



2021

Impact
Report

Photo: Riley Seebeck





OUR MISSION
As a national river conservation nonprofit, our mission is to protect and restore America's whitewater rivers and to enhance opportunities to enjoy them safely.

OUR VISION
Our vision is that our nation's remaining wild and free-flowing rivers stay that way, our developed rivers are restored to function and flourish, that the public has access to rivers for recreation, and that river enthusiasts are active and effective river advocates.

FROM THE LANDMARK REMOVAL OF THE KLAMATH

River dams to securing new access on the Big Sandy River, American Whitewater celebrated major victories in 2024 that highlight the power of collective action and a bold vision for the future of our rivers.

The purchase of boater access to the Big Sandy stands as a testament to what's possible when we act swiftly to capture opportunities in service of the long view. This purchase not only secured permanent access for river runners today but also inspired a new wave of opportunity on other rivers to acquire and safeguard key access parcels—ensuring that the rivers we love remain accessible to boaters, by boaters, forever.

The removal of four Klamath River dams created an unprecedented opportunity for American Whitewater to ensure that

recreation on the restored river is planned for and managed responsibly. We continue to work closely in partnership with the Tribes who led this historic effort to ensure the sustainable enjoyment of the Klamath's many classic whitewater reaches. Already, American Whitewater has leveraged member dollars, and your voices, to help secure and direct over \$10 million in grant funding toward navigational hazard removal and formalized access to the restored Klamath River. These investments are bolstering the local recreation economy and creating opportunity for boaters from across the globe to experience this remarkable place. These are your member dollars at work.

Last year we also went on offense with the launch of the Dead-beat Dam Law Project proactively tackling the issue of private hydropower operators abandoning their dams in your rivers, obstructing navigation, perpetuating environmental harm, and

sticking the public with the cleanup bill. We sued the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission in federal court on this issue, notching critical procedural wins for the next case. At the same time, we played strong defense on the Nolichucky River, standing firmly alongside the community of Erwin, Tennessee to hold federal agencies accountable for their oversight of railroad interests mining the riverbed in the wake of Hurricane Helene.

As you compare these efforts and accomplishments with our financial report, you'll see we stewarded your member and donor dollars responsibly, leveraged your contributions to secure additional grant resources, and put more dollars on the ground towards projects you care about than ever before.

Any win we notch is a win for you—and for all our members. I invite you to celebrate these accomplishments as your own because none of it happens without your financial support. Thank you, not only for belonging to American Whitewater, but for mattering to your rivers. The world is different, and better, because of your generous support of our work and the rivers you love. Thank you.

Clinton Begley,
Executive Director

Brent Austin,
Board President (2023-2024)

Member Highlights

Bill Cross, Oregon

Ender Club Member

"Rivers mean the world to my family and me. Many of our best memories are from wilderness river journeys around the West. I started running rivers as a guide in 1978. Back then, we were working to stop dams from being built. Four-plus decades later, I've been lucky to be part of dam removal efforts on the Klamath River. My interest is in using river recreation to promote river conservation. I've been fortunate to volunteer with American Whitewater's amazingly talented professional staff, supporting their work to preserve free-flowing rivers nationwide."



Laura Farrell, Steve Augustine, and Luke Farrell (the Farrellstines), North Carolina

Family Members

"Rivers have been the thread weaving through every chapter of our family's story. From my husband and me meeting as raft guides and kayak instructors to introducing our son to the river before he could walk, the river has been our classroom, playground, and sanctuary. Being members of American Whitewater is our way of giving back to the rivers that have given us so much. Their unwavering commitment to protecting and restoring whitewater rivers ensures that these cherished waterways remain wild and accessible. Through their advocacy, education, and conservation efforts, AW empowers families like ours to continue creating memories on the water, knowing that future generations will have the same opportunities to connect, learn, and thrive. Supporting AW isn't just about preserving rivers; it's about safeguarding the experiences, lessons, and bonds that only the river can provide."



Nannette Johnson, Colorado

Ender Club Member

"Being a naturalist from Georgia, I originally experienced mostly flat water, swamp paddling and black water. For the last 15 years in Colorado I've come to learn about the trial and tribulations in dealing with western rivers and their deep need for protection. I have become a lover of these rivers and a committed supporter and advocate for land and water conservation. Kudos AW I'm behind ya and you all should be too!"



2024 SUCCESS STORY

500

RIVER MILES PROTECTED

FROM RISKY HYDROPOWER
SELL-OFF (CA)

including segments on the:
North Fork Feather River, Pit River,
McCloud River, Butte Creek, Fordyce Creek,
South Yuba River, Bear River, Eel River,
Mokelumne River, San Joaquin River, &
North Fork Kings River

385

MILES NEW OUTSTANDING WATERS DESIGNATED

ACROSS 15 RIVERS (CO)

Upper and Lower Colorado, Eagle,
Yampa, & Roaring Fork Watersheds

113

NEW MILES FOREST SERVICE WILD AND SCENIC PROTECTIONS

ACROSS 22 RIVER SEGMENTS (CO)
including:

Taylor River, Uncompahgre Gorge,
San Miguel River, Anthracite Creek,
Oh Be Joyful, & East River

4.25

MILES RIVERSIDE LAND PURCHASED

PROTECTING TWO ACCESS POINTS
AND THE WATERSHED

(WV)
Lower Big Sandy Creek

4

DAMS REMOVED

RESTORING 45 MILES OF PREVIOUSLY
DEWATERED WHITewater AND
OPENING OVER 400 MILES
OF SALMON HABITAT (CA/OR)
Klamath River



2

COURT CASES TO PROTECT RIVERS AND OUR RIGHT TO ACCESS THEM

• Nolichucky River (NC/TN)
• Watauga River (NC)



RIVER SAFETY

- Published revised and newly illustrated river safety code
- Updated National Whitewater Inventory gage system



NATIONWIDE RIVERS INVENTORY UPDATED

- NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CREATED
INTERACTIVE MAP OF FREE-FLOWING RIVERS
- A result of American Whitewater advocacy
 - Aimed at maintaining the outstanding values of potential future wild and scenic rivers



DEADBEAT DAM LAW PROJECT LAUNCHED INITIATIVE TO STOP DAM OWNERS FROM ABANDONING STRUCTURES WITHOUT RESTORING THE RIVER

Somersworth Dam (NH/ME)

1

PREVENTED BOATING BAN PROTECTING ACCESS ON 25 MILES (MT)

Fish Creek

AMERICAN WHITEWATER 7,000+ MEMBERS · 85 AFFILIATE CLUBS · 5,000+ VOLUNTEER HOURS

OUR COMMUNITY

CHAMPIONS: 100+
Board members
Key volunteers
Regional coordinators

PATRONS: 2,400+
Major donors
Upper-tier partners
Affiliate Clubs
Enduring River Circle
Members

CONTRIBUTORS: 4,850+
Members and
small donors
Contributing partners
Volunteers
Web contributors

ENDORSERS: 47,000+
Newsletter subscribers
AW web user accounts
Action takers
Event attendees

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

MEMBERS: 7,200
SUPPORTERS: 72,000
AFFILIATE CLUBS: 70

Photo: Riley Seebeck

NATIONAL

Investing in Safe Enjoyment of Rivers

American Whitewater was thrilled to work with river safety experts and a talented illustrator to refresh our Safety Code. This simple how-to guide for safe paddling now includes more craft types, engaging illustrations, and a modern, shareable format. Breathing new life into the Safety Code allows us to introduce its old and new lessons to the current generation of whitewater boaters.



American Whitewater worked with a team of programmers to fully redo our online river gage system in 2024. The new gage service is more up-to-date, reliable, affordable, clearly displayed, and is easier to maintain and innovate on. Color-coded graphs create a more powerful river safety and enjoyment tool for our users. Thanks to member donations and volunteer programmers, the American Whitewater river gage program is better than ever.

THE BIG FOUR

Ways to Avoid Injuries and Incidents

The infographic is titled 'THE BIG FOUR' and lists four safety tips for whitewater boating. Each tip is accompanied by an illustration and a numbered red circle. The tips are: 1. **DRESS FOR THE SWIM**: Always wear a life jacket. 2. **BOAT WITH A TEAM**: Set safety and help others. 3. **KNOW BEFORE YOU GO**: Research the river. Avoid high water, dams and trees. 4. **SOBER IS SAFER**: Stay alert and think clearly. The American Whitewater logo is at the bottom right.

Photo: Justin Harris

SOUTHEAST

Hurricane Helene reshaped and even relocated the rapids in the Nolichucky River's rugged gorge. This created great new rapids and surf waves that are enjoyable at lower flows than what was possible to recreate on before the flood. The hurricane also damaged a rail line that runs along the river through the gorge. In hopes of rebuilding their tracks more cheaply, the behemoth CSX Corporation immediately began mining rock directly out of the riverbed—a practice that severely damaged the natural river channel. When all the agencies bowed to CSX's political power, American Whitewater sued. Through dogged advocacy and working closely with local river advocates, American Whitewater stepped up to save one of the region's paddling gems from unnecessary damage.



Photo: Steven McGrady



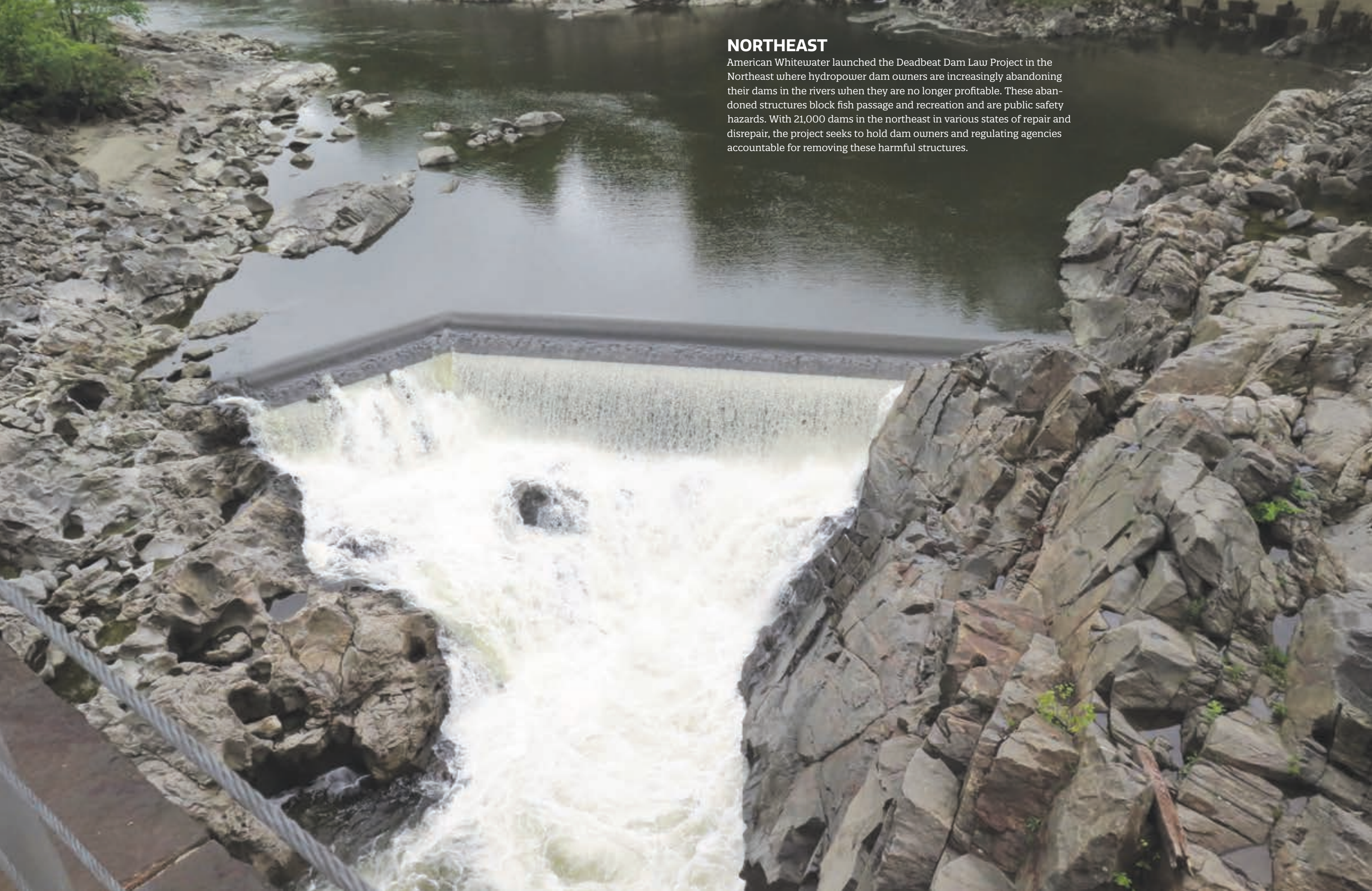
Big Sandy
Photo: Justin Harris

MID-ATLANTIC

American Whitewater worked closely with volunteers Charlie Walbridge and Dave Hough to negotiate the purchase of 4.25 miles of the iconic Lower Big Sandy's left bank from a developer. Thanks to the generosity of the paddling community, we raised the necessary funds and made it happen! The land will now be protected in perpetuity.

NORTHEAST

American Whitewater launched the Deadbeat Dam Law Project in the Northeast where hydropower dam owners are increasingly abandoning their dams in the rivers when they are no longer profitable. These abandoned structures block fish passage and recreation and are public safety hazards. With 21,000 dams in the northeast in various states of repair and disrepair, the project seeks to hold dam owners and regulating agencies accountable for removing these harmful structures.



NORTHERN ROCKIES

We don't take kindly to agencies proposing to ban paddling to benefit fishing, which happened on Montana's Fish Creek in 2024. American Whitewater rallied paddlers and collaborated with partners to push back on this ill-conceived proposal, and responded with robust scientific and legal analysis. The state backed away from its would-be precedent-setting proposal, and Montana's rivers remain public and free.



SOUTHERN ROCKIES

In June 2024, we successfully designated 385 miles of Outstanding Waters on high priority recreational and ecological rivers and creeks in the Colorado and Yampa river basins, securing the highest level protections for water quality afforded by the state of Colorado. Since 2020, American Whitewater has become a leader in water quality protection efforts in the state and the Arkansas River basin is our next priority.



CALIFORNIA

From the far north to the far south of California, American Whitewater worked to expand and defend Wild and Scenic River protections. In the north, we thoroughly reviewed and commented on two new Bureau of Land Management plans—formally objecting to one that fell short of protecting several of Northern California’s rivers, including the newly undammed Klamath, and securing improvements to stream eligibility in the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument. In the south, we successfully concluded years of advocacy and achieved formal recognition of whitewater boating as a protected value on the wilderness reach of Piru Creek, just outside Los Angeles.

Piru Creek, CA
Photo: Scott Harding

PACIFIC NORTHWEST

For the past century, hydroelectric dams have harmed the health of the Klamath River ecosystem. Now, with the removal of four major dams, the landscape is healing rapidly, and new opportunities to experience the river are emerging. American Whitewater is proud to reflect on more than 20 years of work on this effort—led by the Indigenous communities who call the Klamath watershed home.

Klamath River, Wards Canyon
Photo: Scott Harding



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

Barry Adams
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Lifetime Members

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

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Red Creek through Dolly Sods, WV
 Photo: Justin Harris

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						Howard and Joan Thullbery	Art Zemach
						Newton Tilson	Craig Ziegler
						Marc Tohir	Andy Zimmerman
							Mikko and Oskar Zuchner

In Honor of...

Contributions to American Whitewater were made in honor of the following people in 2023:

Zach Allin
American Whitewater's partnership in stopping the Rincon Gravel Mine on the Colorado River in 2023
The American Whitewater Staff
Gus Anderson
Justin Barstow
Becky and Quinn
Richard Bowers
Eric Brooks
Camp Mushroom Bubbles
Canoe Cruisers Association
Tom Christopher
Bill Cross
Nancy Custer
Chris Daly
Mareike Delley
Phil and Mary DeRiemer
Henry Dorris
David Christopher Ennis, jr.
Green Race
Vincent Grube
Chris Harjes
Larry Holmes
Jennifer Hostetler
The great women and men who guide rafts down the Hudson River in NY State
Marc Hunt and Cat Potts
Iowa Paddling Clubs
Kyle Irby

Geoff Johnson
Alden Kahn
Kai Z. Kinder
Klamath River Project
David Konigsberg
Michael Martin
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Megi Morishita
New York State Beaverfest participants
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Aaron Ollivier and Staci Gunter
Bethany Overfield
Taylor Parsons
Stephanie Rogers
Jim Snyder and Attila Szilagyi
ALL Southeastern paddlers
Donald J Trump
Decades of Upper Yough paddlers
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Laura Wilson
Work of Harris
John Zinn
Kai Zinn

In Memory of...

Contributions to American Whitewater were made in memory of these people in 2023.

Wes Albin
Augustus (Gus) Anderson
Kathleen Anderson
Shelby Arno
Jack Baker
Alan Baldwin
Amie Begg
Peter Heyn Borgmeister
David Brown
Walt Carlson
Ed Conning
Curt Crittendon
Maria Daniel
Daniel DeLaVergne
Ella Dingman
David Eckardt
Chris Fleming
Derrel Fortner
Grandpa
John "Gordo" Henderson
George Henry
Henry
Ann Hitchcock
Dr. Paul Thayer Holmes
Sherwood Horine
Gavin Jostad

Billy Keen
Chuck Kern
Pat Kingman
Ron Knipling
Kevan Krasnoff
1st Lt. Nathan Krissoff, USMC
Michael P. Martin
Beth McVay
Nute Mullings
Ricky Brandon Owens
Alan Panebaker
Penelope
Ursy Potter
Greg Mallet-Prevost
Rick Quaintance
Scotty Richards
Sarah Ruhlen
Leo Slaggie
Charles (Chuck) Still
Chuck Still
Cecil Tickamyer
Chris Tulley
Dylan Wallace
Craig Wolfe, Sr.
Sean Wood
Bonnie Mae Wright

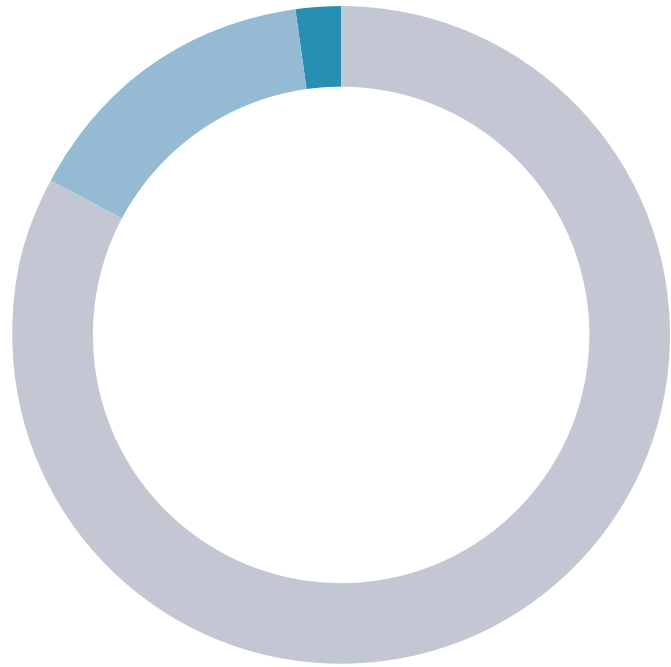
2024 Statement of Activities

	UNRESTRICTED	TEMPORARILY RESTRICTED	TOTAL 2024	TOTAL 2023
PUBLIC SUPPORT				
Contributions	\$632,936.38	\$169,369.75	\$802,306	\$966,437
OTHER REVENUE				
Membership dues	\$451,188.00		\$451,188	\$488,840
Advertising	\$-		\$-	
Grants	\$-	\$903,345.61	\$903,346	\$706,830
Events	\$106,214.19		\$106,214	\$109,769
Industry Partnerships / Sponsorships	\$56,701.33		\$56,701	\$66,943
Products	\$81,224.79		\$81,225	\$112,446
Investment Gains/(losses)	\$1,589.77	\$27,728.09	\$29,318	\$30,813
In-Kind Contributions	\$461,539.97		\$461,540	\$65,494
Interest & Dividends	\$23,326.92		\$23,327	\$29,038
Misc. Income	\$-		\$-	\$3,658
Net Assets Released from Restriction	\$143,511.26	\$(143,511.26)	\$-	\$-
Total Support and Revenue	\$1,958,233	\$956,932	\$2,915,165	\$2,580,268
EXPENSES:				
Program Services:				
Total Program Services	\$1,861,726		\$1,861,726	\$1,642,109
SUPPORTING SERVICES:				
General & Administrative	\$343,413.80		\$343,414	\$422,683
Fundraising	\$36,511.41		\$36,511	\$141,167
Total Supporting Services	\$379,925	\$-	\$379,925	\$563,850
Total Expenses	\$2,241,651		\$2,241,651	\$2,205,959
Total Change in Net Assets	\$(283,418)	\$956,932	\$673,514	\$374,309

Statement of Financial Position

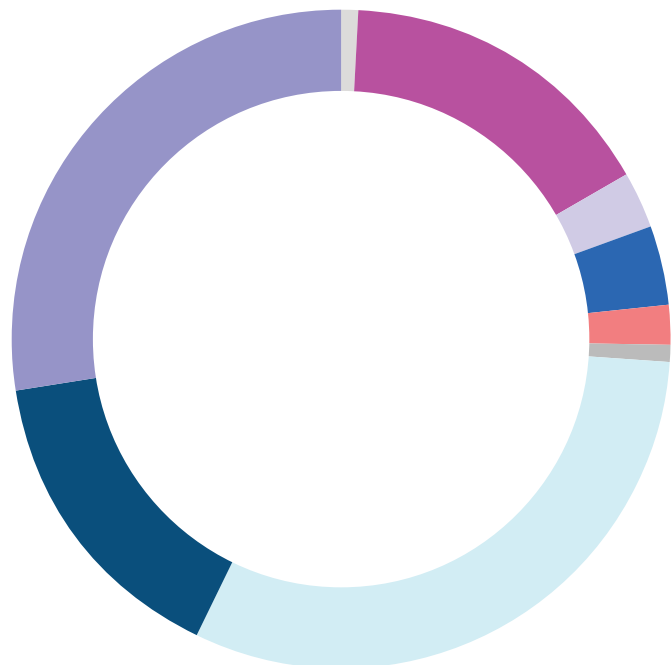
ASSETS	2024	2023	2022
CURRENT ASSETS			
Cash	\$840,421.36	\$1,398,283	\$1,135,463
Accounts Receivable	\$325.00	\$13,524	\$19,583
Grants Receivable	\$201,085.84	\$106,877	\$27,649
Investments	\$781,329.26	\$819,357	\$810,988
Prepaid Expenses	\$200.00	\$17,722	\$27,679
Inventory	\$52,295.85	\$30,083	\$33,668
Total Current Assets	\$1,875,657.31	\$2,385,846	\$2,055,030
LONG-TERM ASSETS			
Lands held for protection			
Whitewater Estates, KY (Elkhorn)	\$31,367.00	\$31,367	\$31,367
Warson Island, TN (Watauga)	\$17,414.00	\$17,414	\$17,414
Craig County, VA (John's Creek)	\$9,536.00	\$9,536	\$9,536
Preston County, WV (Big Sandy)	\$378,337.84	\$5,000	\$-
Total for Lands held for protection	\$436,654.84	\$63,317	\$58,317
Computer equipment, net	\$38,403.72	\$70,181	\$93,467
Total Long-Term Assets	\$475,058.56	\$133,498	\$151,784
Total Assets	\$2,350,716	\$2,519,344	\$2,206,814
LIABILITIES AND FUND BALANCES			
CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Accounts Payable	\$108,519.42	\$39,707	\$70,576
Deferred Revenues	\$114,672.84	\$171,380	\$217,528
Payroll Liabilities	\$43,618.00	\$42,200	\$44,432
Total Current Liabilities	\$266,810.26	\$253,287	\$332,536
NET ASSETS			
Unrestricted Net Assets	\$1,624,824.88	\$1,508,486	\$1,458,802
Restricted Net Assets	\$459,080.73	\$757,571	\$415,476
Total Net Assets	\$2,083,906	\$2,266,057	\$1,874,278
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	\$2,350,716	\$2,519,344	\$2,206,814

2024 Functional Expenses



- Fundraising 2%
- General & Administrative 15%
- Program Services 83%

2024 Revenue Sources



- Misc. Income <1%
- Interest & Dividends 1%
- In-Kind Contributions 16%
- Products 3%
- Events 4%
- Industry Partnerships/Sponsorships 2%
- Investment Gains/(Losses) 1%
- Grants 31%
- Membership dues 15%
- Contributions 28%

American Whitewater Board and Staff 2024

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- | | |
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- | | |
|--|---|
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Photo: Riley Seebeck