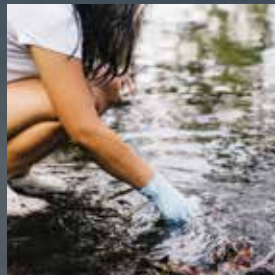


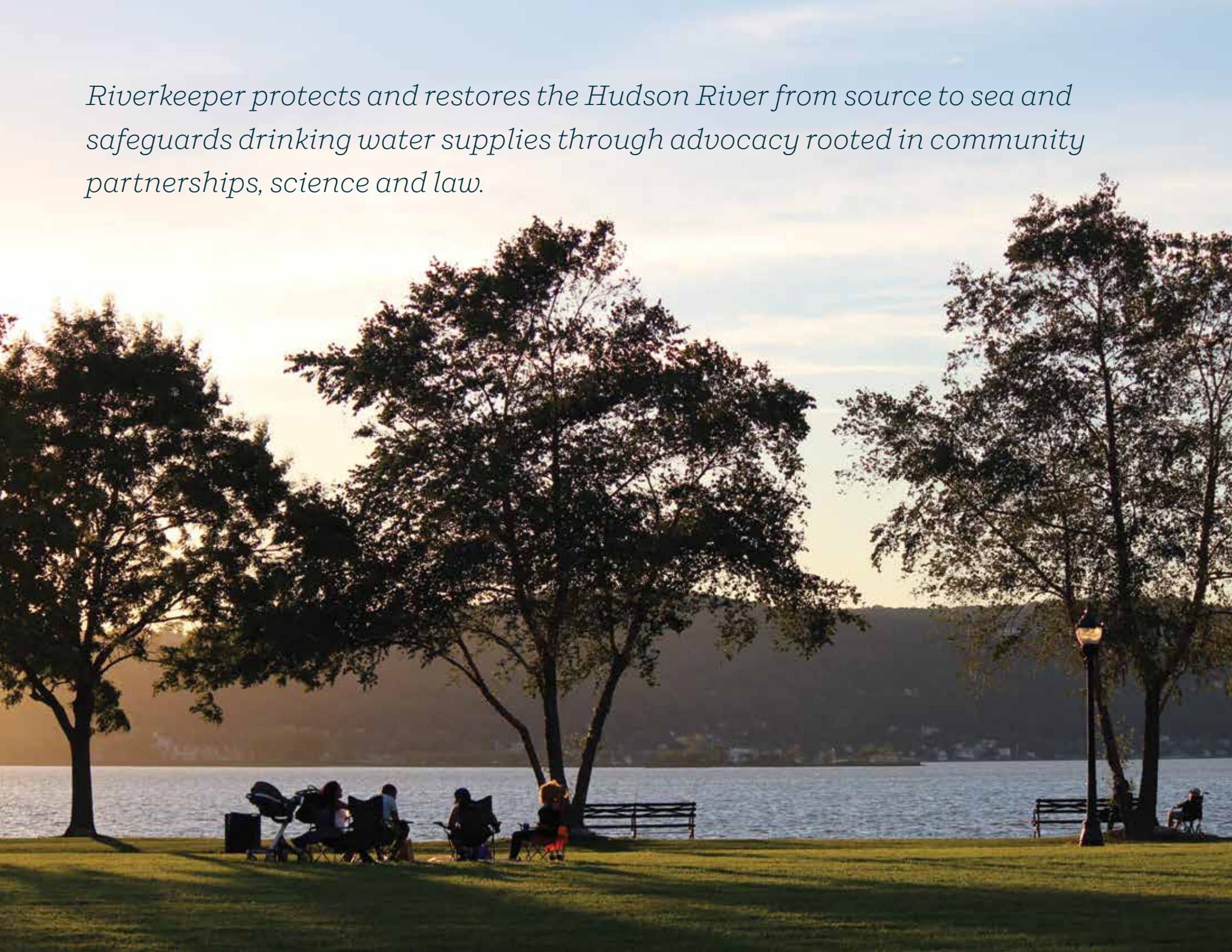


PROTECT & RESTORE

Together we heal the Hudson



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



COVER PHOTO BY JOSEPH SQUILLANTE; INSET PHOTOS BY GILLES UZAN, LEAH RAE AND ALISON WILKES; PHOTOS (FACING PAGE AND THIS PAGE) BY LEAH RAE

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Common purpose



This past year, despite unprecedented challenges, Riverkeeper bore down and made big advances in the areas of water quality, biodiversity, climate resilience and community empowerment. We resumed our region-wide water quality testing program with new COVID-19-safe protocols, and held our 9th Annual *Riverkeeper Sweep*, which featured over 60 different shoreline cleanup and restoration projects. We took down two more large dams, which will open up miles of new habitat to help

the Hudson's embattled fish populations. We completed a new, robust strategic plan designed not only to assure that Riverkeeper achieves new success in the years to come, but also to make us a more diverse, equitable, inclusive and just organization.

In 2021, we'll build on what we achieved this year. Now that we've beaten back the Army Corps of Engineers' misguided plan to build barriers where the Hudson meets the sea, Riverkeeper will foster partnerships to create real solutions to the risks our communities and ecosystems face from sea level rise and storm surge. With the Indian Point nuclear plant closing for good in April, we'll fight against new fossil fuel projects in our watersheds and support community and ecosystem friendly renewable energy.

Perhaps Riverkeeper's greatest area of opportunity is for us to fully live up to our values in the years to come. They include a commitment to the fundamental rights of the Hudson River, its tributaries, and all the living things that depend upon them to exist and thrive in healthy, balanced ecosystems. The idea that full and equitable access to clean

drinking water is a human right and that we all may enjoy the Hudson as a place to swim, fish and boat. That a healthier environment is especially important for disproportionately impacted communities and decimated fish and wildlife populations. And that trust, respect, integrity, and justice must be the basis for all our relationships, both within and beyond our organization.

If Riverkeeper can do a better job living up to those values, we will not just be a fairer, more inclusive organization – we'll be a more successful one. We'll expand the scope and reach of our clean water advocacy, find more partners in new communities and take on important new projects we might otherwise have missed. Riverkeeper will do better, more effective work than we've ever done before, when everyone in our region is empowered to protect the Hudson River and our drinking water and the benefits of our work flow to everyone who calls our region home.

Finally, on a personal note: I'll be coming to the end of my 11-year run as Riverkeeper President next June. Organizations need new leadership on a regular basis to keep growing and renewing themselves and I, too, hope to find new opportunities to grow and renew. But, as long as Riverkeeper stays true to its values and maintains its fundamental commitment to science, law and community partnerships, and as long as you and all our other partners stay with us, I see truly great things ahead for the Hudson, its wildlife and its people.

Ever onward,

Paul Gallay, President & Hudson Riverkeeper

A Year of Victories



**200
TREES
PLANTED**
in Fishkill Creek
headwaters

**3
WASTE
FACILITIES
STOPPED**
by community action

**600
SIGNATURES**
to protect menhaden

**41,000
MILES OF
STREAMS**
protected by
NY Legislature

**1
DANGEROUS
NUCLEAR PLANT**
begins shutdown

**\$17
MILLION**
pledged for coal tar cleanup
in the Hudson



**2
DAMS
REMOVED**
for fish passage

**251
WATERWAYS
SPARED**
from a natural gas
pipeline

**5,000
NAUTICAL
MILES**
patrolled



**2,000
SMALL DRINKING
WATER SYSTEMS**
must test for
PFAS chemicals

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PHOTOS BY GENE HELFMAN (FAR LEFT), ENID MARTINDALE (LEFT) AND JOHN LIPSCOMB (FACING PAGE)



NEW YORK HARBOR Our busy little ship. In September, we spent several days supporting a study on microplastics contamination – including the contaminants that adhere to plastics – with Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory researchers (L-R) Beizhan Yan, Joaquim Goes, Shannon Marie Chiarel and Kali McKee. We're eager to support this research. Ultimately we need data to argue for the regulation and reduction of toxic plastics in the earth's waters.

PHOTOS BY JOHN LIPSCOMB (FACING PAGE AND THIS PAGE, UPPER RIGHT), OCEANS 8 FILMS (LOWER RIGHT), DAVE CONOVER (LEFT)

ON THE WATER



Riverkeeper Patrol

John Lipscomb, Patrol Boat Captain



HUDSON RIVER This is a “young of year” Atlantic sturgeon, only months old, photographed 13 years ago by Dave Conover. We learned more this year about the status of these fish in the Hudson River Estuary, a spawning ground and nursery that is essential to their survival.

Historically, there were once more than 6,000 mature females in the Hudson spawning stock, research suggests. The most recent population estimate puts the annual spawning run at 466, male and female. This indicates that in spite of a moratorium on harvest in 1996, and in spite of being listed as a federally endangered species, the species is not recovering.

Unless we do better, we risk a local extinction. We have to do better, because it's not our right to deprive this species of its ancestral home.

The patrol boat is Riverkeeper's presence on the river, on behalf of the river, logging more than 5,000 nautical miles a year from the Mohawk and Upper Hudson down the Estuary to New York Harbor. The boat provides a deterrent to polluters, a platform for research, and a means of educating the public. It also carries a steady reminder: This river needs keeping.



LIBERTY ISLAND When we came back up the coast after winter restoration work in Chesapeake Bay, Maryland, in March, we weren't even sure whether we could patrol because of the COVID-19 pandemic. We found a deserted river, empty marinas, and for the first time, Lady Liberty standing on her island alone.



20 YEARS TOGETHER October 1, 2020, marked 20 years for me with this boat. She's been remarkably steadfast. Never, ever lets me down. And in those 20 years we've traveled together more than 100,000 miles, more than four circumnavigations of the globe, all on the Hudson. She's universally recognized and greeted for her service to the river.



ON THE WATER



MOHAWK RIVER Batu (@riverkeeperdog) went ashore at Erie Canal Lock 8 to visit with Joshua Richardson, Chief Lock Operator. Because of the pandemic, the canals didn't open until very late this year, and our only Mohawk patrol was in September. I was so moved by the welcome that Riverkeeper, our patrol boat and crew received. We've patrolled here since 2014, and it's good to be part of this community.



PIERMONT PIER In June and July we saw large numbers of dead Atlantic menhaden. Heat, lack of rain and other factors combined to reduce dissolved oxygen that the fish need to survive. It's a warning about our need to restore the river and help it face the stresses of climate change. Menhaden are noble little fish. They are essential as prey for whales, striped bass and so much other life.



NOT HAPPENING IN NEW YORK HARBOR The Army Corps of Engineers studied the option of a barrier like this one across the mouth of the Hudson to protect against storm surges. It would have been a monstrous assault on the river, restricting the ebb and flow of the tide, the very heartbeat and respiration of the estuary. Riverkeeper raised the alarm, and the public responded with overwhelming concern.

In January, President Trump of all people called it "costly, foolish & environmentally unfriendly." How ironic that the plan was killed by an enemy of environmental protection. His desire to punish New York may have saved the river. As City Comptroller Scott Stringer tweeted in reply, "Glad he finally found a wall he doesn't like. Now can we get some real federal investments in resiliency projects that are smart and achievable?" We will keep advocating in favor of rational solutions on coastal flooding, not half-measures that harm the river.

PHOTOS BY JOHN LIPSCOMB (TOP LEFT AND FACING PAGE), GEORGE JACKMAN (BOTTOM LEFT) AND VLADIMIR SIMAN



NEWTOWN CREEK

This is construction and demolition debris waste being unloaded at a recycler in Brooklyn. C&D waste is turning out to be a new problem for the Hudson Valley: Where to put it? We've seen a number of proposals to utilize no-longer-active industrial properties throughout the estuary as either dumping grounds or transfer stations. We want old industrial sites like quarries remediated – not filled with waste.



INBOCHT BAY This jetty south of Catskill is one of the sites where C&D would have been brought – 600,000 tons of it. The plan was to pile the waste around an existing industrial site, supposedly to serve as a visual and noise barrier. C&D material contains contaminants. With this project only a few hundred yards from the Hudson River, contaminants would likely reach the Hudson River, wetlands and surrounding areas through rainfall, runoff and groundwater. The community, with Riverkeeper's support, pushed back, and the developer retreated.

SWEEP On October 17, 1,000 volunteers removed 16 tons of trash from the shorelines of the Hudson River and its tributaries at 67 locations from New York City to the Capital District. With adapted safety protocols and a new date, the annual Riverkeeper Sweep marked a successful 9th year.

VICTORIES

Wins for the water

Here are highlights of Riverkeeper's latest achievements.

Protecting fish

MENHADEN Successfully petitioned the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission to revamp its approach to managing Atlantic menhaden, or “bunker.” These fish are called “the most important fish in the sea” because so many other species prey on them – including the whales that have made a spectacular comeback off the shores of New York City. Now, catch limits and other regulations will be made based on a recognition of this important ecological niche.

INDIAN POINT Achieved the shutdown of the first of two remaining reactors at this decaying nuclear power plant after decades of advocacy, and prepared for closure of the final reactor in April 2021. Indian Point's decommissioning will end a major threat to the region's safety and prevent 1 billion fish, eggs, and larvae from being killed each year by the plant's outdated cooling system.

STRIPED BASS Argued successfully, in the face of a worrying decline in striped bass population coastwide, to ensure that Hudson River recreational fishing can continue, but with additional precautions to ensure that more fish can successfully spawn in the nursery of our estuary, and that more can survive the trauma of “catch and release” sport fishing.

ENDANGERED STURGEON Filed suit to challenge the EPA's temporary green-light policy, which allowed polluters to violate monitoring and reporting requirements with impunity. In particular, the EPA failed to consider how this policy would affect endangered species such as the Atlantic and shortnose sturgeon.

Defending free-flowing rivers

STORM SURGE BARRIERS Coordinated a major advocacy, media, and legal campaign to stop the potential construction of giant storm surge barriers across New York Harbor that would have caused catastrophic harm to the Hudson River while leaving communities vulnerable to flooding. Helped pass legislation in the U.S. House of Representatives to promote positive, thoughtful coastal resilience measures for New York Harbor and the Hudson, including nature-based solutions and expanded community engagement.

DAM REMOVAL Completed two major state-funded dam removal projects on the Quassaick Creek in Newburgh and Furnace Brook in Westchester County. Both projects return ancestral habitat for migratory fish. (P. 16)

HYDROELECTRIC DAM IMPACTS Engaged in once-in-a-generation opportunities to reduce impacts at six existing hydroelectric power plants on dams that block the Mohawk River, Wallkill River and Fishkill Creek. Riverkeeper argues for effective fish passage and protections, mitigations to water quality impacts and improvements to public access for paddlers as facilities receive new licenses that may be in place 40 years.

Preventing water pollution

STREAM PROTECTIONS Shepherded a bill through the New York State Legislature to protect over 41,000 miles of streams threatened by the Trump EPA's all-out assault on environmental regulations. These protections are critical for preventing further degradation of the

Hudson, its tributaries and of drinking water supplies serving millions of New Yorkers.

\$1 BILLION FOR CLEAN WATER With another \$314 million committed in 2019 to repairing and upgrading aging water and wastewater systems, New York State and local communities have invested more than \$1 billion into clean water projects in the Hudson and its tributaries since 2017, an achievement built in part on Riverkeeper's tireless advocacy.

GAS PIPELINE After years of legal battles, helped defeat Constitution Pipeline, which would have carried fracked natural gas across 251 water bodies, including 89 trout spawning streams.

DANSKAMMER Our coalition won a decision from New York State impeding plans for the proposed repowering of the Danskammer gas-fired plant, which would threaten water and air quality in surrounding environmental justice communities like Newburgh.



PHOTOS BY LEAH RAE (FACING PAGE) AND ROB FRIEDMAN

DEBRIS BARGES Stopped a plan to barge construction and demolition debris up the Hudson to Athens, despite the project being on the verge of gaining state permits. Supported local advocates in turning out over 250 community members at an organizational meeting, which was followed by a series of petitions signed by over 2,000 people, all leading up to this victory.

COEYMANS Filed suit under the Clean Water Act against Coeymans Recycling Center, citing its hundreds of illegal storm water discharges in recent years. In addition to monetary penalties, we are seeking to force the Recycling Center to implement better stormwater pollution controls and restore water quality.

WASTE FACILITY Fought successfully for the denial of state permits for a BioHiTech waste processing facility, bitterly opposed by community advocates already overburdened by polluting waste disposal facilities. The project would sit on top of a toxic waste site in Rensselaer and put the Hudson at risk from toxic residues and leachate.

Fighting polluters

FRACKING Won passage of a state law to close the fracking waste loophole, which had allowed out-of-state hazardous fracking waste to be dumped in New York's landfills and wastewater treatment facilities. And, building on our landmark 2014 achievement, we codified in law New York State's ban on fracking.



RONDOUT JUNKYARD Nearly 20 years after Riverkeeper first reported pollution concerns on one of Captain John's early river patrols, the site of the B. Millens Scrapyard on the Rondout Creek in Kingston was declared cleaned up by state regulators. Over 50 years of operation, the scrapyard had left a legacy of heavy metals, PCBs and other pollutants adjacent to vital spawning habitat on an arm of the Hudson River Estuary where student rowers, pleasure boaters and kayakers come to enjoy the water.

ENFORCEMENT Pursued 21 successful clean water enforcement cases in 3 years, bringing \$125,000 to fellow environmental organizations.

Protecting drinking water at its source

LIMITS ON TOXIC CHEMICALS Helped New York set some of the nation's most protective limits on PFOA, PFOS, and 1,4-dioxane in drinking water. The standards must now be implemented with testing in all public water supplies, and Riverkeeper will advocate for them to be both strengthened to match emerging science about these dangerous chemicals, and used to guide cleanups to ensure sources of pollution are fully remediated.

SOURCE PROTECTION STATEWIDE New York State launched the Drinking Water Source Protection Program, with pilot projects in communities statewide. With a framework for creating robust protection programs, and a commitment to fund projects critical to their success, the state has taken a step toward Riverkeeper's goal of applying the lessons learned in the protection of New York City's supply to communities statewide.

NEWBURGH Worked with Newburgh Clean Water Project and decision-makers at all levels to pressure the Air National Guard to expedite a comprehensive cleanup of the source of pollution affecting Newburgh's primary drinking water supply and other waterways. Worked with City of Newburgh to study and develop solutions for water quality challenges to its backup reservoir.

PROTECTING NYC WATER SUPPLY Monitored investigations of pollution at Westchester Airport and treatment of invasive species in Croton Reservoir, and worked to ensure three development projects aren't built without effective curbs on stormwater pollution.

Promoting safe recreation

NYC WATERS Sued New York State for attempting to retract its own water quality standards for New York City. Won a promise from the EPA to promulgate its own regulations if the state fails to ensure the city's waters are held to the standard that residents expect – safe for swimming.

COVID-19 Worked with Columbia and Yale researchers to sample for viruses including SARS-CoV-2 virus that causes COVID-19 in the Capital District and New York City. This research builds on Riverkeeper's longstanding effort to define risks from pathogens that enter the water with untreated sewage, and will contribute to the urgent need to understand the nature of the coronavirus that caused a worldwide pandemic.

COMMUNITY SCIENCE Adapted our community science program for pandemic conditions, and resumed water quality sampling in the Hudson River Estuary and many of its tributaries.

Fostering community stewardship

WATER JUSTICE Launched a three-year project with Media Sanctuary in North Troy to support a new generation of environmental justice advocates focused on water issues. The "Water Justice Lab" will process water samples under Riverkeeper staff mentorship, create radio and podcast content, and provide workforce development training to local youth.

PLASTICS Fought successfully for a statewide ban on Styrofoam containers and advocated for implementation of the state's plastic bag ban. Teamed with Columbia University students on sampling for microplastics in NYC waterways. Co-published a study with Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory examining how pharmaceuticals adhere to microplastics in the waterways (and potentially enter the food web).

CATSKILL Supported the Greene County advocacy community in preventing the Peckham quarry property in Catskill from playing host to an unlined landfill for construction and demolition debris, the second bad idea for the site that we've helped stop in a year.

PHOTOS BY RIVERKEEPER (THIS PAGE), AND LEAH RAE (FACING PAGE)



COAL TAR Riverkeeper worked with mayors and supervisors in the Hudson 7 alliance to ensure that the cleanup plan for a 100-year-old coal tar contamination hotspot near Poughkeepsie is cleaned up comprehensively and without putting at risk the stretch of river that is the drinking water source for over 100,000 people.

OUR VISION

A better future is within our reach.

YOU CAN HELP

PROTECT & RESTORE

THE RIVER

UNDAMMED Quassaick Creek flows freely near its confluence with the Hudson, one week after the removal of the Strooks Felt Dam in October 2020. For about 300 years, a barrier at this location prevented fish from moving upstream and reaching ancestral habitat.

PHOTO BY JESS DEITZ

We envision a river restored to ecological health and balance – free flowing, resilient and teeming with life.

Rewilding the River

Islands and shallows were destroyed long ago to improve navigation. Opportunities abound to restore these natural areas and the life they once supported.

IN THE NORTHERN REACHES OF THE HUDSON Estuary, the natural landscape might seem virtually untouched. Long stretches of forested banks line the foreground, and the Catskills rise to the west, the Taconics to the east. Fresh water flows down while tidal energy reaches up, 150 miles from the ocean, lifting the water twice a day like an eternal heartbeat. Sediment moves in with the tide, sustaining tidal freshwater marsh – a rarity around the globe.

What escapes the eye is a history of wholesale destruction, dating back to the early 1800s, to benefit

navigation and commerce. The upper third of the estuary was once a region of braided river channel, full of shallows and wetlands, or as the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers described it in 1893: “obstructed by bars and shoals due to the existence of numerous islands and sloughs, and the consequent diversion of the river water through too many channels.”

Those numerous, dynamic channels – where slow-moving waters, abundance of food and plentiful cover support a range of life – are now essentially gone.

The Army Corps began re-engineering the river after completion of the Erie Canal, linking the Hudson River to the Midwest, in 1825. Dikes, made with rows of timber pilings, formed a new, artificial shoreline that constricted the tidal flow and deepened the river. A single ship channel was dredged, and the dredged material was used to fill secondary channels and shallows. Nearly 4,000 acres of shallows, wetlands and intertidal habitats were lost because of scouring or filling. More than 85 percent of islands and 70 miles of shoreline were eliminated.

The construction of railroad tracks during the 19th century cut off tidal marshes and coves. And throughout the Hudson River Valley, more than 1,600 dams were built, stifling the flow of nutrients and fish.

There is no going back, but there is much we can do. Rising sea levels threaten to increase the damage,

submerging marshland before sediment has time to build up. Invasive species also threaten habitat for aquatic life.

A wetlands restoration effort completed in 2018 marks a shift toward healing the river and making it more resilient.

Across from Coxsackie at Gay’s Point, engineers carved a 1,200-foot-long, 65-foot-wide channel through an area where dredged material had been placed, creating a peninsula with an artificial embayment. With the channel, a connection with the river was restored. The newly flowing channel is being monitored for improved water quality, plant life and wildlife habitat – a nursery for new life – that is expected to result.



An aerial photo shows work underway in 2017 to excavate a channel at Gay’s Point in Stockport, connecting the artificial embayment at left with the main stem of the Hudson at right, and restore high quality, shallow water habitat for fish and other wildlife. The inset photo shows the newly completed channel in 2018.

Between Catskill and Albany, more than half of the historic shallows and intertidal habitats – 4,000 acres – were obliterated by dredging and filling. More than 85 percent of islands in the Hudson were lost. Now, we’re beginning to give back what was taken away.



On October 27, Riverkeeper and New York State DEC successfully removed the Strooks Felt Dam on the Quassaick Creek in Newburgh near its mouth at the Hudson. It was the second dam in the history of the Hudson Valley to be removed specifically for fish passage. This dam and its predecessor blocked herring and eels from moving upstream for about 300 years.

More information at Riverkeeper.org/dams

PHOTOS BY JESS DEITZ (FACING PAGE) AND DEC (THIS PAGE)

The project, managed by DEC in partnership with the Thruway Authority, used funds that were allocated as compensation for damage caused to the river by the Tappan Zee Bridge replacement project. It is located in Stockport and is part of the Hudson River National Estuarine Research Reserve.

In a 2019 study, the Army Corps joined New York State, Riverkeeper and many other partners in recommending a series of additional restoration projects, noting “dramatic losses of regional ecosystems.”

The Gay’s Point side channel restoration is the first project of its kind in the Hudson River, and it signals the potential for more.

Meanwhile, along Hudson River tributaries, Riverkeeper and the state DEC are teaming up with communities to remove obsolete dams and open ancestral spawning grounds for migratory fish.

In 2020, we removed two obsolete dams, one on Quassaick Creek in Newburgh and the other on Furnace Brook in the Town of Cortlandt, Westchester County. Following up on the successful removal of a dam on Wynants Kill in Troy in 2016, these were the first three dams removed along the Hudson expressly for fish passage.

All of this has happened in five years. Looking forward, additional side channel projects are under consideration and will need public support. The three successful dam removals, we hope, will inspire dam owners and communities throughout the valley to remove obsolete dams for the benefit of fish passage.












The restoration of the Hudson will require a sustained effort, from us and from many generations to come.

Key species in trouble

We need stronger action to protect the Hudson's aquatic life.

The Hudson River is one of the planet's greatest migratory corridors. Shad, river herring, Atlantic sturgeon, striped bass and other species return from the ocean every spring to their ancestral spawning grounds.

Even while the water becomes cleaner, centuries of habitat loss, toxic dumping and overfishing continue to take their toll. We've virtually annihilated many species by harvesting them at their most vulnerable time – when they were about to spawn. To give the fish a fighting chance, we need to do more. Removing dams and restoring side channels is a great start.

		
American eel DEPLETED	Atlantic sturgeon ENDANGERED	
		
Atlantic tomcod VANISHING	American shad DEPLETED	Rainbow smelt VANISHED
		
River herring DEPLETED	Shortnose sturgeon ENDANGERED	Striped bass IN DECLINE
		
White perch IN DECLINE	White catfish VANISHING	Winter flounder VANISHING

We envision reliable sources of safe, clean drinking water.

Sources of life

New York City is renowned for its vast, well protected drinking water supply, while smaller cities like Newburgh are left vulnerable. Riverkeeper is equipping communities with ways to better safeguard their water sources.

A QUARTER-CENTURY AGO, RIVERKEEPER was at the center of the negotiations that established New York City's world-renowned program to protect drinking water at its source. The program prioritizes the natural filtration provided by forested mountains in the Catskills and Hudson Highlands as an effective treatment for the drinking water serving 9 million people — nearly half the state's population.

What about the other half? With the discovery of toxic PFAS chemicals from military fire-fighting foam in Newburgh's primary reservoir in 2016, the crisis put a spotlight on the failure

to protect our other cities and communities throughout the state. Our bedrock environmental laws like the Clean Water Act and Safe Drinking Water Act are unfortunately full of cracks that have left communities at risk — or worse, suffering from illness due to exposure to unsafe water.

Our lax chemical approval laws have allowed tens of thousands of chemicals to enter our waters — including a rising tide of pharmaceuticals, and over 8,000 PFAS compounds known as “forever chemicals” because they are so toxic, ubiquitous and indestructible. Despite this weak tea of chemicals each present at low levels, we've not kept pace by setting new limits on chemicals in drinking water, even those with thoroughly documented risks.

Our land use laws leave downstream communities with no authority to protect the sources of their drinking water upstream. As a result, real estate development is often prioritized, even when it damages the wetlands and streams that act as the kidneys and arteries for downstream waters.

The systemic racism baked into so many of our laws and policies has put Black, Indigenous and people of color most at risk not only from toxic industries, but watersheds degraded by polluted runoff from sprawl.

The climate crisis is putting new stress on these underlying problems, with extreme storms producing damaging pulses of pollution, and hotter temperatures setting the stage for algal blooms.

Riverkeeper recognizes that all living things need clean water, and access to clean drinking water is a human right. We also know it takes a team effort to protect any one water source, or to change the rules to better protect all water sources.

Whether we fight to see the source of toxic PFAS contamination in Newburgh comprehensively cleaned up, or work to protect the Hudson as a drinking water source for 100,000 people, or lobby to establish protective drinking water limits on PFAS chemicals, we are using every tool available to protect drinking water. And we're working to put more tools in the toolbox.

The new Drinking Water Source Protection Program is starting to help communities put plans in place for the protection of their water supplies. Implementing protections will take continued state investments in the Clean Water Infrastructure Act, and the updating of Watershed Rules and Regulations, the New York State law that empowers downstream communities to protect their water sources upstream.

PHOTO BY LEAH RAE

Riverkeeper is working with City of Newburgh and other partners to develop a comprehensive plan to protect Brown's Pond. As one of the city's backup water supplies, this reservoir has become increasingly important since the city's primary reservoir was contaminated.



The EPA and General Electric agreed on extensive dredging to address toxic PCBs in the 40 miles of river above the Troy Dam, but nothing has been done to clean up the 150 miles of river below the Troy Dam. This issue is urgent, because delays have health consequences and the burden falls most heavily on people of color.

INDUSTRIAL LEGACIES

We envision waters recovered from historic and inequitable environmental harms.

Persistent harm, new resolve

THE POLLUTER PAYS. IT'S A SIMPLE JUST CONCEPT Riverkeeper has stood for since our founding. But too often, the most powerful and wealthy polluters shirk this responsibility, while their pollution impacts those with the least power. Riverkeeper believes that working with communities to amplify their voices is the way to bend this toxic arc of history toward justice.

Fifty years ago, our founder, Bob Boyle, published test results showing abnormally high levels of toxic PCBs in the river's striped bass. The findings sparked the long fight to rid the river of General Electric's toxic legacy. GE avoided dredging the worst contaminated pockets in the Upper Hudson for decades. Today, it is avoiding the investigation and cleanup of PCBs in the river's long tidal estuary, between Troy and New York City. GE's PCBs remain

in the sediment, water and wildlife throughout the river's ecosystem. They are also found in people, especially those whose diet relies on fish caught from the river.

With a community of river advocates, we have stepped up pressure on the EPA, which has the power to force GE to finish removing its PCBs. Because of this advocacy, EPA now admits that the six-year dredging project in 40 miles of the river won't give us the result we demand – fish that are safe to eat – and that it must address contamination in the full 200-mile Superfund site.

Whereas PCBs are an invisible threat, other pollution bubbles up in rainbow sheens in the Gowanus Canal and oozes from Newtown Creek's shoreline. Waves of raw sewage are dumped in them each time it rains. These New York Harbor tidal arms should be fertile fish and wildlife habitats, and

watery parks for people in Brooklyn and Queens. They also must remain working waterfronts to meet the vision of generations of frontline community residents. Across the country, gentrification follows environmental remediation, resulting in yet another injustice. That's why it's not enough to keep fighting entrenched powers from ExxonMobil to City Hall. We also need to work with communities to realize their visions for cleaned-up waterways so decades of advocacy isn't all for real estate barons' gains.

Riverkeeper's work must uplift all people, especially communities of Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC). Marginalized communities, distinctly those of color, are disproportionately impacted by these and many other environmental harms. They have had the most taken from them, and we must support their fights for justice as well as the environment.

DEIJ: Riverkeeper strives to right systemic injustices

Riverkeeper strives to support our partners to increase their power and effectiveness regarding decisions affecting their environment and health. Historically, the better resourced and predominantly white environmental movement, including Riverkeeper, has not followed frontline and BIPOC leadership and asks, but rather worked according to its own ideas and motivations. We are working to change this

narrative and have committed ourselves to the ongoing path of **diversity, equity, inclusion and justice work.**

Our **DEIJ** process began in 2017, with some progress and some stumbles. With race and class inequities magnified by the pandemic and the recent uprisings in defense of Black lives, we have re-committed to this incredibly important and urgent work. We're building internal DEIJ systems that are

interwoven with our strategic planning goals. We are examining how our existing structures promote systemic injustice and prioritize the most privileged, and striving to dismantle them. By intensifying our internal DEIJ work, Riverkeeper hopes to become a better actor in our external DEIJ work and supporting our communities to realize a more just future.

PHOTO BY LEAH RAE

We envision safe and accessible waters, stewarded by all.

Deepening our commitment

Amid the pandemic, Riverkeeper continues monitoring for pathogens and moving steadily toward solutions for cleaner water. We'll never return to normal - normal wasn't good enough.



WHEN IT COMES TO COMMUNITY SCIENCE, the people are as powerful as the data we gather. The COVID-19 pandemic therefore presented an unprecedented challenge to our water quality sampling program, which is built on interpersonal interactions among volunteers and staff.

We also knew the data was never so important. Since our first water test in 2006, we've tested for fecal indicator bacteria not because those bacteria are harmful - but because their presence indicates that other pathogens are likely to be present in the water. Viruses have been shown to be the most likely pathogen to cause illness to people swimming in waters affected by untreated sewage.

Could SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, enter water, like other viruses, and cause illness? Scientists worldwide were scrambling to answer basic questions about this coronavirus, how it can be spread, and how to squelch the pandemic.

To meet this challenge, we worked to understand any risks the virus poses through contact with contaminated water, both through following emerging global scientific findings, and partnering with researchers at Columbia University and Yale University to measure SARS-CoV-2 and other viruses in the

Hudson River by gathering samples from our patrol boat.

We put safety protocols in place to prevent staff and volunteers from exposure by interpersonal interactions, contaminated surfaces or contaminated water, and shared those protocols with other community science programs in the region and nationwide.

We didn't miss a single sample in the Hudson River Estuary, completing our 12th year of routine monitoring from the patrol boat. Our community science projects typically engage volunteers to sample more than 300 additional locations in tributaries and at public water access points. While the pandemic kept us from sampling every location or every tributary, we maintained a robust sampling operation.

In adapting to these challenges, we were buoyed by the resilience of our community of partners, from the Lower Hudson Partnership, Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory, SUNY Cobleskill and Bard Water Lab to the many individual volunteers who dip bottles in creeks to measure water quality. As we all move through and beyond the pandemic, we have the chance - and imperative - to keep community at the center of our lives, as the basis for regenerative relationships with people and water, both.

FACING PAGE Genesis Cooper, a high school student from Troy, draws a water sample during the launch of the Water Justice Lab, a project of the Media Sanctuary supported by Riverkeeper. Youth Scientist Fellows like Genesis will participate in Riverkeeper's water quality monitoring projects, and conduct interviews for radio and podcast on the topic of environmental justice.

THIS PAGE Despite the pandemic, Riverkeeper and our partners sampled water from about 290 locations in 2020, about two-thirds of the total in recent years.





STREAM RESTORATION This was the site of a large pond until a dam breached naturally in the headwaters of Fishkill Creek. In September, volunteers from Riverkeeper, One Tree Planted, Trout Unlimited and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation came together to help foster a new and thriving stream ecosystem here. Over the course of two days, volunteers planted 200 trees – the start of a healthy forest that will shade the water and support habitat for fish and other wildlife. We will tend to these trees over the course of the next year to give them the best chance of success.

PHOTOS BY BETH ALLEE (FACING PAGE), LEAH RAE (INSET), DAVID CORDERO (THIS PAGE, TOP RIGHT), CLIFF WEATHERS (BOTTOM RIGHT), AND LEAH RAE (LEFT)

COMMUNITY

Closer than ever

Even 6 feet apart, we've never been more closely engaged along the river. Riverkeeper's community partnerships are building a bigger constituency for the Hudson.



IN THE PAST YEAR we've all learned, on some deeper level, just how dependent we are on one another, and on our natural environment.

We've seen what alienation, division and recklessness can bring. We've seen, also, what we can continue achieving by working together, by staying focused on a better future. Riverkeeper continues to build new partnerships in our work toward a healthy river and well-protected sources of drinking water. The

pandemic has caused us all to grow in our appreciation of these basic needs – not to mention the solace and refuge that a healthy environment provides. We hope you will become more involved in these efforts and help us continue to find the ways forward.



SCIENCE FRIDAY In February, we joined a SciFri Book Club discussion in NYC inspired by Dan Egan's *The Death and Life of the Great Lakes*. The panel explored efforts to protect and restore New York City waterways.

WATER CEREMONY

Riverkeeper participated in a water ceremony on the Hudson shore as part of the Interfaith Center of New York's Rabbi Marshall T. Meyer Retreat for Social Justice. Chief Dwayne Perry of the Ramapough Lenape – descendants of the region's original occupants – grounded the ceremony, and speakers shared religious teachings, rituals, and poetry about honoring and protecting the water and the climate.



ANNUAL SWEEP Volunteers with Outdoor Promise and IMPACT!, Inc. cleared trash from Muchattoes Lake in Newburgh – one of 67 projects in the 9th Annual Riverkeeper Sweep from Brooklyn to the Capital District on October 17. More than 1,000 volunteers cleared 16 tons of trash from the shorelines, gathered 1 ton of recycling, hauled out 98 tires and planted hundreds of trees and shrubs during this annual day of service.



HUDSON RIVER RISING

At our annual Fishermen's Ball, Riverkeeper honored environmental crusader Rob Bilott and the Newburgh Clean Water Project.

While the pandemic forced a reimagining of our annual gala, it didn't diminish the spirit of our supporters. On September 15, more than 300 friends joined together online as we celebrated the Hudson and the work of our honorees. Robert Bilott received our Big Fish Award. An environmental lawyer, Bilott waged a 20-year legal battle against DuPont for knowingly contaminating the water used by thousands of people and animals in West Virginia. Actor Mark Ruffalo, who played Bilott in the 2019 film *Dark Waters*, presented

him with the award. We also honored the Newburgh Clean Water Project – represented at the event by Deborah Brown – with our Hudson Hero Award for its community-based approach to fighting against harmful PFAS contaminants in the city's drinking water. As part of the event, filmmaker Jon Bowermaster debuted his latest mini-documentary, *Hudson River Rising*, which features the work by Riverkeeper and community advocates to protect our shorelines, waterways and drinking water.

Tungsten Sun © Joseph Squillante, 2013. HudsonRiverPhotography.com



Rob Bilott



Steve Liesman



Paul Gallay



Ernest Tollerson



Deborah Brown



Mark Ruffalo



Larry Grenadier and John Scofield



Ophra Wolf

"I'm hoping that through the work of Riverkeeper and others, people will understand that even one person can stand up, rise up, speak out, demand change - and no matter how big and powerful your adversary, entire systems can change." — Rob Bilott

"The age of waiting for someone bigger and better to fix the problem is over." — Ophra Wolf of the Newburgh Clean Water Project

With gratitude & appreciation

Riverkeeper gratefully acknowledges generous contributions from individuals, foundations and corporations.

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Fiscal Year 2020

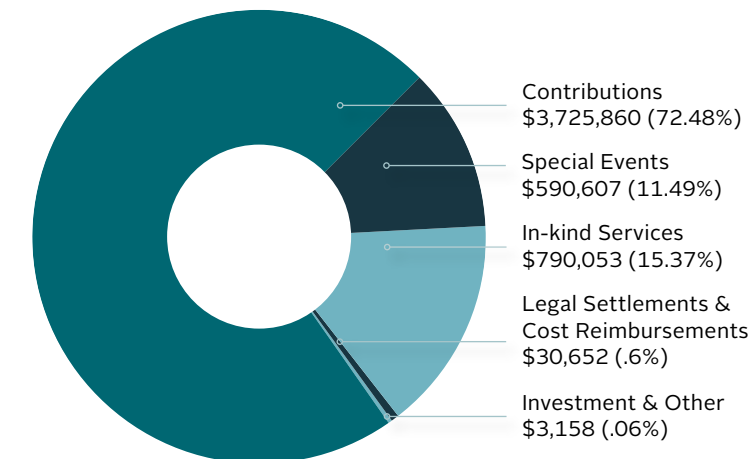
THE ONGOING PANDEMIC BROUGHT MANY UNFORESEEN challenges our way this past fiscal year, including the necessity to scale back or postpone some critical fundraising efforts. Thanks to the extraordinary generosity of our donors in the first half of the year, Riverkeeper was able to weather the storm in fundraising that resulted from the pandemic. As a result, Riverkeeper was still able to increase both its total support and revenue during the fiscal year ending June 30, 2020. We gratefully acknowledge the generous contributions of our private, corporate, and public supporters and members, who

number more than 5,000 a year. Without your amazing support, we would not be able to continue to carry out our important work on behalf of the Hudson River, New York City's drinking water supply and the communities that rely on the health and protection of these waters. We hope you will take pride in all that we have accomplished together and all that we plan to accomplish.

For a detailed Statement of Financial Position and Statement of Financial Activities for Fiscal Year 2020, please visit riverkeeper.org/financials

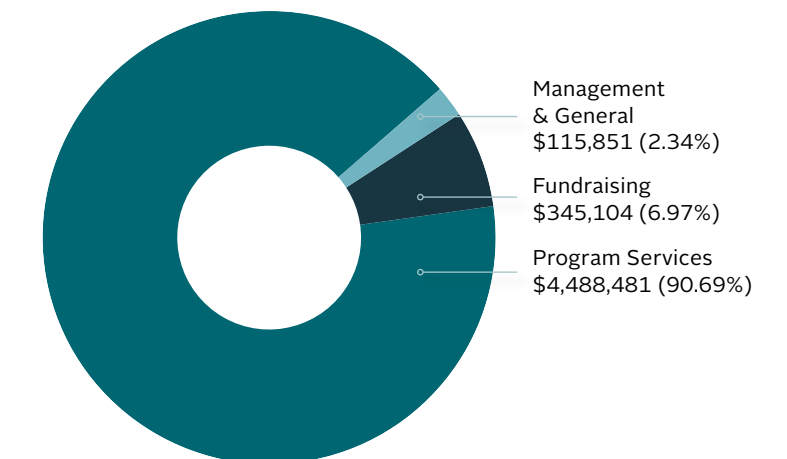
SUPPORT AND REVENUE

Total \$5,140,330



OPERATING EXPENSES

Total \$4,949,436



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Get Involved

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

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

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

Gifts of Stock and Qualified Charitable Distributions from your IRA

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

Storm King Legacy Society

Planned giving is a lasting way of ensuring our clean water mission endures for generations. Special gifts can be achieved through bequests or charitable trusts, and can include real estate, retirement assets, insurance policies, bonds or other tangible assets. Contact Linde Ostro at ext. 229.

Workplace Giving

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

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

Business Membership

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

Young Advocates Council

The Young Advocates Council is an active group of young professionals who serve as Riverkeeper ambassadors and are dedicated to increasing Riverkeeper's visibility through events, social media and fundraising. Contact Jen Benson at ext. 234.

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.

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Mailing Address:

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