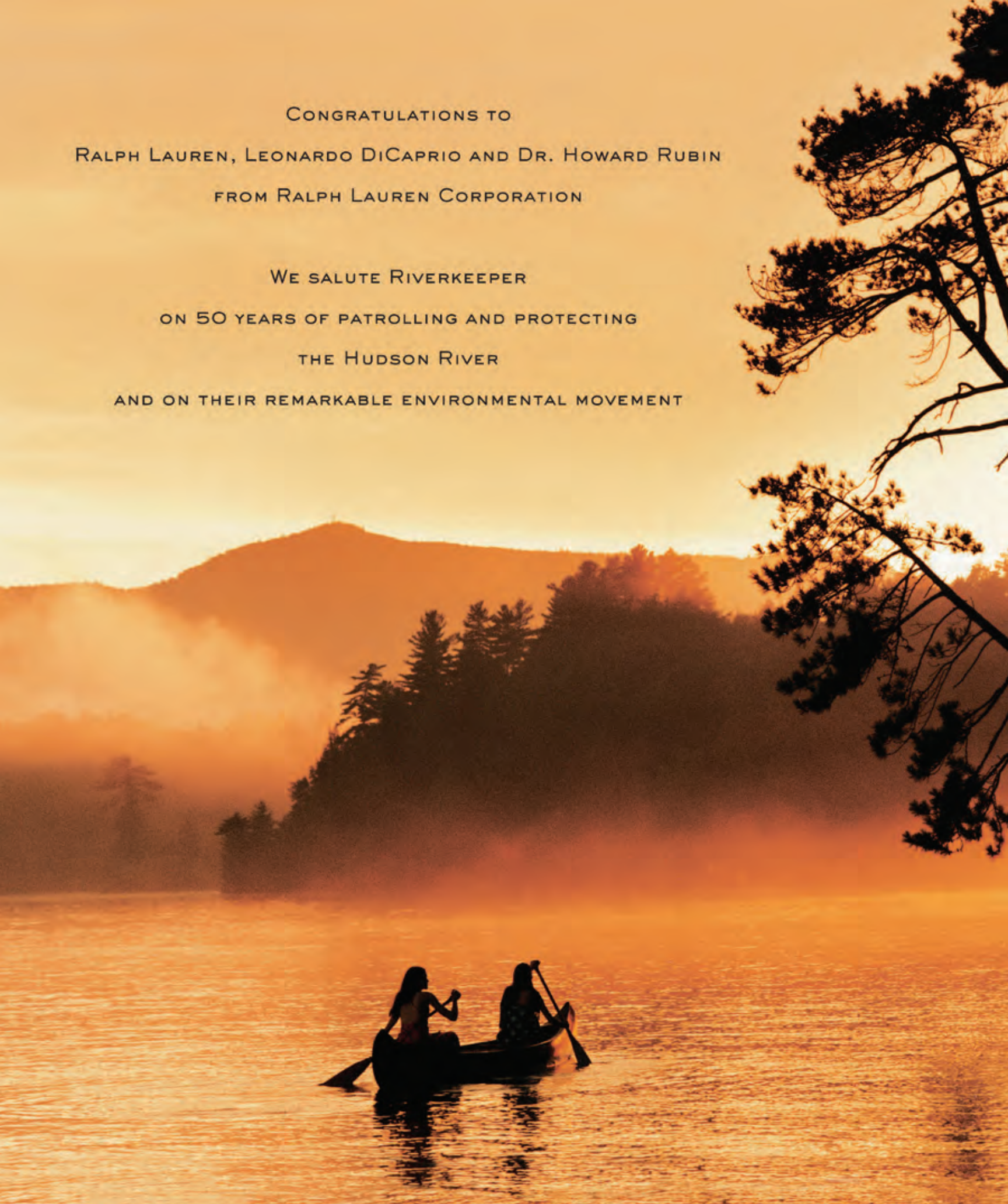


**RIVERKEEPER.**

CONGRATULATIONS TO  
RALPH LAUREN, LEONARDO DiCAPRIO AND DR. HOWARD RUBIN  
FROM RALPH LAUREN CORPORATION

WE SALUTE RIVERKEEPER  
ON 50 YEARS OF PATROLLING AND PROTECTING  
THE HUDSON RIVER  
AND ON THEIR REMARKABLE ENVIRONMENTAL MOVEMENT



## PRESIDENT'S LETTER



### In 1966, the Hudson River was dying from pollution and neglect.

Run-down factories choked the Hudson with hazardous waste, poisoning fish, threatening drinking water supplies, and ruining world-class havens for boating and swimming.

America's "First River" had become little more than an industrial sewer.

By 1966, most people had given up on the Hudson, but not everyone. The Hudson's fishermen, whose catch literally reeked from the oil spilling daily into their cherished river, decided they'd had enough. They banded together and used a decades-old federal law to turn the tide from ruin to recovery on the river that was their livelihood, their home and their haven.

This was the founding of the Hudson River Fishermen's Association – now Riverkeeper – and it created a ripple effect of awareness, a wave of action that's still building.

Today, 50 years later, Riverkeeper fights along side thousands of citizen scientists and activists to reclaim the Hudson and ensure that over 9 million New Yorkers have clean, safe drinking water. Pollution levels are down, and swimming and boating are back. Riverkeeper even inspired a worldwide "waterkeeper" movement protecting tens of thousands of miles of rivers and coastlines on six continents.

But the Hudson's recovery is still fragile, still incomplete. Our fish remain too toxic to eat; pollution levels spike with every rainfall. Mammoth cuts in government spending threaten to reverse a half-century of water quality gains. And, Riverkeeper is being tested like never before, as a new generation of Hudson River activists face up to the challenges of antiquated power plants, climate change and emerging toxic pollutants.

Riverkeeper's vision for the next 50 years is a Hudson River teeming with life, loved and enjoyed by millions, with safe, abundant drinking water for all our communities. Join us as a volunteer, donor or involved citizen, and we can turn this vision, which once seemed unattainable to all but a hardy few, into reality.

*Paul Gallay*

Paul Gallay - President and Hudson riverkeeper



**RIVERKEEPER.**  
Help us celebrate our anniversary  
#50onHudson

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**Get Involved**

**Members**

A gift of any amount makes you a member, and full membership benefits start with annual donations of \$40. Our Sustainers Program includes members who make monthly donations—the most valuable kind of gift because we can count on your continued support while reducing overhead costs. Contact Kristie Nilsson at ext. 243.

**Junior Council**

The Junior Council is an active group of young professionals who serve as Riverkeeper ambassadors and are dedicated to increasing Riverkeeper's awareness through events, social media and fundraising. Contact Missy Falkenberg at ext. 229.

**Gifts of Stock**

Riverkeeper accepts gifts of appreciated stock, which are sold upon receipt to support our work and programs. Contact Monica Gutierrez at ext. 246.

**Estate Planning**

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, bonds or other tangible assets. Contact Geoffrey Chorbajian at ext. 253.

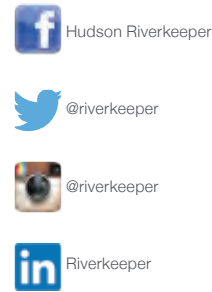
**Business Membership and Workplace Giving**

Businesses support Riverkeeper in a variety of ways including through direct donations, corporate sponsorship, purchase of tickets or tables to our annual gala, The Fishermen's Ball, and through participation in our corporate social responsibility, volunteerism and engagement programs. A growing number of employees for major corporations and government agencies have selected Riverkeeper as the beneficiary of charitable giving via payroll deductions. Contact Kristie Nilsson at ext. 243.

**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.

**Join Us On Social Media**



**Contact Us**

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Email: info@riverkeeper.org Mailing Address:  
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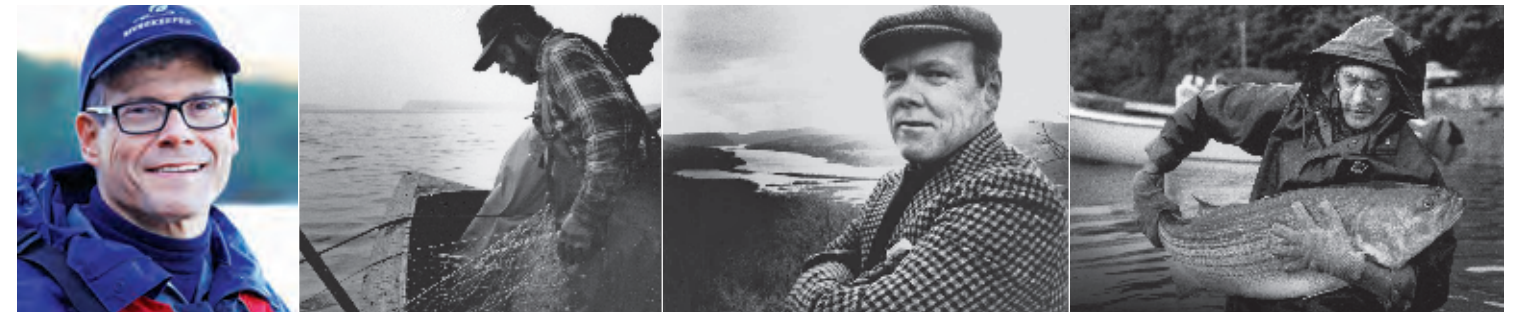
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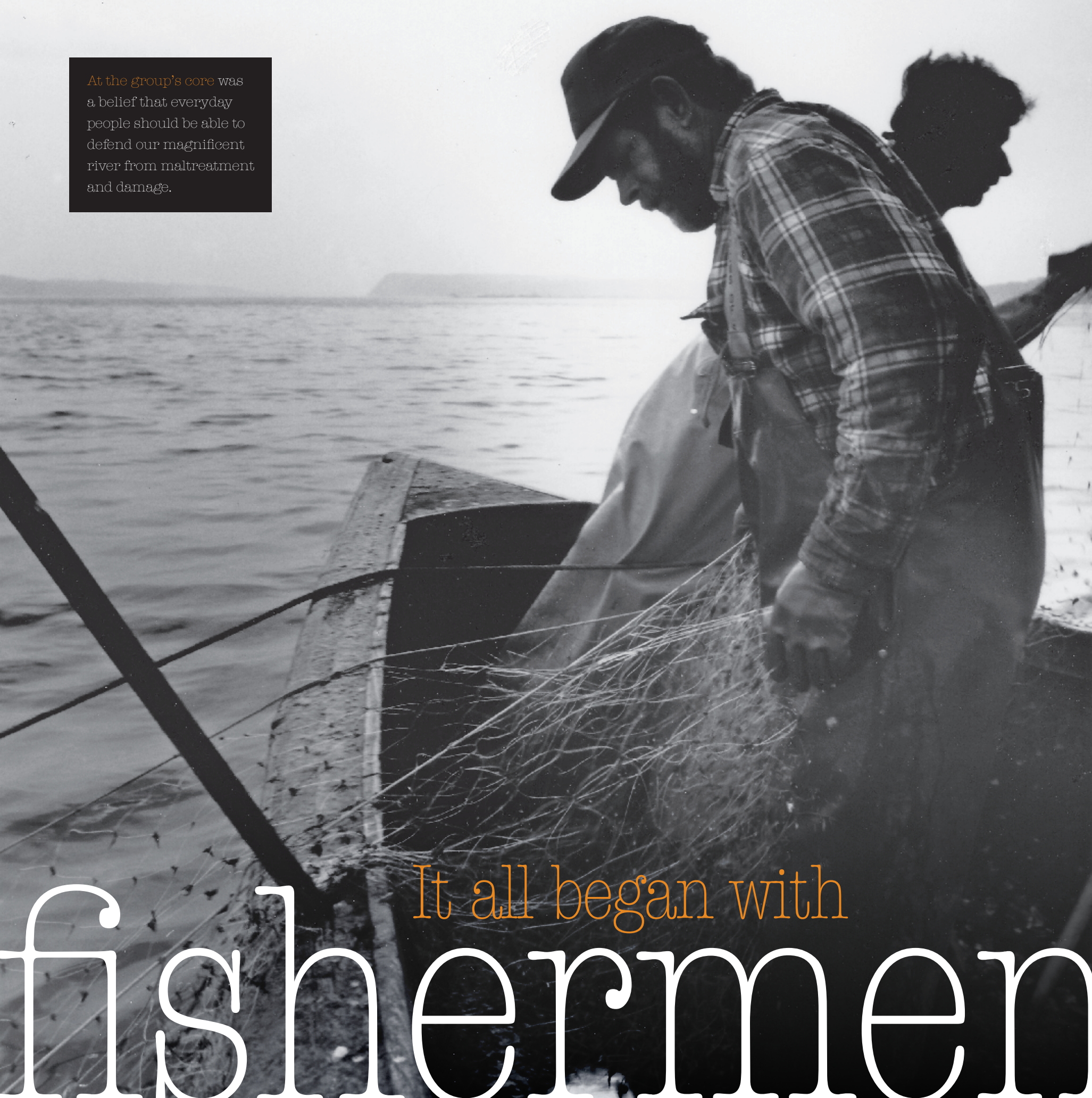
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**OUR MISSION:** RIVERKEEPER IS A MEMBER-SUPPORTED WATCHDOG ORGANIZATION DEDICATED TO DEFENDING THE ECOLOGICAL INTEGRITY OF THE HUDSON RIVER AND ITS TRIBUTARIES, AND TO SAFEGUARDING THE DRINKING WATER OF NINE MILLION NEW YORK CITY AND HUDSON VALLEY RESIDENTS.

At the group's core was a belief that everyday people should be able to defend our magnificent river from maltreatment and damage.



It all began with

# fishermen

In March 1966, a small group of fishermen, concerned citizens and scientists met at a Crotonville American Legion Hall with the intent to reverse the decline of the Hudson by reclaiming it from polluters. With them was Bob Boyle, a senior writer at Sports Illustrated.

At this meeting, Boyle announced that he had discovered two forgotten laws: The Rivers and Harbors Act of 1888 and The Refuse Act of 1899. These laws forbade pollution of navigable waters in the United States, imposed fines for polluters, and provided a bounty reward for whoever reported the violation. After listening to Boyle speak, the blue-collar audience agreed to organize as the Hudson River Fishermen's Association, and dedicate themselves to tracking down the river's polluters and bringing them to justice.

The grassroots actions taken by the fishermen went against convention. While other environmental groups relied on protests and civil disobedience, the HRFA sought to protect the Hudson through advocacy and law enforcement. At the group's core was a belief that everyday people should be able to defend our magnificent river from maltreatment and damage. The Fishermen's actions to protect the water demonstrated that ordinary citizens had legal standing in protecting our natural environment.

The Fishermen were as good as their word. Their first target was Penn Central Railroad, which for years dumped into the mouth of the Croton River, a Hudson tributary. HRFA informed the Army Corps of Engineers and the U.S. Attorney, calling for enforcement of The Refuse Act, but were ignored. So the HRFA took the law into their own hands: They sued Penn Central, the Army Corps of Engineers and the Secretary of the Army. This caught the attention of the U.S. Attorney's office, which then joined the HRFA in its suit against Penn Central. The HRFA prevailed, and the fine provided the first bounty afforded to a private organization from a polluter.

Emboldened, the HRFA distributed thousands of copies of "Bag a Polluter" postcards for citizen whistleblowers to fill in and to mail back to the organization. Soon, they were collecting even larger bounties against polluters such as Anaconda Wire and Copper, Standard Brands, Ciba-Geigy, American Cyanamid, and Westchester County. The Fishermen also joined with Scenic Hudson to stop Con Ed's proposed hydroelectric plant on the face of Storm King Mountain. It was, in large part, the discovery of a striped bass spawning ground near the proposed site that ultimately prevented the building of the facility.

These victories provided new funding to expand HRFA's influence along the Hudson. Meanwhile Boyle — inspired by the British tradition of posting "riverkeepers" on private trout and salmon streams — appointed Tom Whyatt as the first Riverkeeper in 1972. Whyatt patrolled the Hudson by canoe and inspired the People's Pipewatch project, checking for compliance with the newly enacted Clean Water Act. In keeping with Boyle's vision of a Riverkeeper "on the river the length of the year, nailing polluters on the spot," HRFA found its first full-time Riverkeeper in John Cronin in 1983 and built the first Riverkeeper patrol boat that same year.

Soon after, acting on a tip from a New York State Trooper, Cronin learned that Exxon tankers were flushing out jet fuel residue and filling up with river water to take to a refinery in Aruba. Cronin began to collect data and evidence. His proof was so thorough

that Exxon had little choice but to settle, paying \$1.5 million to establish the Hudson River Improvement Fund — which by 2016 had funded \$7 million in projects — and \$500,000 to HRFA.

In 1986, HRFA merged with its growing Riverkeeper program to form one group to protect the river. A year later, the Pace Environmental Litigation Clinic was created under the direction of Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., who had become the HRFA's Chief Prosecuting Attorney three years earlier. Since then, Riverkeeper has brought hundreds of polluters to justice and forced them to spend hundreds of millions of dollars remediating the Hudson.

In 1997, Kennedy negotiated the \$1.5 billion New York City Watershed Memorandum of Agreement on behalf of upstate communities, environmentalists and New York City watershed consumers. It is regarded as an international model in stakeholder consensus negotiations and sustainable development.

Over its history, Riverkeeper has helped to establish globally recognized standards for waterway and watershed protection and serves as a prototype for the growing Waterkeeper movement. And in our 50th Anniversary year, we're reaching new levels of achievement and setting big new goals.

Our strategy for success hasn't changed much since we started out as the Hudson River Fishermen's Association in 1966: Support the grassroots. Be data driven. Don't flinch when the going gets tough. — PAUL GALLAY

## Birth of a movement, rebirth of our waterways

When we celebrate the start of Riverkeeper, we celebrate the start of an idea that took hold across the globe. The Waterkeeper movement is an incredible tale of how citizen action can change the world.

Its main characters are environmental heroes and local community advocates. It is set on rivers, lakes, streams, and other waterways around the world. And its moral is simple: when people come together for a common cause and believe in the power of possibility, there is nothing they cannot accomplish.

At Waterkeeper Alliance, we trace our roots back to that first gathering of the Hudson River Fishermen and their basic belief that the waterways belong to the people and not to any one person or corporation. We also trace our roots to Bob Boyle's call for a Riverkeeper — the eyes and ears for the community and a voice for the river.

Riverkeeper's success led a number of citizens and organizations to emulate its model on their waterways. Before long, there was a Waterkeeper on the Long Island Sound, the Delaware River, San Francisco Bay, Cook Inlet in Alaska and more. These steadfast advocates learned from each other, shared stories and strategies, and stood side-by-side in the fight for clean water.

These early "keepers" determined that it would be helpful to form an alliance providing them with resources, helping them with training and advocating with them on common issues. Riverkeeper's Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. became President of this Waterkeeper Alliance, and continues to tirelessly promote this movement at home and abroad.

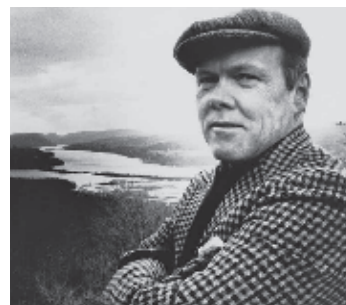
Today, there are more than 280 Waterkeepers on six continents, patrolling and protecting nearly 2.5 million square miles of watersheds worldwide.

While problems and threats remain, the Hudson River is now an icon of ecosystem revitalization. Riverkeeper believed in the power of possibility, and that story is still being written. Like the Fishermen before them, our Waterkeepers around the globe are poised to fight for clean water for the next 50 years and beyond.

— WATERKEEPER ALLIANCE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR MARC YAGGI

# Riverkeeper: An incomplete history\*

\*These are just a few selected chapters of a boundless story that's still being written.



**1966** In March, the Hudson River Fishermen's Association holds its first public meeting at the Parker-Bale American Legion Hall in Crotonville, where Robert H. Boyle suggests that the organization work to track down polluters and bring them to justice.



**1969** HRFA investigates the Anaconda Wire and Copper Company in Hastings-on-Hudson for dumping oil and solvents into the river.

In 1973, the organization collected a \$200,000 bounty as part of a settlement, but ends up with only \$20,000 after federal agencies petition for a share. One of Riverkeeper's oldest campaigns, the case culminated in a 2014 cleanup agreement between NY State and Atlantic Richfield.

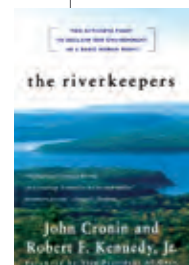


**1970** HRFA President Richie Garrett addresses an audience of 100,000 at the first Earth Day at Union Square in New York City.

**1972** The federal government passes the Clean Water Act. HRFA starts a Riverkeeper program and appoints Tom Whyatt as the first Riverkeeper.



**1968** HRFA sues Penn Central Railroad, whose pipes at Croton Harmon have been discharging oil into the Croton River. HRFA wins its case and collects \$2,000, the first bounty ever paid under the 1899 Refuse Act.



**1997** Riverkeeper helps negotiate and signs the Watershed Memorandum of Agreement, which incorporates the concerns of the city, upstate watershed communities and environmentalist to provide for the protection of NYC's watershed without the need for a filtration system.

*The Riverkeepers*, a book by Kennedy and Cronin about their first-hand accounts as advocates for the Hudson, is published, and Time Magazine dubs them "Heroes for the Planet."



**2000** As its first Boat Captain, John Lipscomb provides Riverkeeper's first full-time presence on the river aboard the R. Ian Fletcher, a 36-foot wooden patrol and research vessel, enabling enforcement, deterrence and outreach.

Riverkeeper and its partners successfully sue the NYC DEP for polluting Esopus Creek, a once-pristine trout stream in the Catskills section of the watershed.



**2001** Riverkeeper launches a campaign to force the closure of the Indian Point based on concerns related to safety, security, and environmental impacts.



**1975** Hudson River fish are found to be contaminated with PCBs, the result of long-term dumping by GE. The DEC begins proceedings against GE for illegally releasing PCBs and HRFA, Clearwater and NRDC join as intervening parties. GE is found guilty of two of three charges and required to create a \$7 million cleanup fund, build pollution abatement facilities, and discontinue its PCBs use by 1977.

The EPA requires Hudson River power plants at Indian Point, Roseton, Bowline to install the "best technology available" (closed cycle cooling) to reduce their impacts on Hudson River fish. Their antiquated once-through cooling systems suck in river water and kill billions of fish in the process each year.

**2003** Riverkeeper persuades the EPA to establish a 153-mile "No Discharge" zone on the Hudson, preventing boats from releasing sewage into the river.

**2002** Riverkeeper leads a coalition filing suit against the DEC to force it to reconsider the outdated Clean Water Act permits of four power plants, which continue to use antiquated once-through cooling systems.



**1976** The DEC bans all recreational and commercial fishing (except for baitfish) in the upper Hudson from the Fort Edward Dam to the Federal Dam at Troy because of PCB-contaminated fish. Hudson River commercial fishing is banned from Fort Edward to the Battery, with the exceptions of baitfish, Atlantic sturgeon over 4 feet, goldfish, and American shad.



**1980** Con Edison abandons plans to build its hydroelectric facility on Storm King Mountain. It is ordered to install devices to prevent entrainment of fish on its intake screens at Indian Point. In exchange, it is temporarily excused from building closed cycle cooling towers at its three power plants. Indian Point has managed to avoid compliance ever since.



**2005** The Albany Steam Generating Station, which used once-through cooling, is retired, and replaced by the Bethlehem Energy Center. Riverkeeper negotiates with new owner PG&E to adopt closed-cycle cooling that reduces fish kills by 98% and state-of-the-art pollution control technology.

**2004** Riverkeeper and six residents of Greenpoint, Brooklyn file suit against ExxonMobil for violation of the Clean Water Act and Resource Conservation and Recovery Act. Since the 1940s, over 17 million gallons of oil have been leaking from oil companies' facilities beneath Greenpoint and into Newtown Creek. The six-year long initiative results in a settlement with Exxon and New York State requiring full cleanup of the largest oil spill in New York history. Under the agreement, Greenpoint residents will be the beneficiaries of a \$19.5 million environmental benefit plan.



**1981** HRFA joins the suit against Westway, a \$2 billion proposal to construct a highway on pilings in the Hudson River, replacing the West Side Highway. The projected construction would kill 64% of the striped bass habitat in the process. Bio-statistician Dr. R. Ian Fletcher is brought in as an expert witness to explain the fish data which has been deliberately misinterpreted.



**1983** The HRFA hires its first full-time Riverkeeper, John Cronin, and builds the first patrol boat.

**2007** Entergy submits its relicensing application to the NRC for a 20-year extension of Indian Point's two reactors. Riverkeeper, the NYS Attorney General and DEC formally oppose relicensing. In 2008, the NRC grants Riverkeeper a hearing on three of the five contentions in its petition.

**2008** The U.S. Supreme Court agrees to hear Riverkeeper's case against the EPA on whether cost-benefit analyses can be used to determine the best technology available for power plants.

Riverkeeper releases *The Status of Fish Populations and the Ecology of the Hudson*, a report produced by Pisces Conservation Ltd. It reveals that 10 of 13 key Hudson River fish species studied have declined in abundance since the 1980s.

Riverkeeper launches water quality testing program and publishes its first findings with Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory.



**1984** Robert F. Kennedy Jr. becomes HRFA's Chief Prosecuting Attorney.



HRFA notifies its intent to sue Exxon, which is discharging polluted salt water ballast from its tankers into the Hudson, refilling its tanks with fresh water, bringing it back to Aruba to sell as drinking water. In a negotiated settlement, Exxon pays \$1.5 million to New York State to establish the Hudson River Improvement Fund, and \$500,000 to HRFA. Half the money is used to fund the Riverkeeper program.

**1985** Kennedy and HRFA bring charges against 16 major polluters of Quassaick Creek, which empties into the Hudson River near Newburgh. All the cases settle, netting Riverkeeper \$200,000 which goes towards a Quassaick Creek Fund.



**2010** New York imposes a precedent-setting moratorium on gas drilling using the controversial horizontal hydraulic fracturing or "fracking" method, after Riverkeeper's Fractured Communities report reveals widespread environmental damage caused by fracking in other states.

After years of lobbying by Riverkeeper and its partner groups, the EPA issued a historic directive to GE to remedy PCB contamination.

# RIVERKEEPER

1986 HRFA and Riverkeeper merge under the Riverkeeper name.



**1987** The Pace Environmental Litigation Clinic is created under the direction of Robert F. Kennedy Jr., allowing third year law students to practice law under Riverkeeper's supervising attorneys.

Riverkeeper files a Clean Water Act citizens' suit against Westchester County for violating a 1972 federal court order to phase out the Croton Landfill which has been leaching toxins into the Hudson River. The county settles, shuts down the landfill, remediates the leachate, and restores the Croton Marsh.



**1992** The National Alliance of River, Sound and Baykeepers, based on the Riverkeeper model, is established.

Riverkeeper wins a suit against New York City, filed because the city's Tannersville sewage plant in the Catskills is a chronic polluter and because the city dumps excessive chemical disinfectants into the Rondout Reservoir to deal with algae.

**1995** DEC modifies its fishing ban on the Hudson to allow "catch and release" in the Upper Hudson from Hudson Falls to the Troy Dam.



**2013** Years of advocacy by Riverkeeper and local partners produced a landmark \$506 million Superfund cleanup for the most polluted arm of the Hudson River estuary, the Gowanus Canal.



**2014** The Andrew Cuomo administration bans fracking in New York State.



**2012** Riverkeeper helps get Endangered Species Act protections for Atlantic Sturgeon, new fishing regulations for herring, and completes field work for an American shad study.

Our lobbying triggers a new law requiring public notification when sewage plants malfunction, leading to \$425 million in funding for plant upgrades.

DEC marine biologist Andy Kahnle, now retired, carries a powerful striped bass into deeper water after tagging the fish on shore at Esopus Meadows.



Our hope for the next 50?

# A Wild River.

Despite all the work Riverkeeper has done, the Hudson has fewer fish today than in 1966.

Fifty years ago the fishermen were determined to protect fish from being contaminated by industrial pollutants. They were concerned about the poison in the fish they were catching. That's what was driving Riverkeeper then.

We won't forget that goal. We want the bodies and flesh of these fish to be free of contamination, for their health and ours. But we have to add to our effort, because some species have diminished to the point that there is concern about their ability to even exist in the Hudson. Atlantic sturgeon, for example. American shad, for another.

When our experts looked at the data on American shad, they said: "This population has all the characteristics of a population heading towards local extinction."

If you wanted to annihilate a species like herring, you'd do exactly what we did on the Hudson. No need for costly, risky, offshore fishing boats. Drop a net in the tributaries where they spawn. Get them just before have a chance to reproduce.

Some reports say there are only about 1,000 or so spawning age Atlantic sturgeon left in Hudson. When your eggs are a high-society appetizer, you're doomed. We stopped killing them in 1996. So in the last few years, we've begun to see the grandchildren of the first fish that were spared. Wouldn't it be great if our children could witness a recovery of Atlantic sturgeon in the Hudson? Wouldn't it be great if these magnificent fish were to survive as more than just a symbol on the road signs for the Estuary?

Estuaries like the Hudson – in particular the Hudson – are spawning grounds and nurseries for species that are critical to the larger ecosystem of the North Atlantic. Riverkeeper will have to play a stronger role with regional management authorities, so fish protected in the Hudson are not killed elsewhere because of fragmented or disjointed management.

We were an important player in the closure and harvest restrictions over the last decade. The commercial harvest of sturgeon was outlawed in the 1990s. The harvest of shad was stopped in 2009, and restrictions were placed on the harvest of river herring a couple years later.

Our lawyers stand up in court devoted to reducing mortality from power plant cooling intakes. Every living creature that gets sucked in through intake water is killed by either the violence of the intake or the heat. Several of these "killer plants" have closed, and a number operate on a limited basis. Any new power plant built today would not be allowed to use once-through cooling.

In spite of our efforts, Indian Point, the mother of all killers, still operates. Riverkeeper battles in court, and we hope to prevail. The water taken in by Indian Point daily, I'm told, far exceeds the entire amount consumed by the City of New York every day. Every living creature in that water is exterminated, every day, every week, every month, going back decades. That's not how you protect a nursery. That's how you kill a nursery.

It's essential to continue our vigilance and oppose projects that would be harmful to river life. It's not like the bad old days have ended.

Critical habitat can be protected. Projects that restore compromised habitat can be funded. Fish ladders and eel ladders can give nature a boost. We're delighted that a dam on a small tributary near Troy will be removed this year – an opportunity we identified while investigating a failed sewer main. After discussions between DEC and Troy, we're told this will be the first dam removal specifically to restore historic fish migration in the Hudson Valley. It's a very small step, but it's a new step.

We will have to protect the Hudson from invasive species. Barriers in the Champlain Canal and Erie Canal might protect the river from future invasives, like black carp, and grass carp, and Asian carp, which are in the Mississippi. The ideas are out there. Let's make them happen.

The recovery and the future successful management of fish species will only be possible if supported by good science, good data. In 100 years, will the fish have recovered? Or will we have failed?

Let's make a priority of giving the Hudson its life back.

Our focus can no longer be to protect a dwindling population from contamination. The focus has to become: Restore robust populations of iconic and native species.

The question I get from the public is, "How is the river?" The river can't be healthy if it's just clean enough for swimming. The river can't be healthy if it's just clean enough for drinking. Success will mean that we have a healthy, living river, full of life, as wild as it can be.

We cannot succeed until society decides that it wants this river to be fully wild again. I hope that future generations of Riverkeepers have that as a goal.

If Riverkeeper weren't needed, if everything were fine, we wouldn't be talking about population crashes of a number of species. If our environmental laws and our regulatory agencies were up to it, we'd use this page for something else.

Our current laws and our regulatory agencies are not equipped to get the job done. Everyone calls the Hudson "mighty," and yet it's completely powerless to defend itself. Fish don't vote. Like the river, they have no voice. The only way fish or aquatic life get to have their say is if Riverkeeper carries the message.

The river, ultimately, is a vessel of life. "Swimmable" isn't the measure of success. "Drinkable" isn't the measure of success. "Fishable" isn't the measure of success. "Living" is the measure.

A living river, that's what success is. That's where we have to end up.

- JOHN LIPSCOMB

"The river, ultimately, is a vessel of life. "Swimmable" isn't the measure of success. "Drinkable" isn't the measure of success. "Fishable" isn't the measure of success. "Living" is the measure."

# Patrol Boat Log



"Now, for the first time, our patrol boat has finally traveled to all the navigable edges of our Hudson River Watershed – south to the Verrazano Bridge, east to Throgs Neck on the East River, north to Fort Edward on the upper Hudson/Champlain Canal, and west on the Mohawk to Rome."

Happy 50th, Riverkeeper.

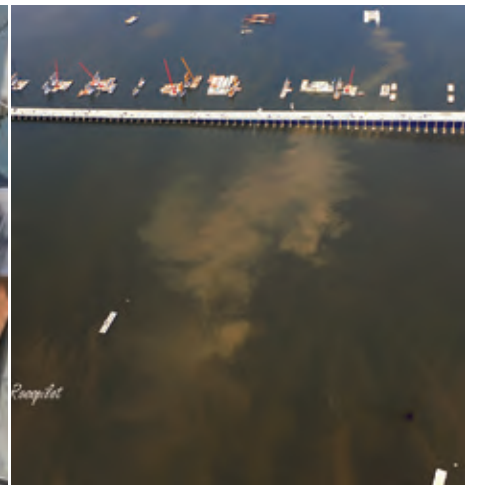
– John Lipscomb, Riverkeeper Patrol Boat Captain.



**6/20/2015:** Patrick and Anna are the Saugerties Lighthouse Keepers – and powerful advocates for the Hudson. Their son "Cricket" is in training. One of the great unexpected pleasures for me over these last 15 years of patrol are the friends and young families like this one – which I am privileged to know and watch as they grow and change – one month, one patrol at a time.



**7/3/2015:** On Newtown Creek with partners including Newtown Creek advocates, a college professor and students, and a colleague from EPA. In 2002 when we started work on Newtown Creek we patrolled alone. That's not true today. The creek has many allies now – all working to heal and protect it.



**8/25/2015:** Aerial patrols of the Tappan Zee replacement project turn up a sediment resuspension violation – one of many. Busted. The Thruway's job is to build a bridge – our job is to protect the River. Now let's see what the Thruway will do to compensate the Hudson.



**7/9/2015:** An asphalt tanker anchored at Hyde Park waiting for her berth to be ready at the Port of Albany. Asphalt is a sinking oil, impossible to recover if spilled, so crude oil isn't our only worry. This is where the ships anchored that John Cronin and Bob Boyle busted in 1983 for discharging oil laced ballast water. I make a point of checking down-current of all commercial vessels. We've twice found leaking oil that way. Riverkeeper's vigilance will not time out.



**7/12/2015:** Northbound through the Troy lock for Waterford – 5 minutes before the lock closed. When I started in 2000 our boat had never been north. In 2001 we expanded our patrols to include the entire 155 mile Estuary. Now, since 2014, we have added patrols on 120 miles of Mohawk River/Erie Canal. I hope that in 2016 we can manage regular patrols of the 35 navigable miles of Upper Hudson/Champlain Canal to Fort Edward. Then Troy will mark the center of our total miles patrolled – with 155 miles to the south and 155 miles to the north. If we can, I'll be pleased.



**5/21/2015:** Near New Baltimore we came upon a buoy drifting with a fishing line attached, baited with live River Herring. Hooks had been driven through their spines. The fisherman was targeting striped bass, which prey on herring. Herring live at sea and return to their natal rivers and tributaries to spawn. Herring populations are very depressed coast-wide, and there is talk of adding them to the list of Endangered Species. My heart breaks for these noble little fish who struggle so to live the lives they must. Yes, noble, because their life struggle is really not so different from ours. Please, why must we use them for bait when synthetic lures will work? Why must we inflict so much pain for sport and pleasure? I cut away the hooks and although the herring were able to swim away, I fear they probably died anyway.



**6/17/2015:** Another crude oil rail bridge rotting to hell. This one over the Normanskill near Albany. Our initiative on crumbling rail bridges led to a nationwide effort by Waterkeepers all across the country who documented deteriorating bridges for a report to federal agencies and elected officials. Will our government, so focused externally on national security, have the integrity to address this real and imminent risk?



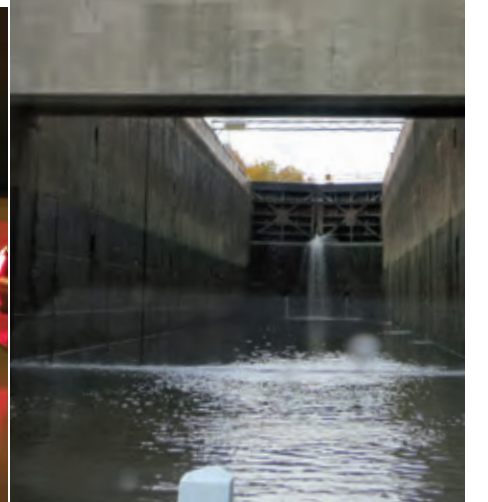
**6/19/2015:** Staff Attorney Abby Jones and I patrol upper Hudson during the last season of PCB dredging. GE has refused to fully clean up its PCB pollution. The cost to finish the job could fall on NYS taxpayers. Meanwhile fish consumption advisories stand for most fish species in the Hudson. Shame on you GE. What a disgrace. Photo credit: © Joseph Squillante, 2015



**7/2/2015:** We found this turbid discharge from a construction site during our Gowanus Canal patrol. We reported it in real time to DEC, our community partners and the press. Within a couple hours the developer had heard from all three, DEC did well and issued a violation. Message to developers hoping to capitalize on the anticipated Gowanus cleanup... "Make very sure you don't cause the slightest harm to the waterway and its aquatic life."



**10/18/2015:** Westbound into the Mother of All Erie Canal locks at Little Falls. The lift here is 42 feet. We patrolled the Mohawk again in 2015 and partnered with SUNY Cobleskill to sample for fecal contamination (as we do on the Estuary and numerous tribs). We are committed to continuing Mohawk patrols in 2016. I'm excited about all the opportunities to partner with the public to help the Mohawk recover.



# Protecting our precious drinking water

At over 1,500 square miles, the watershed system is the single largest man-made financial asset in New York.



1997. Riverkeeper helps negotiate and signs the Watershed Memorandum of Agreement, which incorporates the concerns of New York City, upstate watershed communities and environmentalists to provide for the protection of NYC's watershed without the need for a filtration system.

The supply of clean drinking water is critical to life and to our everyday existence. The New York City water supply system exemplifies what is possible with planning, careful management, and investment in our water future. Over the past century, the city has spent billions of dollars to acquire lands and infrastructure in creating a world-class drinking water system that supplies more than 9 million New York residents. Riverkeeper has made a decades-long commitment to protect and conserve the safe water supplied by the system to the city and to more than 70 upstate communities. There are many challenges to maintaining the system for current and future generations.

Riverkeeper defined its role in the watershed, in part, as a signatory to the 1997 Memorandum of Agreement between the city and watershed communities. Its purpose was accomplishing two fundamental goals: recognize and advance local community economic interests and meet the city's desire for an unfiltered water supply to avoid billions in filtration plant costs. The agreement recognizes the need for responsible development, land acquisition to protect the lands, forests, and streams that preserve the reservoirs, and sustainable jobs for local communities. Riverkeeper continues to work to keep pollution out of New York City's drinking water.

At 2,000 square miles, the watershed system is the single largest man-made financial asset in New York. It is made up of a 6,000-mile network of pipes, shafts and subterranean aqueducts and includes many well known landmarks, like Ashokan Reservoir, which recently turned 100 years old. New York City, through its Department of Environmental Protection, manages the vast drinking water systems. The engineering feat transports water up to 125 miles from the Catskill, Delaware, and Croton systems. In fact, the west of the Hudson River region supplies 90 percent of the City's drinking water. Despite Riverkeeper's many watershed successes, there remains much work to do.

The city drinking watershed systems have suffered from decreasing government funding for clean water and its infrastructure. Funding cuts also impact enforcement efforts to prevent contaminants from entering the water. Government cannot curb and correct violations without needed staff. Riverkeeper steps into the breach when government abdicates its responsibility to protect our clean water. In fact, the federal Clean Water Act empowers Riverkeeper to act when government will not. For example, Riverkeeper's efforts will stop contaminants from entering Schoharie Creek, a tributary of

the Schoharie Reservoir, from the problem plagued Hunter Landfill. We are increasing our efforts to identify and stop these types of violations.

Decreased government funding also impacts access to clean water. Like everything else, the ravages of time have taken their toll on the New York City watershed systems. The state of disrepair can be significant. For the past 20 years the 85-mile-long Delaware Aqueduct has leaked billions of gallons of drinking water at the rate of about 35 million gallons of water each day. New York City's "Water for the Future" initiative for the Delaware Aqueduct is an important example of efforts to make sure that proposed engineering choices and conservation efforts deliver.

We are participating on many operational issues in the watershed. Riverkeeper is also engaged on Gilboa Dam releases to the Schoharie Creek. In this case, we are advocating for changes to water releases to local streams that mimic natural flows, in order to let the Catskill fisheries deliver the type of experience that made this region the birthplace of United States fly-fishing. Our efforts also extend to the downstream communities impacted by muddy water releases from

the Ashokan Reservoir into the Lower Esopus. We continue to urge New York to meet Clean Water Act requirements to address these muddy water impairments to fishing and recreation.

Riverkeeper also continues efforts initiated by the watershed agreement. We continue to serve as watchdog and to engage on projects that affect water quality by increasing impervious surfaces like roads, driveways, and buildings. Inappropriate development hinders the watershed land's natural ability to purify stormwater and keep contaminants out of the drinking water supply. Finally, Riverkeeper will advocate for the type of economically sustainable "green jobs" that watershed communities need, including efforts to promote recreational use of the thousands of acres of watershed lands recently opened to the public.

City officials who manage the watershed system have a significant if not solemn obligation. They have made clear to us the need for a strong environmental voice to address pressing issues and to demand environmentally responsible results. We accept the challenge.

— JOHN PARKER



12

Community science projects supported

6,718

Water samples collected

300

Routinely sampled sites over more than 500 miles

26

Partner organizations

# Community.Science.Solutions.

## Riverkeeper's data inspire healthy investment in clean water infrastructure

A neighborhood in Newburgh had been spewing raw sewage directly into the Hudson River for decades – nearly a century. The pipe leaked right at a boat club, near a restaurant and a condominium complex, into one of America's most cherished rivers. In November 2015, Newburgh investigated, found the problem, and within two weeks had installed new pipes to ensure the sewage reached the city's treatment plant. Why now?

The answer, in a word: **Data.**

Riverkeeper's core water quality monitoring program has, since 2008, sampled 74 locations in the Hudson River Estuary in collaboration with CUNY Queens College and Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory. The data showed that, even absent rain that was known to cause 190 million gallons of raw sewage to overflow into the Hudson at Newburgh in a typical year, the city waterfront showed evidence of contamination. That prompted the city's investigation, and the infrastructure fix to stop the pollution. And early in 2016, the city agreed to a consent order with New York State to spend \$36 million over 15 years to reduce rain-related overflows by nearly 100 million gallons per year.

More data is becoming available every year through Riverkeeper's sampling program, which has extended from monitoring the Hudson aboard our patrol boat to gathering test results from trained community science partners along tributaries and waterfronts.

During an extraordinary year of growth in 2015, Riverkeeper extended this sampling program – and its impact – by more than doubling the partners we work with, increasing the number of community projects we support by 50 percent, sites sampled by 19 percent and samples collected by 23 percent.

By testing the water at hundreds of locations, community science projects focused attention on waterfront access points in New York City, a Hudson River beach in Ossining and nine creeks and rivers in the Hudson River watershed, including a high-profile effort to sample the Mohawk River in collaboration with SUNY Cobleskill, and a new collaboration with Sarah Lawrence College's Center for the Urban River at Beczak to sample the Saw Mill River.

Just as in Newburgh, the data, and the individuals who take the time to observe their waters regularly and report problems, prompted infrastructure fixes in Poughkeepsie, Kingston and Ossining in 2015. The first investments made in a 15-year plan to reduce sewage overflows in the Capital District focused on treating vastly more waste to modern disinfection standards.

Beyond that, our data is being used to update assessments that influence which community wastewater projects will be prioritized for state grants and loans; and the community science effort is helping to support new and renewed citizen-led efforts to protect and restore the Wallkill, Rondout, Pocantico and other watersheds. Assessing water quality and defining priorities at a watershed scale are two keys to financing long-term restoration goals.

It's been 50 years since New York passed the groundbreaking Pure Waters Bond Act, and nearly as long since the federal government passed the Clean Water Act, setting the stage for historic water quality improvements. Under-investment has been the norm for years now, however.

New York State has \$10 billion in shovel-ready wastewater projects, and at least \$31 billion in overall need – the greatest need in the nation. With federal funding down precipitously, the state and local governments have a greater challenge meeting this need to stop water pollution.

In Albany, our data and our partners have changed the conversation, helping to inspire new collaborations with the Department of Environmental Conservation – and inspiring Legislators and the Governor to enact the Water Infrastructure Improvement Act of 2015. In its first round of grants, \$75 million supported drinking water and wastewater projects, and boosted overall grant money committed to water quality projects in the Hudson River Watershed by about 30 percent. The grants have been so successful that in 2016, the Governor and Legislature doubled the state's commitment, adding \$200 million to the program.

Community science is connecting the dots by empowering those who care most about the water to speak out for its improvement. Our leaders are listening.



**Our Program:** Riverkeeper's water quality monitoring program measures Enterococcus, which indicates the presence of fecal contamination, including human sewage, and associated disease-causing pathogens.

See the test results in a set of interactive maps at: [riverkeeper.org/water-quality](http://riverkeeper.org/water-quality)  
Follow updates about the program and community partners at: [riverkeeper.org/blog/patrol](http://riverkeeper.org/blog/patrol)

# Water democracy in action

With Riverkeeper providing the tools – data, science, legal expertise – communities mobilize for clean water



When pollution occurs as “death by a thousand cuts,” as it does along the Wallkill River, a thousand environmental lawsuits is not the solution. **A thousand volunteers may be.**

Legal tools do have their place, and enforcement of the Clean Water Act remains a top priority. A Riverkeeper lawsuit in 1992 stopped Orange County from filling a 50-acre wetland with garbage. The threat of a 2003 lawsuit prompted New Paltz to begin a series of infrastructure fixes to stop overflows of raw sewage. And in 2014, Riverkeeper helped defend the Town of New Paltz’s wetlands protection law, helping preserve more than 75 like it statewide.

In each case, Riverkeeper’s tried-and-true model of enforcing clean water laws, using the tools available

to citizens, had dramatic and positive effects. But with a list of issues in the Wallkill River Watershed ranging from harmful algal blooms to hormone-laced water that alters the development of fish, new strategies are also needed.

Since 2012, Riverkeeper has tried a new tack, marrying community science and the Riverkeeper Sweep shoreline cleanup to build a larger constituency for the river, based on data and action.

By 2015, our community science partners on the Wallkill had gathered over 750 water quality samples, and more than 130 volunteers have stepped up to the river’s edge to remove 2.7 tons of trash and plant 125 trees.

That movement has grown with the help of many partner organizations and the leadership of then-Village of New Paltz Mayor Jason West, to become the Wallkill River Watershed Alliance.

The volunteers of the Alliance are mapping the sources of pollution to prioritize interventions, partnering with both Riverkeeper and the state Department of Environmental Conservation. They’re educating their fellow community members. They’re patrolling the river by kayak. And they’re raising their collective voice as an advocate for the river and its watershed.

We’re seeing the same kind of local advocacy take hold along the Sparkill, the Rondout, and urban waterways like Newtown Creek. We’re proud to assist these new partners, who all have one thing in common. **They’ve taken their river back.**

**Desalination on the Hudson? No way**  
**Rockland residents insisted on a smart, sustainable approach to water supplies. And lo and behold, government and industry listened.**

It might have seemed a done deal when a private water company started planning a desalination plant at Haverstraw Bay, with the blessing of the state Public Service Commission.

But Rockland residents won a decisive, far-reaching victory in December 2015. By a unanimous vote, the PSC decided to abandon Suez’s controversial plan to tap, treat and desalinate Hudson River water and pipe it to Rockland County homes and businesses.

The ruling confirmed what Rockland residents and Riverkeeper supporters have known for years: desalination is flat-out unnecessary and wasteful, given options for increased water conservation and better management of existing supplies.

The vote marked a big turnaround for the PSC. Eight years earlier, it had approved the plan by Suez (then United Water) to build a desal plant.

But soon afterward, the Rockland Water Coalition was formed, in part, to oppose the plant. They rallied the public, which sent 1,500 comments to the PSC, asking that the plans be shelved. This caught the attention of the PSC, who took a hard second look at the plan and its alternatives.

Desalination would require a lot of energy. It would have required as much energy as three or four thousand homes. It would have doubled water rates.

With the decision by Governor Cuomo and the Public Service Commission, the people of New York and the people of Rockland are getting their opportunity to provide for better management of their resources, and a smarter approach. The PSC agrees we can do better with conservation, better management of the available water supply, and locating new water sources in the aquifer.

This is what water democracy looks like. The decision is now supported by Suez and the government in Rockland County, as well as the activists who first rallied to halt the desalination plan.

Riverkeeper, our friends at Scenic Hudson and our legal partners Pace Environmental Litigation Clinic are as proud as can be to be part of this decision.

“This is a truly groundbreaking decision that looks forward to a water policy for the 21st century,

a century in which we must steeply reduce our impacts on climate and strengthen our community resilience in the face of climate change,” said Peggy Kurtz, of the Rockland Water Coalition. “With this decision, the PSC sets New York State on course toward a water and energy policy that looks beyond big, energy-intensive construction projects, such as desalination, in favor of greener, energy-saving, more climate-resilient solutions such as conservation, efficiency and repair of leaks. This decision ultimately safeguards the life of the river and the quality of our drinking water.”

Rockland’s water conservation efforts will be getting a big boost with a \$250,000 allotment from the 2016-2017 state budget. The funds will allow the county to continue its efforts to reduce water use, ensuring that demand does not exceed supply, and help the county perform tasks that residents have said are important to them and to the county’s future when it comes to ensuring safe drinking water.

**Kingston voters reclaim their water rights**  
**When a decision was made to sell precious drinking water supplies to a private bottling outfit, the public had no say. In a landslide referendum, the public made sure that would never happen again.**

Residents of Ulster County, supported by

Riverkeeper, stood up in 2014 to question Niagara Bottling Co.’s plan for a large water bottling facility on the banks of Lower Esopus Creek. The company sought to bottle up to 1.75 million gallons of water taken from the City of Kingston’s reservoir in the Town of Woodstock.

The sale of the city’s water to an outside entity had huge implications for the environment, the precious drinking water supply, and the viability of future development. But the decision was in the hands of the city Water Board, appointed by the Mayor. Ultimately, public opposition and Riverkeeper’s intervention in the environmental review process caused the company to abandon its plan. But local advocates continued their efforts to make sure public water resources remain in the hands of the public.

“You had no say about whether to sell our limited supply of safe, high quality drinking water to a billion-dollar corporation for a fraction of the rate that you pay,” the community organization Kingston Citizens reminded fellow residents.

On Nov. 3, 2015, a Kingston Water Sales Referendum passed by a landslide, 3,625 to 737, giving the democratically elected Common Council, and thus the citizens that had elected them, a say in the sale of water to outside entities.

— DAN SHAPLEY AND PAUL GALLAY



Riverkeeper patrolled the Hudson at Indian Point the morning after a May 9, 2015, transformer explosion and fire at the plant, and documented a widespread, 3,000-gallon spill of transformer oil.

This was the third transformer accident at the nuclear plant in eight years.

## Indian Point: Not safe, not secure, not vital

A string of malfunctions over the last year has made it harder for the surrounding population to ignore the unfathomable risks that Indian Point poses to us every day. These concerns for our own health should remind us of the damage this outdated plant already does to the river's life every day – killing tiny fish and eggs through its destructive intakes and heated discharges. Riverkeeper has been battling against this damage since its earliest days. And every year seems to bring new reasons to fight ever harder to shut it down.

In the past year, Indian Point has suffered seven troublesome incidents, including the crippling of one reactor from radiation-damaged bolts, a radiation leak, transformer explosion and oil spill, water pump failure, electrical anomalies and the loss of power to several reactor control rods.

In the latest incident, an inspection of the Unit 2 reactor revealed that some 27 percent of essential baffle bolts inside the core of the Unit 2 reactor are either degraded or missing, necessitating that the reactor remain closed until a robotic repair unit can assess the extent of the damage.

Just prior to that, a leak of radioactive tritium into the groundwater at Indian Point captured national headlines. At one monitoring well, a 65,000 percent increase in tritium was initially recorded, and a few days later those levels shot up by another 80 percent. As of this writing, we do not know what other radioactive isotopes were also released.

And in May 2015, a transformer explosion, fire, and oil spill was the third major transformer incident at the nuclear plant in eight years.

If these malfunctions aren't frightening enough, consider these:

- The NRC says one of Indian Point's reactors has the highest risk of earthquake damage of all the nation's reactors.
- Federal studies have shown that the plant is severely vulnerable to acts of terrorism.
- Indian Point has 2,000 tons of radioactive waste overpacked into leaking spent-fuel pools.
- The evacuation plan in the wake of a catastrophic incident is unworkable. Tens of millions of people would be sitting ducks in the event of a disaster.

Despite this, Indian Point's two reactors continue to operate without licenses, one having expired in 2013 and the other last year. The NRC allows Indian Point to operate while it considers a 20 year license renewal for both. And the NRC — known to be very friendly with the nuclear energy industry — shows no indications that it wants Indian Point closed.

Public opinion favors closing Indian Point as long as there's enough replacement energy and electric rates don't skyrocket. So let's do the math: Indian Point's generating capacity is just over 2,000 megawatts. After accounting for over 1,000 MW of newly restored electrical supply, roughly 400 MW of transmission improvements in the lower Hudson Valley, and over 100 MW of efficiency improvements by Con Edison, the New York Independent Service Operator indicated a net reliability "need" of 500 MW in 2014.

“This plant is too big to fail, and too old to trust.”

— Paul Gallay

Since that study, downstate NY load forecasts for this summer have dropped by about 500 MW. Thus, adequate resources will be in place to assure reliable system operation this summer, and the cost to ratepayers will be minimal — they may even see a net decrease in rates if they opt for renewable energy.

In the future, new efficiency and renewables projects — on commercial and private buildings alike — will drive still greater savings, thanks to \$5 billion in planned energy investments by New York State. Once we close the plant down, we will be immediately safer and significantly closer to a truly sound, reliable energy supply. — PAUL GALLAY

### Indian Point Legal Update

**State Water Discharge Permit and Water Quality Certification Denial Proceedings.** Riverkeeper argued before DEC administrative judges to impose seasonal shutdowns either on an interim basis, while cooling towers are constructed, or on a permanent basis, in the event that cooling towers are not found to be feasible. The judges were asked to consider the impact of the plant's once-through cooling system, which kills billions of aquatic organisms every year. Supported by its expert witness, Dr. Peter A. Henderson, Riverkeeper presented testimony and reports which plainly showed that interim or permanent outages can be immediately implemented at Indian Point without adverse impacts to electric system reliability or air quality, and without significant effects on consumer electricity costs. The DEC may decide the case later this year.

**State Coastal Consistency Denial.** Citing numerous environmental and public safety concerns, the NYS Department of State filed an objection to Indian Point's application for a Coastal Consistency Certification. This objection has the potential to block the license renewal and require the closure of Indian Point as soon as next year. Entergy, however, claims that it is not bound by this permit and the NY State Court will hear that case this year. Riverkeeper was granted permission to intervene as amicus curiae and has filed a brief supporting the DOS. Oral arguments will be held later this year.

**NRC License Renewal Proceeding.** Riverkeeper counsel and expert witnesses appeared in hearings before the NRC's Atomic Safety and Licensing Board that addressed Entergy's flawed "Aging Management Plan," which is based upon assumptions and downplays the aging reactors' safety risks. Riverkeeper presented evidence which showed that, over time, radiation, thermal variations and vibrations threaten failure of vital

components from metal fatigue, and that the threat of catastrophic failure is heightened by embrittlement and corrosion of key reactor components. Additional hearings may be required regarding NRC's analysis of the potential for severe reactor accidents.

**Nuclear Waste Storage Rule.** Since the nation lacks a repository for high-level radioactive waste, spent fuel is stored on site at each respective reactor. As a result of a 2012 federal court victory won by Riverkeeper and a coalition of states and environmental groups, the NRC was required to prepare an environmental impact statement for an "extended waste storage rule." The statement, however, disregarded environmental impacts of indefinite storage of spent fuel at reactor sites like Indian Point in the event that no long-term disposal solution is ever found. In 2014, Riverkeeper joined a coalition of states and environmental groups to sue NRC. This case has been fully briefed and was argued in February of 2016. A decision may come before the end of the year.



Left to right: A tank car train moves south along the Hudson past homes in Rockland County.

Protesters hold signs on a railroad overpass in Kingston in July 2015, marching in memory of the 47 people killed in a July 2013 crude oil train explosion in Quebec. The marchers demanded protection from the dangers of shipping explosive Bakken crude oil through the Hudson Valley.

Frack waste operations in Pennsylvania.

## How reckless energy transport costs the Hudson—and how we fight back

The river has always been a corridor of industry and commerce in America. And for too long, it has paid a high price.

As it did two centuries ago, when the Erie Canal opened the midwest to seaports, the valley has again become a commercial transportation hub, bringing large volumes of natural gas and oil from the heartland to the northeast and international markets. The chosen methods include rail cars, barges, and pipelines.

Movement of these fossil fuels poses threats to our rivers and streams, to drinking water for millions of New Yorkers and to our climate – facilitated by outdated rules, unsafe railcars and virtually no regulatory oversight. Each day the valley is placed at risk from massive oil shipments and high volume gas flows. Unprepared local communities must bear the emergency response burden, should disaster strike.

Riverkeeper is working at the local, state and federal levels to defend the river. We insist that government do its job: Protect us and our environment.

### Demanding safety along oil routes

Riverkeeper continues to press for meaningful protections against the threat of oil spills from barges or trains along the Hudson. We are guarding against new threats to the Hudson Valley, including a plan to ship heavy, toxic “tar sands” oil through Albany, and proposed oil pipelines along the Thruway

corridor. We have pushed better spill response planning and a bigger state oil spill fund. And we have exposed government’s ongoing failure to provide meaningful oversight over the crude-by-rail industry, even in the wake of explosive derailments across North America, including the 2013 tragedy that took 47 lives in Lac Megantic, Quebec.

Riverkeeper scored a major victory when the state Department of Environmental Conservation changed course on a proposed Global oil terminal expansion in Albany that would handle heavy crude oil, signaling that the state would require a full environmental review. Heavy, toxic, tar sands crude oil would pose a new level of risk, sinking into the water column if spilled and becoming unrecoverable.

In February of this year, a grassroots coalition headed by Riverkeeper filed a citizen’s lawsuit in federal court, charging that Global Companies is operating in violation of the Clean Air Act for failing to obtain a required air pollution permit and to institute necessary pollution controls when it modified its Albany facility in 2012, to allow a five-fold increase in the amount of crude oil handled at the facility. The lawsuit also claims Global has violated a DEC permit by handling Bakken crude, which emits more air pollutants, including benzene, a known human carcinogen, than conventional crude oil.

We are demanding safety along the oil routes as well. Riverkeeper’s 2014 initiative to document decrepit conditions at rail bridges inspired a national

effort to do the same. Riverkeeper, Waterkeeper Alliance and Forest Ethics reported the findings of Keeper groups around the country in a report, “Deadly Crossing: Neglected Bridges and Exploding Oil Trains,” documenting potential deficiencies of 250 bridges and noting problems such as rotted, cracked, or crumbling foundations.

Our call for transparency prompted the Federal Railroad Administration to launch a website allowing local officials to request public versions of bridge safety inspection reports for rail bridges in their jurisdiction. It’s a first step that we hope will be followed by actual improvements in bridge safety and oversight.

Our demands for modernized spill response planning has yielded steps for better preparation along the length of the river. We secured a commitment for the first in-water spill response drill in the upper estuary. And our advocacy prompted the U.S. Coast Guard and state DEC officials to create new maps detailing environmentally sensitive areas and response strategies along every river mile.

### Stopping the Use of Fracking Waste

In 2014, New York State determined that because of potentially adverse environmental impacts, it would not permit hydraulic fracturing in the state. The process of extracting oil and natural gas continues in surrounding states. The process produces large amounts of liquid and solid waste

that can contain pollutants such as chemicals, metals, excess salts, and carcinogens like benzene and naturally-occurring radioactive materials. In most situations, the contaminant cocktail used in the fracking process is not disclosed and is unknown. In the past five years, more than 510,000 tons of solid waste and 23,000 barrels of liquid fracking waste from Pennsylvania have been shipped to New York landfills for disposal. The liquid material that drains from the landfills, known as leachate, is then sent to nearby wastewater treatment facilities. New York allows another form of fracking waste, liquid brine, to be used for de-icing roadways and for dust control.

Keeping the contaminants in fracking waste from entering our waterways is a Riverkeeper priority. We continue to support local governments in New York in passing frack waste bans. We have also created an online information toolkit for communities seeking additional facts and ways to protect themselves. [Find the toolkit at Riverkeeper.org](http://Riverkeeper.org).

**Do truckers get to inspect their own trucks? Do you get to inspect your own car? Of course not. So it’s insane, and completely unacceptable, that the rail industry gets to inspect its own infrastructure while moving cargo that is of such enormous risk to American citizens and the environment.**

### The Boom in Energy Pipelines

The rise in natural gas and oil production in the United States caused the need to transport supplies to the Northeast market and beyond. Several proposed projects are designed to either develop new pipelines or to expand existing pipelines. The Hudson Valley is facing at least six projects in varying states of review. These pipelines are a concern because their construction and maintenance threaten to harm the environment of the river and the New York City drinking water supply watershed. Pipelines around the U.S. and Canada also demonstrate the risk to communities and the life of residents when pipelines rupture, leak, or explode.

Pipeline construction can harm water quality, fish and aquatic habitats, and drinking water supplies. Construction often involves trenching a through wetlands and waterbodies, including streams, creeks, and rivers. It can also include the removal of hundreds of trees – which increases stormwater runoff that can transport pollutants into nearby water supplies. Pollutants, including oil and grease from trucks and machinery, can infiltrate into groundwater during construction. Testing pipelines also poses challenges - the millions of gallons of water needed for testing can stress local supplies and risk polluting water resources when the water is disposed.

Riverkeeper has been actively involved in the environmental review processes for a number of gas pipeline projects, including the Constitution Pipeline and expansion of the Algonquin pipeline next to the Indian Point nuclear plant. We are challenging the approval of these gas pipelines in federal court.

In addition, Riverkeeper has been at the forefront of grassroots opposition to the Pilgrim pipelines, proposed to run from Albany, N.Y., to Linden, N.J., pumping 8.4 million gallons per day of crude oil south and refined products north, crossing the Hudson twice and boring through or under every major tributary. The drinking water for millions would be at risk. As a result of our advocacy with the Coalition Against Pilgrim Pipeline NY/NJ, nearly 60 municipalities have formally opposed the project. CAPP and Riverkeeper are empowering communities to refuse to agree to the construction of new fossil fuel infrastructure through their borders, and to call on Governor Cuomo to instead commit to a renewable energy future. We will continue to make that case at every level of government.





**Left:** The Hudson River at Hastings, former site of Anaconda Wire and Copper Company, is one of the most contaminated industrial sites along the Hudson River and a massive source of toxic PCBs.

**Above:** Dredging operations remove PCB-contaminated sediment in the Upper Hudson. Toxic coal tar sludge blankets the river bottom at Poughkeepsie.

## In Hastings, a path toward restoration



Riverkeeper began fighting for cleanup at the former Anaconda Wire and Copper Company site in Hastings – one of the most contaminated locations along the

Hudson River and a massive source of toxic PCBs – during its earliest years as the Hudson River Fishermen’s Association.

HRFA started investigating in 1969 with information from Fred Danback, a union shop steward who, while sweeping the factory floor, found that oil and solvents were being dumped straight into the river through the floor drains. Struck by the injustice of what the pollution was doing to the river and to the shad fishermen’s business, he spoke out.

The Fishermen’s Association pressed the case until the U.S. Attorney, in 1973, fined Anaconda \$200,000. After the land was acquired by the oil giant Atlantic Richfield (ARCO), it remained an industrial wasteland. John Cronin and Robert F. Kennedy Jr. described entering a massive indoor garbage dump there in 1994, with oil drums, car parts, broken asphalt, thousands of tires, and a “putrid ooze” leaking through the floor drains into the river.

Riverkeeper continues fighting for the cleanup of toxic PCBs at the site. In 2003, Riverkeeper, ARCO and the Village of Hastings signed a settlement agreement, resolving a 1994 federal lawsuit filed by Riverkeeper against ARCO. Riverkeeper, Hastings and Scenic Hudson continued to push BP/ARCO and the state to broaden the cleanup plan to include the portion of the Hudson heavily contaminated by PCBs from the site. In 2012 and 2013, agreements were reached regarding the in-river contamination.

This year, the parties reached a proposed new Consent Decree that would incorporate these more recent agreements. Once approved by the U.S. District Court, BP/ARCO can begin to move forward with the cleanup, overseen by the DEC.

And then, a place that has seen some of the worst industrial abuse could become a place of opportunity for fish habitat restoration, access to the river and enjoyment of the water.

# Ridding the river of a toxic legacy

The Hudson’s recovery depends on sustained, long-term efforts to free the river from a legacy of industrial pollution. Some of Riverkeeper’s earliest battles are still being fought. GE must repair the full damage that its PCBs did to the river a generation ago. Hundred-year-old blankets of toxic coal tar must be removed from the sediment at Poughkeepsie. Hastings must recover its waterfront, with healthy habitat for river life. Success may take generations. Riverkeeper will not back down.

### GE needs to finish cleaning the Hudson of its PCBs

This past October, GE declared that it completed its mandated dredging project to remove toxic PCBs — polychlorinated biphenyls — from the Hudson River. But Riverkeeper won’t allow the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to give GE a free pass when the Hudson River remains contaminated by this toxin and probable human carcinogen.

Much work remains to be done.

Between 1947 and 1977, GE dumped an estimated 1.3 million pounds of PCBs into the river from two upstate plants, where the fire-retardant chemicals were used in manufacturing. Today, these PCBs are concentrated in sediment, and fish and wildlife as far south as New York Harbor. They persist in the environment and are present in our own bodies.

In 2009, GE began the long-delayed Superfund cleanup of those PCBs. Soon after, the EPA discovered that there were dramatically more PCBs in the Upper Hudson than previously thought, and they were distributed beyond the areas targeted for the cleanup. The EPA failed to alter the dredging plan and hold GE accountable when it was discovered that the company had underreported PCB levels in fish, an important measure of the cleanup’s effectiveness.

Today, we are fighting to hold GE accountable for all the PCB contamination it created, including that found in the sediment of the Champlain Canal

navigation channel, which has prevented the New York State Canal Corporation from achieving its mandated duty of maintaining the channel to navigable depths.

PCB contamination has also interfered with commercial, recreational and economic opportunities on the river. Taxpayers and toll-payers will be forced to pay hundreds of millions for dredging the channel if GE does not step up. If the burden fell on the state, it would be a decades-long effort, yet it would likely amount to a mere half-season of dredging for GE to complete it.

We’re not alone in this battle: Municipalities up and down the river demand that GE do more dredging. The Hudson River Natural Resources Trustees, which act on behalf of the public to assess damage to the river by hazardous substances, say unsafe levels of PCBs are being left behind. They called on the EPA to keep the dredging facilities in place.

The EPA currently defines success for GE as reaching the goals of a flawed cleanup, rather than achieving the public health and environmental objectives of the project. Riverkeeper calls on the EPA to acknowledge the original plan’s shortcomings and to implement a five-year review with robust public input. This can lay the groundwork for the comprehensive cleanup that will truly restore this damaged resource.

### In prime sturgeon habitat, a 100-year-old oily stain

Before we strung electric lines, light and heat for the Hudson Valley was provided by gas pipes. And that gas was manufactured by processing coal – a dirty business that created countless tons of toxic, oily coal tar.

In Poughkeepsie, the coal tar generated by the local manufactured gas plant – along with wastes from other mid-Hudson facilities – was dumped directly into the Hudson River through a 12-inch pipe.

A hundred years later, 9 acres of prime sturgeon habitat are covered in a thick toxic sludge.

The waste is evident even to pedestrians on the Walkway Over the Hudson, who frequently call both

Riverkeeper and the DEC to report the blooms of oily sheens that bubble up from the depths. In 2015, Riverkeeper advocated for a strong cleanup of this legacy pollution, highlighting ways the state-directed cleanup by Central Gas & Electric Co. can maximize the removal of toxic goop, and set the stage for restored shoreline habitat when the job is done.

### A higher standard on the Rondout Creek in Kingston

The City of Kingston has a vision for its Rondout Creek waterfront: more boaters, more strollers, more wildlife and more business. To get there, it has to ensure the cleanup of a string of polluted waterfront parcels – brownfields where contaminated soils are common.

Riverkeeper stepped in to ensure that the cleanup of one of these sites, a designated state Superfund site with a notorious history of pollution, was completed responsibly, with high standards for controlling stormwater runoff. And we’re advocating that the standards applied there, at the Millens scrapyard, be applied widely, to ensure the city can achieve its vision for improved water quality and habitat in the Rondout Creek, while it pursues economic development. – DAN SHAPLEY

“Toxic landmarks like the Anaconda dump are not unique to the Hudson Valley....While the Hudson is cursed with more than its share, it was blessed since the early 1960s with an activist community that engaged polluters with an intensity and ingenuity that made the Hudson the most critical legal battleground of the modern environmental era.”

– *The Riverkeepers, John Cronin and Robert F. Kennedy Jr.*



## Flushing Bay: New challenges, new partnerships

Riverkeeper has grown its presence in Flushing Bay, beginning with a walk around the World's Fair Marina with local dragon boaters in 2014. We've expanded our effort to include watchdog trainings, CSO workshops and, in 2015, our first boat patrols in this corner of the Upper East River.

Chief among our partners are the recreational users of the water – the dragon boat teams who have banded together to clean up their waterway under the name Guardians of Flushing Bay, as well as businesses, residents, and industries that make use of the creek and bay.

Together, we have started to tackle some of the largest problems in the city: the combined sewage discharges, contaminated sediments, public access difficulties and derelict barges.

These waterways are among the city's top waterways burdened by sewage pollution. Flushing Creek counts as one of the (if not the) largest conveyances of combined sewage. In the Bay, nestled between the New York Mets' CitiField and LaGuardia Airport, two more CSO discharge outfalls – the size of typical garage doors – pump over a billion gallons of combined sewage per year, each, into this offshoot of the East River.

In 2015 Riverkeeper demanded removal of two abandoned barges shedding Styrofoam and other contaminants into the bay and posing a threat to navigation. Working with local partners, we secured support from U.S. Rep. Joseph Crowley, and a commitment for barge removal by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. We've made clear we and the community will not allow Flushing Bay to be treated as a dump.

With the power of the people, this community's dedication to the waterfront has been built on years of waterfront cleanups, strong support from local elected officials, and more eyes on the water.

Riverkeeper looks forward to continuing to build local partnerships, support the work of local leaders, and to celebrate the past, present, and future uses of this historic waterfront.

– SEAN DIXON

# Hope for an Urban Revival

From the Hutchinson River to Jamaica Bay, the Arthur Kill to Spuyten Duyvil, and Newtown Creek to the Gowanus Canal, the tides of the greater New York/New Jersey Harbor flow through all of our waterways. Twice a day, these ebbs and flows connect the waterfront homes of millions of people to the aquatic habitats of hundreds of species of flora and fauna.

Over the long history of the City of New York, these waters have also absorbed the downside of development. Toxins, oils, bacteria, garbage, street runoff, and myriad other pollutants fouling the ecosystem created risks to public health and the environment.

As a city, the early 1800s saw a growing public consensus that pollution didn't belong near drinking water supplies – aqueducts, safety standards, and infrastructure investments were made across the region. Unfortunately, it wasn't until the mid-1900s that we applied the same rationale to the waters we use for recreation, that we live along, and within which we fish.

In the 50 years since Riverkeeper's founding, we've been glad to see a sea change in the way the city approaches clean water. Public access points, triathlons, ferry services, green infrastructure, esplanades, education centers, and restoration work has bridged the pollution-based divide that once separated New Yorkers from their Sixth Borough – the waters around them.

Much work remains, however – and Riverkeeper looks forward to helping steward the next 50 years of change in New York City.

Importantly, the city faces ongoing and ever-present risks from climate change. Sea level rise has exacerbated the flooding caused by monthly extra-high tides, pushed up groundwater contamination into basements, and made each waterfront business keenly aware of their connection to the water. Superstorm Sandy, and Hurricane Irene before then,

triggered city-wide reviews of coastal industries, building codes, and emergency management. Changes in storm patterns and ecosystems have shifted our approaches to everything from green infrastructure design to long-term water quality standards.

Over the coming decades, New York City's population growth will present both a challenge and an opportunity. With the number of people living alongside the city's waters expected to continue to grow, so too will the risks those residents will face – from climate change, from legacy toxics, and from ongoing sewage pollution. That said, the people of New York City are increasingly getting in, on, or near the water – for fishing, kayaking, biking, and boating. As more people work, walk, and boat on our waterways, more eyes, ears, and hearts are opened. This, in turn, leads to a more engaged community and a deeper bond between the industries, businesses, and people that rely on clean water and healthy habitats.

Riverkeeper's work in New York City spans each and every one of these challenges and opportunities.

Over almost two-thirds of the city, where the sewer systems are connected to the stormwater systems (the “combined sewer” system), Riverkeeper has been advocating at the city, state, and federal level to ensure that the right infrastructure investments are made to reduce the tens of billions of gallons of combined sewage that discharge into City waters each year.

In the rest of the city, where the stormwater systems are separate from the sewers, Riverkeeper has been working with the city on the details of its first-ever “stormwater management plan” – required under an August 2015 permit issued by New York State.

Around the city, Riverkeeper has been working to engage and activate communities along diverse waterfronts. We actively support and strengthen the work of organizations like the Guardians of Flushing Bay, Gowanus Canal Conservancy, and Newtown Creek Alliance. By helping increase the volume of the voices of community advocates, we hope to prove that clean water – like politics – is local.

Riverkeeper is working to grow the ecosystem services of our waterways as a member of the Billion Oyster Project technical advisory committee, helping guide restoration of aquatic habitat as a Co-Chair of the Harbor Estuary Program's Citizen Advisory Committee, and supporting the educational and advocacy goals as a member of the Steering Committee of the SWIM Coalition.

Over the next 50 years, Riverkeeper's work at the focal point of the Hudson River, Long Island Sound, and New York Harbor – the waterways of the East River and coastal NYC – will shepherd in a new era of clean waters, clean waterfronts, and resilient communities.

– SEAN DIXON



Wildlife habitat is re-emerging in the shadow of the Robert F. Kennedy (Triborough) Bridge on Randall's Island, thanks to the management of 20 acres of restored natural areas.

Riverkeeper Sweep volunteers cleared invasive plants and litter from Little Hell Gate Saltwater Marsh, a rare, 5-acre habitat on the Harlem River, and the Little Hell Gate Freshwater Wetland, which helps filter stormwater runoff from the island's playing fields, in May 2015.

“Randall's Island is an inspiring example of what we can all do to make our shorelines cleaner and healthier.” – Dana Gulley



"During Pete Grannis' tenure as Commissioner of New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, increased cooperation began between government and environmental stakeholders. This photo shows the first joint water patrol of Environmental Conservation Police from the Riverkeeper near Kingston New York. On this September 2009 day, history was made when the resources of both Riverkeeper and the State of New York began working together to identify environmental problems and environmental polluters."

— John Parker, Director of Legal Programs

## Our core mission: Environmental enforcement

The Hudson River and the lakes, streams, and tributaries that make up the mighty estuary are not free sewers or dumping grounds that companies or governments can use to save a few bucks. Illegal pollution anywhere affects us all everywhere. Tens of thousands of Americans die every year because of pollution.

But in New York, enforcement efforts and resources have been cut by as much as two thirds over past years. Our state's Department of Environmental Conservation is dramatically understaffed, despite the fact that enforcement of the law is one of the fundamental obligations of government. The DEC's enforcement and permitting efforts influence almost every type of activity imaginable in the state.

Fifty years ago a number of fishermen, frustrated with the pollution they saw and upset with the injustice of failed efforts, took up the enforcement challenge. That founding spirit is alive and at our core.

Riverkeeper uses many tools to advance our enforcement efforts. We work with everyday people to spot and to identify environmental concerns. We serve as watchdogs over government agencies that oversee the violators.

The Clean Water Act empowers citizens to act as private attorneys general when government chooses to not enforce after they are put on notice of violations. The law allows organizations like Riverkeeper to collect legal fees when it steps up to bring these enforcement cases. Why do we bring these enforcement actions? Because our water, which is vital to life, has no voice. When government fails to act, we step in.

Our efforts include educating and informing lawmakers and regulators, by assisting with developing and updating environmental and public health lawmaking to protect the natural world at both the state and national level.

These far reaching efforts have produced many successes. We have reduced the harmful and polluting impacts of entire industries. We have stopped polluters in contaminated communities with the goal of achieving environmental cleanup, justice, and compliance.

**Protecting New York's Water from Industrial Animal Farm Waste.** New York is the country's fourth largest milk-producing state with more than 600,000 dairy cows, each of which produces over 100 pounds of manure per day. The way this staggering amount of waste is stored and utilized has serious implications for human health and water quality.

New York is in the process of renewing the Clean Water Act general permits that regulate how industrial-sized animal facilities, those with greater than 300 cows or the equivalent, dispose of manure so they do not contaminate our waters. Until now, the permits have allowed these animal facilities to

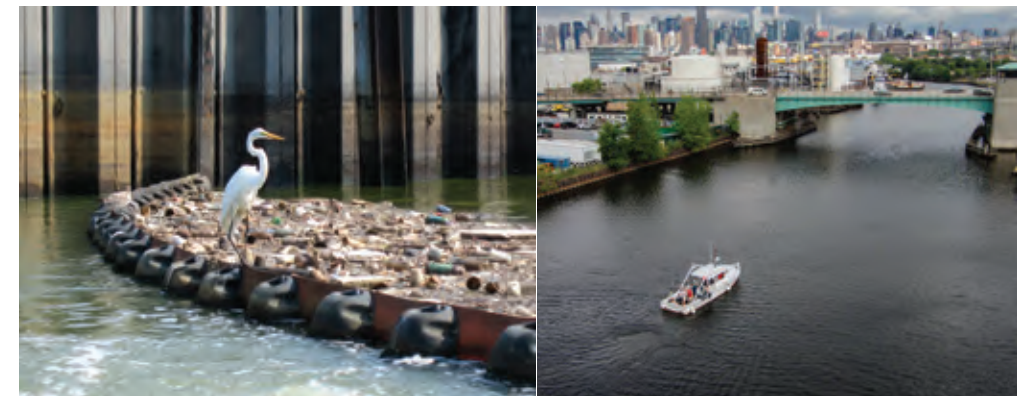
spread manure on frozen or snow-covered ground when it has no agricultural benefit for crops. There are significant impacts to water quality after the inevitable spring rain and snowmelt. In the last two years, these farm practices have led to over forty surface water and groundwater contamination events.

Riverkeeper has fought on a number of fronts to bring an end to the practice of winter manure spreading. Our activities include informing reporters and community groups about the issue, circulating a petition signed by more than 700 Riverkeeper supporters, working closely with coalition partners to draft over 100 pages of detailed technical and legal comments on the draft animal facility permits, and advocating for state funding to help farmers construct storage capacity sufficient to hold manure throughout the winter months.

Our efforts have met success. The state has proposed permit improvements to mitigate impacts of winter spreading activities. We also supported a \$4.8 million increase for agricultural pollution prevention in the state budget, much of which will be dedicated to manure storage.

**Stopping the Town of Hunter's Untreated Landfill Discharges.** The Town of Hunter landfill has been polluting the New York City watershed for the past six years. The landfill has failed to fully treat its polluted leachate, or rainwater that has passed through the landfill, and become contaminated by its contents. The untreated leachate carries heavy metals, ammonia and other contaminants into Schoharie Creek, a crucial water body that is part of the drinking water supply for millions. The Schoharie is also a popular picnicking and swimming destination and supports a heavily stocked trout fishery. The Hunter violations were discovered through our enforcement review of over 200 permitted facilities in the New York City drinking water watershed. Riverkeeper identified the Hunter landfill as a chronic problem facility with 2,676 violations over the past five years. Riverkeeper, represented by the Pace Environmental Litigation Clinic, sent a formal Notice of Intent to Sue the Town for the landfill's pollution discharges to Schoharie Creek. Our notice letter has spurred the state to action. The DEC inspected the landfill and negotiated a consent order settlement with the Town that will require the illegal discharges to end. We will monitor the state's action to make sure that our efforts under the Citizen Suit provision of the Clean Water Act protect the Schoharie and its many beneficiaries.

**A driving force on the Gowanus Canal.** Unlike many other waterways around New York City that have seen at least some improvements over the past 50 years – whether that was due to long-running campaigns or recent, targeted enforcement efforts – the Gowanus Canal remains one of the most toxic, polluted waterways in the nation. During each patrol of the canal, Riverkeeper is reminded of



"Whenever we see cormorants, or we see egret or we see heron, it's a really hopeful sign, and it's a message from the natural world, saying, 'We're waiting. You do the right thing, and we'll come back.'" — John Lipscomb

the staggering, unabated need for remediation. The Gowanus Canal, much like the Newtown Creek, has been burdened by a century of toxic contamination introduced through the combined sewer system, by decades of spills at manufactured gas plants, and by unknowable amounts of illegal industrial dumping – most of which occurred long before Riverkeeper was founded.

Riverkeeper's presence – enforcement patrols, sewershed advocacy, monitoring water quality and supporting the community – continues to be a driving force on the canal. Our watchdog efforts in the past year have shed light on emerging development risks; our work on the sewershed problems stopped the city from diverting combined sewage into neighboring communities around Brooklyn; our work supporting community voices and citizen advocates have facilitated collaboration at city, state, and federal agencies.

Part Clean Water Act issue, part Superfund issue, the control of combined sewer overflow pollution in the Gowanus sewershed has been a hot topic in recent months as the city and the EPA negotiate over where, when, and to what size a pair of multimillion-gallon combined sewage storage tanks – required in the official EPA cleanup plan – are built.

At this stage, the combined sewer overflow and Superfund processes are resulting in final decisions that will have lifelong consequences. Riverkeeper remains steadfastly committed to the canal's future, and the future of the industries, businesses, and residents that depend on its cleanliness.

**Vigilance and vision for Newtown Creek.** For well over a century, the Newtown Creek was one of the most thoroughly utilized waterways in the nation. Home to oil refineries, fuel depots, heavy industries, combined sewer systems, garbage dumps, cemeteries, and runoff from densely populated urban areas, the creek has a long road of remediation ahead of it.

For well over a decade, Riverkeeper has been patrolling the creek. Dozens of citizen suit

Newtown Creek is a perfect example of how a little group can go up against the largest petroleum corporation on earth, and succeed.

enforcement actions have been brought; some of those – such as the Exxon oil spill in Greenpoint, Brooklyn – became trigger points for city, state, and federal action.

Along with the Gowanus Canal, the creek became a "listed" federal Superfund site in 2010. With this designation came hope – that one day the waterfowl, fish, and shellfish of the creek would return, that the community could utilize and enjoy over 7 miles of waterfront, and that the cleanup of the creek would create a coalesced community.

Today, Riverkeeper patrols – along with the human-powered patrols of our partners at the North Brooklyn Boat Club and Newtown Creek Alliance – have seen this hope become reality. Menhaden shoals, migratory birds, mussels, oysters, and larger predatory fish have returned to the Creek.

On the heels of these sightings, though, Riverkeeper is constantly reminded why vigilance is needed. Over the past year, fresh oil spills, intentional and unintentional dumping, and an revolving door of industrial polluters showcase the need for more oversight, citizen suit enforcement, and on-the-water presence.

Riverkeeper, as a member of the Superfund Community Advisory Group Steering Committee, has been pushing for robust EPA involvement in upland remediation work (to clean up legacy pollution at sites adjacent to the creek), and for a community-led visioning process for the future uses of the creek.

Over the next year, the Superfund process will accelerate – both phases of early ecological and public health assessments have all but wrapped up, and the EPA is beginning to take a hard look at what solutions will be needed in the creek. Riverkeeper will continue to call for the full remediation and restoration of Newtown Creek, the capture and treatment of CSO and MS4 pollution in the creek's watershed, and the involvement of the community – industry and resident alike – in each stage of the creek's renewal. — JOHN PARKER AND SEAN DIXON

# People Power

## A new objective: Cleaning the shoreline, restoring the river

Riverkeeper's shoreline cleanups are in their fifth year. And what began as an annual day of service — the spectacularly successful Riverkeeper Sweep — has grown into a larger initiative to reduce pollution and foster local action.

In 2015, we announced a sustained year-round campaign to make our shorelines trash-free, building upon our biggest Sweep yet. On May 9, 2015, more than 2,000 volunteers — from Brooklyn to Troy — removed 40 tons of debris from Hudson Valley and New York City shorelines. Volunteers also planted native grasses, trees and shrubs along the shorelines while removing invasive species. Again, plastic and Styrofoam were the most common item cleared from the shores, but lawnmowers, tires, couches, part of a car and even a playground horse were hauled out of the river, too.

Along Hudson Valley tributaries like the Wallkill River, volunteers organized cleanups by boat and land, and took part in the "Trees for Tribs" program in partnership with the New York Department of Environmental Conservation's Hudson River Estuary Program. More people were involved than ever, in more communities than ever.

Here's what one day's work by dedicated volunteers accomplished, by the numbers:

- More than 2,000 volunteers turned out at 102 project sites, from Red Hook in Brooklyn to the Capital District.
- More than 40 tons of debris were removed from the Hudson River Estuary, including the East River, Gowanus Canal and Hudson Valley streams.
- 1,150 native trees and grasses were planted.
- More than 500 trees and shrubs received maintenance care.

Inspired by this single day's success, Riverkeeper launched an extended campaign to reduce trash — plastic pollution in particular — and engage communities throughout the Hudson River

"Being able to plant and restore an area where I've been coming the last 40 years — I came here as a kid and played sporting events — to see what's happening with Randall's Island is awesome. I'm a big believer in what Riverkeeper's doing. This is just a tiny little part of it, but we're making some real progress."

— John McEnroe at Riverkeeper Sweep 2015, Randall's Island, NYC



Clockwise from top: Volunteers taking part in Riverkeeper Sweep by kayak on the Wallkill River; Dana Gullely, Riverkeeper's Director of Community Engagement; Sweep volunteers at Randall's Island, including tennis legend John McEnroe.

watershed in conservation. We won a ban on microbeads in cosmetic products, drove local efforts to limit the use of foam containers, supported a New York City fee on single-use plastic shopping bags, and promoted the use of reusable bags. We helped organize additional shoreline cleanups and took part in the EPA's Trash Free Waters working group with science, government and advocacy groups to address both global and local problems.

In 2015, Riverkeeper and partners worked with several local communities up and down the Hudson

to ban single-use plastic shopping bags and polystyrene products in food service establishments. Ulster and Putnam counties went on to enact bans on polystyrene.

In 2016, our volunteer and outreach efforts continue to grow. The Sweep is now incorporating a data collection initiative with local high schools and colleges to gain snapshot of the shore trash along the Hudson.

— DANA GULLEY

# Partnership rids the Hudson of an eyesore

Riverkeeper Sweep volunteers manage to remove more than 100 tires from the river each year, but there was one target that required a special effort.

An enormous tractor tire was mired for years in a shallow cove along the Hudson just south of the Bear Mountain Bridge, blighting a beautiful landscape during low tide and creating an eyesore along the Metro-North commute. It sent exactly the wrong message — that nobody cares about the Hudson.

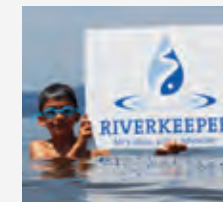
Now the tire is gone. And that has sent the opposite message: Many people look out for the river, and will not accept its use as a dump.

Sweep volunteer Evelyn Watters helped call attention to the need to remove the tire, and Dan Shapley, Riverkeeper's water quality manager, resolved to take on the project after passing it on his commute.



Special equipment was necessary to extricate the object, more than 6 feet in diameter, weighing, as it turned out, about 1,800 pounds. Riverkeeper reached out to Sea Tow Central Hudson and Metro-North Railroad, and found willing partners ready to take on the project. In November, the three partners teamed up on a successful operation to haul it out and ship it off for recycling.

## HOW YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE



Riverkeeper's growing volunteer program had its biggest impact ever in 2015. We trained 300 volunteers, including 72 Riverkeeper Ambassadors who contribute professional skills or represent Riverkeeper to the public. We worked with 135 local partners, which include community groups, municipalities, businesses, boat clubs and colleges. We also attended 80 community events, with many of those events staffed by our Ambassadors. Please be a part of our work as we begin a new half century of service to the river. Here's how:

**Stewardship:** Volunteer for shoreline cleanups and plantings, including the annual Riverkeeper Sweep from the Capital District to NYC. Visit our Volunteer page at [riverkeeper.org/volunteer](http://riverkeeper.org/volunteer).

**Citizen science:** Citizen scientists form the backbone of our water quality program. We need help sampling tributaries of the Hudson for Enterococcus, an indicator of fecal contamination. Your samples help us monitor the health of local waterways, inform the public of health threats and advocate for critical wastewater infrastructure. For information contact Jennifer Epstein, Water Quality Program Associate at [jepstein@riverkeeper.org](mailto:jepstein@riverkeeper.org) or (914) 478-4501 ext. 248.

**Outreach:** Be a "super volunteer" and become a Riverkeeper Ambassador, taking our message

to festivals and farmers markets. We rely on volunteers to help us reach more communities than ever before. If you are interested in becoming an Ambassador, Riverkeeper will pair you with a seasoned veteran to help you get up to speed.

**Advocacy:** What's the difference between signing a petition and taking action with Riverkeeper? Our action alerts are strategically timed, worded and targeted to have the greatest impact. Visit [Riverkeeper.org](http://Riverkeeper.org) to see our current action alerts and sign up for email notices

For more information on how to become involved with Riverkeeper, call (914) 478-4501 ext. 222.

[www.riverkeeper.org](http://www.riverkeeper.org)

### How to make a pollution report

1. Date/time/weather conditions
2. Location
3. Details — sight/smell/frequency
4. Photos, video, narrative
5. Your contact information

### Where to Report

DEC Spills Hotline: 1-800-457-7362  
Riverkeeper: 914-478-4501, ext. 231  
[tinyurl.com/rvkwatcdog](http://tinyurl.com/rvkwatcdog)



## Local action leads to national ban on plastic microbeads

In 2015 we made progress in stopping plastic pollution at the source: Our own consumer goods.

Riverkeeper worked with local partners on a successful public awareness campaign against microbeads — tiny plastic scrubbing beads that have been accumulating by the tens of millions in the Great Lakes and threatening the health of marine life.

About the size of grains of sand, microbeads can persist in the environment for centuries and accumulate toxic chemicals that could enter the food chain if marine creatures ingest them. The beads can absorb petroleum products, pesticides, insecticides and even harmful industrial chemicals like PCBs. In recent years, they've been used in a wide array of personal care products, from toothpaste to body washes and skin creams, for their scrubbing and exfoliating properties.

Microbead pollution enters our waters when a product is used and washed off. This pollution is released into waters through sewage overflows or treatment plants not designed to remove microbeads and into our waterways. They mix with the toxins in the water and end up in the fish we eat — with some alarming consequences.

NY Attorney General Eric Schneiderman issued a report revealing their presence in 74 percent of samples taken from 34 wastewater treatment facilities. Calling microbeads "toxic sponges," the Attorney General's office sent a program to the legislature to prohibit the distribution and sale of cosmetic products containing microbeads less than 5 millimeters in size.

Riverkeeper worked with communities by drafting model legislation to "ban the bead." Soon, New York was on the verge of becoming one of the first states in the nation to outlaw the sale of personal care products containing microbeads.

But it seemed the only thing stopping the state was that Congress got there first.

In late December 2015, President Obama signed the Microbead-Free Waters Act, which will prohibit the sale of cosmetics containing the plastic beads beginning in 2017. This decisive victory in a gridlocked Washington took many by surprise. It was the local bans, according Connecticut Sen. Chris Murphy, that made all the difference.





### Riverkeeper demands steps to protect sturgeon from Tappan Zee Bridge construction

Before construction began on the new Tappan Zee Bridge in 2012, Riverkeeper fought for measures that would minimize harm to the river and its life. We've been monitoring since then for compliance, calling out failures such as poor dredging practices that threatened to contaminate the river.

In 2015 we sounded a new alarm: New York State recorded a 20-fold increase in reports of dead sturgeon in the Hudson Estuary, starting at the exact time the bridge construction began in 2012.

The facts are startling: Four years prior to construction, just six dead sturgeon were reported to the state. In the four years since, 124 have been reported. More than half have been struck by a vessel or propeller.

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) agreed to re-examine the project and its impact on the endangered fish. In its review prior to construction, NMFS allowed that just two of each endangered sturgeon species – Atlantic and shortnose – could be killed over the course of the five-year project.

There are very few Atlantic sturgeon left in the Hudson. They are the largest fish in the river, the icon displayed on every sign for the Hudson River Estuary. We hope the Fisheries Service, New York State and its contractor listen to the urgent appeals from Riverkeeper and thousands of individuals to impose speed limits, use propeller cages or take other steps that could halt this toll.

Atlantic sturgeon are magnificent. Anyone lucky enough to see these fish is awed by their size, their armor-like plates, and their prehistoric appearance. They are defenseless. They need our protection.

The future of the Hudson?

We hold it in our hands.



“The single defining feature, at least on the surface of our planet, is our water. That makes us special in the universe—there aren't as many water planets as you might imagine—which means everything we do relative to our water matters. Everything.” – Wallace J. Nichols



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Riverkeeper on 50  
years of stewardship.*



“CLIMATE CHANGE IS REAL, IT IS HAPPENING RIGHT NOW. IT IS THE MOST URGENT THREAT FACING OUR ENTIRE SPECIES, AND WE NEED TO WORK COLLECTIVELY TOGETHER AND STOP PROCRASTINATING. WE NEED TO SUPPORT LEADERS AROUND THE WORLD WHO DO NOT SPEAK FOR THE BIG POLLUTERS, BUT WHO SPEAK FOR ALL OF HUMANITY.”

*– Leonardo DiCaprio*



*Dear Leo, thank you for years of commitment to our environment and keeping our planet clean.  
Congratulations on receiving Riverkeeper's Big Fish Award at the 2016 Ball.*

*Love, Rita and Tom*

# Fishermen's Ball

## Celebrating the dedication of Eileen Fisher, Jeff Koons and HSBC

At our annual celebration, the Fishermen's Ball, Riverkeeper spotlighted three honorees as "Big Fish" for their commitment to environmental protection: Eileen Fisher, Jeff Koons and HSBC.

Actress and comedienne Cheryl Hines was the emcee of the event — held at Chelsea Piers on a cool May evening — and mega-producer Andy Cohen introduced a short video about Riverkeeper.

Fisher — whose company and clothing line shares her name — has been a strong and loyal ally in the work to protect the Hudson River. Upon receiving the award, Fisher spoke about the current ecological impact of textile manufacturing, saying that "the clothing industry is the second largest polluter in the world ... second only to oil." But by incorporating sustainable business practices, Fisher said that it's her eco-conscious company's goal to attain 100 percent sustainability by the year 2020. Fisher said her company would work with other manufacturers to soften the environmental impact of the clothing industry.

Pioneering artist Jeff Koons — known for his iconic sculptures Rabbit and Balloon Dog — has been a longtime supporter of the Waterkeeper movement and is a strong advocate for clean drinking water in New York City. Robert F. Kennedy Jr. presented the award to Koons, thanking him "for everything he's done for our movement and clean water."

Riverkeeper President Paul Gallay presented the award to HSBC and it was accepted on the corporation's behalf by Adam Israel, the Executive Sponsor of its Water Programme. The Water Programme helps protect and provide fresh water and sanitation around the world, and raises awareness about water accessibility and water quality. "Like Riverkeeper," said Israel, "we share the value of healthy waterways, which lead to healthy communities, which lead to healthy economies."

Special recognition was given to the Empire Dragon Boat Team — a group of women cancer survivors — which has been a key environmental ally on Flushing Bay, where they train and compete. The Empire team raises public awareness of issues related to cancer survivorship, advocates for healthy lifestyles and provides funding in the fight against cancer. But, as the team's head coach, Akila Simon, says: "What impresses me most is their selflessness as seen in their desire to advocate for a water body apparently forgotten. The place where we call home, where we paddle, Flushing Bay."

— CLIFF WEATHERS



Left facing page: Eileen Fisher is honored as Riverkeeper's "Big Fish." Above, fellow "Big Fish" honoree Jeff Koons is joined by Riverkeeper Board Member John McEnroe and Chief Prosecuting Attorney Robert F. Kennedy Jr.

At right, Riverkeeper Advisory Board Member Mary McNamara speaks with Akila R. Simon, Head Coach of the Empire Dragon Boat Team, a key Riverkeeper environmental ally on Flushing Bay.

Below right, Riverkeeper Board Member Kristie Pellecchia, center, is joined by Matt Havens of KfW Bank, Angela Tribelli of Harper Collins, and colleagues from Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corporation, Alan Krouk and Patrick Palaganas.





The Empire State Building glows with Riverkeeper's colors – blue, green and deep blue – in honor of Riverkeeper's 50th anniversary.



Leadership Council Member Alex Herzan, in green, with members of the Empire Dragon Boat team and Riverkeeper NYC Staff Attorney Sean Dixon.

## With Gratitude and Appreciation

Riverkeeper gratefully acknowledges generous contributions from individuals, foundations and corporations. The listing below reflects contributions of \$250 and greater received between July 1, 2014 and June 30, 2015.

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Bank of America volunteers participate in Riverkeeper Sweep.



Suzanne Augustin, her son, volunteer water quality sampler CJ Augustin, and young Max Sabety learn about the Hudson River with Captain John Lipscomb.



Advisory Board member Christine Churchill, her husband Bruce and daughter Wylie explore our waterways on the 4th of July.

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BALANCE SHEET FISCAL YEAR 2014 VS. FISCAL YEAR 2015

ASSETS	FY '15	FY'14
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 723,010	\$ 403,622
Current portion of contributions and pledges receivables	1,040,498	728,934
Prepaid expenses	4,776	3,449
<b>Total current assets</b>	<b>1,768,284</b>	<b>1,136,005</b>
Contributions and pledges receivables, net of current portion	1,015,500	425,000
Property and equipment (net)	90,908	90,131
Security deposits	10,600	10,600
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$ 2,885,292</b>	<b>\$1,661,736</b>
<b>LIABILITIES and NET ASSETS</b>		
Accounts and grants payable and accrued expenses	\$ 420,532	\$ 128,134
<b>Net Assets</b>		
Unrestricted	449,462	908,602
Temporarily restricted	840,298	375,000
Permanently restricted	1,175,000	250,000
<b>Total net assets</b>	<b>2,464,760</b>	<b>1,553,602</b>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES and NET ASSETS</b>	<b>\$2,885,292</b>	<b>\$1,661,736</b>


STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION FISCAL YEAR 2015 vs. FISCAL YEAR 2014


SUPPORT AND REVENUE	FY '15	FY'14
Contributions	\$ 3,814,363	\$ 2,845,910
Special events	\$1,175,978	\$1,140,616
In-kind services	1,071,295	702,416
Investment	151	229
Other	1,021	996
Cost reimbursements	90,094	81,058
<b>Total support and revenue</b>	<b>6,152,902</b>	<b>4,771,195</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>		
Program services	\$ 4,689,125	\$ 4,011,301
Management and general	146,761	101,644
Fundraising	385,858	362,443
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>5,221,744</b>	<b>4,475,388</b>
<b>Surplus/Increase in Net Assets</b>	<b>931,158</b>	<b>295,807</b>






RIVERKEEPER®

# RIVERKEEPER ON THE MAP 2015

 Rivers and creeks sampled by Riverkeeper and our citizen partners

 Communities served by Riverkeeper cleanups and plantings

 SERVED AS WATCHDOG  
 ADVOCATED FOR BETTER PLANS AND POLICIES  
 PARTNERED WITH LOCAL GROUPS





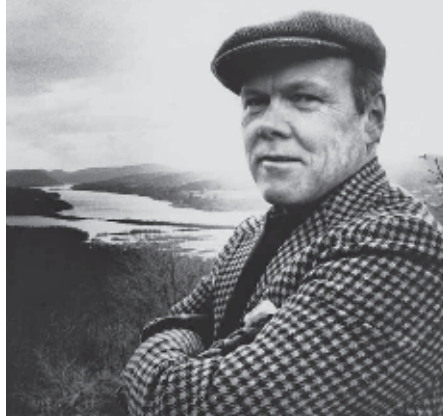


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RIVERKEEPER.

YOURS TO PROTECT.



“Bob Boyle conceived of and founded Riverkeeper 50 years ago. All the work that Riverkeeper has accomplished, all the work it will accomplish, and all the work being carried out by Waterkeepers around the globe is the result of Bob’s initiative and vision – his absolute unwillingness to accept harm to the Hudson.

The power of his advocacy and his extraordinary intellect are undiminished, as powerful as ever, today. It is a great privilege to work with him on behalf of the River. Bob Boyle is a perfect example of how one person can change the world.”

– John Lipscomb, Riverkeeper Patrol Boat Captain



**RIVERKEEPER.**

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