



Our Vision

A thriving watershed, forever accessible, scenic and wild.

Our Mission

Inspire stewardship to forever ensure the rare ecological integrity of the St. Croix and Namekagon Riverway.



Wild Rivers Conservancy is the official non-profit partner of the St. Croix National Scenic Riverway

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One big goal was to develop a joint National Park Service and Conservancy volunteer program. Because of your support we hired a volunteer coordinator to recruit, train, and match people to opportunities within the Riverway and its watershed. The joint volunteer program has a solid structure and we are well on our way to providing meaningful experiences for volunteers. We've already seen an increase in the work volunteers provide, providing support well beyond our current staffing capacity for land restoration, park maintenance, education programs, outdoor recreation, citizen science monitoring, and more.

We are continually learning how to be more inclusive and welcoming with our offered activities, working for and with each other toward a broader sense of diversity. Working in partnership with several under-served communities we have identified some of the barriers for people to experience outdoor exploration and recreation. Examples of the barriers are cost, lack of time and equipment, inexperience, lack of physical ability, fear, lack of role models or mentors, safety concerns, and cultural differences.

Our programs empower individuals to understand the land they live and depend on. We nurture relationships with organizations, learning together ways to overcome barriers, including equipment, experience, and transportation for everyone to have access to outdoor recreation and exploration.

This annual report shares a glimpse of the work being done in the Riverway and throughout the watershed. We hope you are inspired to stay involved and committed to helping advance our shared mission and vision in 2023 and beyond.

Ever Forward,



Deb Ryun
Executive Director
Wild Rivers Conservancy



Stuart Neville
Board Chair
Wild Rivers Conservancy



Craig Hansen
Superintendent
St. Croix National Scenic Riverway





I feel now more than ever, it is so important to get as many people involved, educated, and out in the watershed, because there are dangers of development and pollution more than ever

- Tim "Tougie" Tougas | Volunteer

Being a volunteer with Riverway Volunteers is a win-win for me. I feel I'm giving back to the river with others and receiving the privilege of being on the river.

- Julie Kilpatrick | Volunteer

Showing Up For The Watershed

233 Volunteers

1,458 Volunteer Hours

\$43,667 Estimated value

The power of volunteering brings both new and dedicated stewards together at a scale far beyond what our traditional budget allows. Partners including; Xcel Energy, Andersen Windows, Polaris, and more, collaborated with us on large scale volunteer invasive species removal and tree planting events.

After identifying a need to build a robust joint volunteer program with the National Park Service, the Conservancy's first Volunteer Coordinator, Erika Van Krevelen, was hired in the fall of 2022. Watch us continue to grow this program!

Working Together For The Riverway

Our Natural Resources team made strides in the preservation of lands, improvement in water quality, removal of invasive species, and sustaining the diversity of our watershed. A community needs a healthy and scenic environment to build itself around. We cannot do this work alone. Key partnerships with the National Parks Service, The Trust for Public Land, Minnesota Land Trust, Minnesota and Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, and others allowed us to extend efforts further thanks to these respected partners.

Winged Mapleleaf Mussel Propagation

The US Geological Survey, St. Croix National Scenic Riverway, the Conservancy, and other partners banded together in an innovative effort to propagate the federally endangered Winged mapleleaf mussel in a lab-river hybrid setting. From early June to mid-September juvenile mussels grew in a trailer that fed river water continuously into their tanks.

A total of 102 mussels survived and grew from 0.3 mm to 4 mm in total length and have overwintered in the St. Croix River. The long-term goal of this project is to stabilize this unique population that help maintain the health and resiliency of the St. Croix's ecosystem. We are excited to see how this project continues to make strides in 2023.



The St. Croix National Scenic Riverway partnered with US Army Corp of Engineers, Minnesota and Wisconsin DNR, local universities, Mississippi National Recreation Area, and others to perform native mussel population surveys throughout key mussel beds in the St. Croix River. Conservancy staff assisted with these efforts throughout the past 2-3 years. These surveys are essential to monitor and track populations, especially the five federally endangered populations; Spectaclecase, Winged Mapleleaf, Snuffbox, Higgins Eye and the Sheepnose mussel. These surveys also track invasive zebra mussel population densities in the lower riverway. When mussels are surveyed and they have zebra mussels on them, those zebra mussels are counted, recorded then taken off the mussel to help prolong the longevity, since zebra mussels suffocate our native mussel species when they attach.



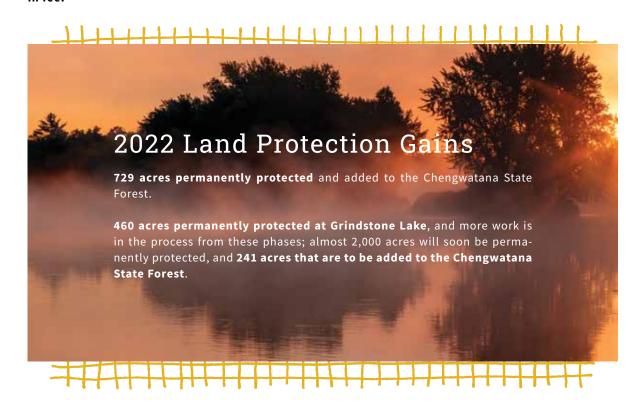
Protecting Land With Our Partners

The landscape of the watershed contains large swaths of unique ecosystems, wildlife habitat, and is home to rare and endangered species. The Riverway is a regional attraction for upwards of 1 million visitors annually due to its many recreation opportunities, such as high-quality fishing, hunting, birding, hiking, and boating. Although the status of the St. Croix and Namekagon Rivers as a Wild and Scenic River comes with federal protections, it applies only to a thin ribbon of land adjacent to the Riverway. Beyond the Riverway boundary, more than 75% of the watershed's forest habitat remains unprotected and the threat of development, fragmentation, and conversion to agriculture is substantial.

The goal of the St. Croix Watershed Habitat and Restoration program and partnership are to protect large intact forest patches, sustain riparian forests, and restore and protect lands. Within this region we have an unparalleled opportunity for conservation. The St. Croix River watershed has been classified as containing the best-preserved remnant of pre-settlement natural communities in the Upper Mississippi drainage. But we must protect the rich natural and cultural heritage of the St. Croix River watershed before they too are altered by ever encroaching agricultural and development pressure.



To date, the St. Croix Watershed Habitat Protection and Restoration program partnership has led to 1,318 acres of active easements, 6.5 miles of protected shoreline, and 970 acres of land acquired in fee.





-Ezra, Student | Wild River Journey 2022



"I learned so much in just a few months last summer, so I am ecstatic to see what I can accomplish and learn this summer as well."

- Kylee Wesbrook | 2022 & 2023 Summer Intern

Increasing Our Reach With Interns

We continued our successful summer intern program in 2022. This program allows us to contribute to the National Park Service, and other partners in a much larger capacity during busy summer months.

Our six 2022 interns completed **2,120 hours of service valued at \$63,494.** Internships are a way for college students or recent grads to gain valuable experience exploring a career path, refining their skills, and networking with professionals, all while getting paid.

Explore Wild Rivers, Hands on Discovery For All

Our public programs continue to connect people to the Riverway through outdoor recreation experiences in all seasons. Participants experienced birding, kayaking, camping, snowshoeing, hiking and, new this year, ice fishing!

In 2022 our focus increased on partnering with communities throughout the watershed in an effort to create positive programming for all. These new partners included; Indigenous People's Task Force, 21 Roots Farm, MN Healing Justice Coalition, and New Millennium Academy.

Explore Wild Rivers 2022 Impact:

66 Programs offered

41 General public (62% of EWR Programming)

25 Focused partnerships (38% of EWR Programming)

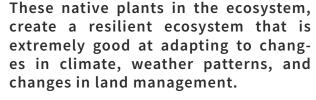
1,354 Total Participants



Sustaining Land Through The Seed Farm



76 acres of Waterfowl Production Areas were seeded to enhance native habitats within the watershed, with an estimated seed value exceeding \$260,000. All this native seed was collected locally by the US Fish and Wildlife Service's Seed Farm Program in conjunction with Wild Rivers Conservancy staff over the last several years.



- Alex Bouthilet | Seed Farm Manager

2022 Fiscal Year Financial Report

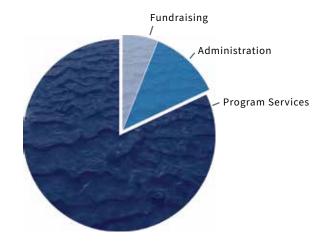
Expenses

82% Program Services

12% Administration

6% Fundraising

\$1,155,931 Total Expenses



Income

37% Direct Public Support

20% Government Grants and Agreements

27% Foundations and Grants

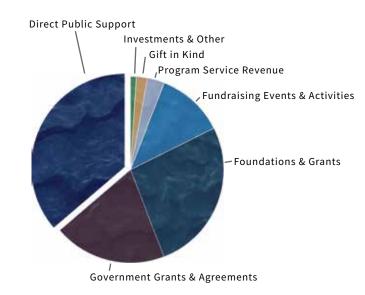
12% Fundraising Events & Activities

3% Program Service Revenue

2% Gift in Kind

< 1% Investments & Other

\$1,164,680 Total Income



Assets

\$361,712 Current Assets **\$240,799** Investments

\$20,899 Property & Equipment

\$623,410 Total Assets

Liability And Equity

\$19,407 Accounts Payable

\$172,447 Other Current Liabilities

\$191,854 Total Current Liabilities

\$431,556 Net Assets

\$623,410 Total Liabilities and Equity

2022 Financial Supporters

Your support matters to us. This list represents gifts given from January 1, 2022 through December 31, 2022, and includes in-kind and memorial gifts. Every attempt was made to ensure the accuracy of this list. We sincerely regret any errors or omissions. You may call our Development office at 715-483-3300 with questions or corrections.

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We invite you to continue supporting our mission in 2023. Donate today with the provided envelope.



more diverse audiences through thoughtful and intentional Riverway connections; the Conservancy is truly building community.

When people come together, they get stronger, louder, and more visible. The Conservancy has been the voice for the Riverway for 112 years now. A powerful group of people coming together to protect this important resource and bringing their friends and family along the way.

There is one community I am proud to recognize, our community of generous donors. All of the important work shared within these pages would not be possible without the support of donors like you.

While the volunteer program gets up and running, it's general operating dollars that are supporting this program. As interns support and expand the natural resources work within the watershed this summer, it's general operating dollars that support this program. And when development threatens the Riverway, it's again general operating dollars that make sure our staff is present and connected to each project.

Your gifts to the St. Croix and Namekagon rivers for general operations are needed and are making a difference. Whether it's a \$20 recurring donation each month, a gift from your Donor Advised Fund, sponsorship of the Conservancy's annual fundraiser, or a legacy gift; we invite you to share a meaningful gift with the Riverway today.

We will keep our focus on building a strong growing Riverway community. Connecting new audiences to our National Park while protecting the watershed's natural resources. We need you as part of the generous community of donors making all of this work possible.

Thank you for your support!





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