post				
Sean Power				
Chris Prangley				
Andrea Price				
Dixie-Marree Prickett				
Nick Pritchard				
Aaron and Tamsen Pruzan				
Joe and Lucy Pulliam				
Peter Quayle				
Bill Queitzsch				
Clifton Rabuffo				
Justin Rae				
Pete Rainey				
Chris Ramko				
Morgan Randell				
Ken and Emily Ransford				
Mark Rasmus				
Harrison Rea				
Paul Reavley				
Brett Redfearn				
Brian Reeder				
Will Reeves				
Robert Reiterman				
Eli, Liana, Z and Pi Ren				
Deborah Reyes				
Timothy Reynolds				
Johnson Rice				
Eric Richardson				
Lucas Rietmann				
Dave Robey				
Brian Robin				
Barry Robinson				
Stephen Robinson				
Corey Robinson				
Matthew Rodgers				
Karl Rogers				
Richard Rollins				
Maya Rosecrance				
Jesse Rosenzweig				
Fred Ruddock				
Eric Ruhl				
Brett Russell				
Lee Rust				
Peter Ryan				
Roman Ryder				
Tim Ryle				
Scott Saavedra				
Lawton Salley				
Chanchal Samanta and Deborah Reichert				
Neal and Brooke Sandford				
Mark Scantlebury and Audrey Bergsma				
Arnold Schaeffer and Deborah Chandler				
Susan Scheufele and Greg Smith				
Patricia Schifferle and Bob Gilliom				
Fritz Schlereth				
Johanna Schneider				
Tom Schneller				
Rick Schoen				
Eric and Tera Schreiber				
Jim Scott				
Norwood Scott				
Mark Scriver				
Roberta Scull				
Leaf Seabrook				
Richard Seagraves				
David Seay				
Chuck Seidler				
John Seiner, Kathleen Murphy and David Seiner				
Herman Senter				
Pat Sheridan				
Ed Sherwood				
Christopher Shih				
Amy Shipman				
Danny Siger				
Jim Silavent				
Jim and Iris Sindelar				
Brian Sineath				
Tom Sitz				
Peter Skinner				
Brady Sleeper				
Edwin Smalley				
Michael Smith				
Mike Smith				
Stephen Smith				
Aulton Smith				
Thomas Smith				
Chris Sneed				
James Sneeringer				
Sean Snyder				
Keirith Snyder				
Matt Solomon				
Marv Sowers and Amy Pearsall				
Susan Spaniol				
Joel Spiegel				
David Spiegel				
Eli Spiegel				
Corey Spoores				
Rok, Lea and Ria Sribar				
Kevin St. John				
Aaron Stabel				
Bruce Stajnraih				
Kurt Stalnaker				
Robert Stanley				
Roger Starring				
Boris Startsev				
Mary Starzinski				
Kathryn Stege				
Gordon Steindorf				
Dave Steindorf	</			

In Memory of...

*Contributions to
American Whitewater
were made in memory
of these people in 2025.*

Wes Albin
Gus Anderson
Kathleen Anderson
Shelby Arno
Jack Baker
Alan Baldwin
Rowena Lavon Bitting
Maurice Blackburn
Bill (William) and Peggy (Margaret) Carr
Clay Chaney
Lloyd Comiter
Ed Conning
Steve Daniel
Daniel DeLaVergne
Ella Dingman
Rick Dohaney
Cliff Eisner
Coplin Fickett
Larry 'the Legend' Firman
Derrel Fortner
Wes Gilligan
John Googins
River James Grier
Henry
Richard Hopley (Oci-One Kanubi)
John Huisjen
Tom and Joan Jarriel

Jeffrey Johnson
Phil Johnsrud
Chuck Kern
!st Lt. Nathan Krissoff, USMC
David Luinstra
Jeff Marquis
Mike Martin
Chuck McHenry
John Edward Moore
Nute Mullings
Maria Noakes
Ricky Brandon Owens
Alan Panebaker
Penelope
Chason Russell
Richard Spencer
Richard Swomley
Dylan Wallace
Peter Wallace
Robert (Butch) Weaver
Audrey Wells
Graham K. White

Chattooga River (GA).
Photo: Tracy Chapple

In Honor of...

*Contributions to
American Whitewater
were made in honor of
the following people
in 2025.*

American Whitewater
Brent Austin
Hannah and Alex Barham
Lee Belknap
David Benforado
Theo, Levi, Jed and Ollie Blashford
Tom Blue
Dave Calfee
Jennifer Davis and Gabe Kenne
Matt Deacon
Phil & Mary DeRiemer
E. Emch
David Ennis
Whitney Eure
Sean and Kim Finigan
Brad Frank
Jeffrey Green
Hayduke
Kyle Irby & Lorelle Rau
Kai Kinder
John Kobak
Kestrel Kunz
Andrew and Kelley Marsh
Marty McDonnell and Sierra Mac River Trips
Hunter Merritt
Donald and Jeanine Messer
Scott Miller
Missouri Whitewater Association
Montana River Guides
Montgomery Whitewater

Tom O'Keefe
Dr. Nori Onishi
Alan Panebaker
Delton Poole
Pride Day on The River
Rafting Redux aluminum can recycling
Rendezvous River Sports 30th Anniversary
in 2025
Chad Richards
Chad & Hannah Romano
Mark Rothert
Ryan Scott
Scott and Kesley
Dave Steindorf
Willy Stokman
Tarkio Kayak Adventures
The Lord Jesus, Messiah, creator of Heaven
and Earth
Phil Triolo
Trotter Tour Golfers
Chris Tulley
Tuolumne River
Barry Tuscano
Remy Vrahas
Charlie Walbridge
Brad Walker
Graham White
Nik White
Buzz Williams and the Chattooga Conservancy

Snoqualamie Falls, WA
Photo: Megan Kelly

2025 Statement of Activities

	UNRESTRICTED	TEMPORARILY RESTRICTED	TOTAL 2025	TOTAL 2024
PUBLIC SUPPORT				
Contributions	\$ 862,736 .00	\$ 2,058,754.00*	\$ 2,957,334.00	\$ 808,204.00
OTHER REVENUE				
Membership dues	\$ 472,071.71	\$ -	\$ 466,167.00	\$ 451,188
Advertising	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Grants	\$ 176,977.00	\$ 536,306.00	\$ 586,929	\$ 903,346
Events	\$ 105,802.27	\$ -	\$ 105,802	\$ 106,214
Industry Partnerships / Sponsorships	\$ 55,903.20	\$ -	\$ 55,903	\$ 56,701
Product & Journal Sales	\$ 98,353.00	\$ -	\$ 80,473	\$ 81,225
Investment Activity	\$68,419.00	\$ 30,318.60	\$ 26,368	\$ 29,318
In-Kind Contributions	\$ 502,598.50	\$ -	\$ 585,412	\$ 461,540
Interest, Dividends & Investment Activity	\$ 18,340.00	\$ -	\$ 60,391	\$ 23,327
Misc. Income	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Net Assets Released from Restriction	\$ 1,117,143.00	\$ (1,117,143.00)	\$ -	\$ -
Total Support and Revenue	\$ 2,308,892	\$ 2,621,791	\$ 4,930,683	\$ 2,915,165
EXPENSES:				
Program Services:				
Total Program Services	\$ 2,701,663.00		\$ 1,758,580	\$ 1,861,726
SUPPORTING SERVICES:				
General & Administrative	\$ 607,375.00		\$ 385,050	\$ 343,414
Fundraising	\$ 76,814.00		\$ 56,626	\$ 36,511
Total Supporting Services	\$ 441,676	\$ -	\$ 441,676	\$ 379,925
Total Expenses	\$ 2,200,256		\$ 2,200,256	\$ 2,241,651
Total Change in Net Assets	\$ 108,636	\$ 2,621,791	\$ 2,730,427	\$ 673,514

These published figures are provisional and subject to change. The finalized auditors report and IRS form 990 will be found on our website once they are complete.

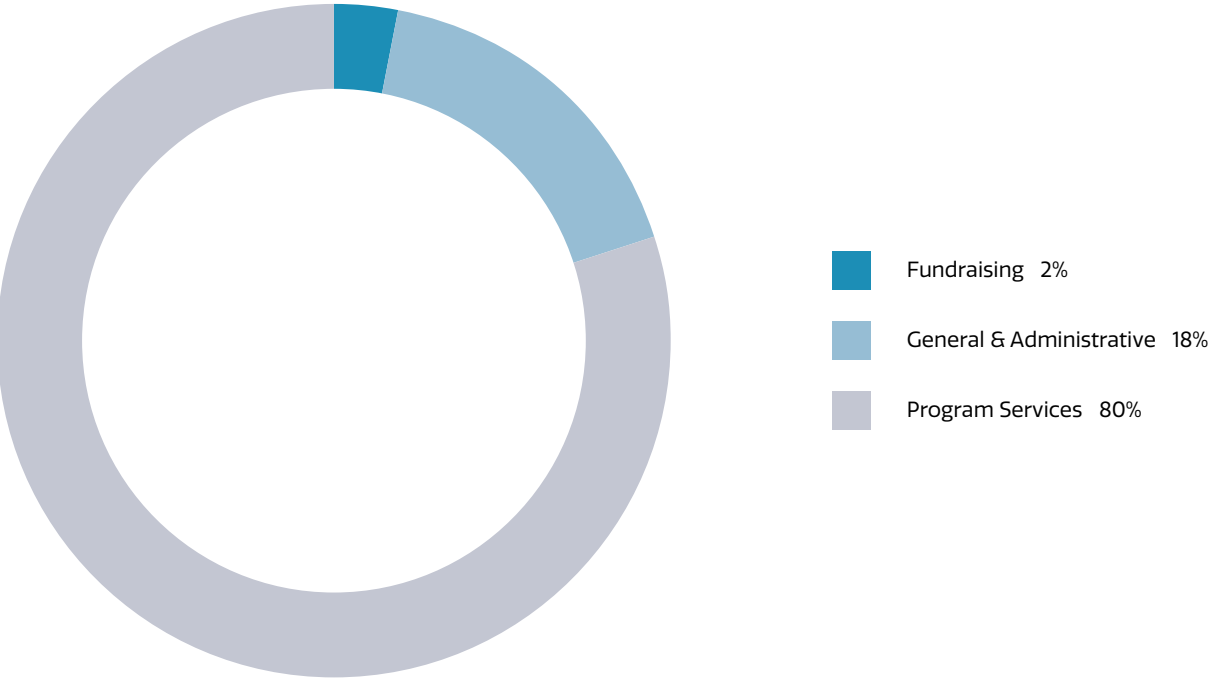
*In 2025, American Whitewater received \$1,082,197 in gifts designated for river access capital improvements and land acquisition projects. The majority of those funds are being held in principle protected investments for use in 2026-2027, when the acquisition and access work they support is completed.

†In 2024, American Whitewater acquired 4.25 river miles on river left of the Big Sandy River in Preston County, WV. That land (Parcel #1), and an additional parcel secured in 2025 (Parcel #2), along with a ~\$35k stewardship fund directed by American Whitewater members, was transferred to the West Virginia Land Trust in 2025 to ensure permanent conservation and boater access. A third parcel acquired in 2025 (Parcel #3) will be transferred to West Virginia Land Trust in 2026.

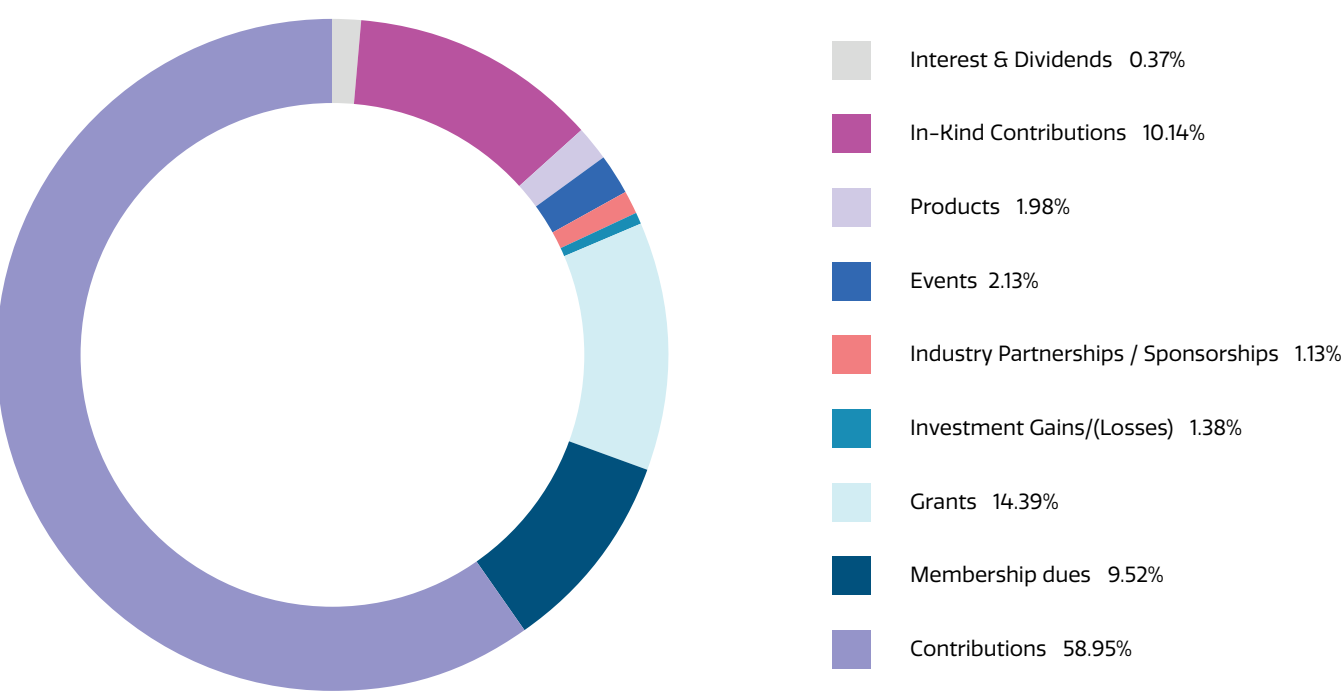
Statement of Financial Position

ASSETS	2025	2024	2023
CURRENT ASSETS			
Cash	\$ 1,255,829.00	\$ 968,405.00	\$ 1,398,283
Accounts Receivable	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 13,524
Pledges & Grants Receivable	\$ 78,398.00	\$ 209,061.00	\$ 106,877
Investments	\$ 1,995,515.85	\$ 781,329.26	\$ 819,357
Prepaid Expenses	\$ -	\$ 5,950.00	\$ 17,722
Inventory	\$ 30,336.43	\$ 52,295.85	\$ 30,083
Total Current Assets	\$ 3,360,079.28	\$ 2,017,041.11	\$ 2,385,846
LONG-TERM ASSETS			
Lands held for protection			
Whitewater Estates, KY (Elkhorn)	\$ 31,367.00	\$ 31,367.00	\$ 31,367
Warson Island, TN (Watauga)	\$ 17,414.00	\$ 17,414.00	\$ 17,414
Craig County, VA (John’s Creek)	\$ 9,536.00	\$ 9,536.00	\$ 9,536
Preston County, WV (Big Sandy #3)	\$ 451,967.88	\$ -	\$ -
Preston County, WV (Big Sandy #1)†	\$ (378,337.84)	\$ 320,021.00	\$ 5,000
Preston County, WV (Big Sandy #2)†	\$ (65,592.99)	\$ -	\$ -
Total for Lands held for protection	\$ 500,284.88	\$ 436,654.84	\$ 63,317
Computer equipment, net	\$ 7,251.94	\$ 38,403.72	\$ 70,181
Total Long-Term Assets	\$ 517,536.82	\$ 416,741.72	\$ 133,498
Total Assets	\$ 3,877,616	\$ 2,433,783	\$ 2,519,344
LIABILITIES AND FUND BALANCES			
CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Accounts Payable	\$ 115,761.00	\$ 111,227.00	\$ 39,707
Deferred Revenues	\$ 93,283.00	\$ 114,672.84	\$ 171,380
Payroll Liabilities	\$ 71,121.00	\$ 61,508.00	\$ 59,670
Total Current Liabilities	\$ 280,165.00	\$ 287,407.84	\$ 270,757
Long-Term Liabilites			
Note Payable, Long-Term	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Total Long-Term Liabilities	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
NET ASSETS			
Unrestricted Net Assets	\$ 1,600,531.00	\$ 1,627,372.00	\$ 1,491,016
Restricted Net Assets	\$ 1,996,920.00	\$ 519,003.00	\$ 757,571
Total Net Assets	\$ 3,597,451	\$ 2,083,906	\$ 2,266,057
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	\$ 3,877,616	\$ 2,433,783	\$ 2,519,344

2025 Functional Expenses



2025 Revenue Sources



American
Whitewater
Board and Staff
2025

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

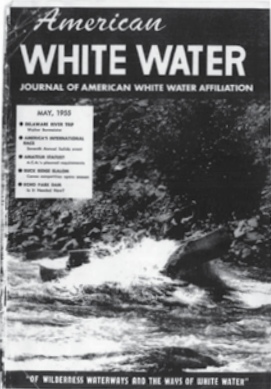
Brent Austin Cosby, TN baustin@jbrentaustin.com	Chris Neuenschwander Pike Road, AL chris.neuenschwander@jacksonthornton.com
Lily Durkee Fort Collins, CO lily@diversifywhitewater.org	Erin Savage Mills River, NC savage.ee@gmail.com
Darcy Gaechter Glenwood Springs, CO darcygaechter@gmail.com	Charlie Walbridge, Honorary Bruceton Mills, WV ccwalbridge@cs.com
Andy Held Kirkland, WA public@andyheld.com	BOARD OFFICERS Erin Savage, Chair Greg Lee, Vice Chair Megi Morishita, Secretary Bruce Lessels, Treasurer At Large, Lily Durkee
Greg Lee San Francisco, CA gregliest@gmail.com	
Bruce Lessels Buckland, MA bdlessels@gmail.com	
Megi Morishita Trout Lake, WA megi1971@gmail.com	
April Montgomery Norwood, CO aprildmontgomery@gmail.com	

STAFF

Clinton Begley Executive Director Springfield, OR clinton@americanwhitewater.org	Bob Nasdor NE Stewardship Director Sudbury, MA bob@americanwhitewater.org
Kevin Colburn National Stewardship Director Asheville, NC kevin@americanwhitewater.org	Thomas O'Keefe Senior Director of Policy and Science Seattle, WA okeefe@americanwhitewater.org
Scott Harding Stewardship Associate Forks of Salmon, CA scott@americanwhitewater.org	Bethany Overfield Membership & Engagement Director Brevard, NC bethany@americanwhitewater.org
Heidi Heisler Finance Director Springfield, OR fiscal@americanwhitewater.org	Theresa Simsiman California Stewardship Director Sacramento, CA theresa@americanwhitewater.org
Hattie Johnson Southern Rockies Restoration Director Carbondale, CO hattie@americanwhitewater.org	Evan Stafford Communications Director Fort Collins, CO evan@americanwhitewater.org
Kestrel Kunz Southern Rockies Protection Director Crested Butte, CO kestrel@americanwhitewater.org	Dave Steindorf Hydropower Specialist Chico, CA dave@americanwhitewater.org
Sadie Mathison Membership and Operations Specialist Duluth, MN sadie@americanwhitewater.org	Jeff Venturino California Stewardship Associate Nevada City, CA jeffventurino@americanwhitewater.org

American Whitewater Timeline, 1954–2025





1954

American White Water Affiliation (AWWA) Forms

Formed as the result of a memo sent out on April 6, 1954 to multiple outing clubs and informal paddlers across the country, beginning a circle of communication and information exchange about ideas around conservation and advances in technique, equipment, and safety.

First secretary Eliot Dubois, of the Appalachian Mountain Club-Boston, often considered to be the founder, was in fact one of many influential original members and club affiliate leaders who founded and led the development of the AWWA, including Bruce Grant (CA), Laurence Grinnell (NY), Wolf Bauer (WA), Clyde Jones (CO), Steve Bradley (CO), Oscar “Oz” Hawksley (MO), Walter F. Bermeister (MA), W. S. “Stu” Gardiner (UT), Don Rupp (PA), Bob McNair (PA), Harold Kiehm (IL), Marvin McLarty, and Wolfgang Lert.

1955

Journal first published, first editor Joe Lacy, an early Colorado whitewater pioneer. Articles ranging from technique and safety, to conservation and boat building instructions were all featured in the Journal and it continues to be an important source of inspiration and information for river runners to this day.

Echo Park Dam Fight

An article questioning the need for another massive dam in the Green River watershed that would have flooded both the Yampa Canyon and the Gates of Lodore ran in the very first issue of the Journal. The controversy over the proposed Echo Park dam in the mid-1950s was a crucial episode for the fledgling environmental movement, encouraging river activists to fight the large-scale dam proposals across the West and captivating the country. Following years of debate, the US Congress decided not to authorize the dam, signifying the growing public interest in national parks and monuments and in the protection of wild rivers.

1956

Constitution and bylaws adopted, executive board created, internal service committees of Safety, Membership, Conservation and Editorial committees were formed under the General Committee made up of representatives of affiliated clubs. Four other committees, Safety, Membership, Guidebook and Conservation were established and made up of volunteer members.

1957

First publishing of the international scale of river difficulty.

First Publication of Purpose, The American White Water Affiliation

“We are many individuals who wish to promote river touring, and to keep informed about wilderness waterways and the ways of white water. We are an affiliation of outdoor groups, outing associations, canoe clubs, ski clubs, hiking groups, all interested in river touring for our members. Our groups range from the Appalachian Mountain Club in Boston, to the Washington Foldboat Club in Seattle. These groups have pioneered in developing river know-how. They are the local sources from which flow the currents tributary to our growing sport. Through group representatives, the knowledge of all is made available to all. We are a non-profit organization. Our organizational simplicity permits all dues to go directly to the building of our magazine and services.”

“To encourage exploration and enjoyment of wilderness waterways; to foster research, development, and teaching of improved techniques and equipment designs for safely negotiating white water; to protect the wilderness character of our waterways for the growing number who are discovering the rewards awaiting the river tourist.”

1958

Secretary Oz Hawksley

American Whitewater co-founder, Oscar “Oz” Hawksley, was at the forefront of early exploration of the Clearwater, Main Salmon, and Middle Fork Salmon Rivers (ID), Flathead (MT), and Yampa and Green Rivers (CO, UT, WY), along with many rivers in the Ozarks. Oz was a part of a new generation of wilderness explorers, many of whom had served in World War II, who took to the water with army surplus rafts. These explorations and conservation efforts, such as Oz’s first modern descent of the Selway River (ID), were critical to the design of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. Due to this advocacy, many of the rivers they explored including the Selway, the Salmon, and the Flathead, were among the first rivers designated when the Act became law on October 2, 1968.

1959

Publishing of the Safety Code, the first comprehensive guide to river safety knowledge including many basic principles we now take for granted but which were not common practice at the time. The original code covered personal preparedness (wear a life jacket, never boat alone, be a competent swimmer, beware of cold water, have a frank knowledge of your boating ability, etc.), boat preparedness and group equipment (have a spare paddle, carry a repair and first-aid kit, install floatation devices, carry a throw line, etc.), and group dynamics on the river (understanding hazards, using signals, responsibility to assist your partners, etc).

1960

Executive Secretary Clyde Jones assigns a more full staff in Editorial (Martin Vanderveen), Safety (Leonard E. Fancher), Conservation Chairman (Daniel K. Bradley), and Advisory Committee Chairman (Oz Hawksley).

1961

Article of Incorporation filed in Missouri.

1962

Origins of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act

American Whitewater sent a report in 1960 to the Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Commission calling upon them to extend new protections to special free flowing rivers. In 1962, A Report to the President and to the Congress issued by the Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Commission recommended that, “10. Certain rivers of unusual scientific, esthetic, and recreation value should be allowed to remain in their free-flowing state and natural setting without man-made alterations.”

Wolf Bauer wrote a concept paper with a handwritten note from Secretary of the Interior Stu Udall indicating they were in contact. The Craigheads are credited with the original idea but Wolf Bauer and paddlers in the Wisconsin Hoofers, who had a relationship with Senator Gaylord Nelson, also clearly had an important leadership role that is not often recognized.

1963

First Revision of the Safety Code leading to a perpetual updating of safety information as advances in data, understanding of river hazards and rescue techniques have evolved.

1964

American Whitewater co-founder Wolf Bauer wrote an essay on the “Concept of River Wilderness,” featuring the Sauk River (WA), a major influence in the movement and the legislation that eventually became the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. In 1978, the river was designated as Wild and Scenic.

1968

On October 2, the Wild and Scenic Act was signed into law by Lyndon Johnson.

Through the American Whitewater Journal, Oz Hawksley encouraged letter writing and kept paddlers across the country informed on the progress of Wild Rivers legislation and the ultimate signing of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. Affiliate clubs became involved in education and outreach efforts, including a trip by Kayak and Canoe Club of New York to take Senator Kennedy (in the photo) and Interior Secretary Udall down the Hudson River to promote the Wild Rivers Bill, and efforts by the Wisconsin Hoofers to highlight the need to protect the Wolf River in Wisconsin while Gaylord Nelson was still Governor and before he joined the Senate. Over the decades and through today, boaters continue to take an active



role in securing new designations and advocating for protection for hundreds of rivers that agencies have determined to be “eligible” Wild and Scenic Rivers, but have not been formally designated.

1972

American Whitewater establishes 501(c)(3) status.

1973

Gerald Meral for the Journal pens the original essay on the need for a national coalition for American rivers, the impetus for the formation of our partner organization American Rivers.

1974

In 1968 the Chattooga River (along with 19 other rivers) was designated as a “study river” by the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. In 1971 the movie Deliverance featured the Chattooga’s whitewater, and interest from river runners grew. Efforts over the next several years to share the river with influential members of the community, including then-Governor of Georgia Jimmy Carter, culminated in the river’s designation in 1974. Claude Terry and Jimmy Carter running the Chattooga. Photo by Doug Woodward

1975

Origins of the American Whitewater Accident Database

Charlie Walbridge was on the water when a drowning occurred at a Class II slalom race. The paddler was well equipped and experienced and no one could explain exactly how it happened. Charlie was upset, and curious enough to start asking questions. He knew many of the paddlers who had tried to make the rescue and talked with them the next day. Later someone told him about a similar accident that happened a few months earlier in Tennessee. His report, published in the 1976 AW Journal, described the risks of foot entrapment for the first time. The well-known caution not to stand up in fast-moving water, not standard back then, quickly became a standard safety practice. This illustrated how paddlers learn from accident reports and led to Charlie receiving more reports. Later he started studying accidents outside the whitewater paddling community to support American Whitewater work with State and Federal boating regulators. Any incident occurring on fast moving water was of interest. He encouraged paddlers to submit accounts of near misses, serious injuries, and successful rescues. The Database now covers almost 50 years of whitewater incidents and has proved invaluable in the development of river safety knowledge.

1983

The first Gauley Fest. After almost two decade’s worth of advocacy work by volunteers and members, plans for a second dam that would have that would have dewatered the Upper Gauley above Pillow Rock dropped dropped. On Sept. 24 nearly 1000 paddlers gathered to celebrate and the biggest white-water festival in the world was born. Today, it remains American Whitewater’s largest fundraising event and brings thousands of boaters to Summersville, WV to commemorate the river’s protection and restoration, to learn about river stewardship across the country and to experience the river’s legendary whitewater.

1986

Federal Power Act Amended

A 1986 amendment to the Federal Power Act, the Electric Consumers Protection Act (ECPA), required the Commission to take a more balanced approach to dam licensing. ECPA requires the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, when deciding whether to issue a new license, to consider not only the power generation potential of a river, but to give equal consideration to energy conservation, protection of fish and wildlife, protection of recreational opportunities, and preservation of general environmental quality.

This “equal consideration” mandate requires FERC to consult with federal, state and local resource agencies, including fish and wildlife, recreation, and land management agencies, in order to more accurately assess the impact of a hydro project on the surrounding environment. Beginning with Pope Barrow, Pete Skinner and others utilization of this amendment to influence the restoration of the Black River watershed in New York, American Whitewater now has been a party to hundreds of dam relicensing processes across the country using an updated version of this original FERC process.

1992

American Whitewater partnered with American Rivers to create the Hydropower Reform Coalition. The Hydropower Reform Coalition consists of 160 national, regional, and local conservation and recreation organizations dedicated to protecting and restoring rivers affected by hydropower dams, ensuring public access to these lands and waters, and reforming the federal licensing process to ensure public participation and to improve the quality of the resulting decisions. American Whitewater staff continue to co-chair the coalition and play a strong leadership role in restoring rivers affected by hydropower.

1994

In 1994, the “Deerfield Settlement Agreement” was signed and became the first hydropowers settlement agreement ever developed in New England and only the second agreement ever signed in the U.S. This agreement incorporated significant land protective measures, fishery and recreational benefits, and financial enhancements never before available in Federal Energy Regulatory Commission relicensing, including 32 releases on the Class IV Monroe Bridge, and 105 releases on the Class II-III Fife Brook making paddling available almost every day throughout the summer.

1995

A Whitewater Website

The American Whitewater website launched, providing an online place for all things whitewater rivers, including offering space for affiliate clubs to host their own page. It was announced this way in the 1995 July/August Journal: “We opened the first World Wide Web site on the Internet exclusively devoted to whitewater boating ...a cornucopia of whitewater information. Boaters surfing cyberspace (when it is too dark to be out on the river) can find everything and anything they want on our amazing, new Homey Page.”

Before the website, if you wanted to find a river to boat, you had to do some offline research. You could mail \$15 to American Whitewater and receive a spiral-bound notebook, known as “The Nationwide Whitewater Inventory, that included a table of rivers organized by state. The inventory was put together in 1988 and exhaustively checked by local experts in each state. By 1990, \$7 got you the entire Inventory on a 5.25-inch floppy disk. The floppy disk included extra beta not available in the spiral-bound format. Digitizing the inventory was a truly innovative way to share river information. It helped open a new age of river exploration for boaters looking to paddle beyond their home river, then the website took this one step further and was part of the beginning of an internet-based landscape that almost all boaters now use to find information about rivers.

1997

Beaver River Relicensing (NY)

The Beaver offers some of the most challenging and dramatic rapids in New York, as well as some great intermediate whitewater. Before 1997, the river was dewatered by several dams and diversions. American Whitewater began working on the relicensing of the Beaver in the late eighties and now a 1997 relicensing agreement provides 11 days of releases on three different reaches, the Moshier, Eagle, and Taylorville runs.

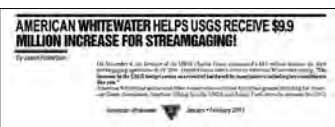
Canyon Creek Saved, Hydropower Proposal “Dead in the Water” (WA)

For several years, Canyon Creek was targeted for damming, but American Whitewater and its affiliates – including The Mountaineers, Rivers Council of Washington, Oregon Kayak & Canoe Club, and Washington Kayak Club – succeeded in a legal fight to cancel the dam’s Preliminary Permit and keep Canyon Creek free-flowing.

First Tallulah Releases Kick Off Flow Restoration Success in Southeast (GA)

In 1995, the first release on the Tallulah River in Georgia took place, thanks to American Whitewater efforts. This was the first of many successful flow restoration stories for American Whitewater in the southeast, including the Cheoah, West Fork Tuckasegee, and Nantahala.





2000

First Edition of the American Whitewater Navigability Toolkit Published

American Whitewater seeks to improve citizens' knowledge of the rights Americans have to access our nation's rivers and streams, with an aim to reduce conflicts and support their responsible recreational enjoyment. In the late 90s, a team of legal volunteers researched the navigability statutes for all 50 states, as well as case law in state courts, to define the scope of the public's rights and privileges on our nation's waterways. The result was the groundbreaking American Whitewater Navigability Toolkit, first published in 2000. The current third edition was updated and edited thanks to pro bono assistance from Morgan, Lewis & Bockius LLP.

American Whitewater Acquires Take-out on Elkhorn Creek (KY)

In 2000, American Whitewater successfully purchased land for a take-out on Elkhorn Creek. This Class II-III creek is located in central Kentucky and provides some of the closest and most dependable whitewater for boaters in Kentucky, Ohio, and Indiana.

2001

White Salmon BZ Access Area Secured (WA)

Access to the Green Truss and BZ section of the White Salmon at one time was privately owned. When the landowner was ready to sell, American Whitewater worked to bring this access point into public ownership utilizing the Land and Water Conservation Fund. In the fall of 2000, the Trust for Public Land acquired the primary access point at BZ Corners and transferred it to public ownership during the summer of 2001. The Forest Service now manages the 11-acre parcel as part of the Lower White Salmon Wild and Scenic River.

Helped Secure Major Funding Increase For USGS Streamflow Gages

American Whitewater has played an instrumental role in identifying and funding the installation for streamflow gages across the country. An early victory came when we helped increase the USGS stream gaging operations fund by 9.9 million in FY 2001. We received an official thank you letter from the USGS Director for our assistance.

2002

California's First Restored Flow Release

A 2000 agreement, initiated in 2022, more than doubled the base flows of the North Fork Feather River, set standards for water temperature, required habitat improvements for fish spawning, and required recreational releases starting at one weekend per month during the summer. Since initiation, AW has seen a dramatic improvement in the fishery, an increase in shore-based recreation, and thousands of paddlers visiting the year-round boatable flows.

2005

American Whitewater Regional Stewardship Model Begins

California, Pacific Northwest, Southeast, and Mid-Atlantic programs were established, leading to programs across the country including the Southern and Northern Rockies, Northeast, and Midwest. This geographic focus was a big shift from operating with conservation and access departments working separately on river issues across the country. The new approach helped American Whitewater create deeper local roots in the communities we work in and establish valuable relationships with members, volunteers, funders, and decision-makers.

2006

Colorado / Southern Rockies Program Begins

In 2006, a group of stakeholders met along the banks of the Arkansas River to discuss where American Whitewater might fit into the region's river stewardship work. From that meeting, AW expanded its regional model to include the Southern Rockies. Among other work, American Whitewater began an initiative to protect and improve flows in the Colorado River Basin by defining and analyzing recreational flow levels. In 2013, our Boatable Days Tool was adopted into the Colorado Water Plan as the authoritative mechanism for defining recreational flow needs on state rivers.

2008

First Bear River Releases (ID)

In southeastern Idaho, a region somewhat lacking in river recreation opportunities, scheduled releases on the Bear River have provided whitewater boating opportunities since 2008. Thanks to advocacy from American Whitewater and its partners, a relicensing agreement with dam owners provides nine days of restored flow spread over four weekends.

2011

White Salmon River Restoration (WA)

In 1992, American Whitewater made its original request for a study on the removal of the Condit Dam on the lower White Salmon River. In the request, AW wrote that a study was needed to "determine the recreation, fishery, flood damage mitigation, power production and other impacts associated with the removal of impoundments and in returning the White Salmon River to its truest sense of 'run-of-river.'" With the dam breached in October 2011, the deconstruction of Condit Dam stands as a benchmark for national river restoration. The removal opened 33 miles of critical cold spawning habitat for steelhead and 15 miles for salmon, both endangered species. In addition, five miles of restored river has provided new opportunities for whitewater recreation.

Boatable Days Tool Incorporated into Bureau of Reclamation's Colorado River Basin Study

American Whitewater met with Secretary of Interior Ken Salazar and Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) staff to demonstrate the value of and methodology for developing quantitative metrics for whitewater boating. This simple approach measured current boating opportunities and changes to opportunities under future scenarios. AW's experience in describing the effects of flow on recreation opportunities and negotiating "boatable days" in over 100 FERC licenses, Resource Management Plans, and local watershed initiatives convinced the BOR to develop and utilize a "boatable days" metric for managing whitewater rivers in the Colorado River Basin.

2012

Upper Chattooga Access (NC/GA/SC)

The Chattooga River, which starts in Western North Carolina and flows south to form the border between Georgia and South Carolina, was designated a Wild and Scenic River in 1974. Two years later, the U.S. Forest Service decided, without cause, to prevent boating on the uppermost 21 miles of the river. From 1995 to 2012, American Whitewater worked to have the prohibition lifted through administrative appeals and federal court challenges. The efforts culminated in a 2012 U.S. Forest Service decision to ease the restrictions and allow some boating. Since then, the remaining boating restrictions have proven unnecessary, but remain in place, despite continued advocacy by American Whitewater and its partners.

2014

Elwha River Restoration (WA)

After three decades of advocacy and two decades of planning, what was then the largest dam removal in U.S. history began in 2011 with the removal of the Elwha Dam, followed by the removal of the Glines Canyon Dam in 2014. American Whitewater has actively supported this restoration effort since becoming directly engaged in 1992, with strong local member advocacy prior to that. Built in the early 1900s, the 108-foot Elwha Dam and 210-foot Glines Canyon Dam blocked the river's once-legendary salmon runs for nearly a century. Removing the dams has freed the Elwha River and now allows all five species of Pacific salmon, along with steelhead, sea-run cutthroat, and bull trout, to return to more than 70 miles of high-quality habitat.

2015

Browns Canyon National Monument Designated

Colorado's Browns Canyon is a spectacular landscape for outdoor recreation, and among the nation's most popular whitewater destination. Designated under the U.S. Antiquities Act, the monument protects over 21,000 acres of public lands surrounding the Arkansas River near Salida, Colorado. American Whitewater played a key role in advocating for the designation of Browns Canyon National Monument, working closely with state representatives including former Senator Mark Udall, who introduced a monument proposal that followed a multi-year process of input from residents, boaters, ranchers, and businesses. AW was proud to see the president's proclamation honor the spirit of Udall's legislation.





Merced and Tuolumne Rivers in Yosemite National Park Reopened to Recreation (CA)

The Merced River in Yosemite National Park was officially reopened to river recreation after seven years of sustained engagement by American Whitewater with the National Park Service and other stakeholders. Allowing boating was a small, yet important component of the grander plan to preserve the outstandingly remarkable values of the Wild and Scenic Merced River. The Tuolumne River was also reopened to legal boating in the Grand Canyon of the Tuolumne; however, AW was disappointed that the National Park Service continued to prohibit boating on the rest of the river. AW advocates for the National Park’s management to put river recreation on equal footing with other similar activities.

2016

“Right to Paddle” Successful Legal Challenge in South Carolina

Boaters successfully helped defend the public right to float rivers and streams in South Carolina when American Whitewater and co-defendants decisively won a legal challenge on the South Fork of the Saluda River. When landowners acquired an affidavit claiming the river was impossible to navigate in a canoe, AW produced a video of a canoe descent. Submitting boating videos as evidence proved to be an effective strategy. The court found that “the standard for navigability rests on the potential for any public use, be it commercial or recreational,” citing the video as definitive proof of navigability.

2018

50th Anniversary of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, East Rosebud Designated

Marking the exciting finale of nearly a decade of efforts to protect Montana’s East Rosebud Creek from hydropower development and other impacts, this designation came on the 50th anniversary of the beloved Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. The Wild and Scenic Rivers Act prevents dams in perpetuity and local citizens alongside American Whitewater and our partners continue to work towards future designations in Montana and across the nation.

2019

John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act

On March 12, the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) was permanently reauthorized as part of the John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act—a long-fought and significant victory secured with bipartisan support in Congress. Passage of the Dingell Act ensured that the LWCF no longer faces the uncertainty of potential expiration and that its unique structure and flow of funds are permanently protected. The Dingell Act also designated the Farmington & Salmon Brook Rivers in Connecticut and the Green River in Utah as Wild and Scenic.

2020

Great American Outdoors Act

The Great American Outdoors Act, once signed into law, provided \$9.5 billion to temporarily address years inadequate funding by Congress for federally managed lands, and permanently funds the Land and Water Conservation Fund at \$900 million per year.

2021

New Customer Relations Management System Launched

After decades of working with membership, volunteer, and partner data manually, American White-water took a big step into the 21st century by fully integrating our outreach and communications for both membership and stewardship work. This shift made AW’s outreach overall more efficient, opened up new and different opportunities to engage AW supporters, and has led to better systems for sharing information on on opportunities for river running, volunteering, and engaging with your representatives.

2022

New Mexico Public Stream Access Secured

The New Mexico Supreme Court reaffirmed the the longstanding right of the public to recreate on all streams in the state, including walking or wading on the streambeds. The written opinion followed previous court action when it unanimously threw out a New Mexico State Game Commission rule that purported to allow landowners to block access to public waters. In the unanimous opinion, the New Mexico Supreme Court made explicit what the state constitution and prior case law implied—that the public has the right to access and recreate on all rivers and streams in the state, regardless of navigability.



River Signage Toolbox Released

With the support of the Coast Guard Boating Safety Program and in partnership with environmental design firm Tangram, American Whitewater developed an open-source toolbox supplying graphics, messaging, sign templates, sign placement criteria, and other content guidelines for safety and wayfinding signs at river access sites. This tool was built to help site managers develop effective, customizable signage that conveys critical information. Safety signage plays a crucial role in educating and creating awareness about recreating responsibly, as well as hazards or potentially dangerous situations.

2023

Klamath River Dam Removals (CA/OR)

After over two decades of Tribal advocacy, the removal of four hydroelectric dams, Iron Gate, Copco 1 and 2, and JC Boyle finally got underway, reopening over 400 miles of the river and tributaries to the legendary salmon runs stifled by impoundments for over a century. The final regulatory step for the removal, a license surrender order by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, was issued, and dam removal began with the deconstruction of Copco 2 in 2023. With all four dams removed, resto-ration work is now underway. American Whitewater took a leadership role in developing a vision for how the public will interact with and enjoy a restored river. The results of these efforts have been incorporated into the Recreation Management Plan and AW continues its work to ensure implemen-tation of that plan.

Great Falls Catawba River Restoration (NC/SC)

Nearly 20 years ago American Whitewater started working on new licenses for the chain of hydro-power dams on the Catawba River, which spans North and South Carolina, with a special emphasis on restoring flows to the dewatered Great Falls of the Catawba. Hundreds of hours of negotiations and studies with many partners led to a settlement agreement in 2006, and, finally, a federal license in 2015 after being stalled by litigation and other factors. In 2023, releases began and the restored river now has boatable flows almost every day, alongside numerous weekends of high-quality recreational release flow days spread throughout the year.

2024

Big Sandy Conservation Land Purchase (WV)

Early in 2024, American Whitewater completed the purchase of a large portion of the classic Lower Big Sandy landscape, protecting 4.25 miles of river frontage, the remainder of which is already under conservation ownership. This purchase safeguards access and portage routes, and an irreplaceable piece of West Virginia’s ecology, economy, and quality of life. The effort was led by longtime American Whitewater board member Charlie Walbridge and retired Cheat River outfitter Dave Hough and made possible by major gifts from over two dozen paddlers.

2025

In 2025, two more parcels on the Big Sandy protecting scenery and improving access were purchased through our growing acquisitions program.

American Whitewater Fiercely Opposes Public Land Sales

We met efforts led by Senator Mike Lee (UT) to mandate massive land sales and to strip protections from federal lands and Wild and Scenic rivers by encouraging our community to demand their removal from budget reconciliation efforts. We delivered over 15,000 letters to Congress as part of a country-wide, bipartisan pushback against this deliberate effort to weaken and shrink our collective natural resources. Public lands host the great majority of whitewater boating opportunities in the American West, and many of our country’s most iconic runs, like the Grand Canyon, Middle Fork Salmon, Tuolumne, and Gauley, reside inside lands we own collectively as a nation. We’re proud of the way our community stood together against these threats and played an integral role in keeping public lands and waters in public hands. ■



AMERICAN WHITEWATER PARTNERS*

\$20,000 – Class V



\$10,000 – Class III



\$7,500 – Class II



\$5,000 – Boof



\$2,500 – Wave

