



RIVERKEEPER.

2023 IMPACT REPORT



OUR MISSION: 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.



A Measurable Impact



300 MILES OF RIVER

regularly monitored by Riverkeeper boat patrols

7,502 WATER QUALITY MEASUREMENTS

taken by Riverkeeper and our partners



959 NATIVE TREES and shrubs maintained

7,700 VOLUNTEER HOURS dedicated to the river

1.5 MILLION GALLONS

of radioactive wastewater kept out of the Hudson



19 HUDSON VALLEY DRINKING WATER SUPPLIES

helped by new protection program

\$500 MILLION

in the NYS budget for grants to improve water quality

1 MILE

of publicly accessible Flushing Bay shoreline spared in defeat of AirTrain project



31 TONS OF DEBRIS

removed from the river by more than 2,500 volunteers in 1 day

9

LEGAL CASES in progress

28,148 LETTERS

to lawmakers and decision-makers

7

ACRES forever protected around Kensico Reservoir, which supplies drinking water to NYC



PHOTOS (FRONT COVER LOWER LEFT) BY ELLIE IRONS / NATURE LAB; (FRONT COVER LOWER RIGHT) COURTESY OF LEWIS PUGH FOUNDATION; (THIS PAGE LOWER RIGHT) BY JOSH PEARSON

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

You buoy our efforts



AS WE NEAR THE END OF 2023, and my second year as Hudson Riverkeeper and President, I am full of hope and energized for the work that lies ahead. We have incredible momentum at Riverkeeper coming out of significant victories and the rising public call for our waterways to be protected from harm, free flowing, and full of life.

The passage into law of the Save the Hudson bill, which prohibits the discharge of radioactive waste into the Hudson River at Indian Point nuclear power plant, was proof positive that the majority of our residents and elected officials now recognize the central role the Hudson River plays in our regional ecology, economy, and in the heart and soul of our communities. Our team worked tirelessly on the legislative strategy to block Holtec's planned wastewater dumping; the bill passed unanimously in the State Senate and with a strong bipartisan majority in the State Assembly. The public outrage that anyone could still think it's acceptable for the Hudson River to serve as a toxic dumping ground moved our Governor to sign the bill into law before the planned discharges began. For Riverkeeper, an organization that has been fighting for more than half a century against the business practice of prioritizing profits over clean water, your outcry has been wind in our sails!

This year, we had our progress reflected back to us when international marine conservation nonprofit Mission Blue gave the New York Harbor the "Hope Spot" designation, and when United Nations "Patron of the Oceans" Lewis Pugh highlighted the Hudson River as a model of river recovery by swimming its full 315-mile length. Lewis told us about meeting elders along the river who shared with him that, due to pollution, they had been unable to swim in the river in their youth. They expressed gratitude – and, in some cases, amazement – at seeing the river return to swimmable conditions. As someone who swims in the Hudson often, and who raised my children swimming, paddling, and sailing on the river, I share their deep gratitude for cleaner waters.

Knowing how my family benefits from access to safe swimming and clean drinking water, I find it

deeply troubling that many fellow New Yorkers still do not enjoy these rights that were guaranteed to all Americans when the Clean Water Act was passed into law 50 years ago. Guaranteed, *but not yet delivered* due to prioritization of profits over public good, and to environmental racism. At Riverkeeper we are doubling down on our fight for clean and safe water for all, from NYC to Troy, and into our tributary rivers and creeks.

Climate change is galvanizing the public into a greater awareness of our ecological community, and into action. More people than ever can see the pressing need to secure our drinking water sources, make our riverfronts accessible to all, remove the abandoned dams that clog our waterways and deny fish needed habitat, protect our remaining wetlands and living shorelines which provide habitat and flood protection, and the list goes on.

It is your growing engagement in these issues and your willingness to invest in the solutions we all need for continued ecosystem recovery, that allow the team at Riverkeeper to increase our impact, amplify our message of clean water, and build the movement we need to continue to be effective water protectors.

We stand on the shoulders of generations of water protectors in the Hudson Valley, starting with the Munsee, Mohican, Mohawk, Schaghticoke, and other tribes. Water is part of our infrastructure and a key to public and private prosperity, but it is also a life source and home to myriad creatures with their own inherent right to life. I call on all of us to think about our relationship to the land and the water every day. Consider how we can be better stewards and, above all in ways both tangible and profound, good ancestors.



With hope and gratitude,
Tracy

Tracy Brown, President & Hudson Riverkeeper

Celebrating important wins

Sparing the Hudson from more radioactive dumping

After successfully securing the shutdown of the dangerous Indian Point nuclear power plant – which killed billions of fish annually – in 2021, Riverkeeper is serving a critical watchdog role in the decommissioning process. In 2023, we stood up to prevent Holtec from dumping radioactive wastewater from the plant’s spent fuel pools into the Hudson. Members of the public mobilized, organized rallies, and used Riverkeeper’s web portal to send more than 20,000 letters to New York legislators and Governor Hochul to oppose the use of the river as a dumping ground and demand action. Our team helped frame and advance the legislative strategy, and in August, Governor Hochul signed into law the “Save the Hudson” legislation, championed by Assemblymember Dana Levenberg and Senate Environmental Conservation Chairman Pete

Hackham, demonstrating New York’s commitment to a healthy Hudson River.

Keeping the drinking water supply safe

Communities in the Hudson Valley and across the state are actively working to better protect their local drinking water supplies, using a critical state program that Riverkeeper helped establish. Nineteen Drinking Water Source Protection Plans are underway in the Hudson River watershed alone, including ones in Ossining and Peekskill, developed with Riverkeeper. Our partnership with Peekskill has led to a water quality monitoring project in Peekskill Hollow Brook, a drinking water source, and a new Watershed Inspector, a position we advocated for. To help raise awareness of the critical importance of clean drinking water, we collaborated with Peekskill Brewery on a Riverkeeper Beer, made in part from the brook itself. We helped the “Hudson 7” – a group of communities that rely on the Hudson for their drinking water – gain a seat at the table to secure extra precautions in advance of the Champlain Hudson Power Express project, which will bury a giant electric cable in the river bed.

To help protect the crown jewel of New York City’s drinking water supply, Riverkeeper, with partner NRDC, negotiated with a developer to permanently conserve larger areas of buffer land next to the Kensico Reservoir.

Supporting swimmable, fishable, drinkable water for all

Riverkeeper is using our legal and advocacy tools to force stronger water quality standards and bigger investments to reduce sewage pollution in the waters surrounding New York City. In response to a lawsuit by Riverkeeper and our partners, New York State proposed the first of two new rules that are meant to update standards for waters around New York City. The rule will define how much contamination is allowable in waters used for swimming, kayaking, or fishing; the second will define which waterways should meet those criteria. Riverkeeper is insisting on a high bar for “swimmable” waters in a city where rainfall easily overwhelms the combined sewer system and triggers the release of 21 billion gallons of raw sewage into waterways each year.



BIG SWEEP On May 6, more than 2,500 volunteers removed 31 tons of debris from hundreds of miles of shoreline in NYC and the Hudson Valley in our 12th Annual Riverkeeper Sweep. This momentous day of service is our biggest event of the year. The efforts continue throughout the year, when Riverkeeper teams up with HSBC, Hairstory, M&T Bank, and other businesses on shoreline cleanup and restoration projects.



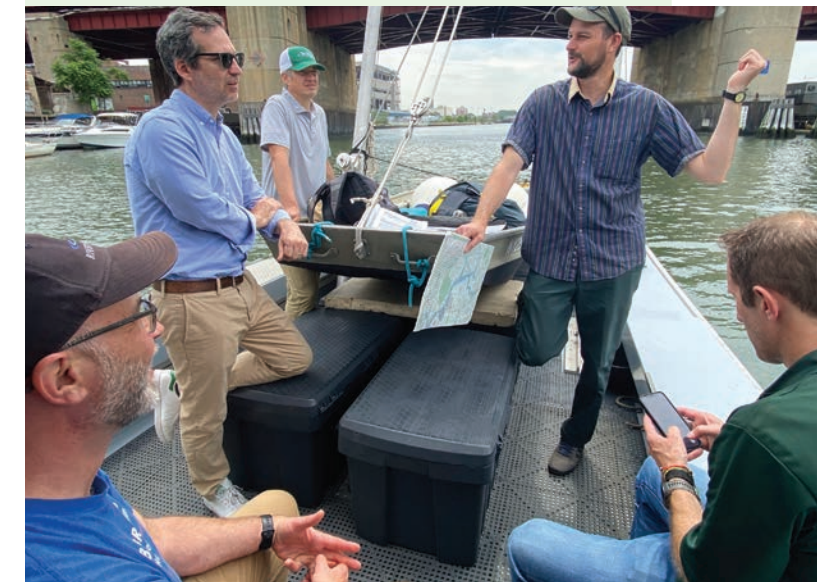
SURVEYING FISH In May, Riverkeeper’s Habitat Restoration team conducted surveys in Furnace Brook at a site where we removed a dam, to learn what species were present and in what numbers. We found a wide variety of freshwater species – a sign that this stream is being restored to health.

Protecting habitat and restoring creeks, one dam at a time

Riverkeeper continues to invest in our habitat restoration program, and welcomed our first Science Director, Shannon Roback, Ph.D., in August. We scored victories including New York State’s Living Shorelines Act, which prioritizes granting permits for nature-based features such as constructed wetlands or oyster breakwaters, for a more resilient approach than “hardened” shorelines like concrete seawalls.

Riverkeeper serves a key role in directing major funding sources, such as New York’s \$4.2 billion Environmental Bond Act, toward projects that can restore critical habitat. We are advancing numerous efforts to remove old, obsolete dams and restore free-flowing, healthy streams in the Hudson Valley. A new documentary film by National Geographic “Ocean Hero” Jon Bowermaster, “One Dam at a Time,” celebrates the success of our first three dam removals. Our fish surveys are telling the success story, too, as a diversity of species – American eel, white perch, and white sucker – return to newly opened habitat in Furnace Brook and the Quassaick Creek.

ON PATROL Riverkeeper hosted staff from the state Department of Environmental Conservation and our partners Newtown Creek Alliance in June to see some of the waters where the state is proposing new water quality standards. We are working to ensure these standards support swimming, paddling, and the visionary goals of communities like those working for the restoration of Newtown Creek.



VICTORIES

Holding polluters to account

Riverkeeper led a renewed push to hold General Electric accountable for cleanup of toxic PCBs that the company dumped from 1947 to 1977, which are still at dangerous levels in sediment, water, and wildlife throughout the Hudson as far south as New York Harbor. PCBs remain a health hazard to those who eat the fish, despite a landmark dredging project in the Upper Hudson. As the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency prepares its five-year review of the Hudson River Superfund site – the largest in the nation – we are working with our partner Scenic Hudson to demonstrate the need for further PCB removal in the “Upper” Hudson. The data show that fish will remain unsafe to consume for the foreseeable future, and more cleanup must be done to protect human health and the environment. Meanwhile, years of advocacy paid off with the launch of a new study of PCBs and other contaminants in the “Lower” Hudson, 160 miles from Troy to New York City – a first step toward a potential cleanup in this portion of the river.



TESTING WATER QUALITY Aljahraun Wright tests a Hudson River water sample at Media Sanctuary in Troy, one of the partners in Riverkeeper’s vast water quality monitoring program. Volunteers gathered samples from over 100 locations on eight tributaries throughout the Hudson River watershed, and Riverkeeper continued to monitor more than 70 locations along the main stem. For a fourth year, we collaborated with Media Sanctuary on the Water Justice Lab, where several youth fellows, representing the next generation of environmentalists, process water samples from the Upper Hudson and take part in a “Source to Estuary” summer course.



REVIVING HABITAT In September, we held our first Whale Watching Voyage in New York Harbor in celebration of our progress making the Hudson River clean and healthy enough to support a diverse range of species. We were thrilled to spot 4 humpback whales, 3 minke whales, a pod of dolphins and many schools of menhaden, each a source of inspiration.

Making smart plans for climate change

Riverkeeper advanced its campaign for nature-based flood plans for the New York - New Jersey metro region – an approach that protects the vitality of the Hudson River estuary, addresses all flood hazards, and ensures equitable protections for the most vulnerable. In 2019, we successfully campaigned against building massive storm surge gates across New York Harbor – an idea then under consideration by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. In 2023, we demanded critical changes to the Corps’ current \$52.6 billion plan that remains too narrowly focused on storm surge, and fails to address the combined threats of sea level rise, rising groundwater, and increasingly intense downpours. Riverkeeper demands that the Corps comply with reforms mandated by Congress, and Riverkeeper President Tracy Brown delivered the message through New York Public Radio, Reuters, and other news outlets. Instead of sending its flawed plan to Congress as scheduled, the Corps is considering these requests. At the same time, Riverkeeper is pressing New York City to turn its plans – AdaptNYC, PlaNYC and others – into action, to achieve a cleaner, greener, more just and resilient city for all.

In July, extreme rains caused extensive damage to the Hudson Valley, and underscored the need for bigger investments in water infrastructure that can withstand the changing climate. Riverkeeper has acted as an advisor as New York State prepares a landmark Climate Impacts Assessment, examining climate impacts on water resources, and is working with communities to help them mitigate the risks. For example, we are supporting mid-Hudson communities in requesting a state study of how sea level rise will affect management of drinking water as the salt front moves north.

PHOTO (FAR LEFT) BY ELLIE IRONS / NATURE LAB; (BACK COVER LEFT) BY LYNDA SHENKMAN / OXYGEN HOUSE PHOTOGRAPHY

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

WE GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGE the generous contributions of our private, corporate, and public supporters and thousands of members. 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 2023, please visit riverkeeper.org/financials.



SUPPORT AND REVENUE
Total \$5,207,385



OPERATING EXPENSES
Total \$5,136,138

- Contributions \$3,629,204 (69.69%)
- Special Events \$688,105 (13.21%)
- Contributions of Nonfinancial Assets \$836,683 (16.07%)
- Legal Settlements and Cost Reimbursements \$44,265 (.85%)
- Investment & Other \$9,128 (.18%)

- Program Services \$4,501,049 (87.63%)
- Fundraising \$378,818 (7.38%)
- Management & General \$256,271 (4.99%)

TO SUPPORT THIS WORK:



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

Riverkeeper President and Hudson Riverkeeper Tracy Brown, New York State Senator Pete Harckham, and Croton-on-Hudson Mayor Brian Pugh honoring paddlers representing the Haudenosaunee nations during their 1,500-mile Great Loop journey



RIVERKEEPER.

Help make an impact

Riverkeeper is an independent voice for the Hudson. Facts, science, community voices, and a love for the river are the foundation of our work. We are powered by a wide range of supporters and partners, and that's our greatest strength. Your partnership is essential – our work literally depends on your involvement and your support. Help spread the word, and help achieve results. 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.

Find out how you can get involved. Visit Riverkeeper.org/impact

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