
WATERKEEPER® ALLIANCE
2026 IMPACT REPORT
ACCOUNTABILITY
in ACTION



Our Global Water Movement's FOCUS AND IMPACT

Movement-wide, we have more than 1,000 staff, 1 million volunteers and supporters.

More than 290 Waterkeeper groups in over 40 countries patrol and protect over 16.6 million square kilometers (6.4 million square miles) of watersheds on six continents.

Waterkeeper Alliance is a top-ranked 501(c)(3) charity, with Top-Rated status from CharityWatch, 4 Stars from Charity Navigator, and Platinum Status from Candid, formerly known as GuideStar.

Waterkeeper Alliance meets the 20 Standards for Charity Accountability with the Better Business Bureau's Wise Giving Alliance.



Dear Waterkeeper Movement,

Clean water protections do not happen automatically. They exist because people like you choose to defend them.

For more than 25 years, Waterkeeper Alliance and our global network have worked to ensure communities have the knowledge, platform, and legal tools needed to protect the waters they depend on. In every watershed, accountability begins with local people who understand that clean water is not a privilege. It is a right.

In 2026, that accountability was tested around the world. Communities faced mounting pressures from pollution, climate change, industrial development, and weakening environmental safeguards. Waterkeeper groups responded by bringing science, advocacy, and community leadership together to defend the waters they know best.

I grew up in the Susquehanna River watershed in Pennsylvania, and it is where I first understood that clean water is not something every community can count on. So one of the moments that meant the most to me this year came from those home waters. Lower Susquehanna Riverkeeper successfully pursued a Clean Water Act citizen suit against Republic Services over pollution of Kreutz Creek, resulting in a $9.2 million civil penalty for hundreds of permit violations. That result came not from a government enforcement action, but from a local Waterkeeper group that kept watching, kept documenting, and refused to let it go. That is what accountability looks like.

This year, Waterkeeper Alliance strengthened legal and policy advocacy, advanced solutions to address PFAS contamination, plastic pollution, climate change, industrial agriculture, and other systemic threats, and amplified frontline voices in decisions affecting their water. Whether through litigation, scientific research, regulatory advocacy, or public engagement, our network demonstrated that lasting environmental protection depends on informed, empowered communities.

We also expanded the global Waterkeeper movement. In 2026, six new Waterkeeper groups joined our network, extending protection to critical watersheds across the United States, Africa, and South America. Each new Waterkeeper group strengthens our collective ability to protect clean water while bringing local knowledge and leadership to a growing global community.

This year also marked the conclusion of our 2021–2026 strategic plan and the beginning of the next chapter for our movement. Together, we have strengthened our global network, expanded our collective impact, and laid the foundation for an ambitious new strategic plan that will guide our work through 2031.

The challenges ahead are significant, but so is the strength of this movement. Every day, Waterkeeper groups prove that when communities are equipped with the right tools, strong partnerships, and a shared purpose, they can protect the waters that sustain us all.

Thank you for standing with us.

Marc Yaggi, Chief Executive Officer

A Stronger Movement, A SHARED FUTURE

Every great movement needs a shared vision, one that reflects the voices, experiences, and aspirations of the people who make it possible. In late 2020, more than 260 Waterkeeper groups, partners, and supporters came together to chart our path forward. The result was the 5-Year Plan for the Movement (2021–2026), a blueprint to strengthen our network, amplify our collective voice, and fortify clean water protections worldwide.

Over the past five years, our annual Impact Reports have documented our collective victories, challenges, setbacks, and determination while highlighting the strategic priorities that have guided our work. As we conclude this plan, this report reflects on what we have accomplished together and the lasting impact of a movement strengthened by collaboration, shared purpose, and local leadership.

This year also marks the beginning of a new chapter. Following more than a year of listening, collaboration, and planning with Waterkeeper groups, Affiliates, Trustees, partners, and supporters around the world, Waterkeeper Alliance has adopted a new 2027–2031 Strategic Plan. Built on the lessons and successes of the past five years, the new plan will strengthen Waterkeeper groups, elevate our collective voice, advance and defend clean water protections, and build the organizational capacity needed to sustain our global movement for years to come.

Thank you for your support.
Together, we are building a stronger, more resilient movement to protect the right to clean water for communities worldwide.

Five Years of Waterkeeper Impact
AT-A-GLANCE

16.6M SQUARE KILOMETERS | **6.4M** SQUARE MILES

2.4B
PEOPLE

294
WATERKEEPER GROUPS

43
COUNTRIES

PRIORITY 1

STRENGTHEN WATERKEEPER GROUPS & GROW A SUSTAINABLE, DIVERSE MOVEMENT

Five Years of Waterkeeper Impact
AT-A-GLANCE

PRIORITY 2

AMPLIFY THE COLLECTIVE VOICE OF THE WATERKEEPER MOVEMENT

175%
MEDIA REACH GROWTH

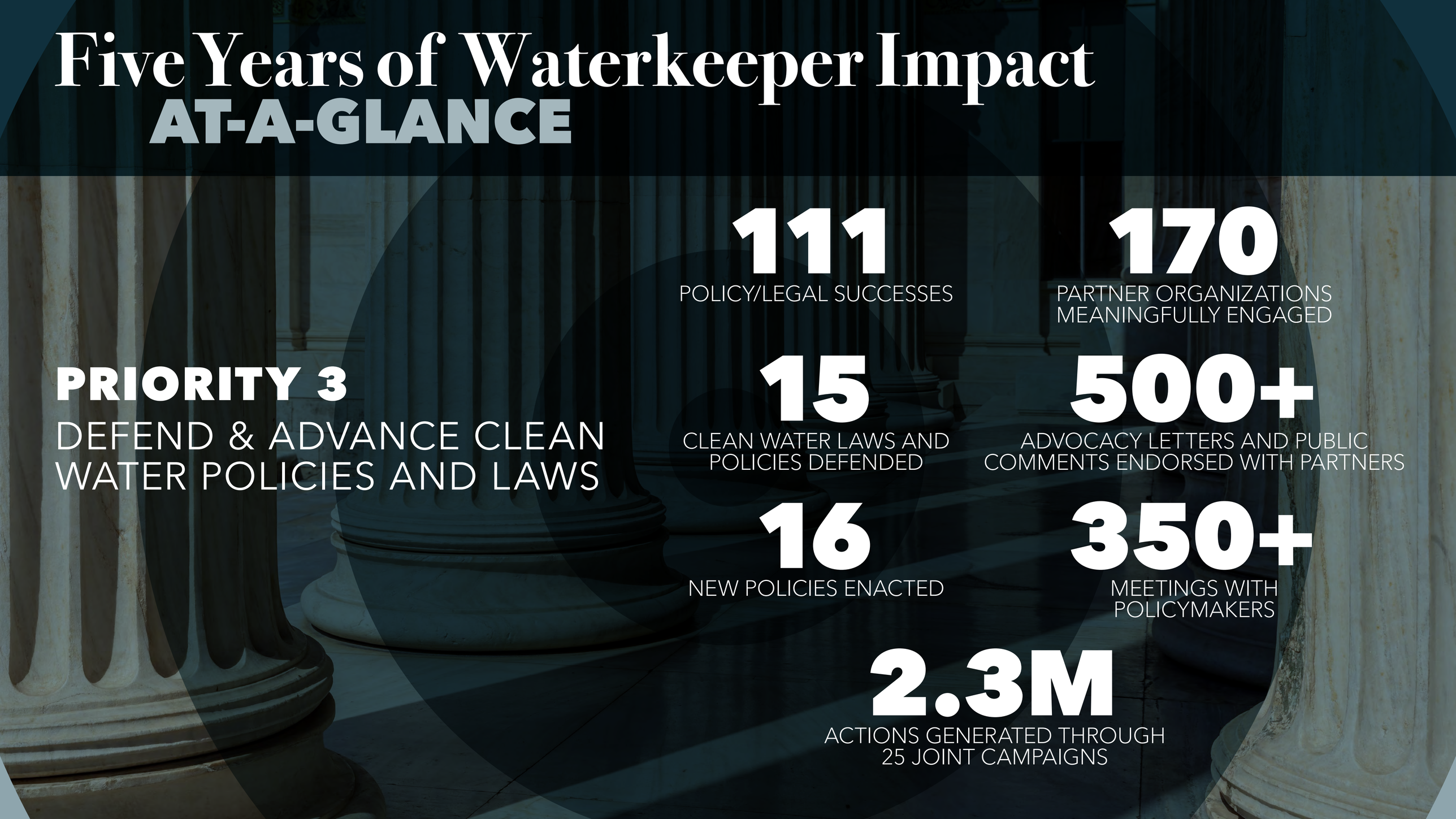
225K
SUPPORTERS ENGAGED

95%
INCREASED DIGITAL ENGAGEMENT

83%
GLOBAL STORYTELLING

100%
FRONTLINE-FOCUSED FEATURES

Five Years of Waterkeeper Impact
AT-A-GLANCE



PRIORITY 3

DEFEND & ADVANCE CLEAN WATER POLICIES AND LAWS

111
POLICY/LEGAL SUCCESSES

170
PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS MEANINGFULLY ENGAGED

15
CLEAN WATER LAWS AND POLICIES DEFENDED

500+
ADVOCACY LETTERS AND PUBLIC COMMENTS ENDORSED WITH PARTNERS

16
NEW POLICIES ENACTED

350+
MEETINGS WITH POLICYMAKERS

2.3M
ACTIONS GENERATED THROUGH 25 JOINT CAMPAIGNS

Five Years of Waterkeeper Impact

WATERKEEPER MOVEMENT METRICS

ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION

14,364	On-water trips
11,293	Cleanups
5,944,200	Kilograms of trash removed from cleanups
3,805	Restoration projects

MONITORING & ENFORCEMENT

15,367	Sites investigated
12,301	Pollution reports responded to
91,000	Water samples collected
5,971	Reported violations
649	Lawsuits commenced
683	Current lawsuits

EDUCATION & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

345,661	Students engaged
8,105	School presentations
285,299	Volunteer engagements
7,053	Public events
6,275	Public hearings

EVERY WATERKEEPER BEGINS WITH A COMMITMENT TO PLACE

The Waterkeeper model is built on the belief that the people closest to a watershed are often its strongest defenders. These leaders bring scientific knowledge, cultural understanding, and community relationships to the work of protecting their waters.

In 2026, six new Waterkeeper groups joined our global movement, strengthening efforts to protect threatened waterways.

NEW YORK, NORTH AMERICA

LONG ISLAND SOUTH SHORE WATERKEEPER

Restoring New York's South Shore Estuary

Andrew Mirchel's lifelong connection to Long Island's waters has shaped a career in marine science, restoration, and environmental advocacy. The new Long Island South Shore Waterkeeper group will address nitrogen pollution, stormwater runoff, habitat degradation, and other threats while strengthening regional collaboration to protect the South Shore Estuary.

ZIMBABWE, AFRICA

MANICA WATERKEEPER

Protecting Zimbabwe's Save River

Jussa Kudherezera brings a deep commitment to environmental justice, climate resilience, and community-led conservation to the Save River watershed in Manicaland, Zimbabwe. Manica Waterkeeper will work alongside local communities to protect rivers that sustain ecosystems, livelihoods, and future generations.

MAGALLANES REGION, CHILE

SERRANO WATERKEEPER

Defending Southern Chilean Patagonia

Dr. Shaw Lacy leads efforts to protect the Serrano watershed in Southern Chilean Patagonia, where climate change, land-use change, invasive species, and fragmented governance threaten freshwater ecosystems. Serrano Waterkeeper brings local leadership to safeguard this globally significant watershed.

SOUTH CAROLINA, NORTH AMERICA

PEE DEE-LYNCHES RIVERKEEPER

Protecting South Carolina's Historic Rivers

Dylan Coleman has dedicated his career to protecting South Carolina's waterways through conservation, water quality monitoring, cleanup efforts, and public advocacy. As the new Pee Dee-Lynches Riverkeeper, he will continue safeguarding the Little Pee Dee, Great Pee Dee, and Lynches River watersheds.

BURKINA FASO, AFRICA

MOUHOUN WATERKEEPER

Safeguarding Burkina Faso's Freshwater Future

Mouhoun Waterkeeper, led by René Bayili, is dedicated to protecting one of Burkina Faso's most important freshwater ecosystems. Working alongside local communities, the program will address climate variability, pollution, deforestation, and unsustainable water use while protecting the rivers and wetlands that sustain people, biodiversity, and livelihoods.

KENYA, AFRICA

NORTH BASIN LAKE VICTORIA WATERKEEPER

Expanding Protection Across Kenya's Lake Victoria Basin

Based in Kisumu, Kenya, North Basin Lake Victoria Waterkeeper expands representation across the northern basin of Lake Victoria, where industrial contamination and other threats affect surrounding communities. Led by Millicent Olal Muchilwa, the program strengthens regional collaboration to protect one of Africa's most important freshwater ecosystems.

Strengthening Regional Leadership, BUILDING COLLECTIVE IMPACT

WATER PROTECTION IS LOCAL.

THE THREATS FACING WATERWAYS ARE INCREASINGLY INTERCONNECTED.

Through late 2025 into early 2026, Waterkeeper Alliance strengthened connections among Waterkeeper groups through a series of summits designed to bring leaders together, share strategies, and build collective solutions–strengthening leadership, deepening peer learning, and fostering lasting collaboration across regions.



50% Regional Representation

More than half of attendees at each new regional summit represented Waterkeeper groups from within their respective regions.



Regional summit training strengthened Waterkeeper capacity on topics ranging from the Rights of Nature and climate resilience to restoration, conservation technology, and emerging tools for water protection.

60% Global Engagement

Regional summits brought together participants from 26 of the 43 countries in our movement to strengthen collaboration, exchange strategies, and develop collective solutions.

AFRICA REGIONAL SUMMIT

DAKAR, SÉNÉGAL | SEPTEMBER 9-12, 2025

Hosted by Hann Baykeeper

"As both a citizen of Sénégal and an interpreter, I found the discussions to be an eye-opening awakening to the complex situational context of African rivers—particularly in my native Casamance, where communities are still striving for access to safe drinking water. I am deeply grateful to have been associated with such a meaningful event, and I sincerely appreciate your commitment to amplifying the voices of our communities."

– Ousmane Baldé, Linguist & Translator, (Sénégal)

OCEANIA REGIONAL SUMMIT

SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA | OCTOBER 12-15, 2025

Hosted by Hawkesbury-Nepean Waterkeeper

"Meeting everyone in person, getting to chat about what they do and how their group works, was the most valuable part. You realize how much we have in common and how much stronger we are when we connect."

– Dr. Michelle Ryan, Hawkesbury-Nepean Waterkeeper (Australia)

ASIA REGIONAL SUMMIT

HANGZHOU, CHINA | OCTOBER 26-29, 2025

Hosted by Waterkeepers China

"It was a great gathering with fellow Waterkeepers across the region, which is very useful to rejuvenate the energy among each other and learn practices and new techniques."

– Bijay Bashyal, Seti Gandaki River Waterkeeper (Nepal)

NORTH AMERICA REGIONAL SUMMIT

PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA, UNITED STATES | NOVEMBER 12-14, 2025

Hosted by Three Rivers Waterkeeper

"This was the first national Waterkeeper Alliance event I've been to and am so glad I made the effort. I really did learn a lot and feel much more connected to Waterkeeper Alliance and many fellow Waterkeepers. It's quite a privilege to be a part of this movement."

– Melissa Paly, Great Bay Piscataqua Waterkeeper (USA)

LATIN AMERICA REGIONAL SUMMIT

OAXACA, MEXICO | NOVEMBER 4-6, 2025

Hosted by Río Verde Waterkeeper

"It truly was an intense and meaningful week that allowed us to learn more about each other, discover the incredible work our colleagues do, and recharge with that shared energy to keep moving forward. I am fully convinced that together we can overcome any obstacle."

– Liliana Guerrero Ramírez, Bocas de Ceniza Waterkeeper (Colombia)

EUROPE & MIDDLE EAST REGIONAL SUMMIT

LONDON, UNITED KINGDOM | JANUARY 19-21, 2026

Hosted by London Waterkeeper

"Being in the same room with everyone was the most valuable part. Because we are a small region, we were able to have more detailed and thoughtful conversations. It was especially meaningful to have [our Waterkeepers] from Ukraine and Iraq. Together, we strengthened our understanding of how we operate as Waterkeepers in Europe and the Middle East and developed approaches that truly work in our countries."

– Theo Thomas, London Waterkeeper (United Kingdom)

Defending Water Protections WORLDWIDE

Through strategic litigation, scientific research, and coordinated advocacy, we support Waterkeeper groups around the world holding polluters accountable, challenging harmful decisions, and advancing systemic solutions that protect the waterways communities depend on.



PROTECTING LOUISIANA'S ATCHAFALAYA BASIN FROM HARMFUL DEVELOPMENT

In a historic victory for Louisiana's Atchafalaya Basin, we joined Atchafalaya Basinkeeper and partners in successfully stopping the East Grand Lake Project, which threatened critical wetlands, fisheries, and flood protection capacity. In March 2026, the U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Louisiana vacated and enjoined the project's federal permit, finding that the approval process failed to adequately consider environmental impacts and alternatives. The decision marks a major milestone in more than 15 years of advocacy by Atchafalaya Basinkeeper and community partners to protect one of the nation's most important river systems.



DEFENDING STRONGER POLLUTION LIMITS FOR COAL POWER PLANTS

We joined partners in challenging the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Steam Electric Effluent Limitations Guidelines Deadline Extensions Rule, which delays critical pollution controls for coal-fired power plants and allows continued discharges of toxic pollutants into waterways. Filed in January 2026 the legal challenge builds on more than 15 years of advocacy to modernize outdated wastewater standards and protect communities from pollutants such as mercury, arsenic, and selenium.



CHALLENGING POLLUTION FROM INDUSTRIAL MEAT PROCESSING FACILITIES

We joined Cape Fear River Watch, parent organization of Cape Fear Riverkeeper, and coalition partners in filing a federal lawsuit challenging EPA's withdrawal of critical regulations that would have reduced water pollution from slaughterhouses and meat processing facilities. The proposed standards would have limited phosphorus discharges from at least 126 facilities nationwide, preventing millions of pounds of nutrient pollution from entering waterways each year.



DEFENDING COMMUNITIES' RIGHT TO KNOW ABOUT FACTORY FARM POLLUTION

We filed an appeal challenging an EPA rule that exempts industrial animal feeding operations from reporting hazardous air emissions, including ammonia and hydrogen sulfide, under the Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act. The lawsuit seeks to restore critical transparency protections that allow communities and emergency responders to understand and address pollution risks from factory farms. This action builds on more than 15 years of advocacy to ensure accountability for industrial agriculture pollution and protect public health and the environment.



ADVANCING PUBLIC RIGHT-TO-KNOW PROTECTIONS FOR NEW YORK CITY WATERWAYS

We joined Hudson Riverkeeper, Save the Sound, NY/NJ Baykeeper, and partners in securing a major legal victory requiring New York City to properly notify the public when sewage overflows and polluted stormwater discharge into local waterways. The appellate court ruling strengthens transparency protections under the Sewage Pollution Right to Know Act, helping swimmers, boaters, anglers, and communities make informed decisions about water safety. The decision builds on years of advocacy to reduce sewage pollution and protect public health across New York's waterways.



PROTECTING WATERS OF THE UNITED STATES

We led a coordinated effort to protect federal Clean Water Act safeguards amid ongoing efforts to narrow the definition of "waters of the United States" (WOTUS). Through legal advocacy, technical comments, trainings, and network coordination, we worked with U.S. Waterkeeper groups to challenge proposed rollbacks that would remove protections for rivers, streams, wetlands, and other vital waterways. Our detailed comments opposing proposed WOTUS changes were joined by 98 U.S. Waterkeeper groups, while additional roundtables and advocacy efforts helped equip the network to respond to threats to clean water protections.



WATERKEEPER VOICES OPPOSE WOTUS ROLLBACKS

Waterkeeper groups across the country took action to oppose EPA's proposed changes to the definition of "waters of the United States" (WOTUS), meeting with members of Congress and testifying at public hearings. Waterkeeper Alliance organized four congressional meetings with Anacostia Riverkeeper, Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper, Choptank Riverkeeper, Cook Inletkeeper, Gunpowder Riverkeeper, Hackensack Waterkeeper, Hudson Riverkeeper, Patuxent Riverkeeper, Peconic Baykeeper, and Waterkeepers Chesapeake to urge their representatives to oppose the rollbacks. Separately, Atchafalaya Basinkeeper, Bayou City Waterkeeper, Gunpowder Riverkeeper, Milwaukee Riverkeeper, Three Rivers Waterkeeper, and Willamette Riverkeeper joined Waterkeeper Alliance in testifying against the changes at two EPA public hearings.

To help communities and policymakers address gaps created by the Supreme Court's *Sackett v. EPA* decision and the narrowing of federal protections, we released *Protecting Clean Water at the State Level After Sackett* with the Center for Water Security and Cooperation. The report provides a roadmap for strengthening state-level water protections, identifying opportunities to improve laws and regulations in Arkansas, Mississippi, Missouri, and Tennessee. By highlighting pathways for states to better protect rivers, streams, wetlands, and other waters, the report offers practical tools for maintaining water quality protections as federal safeguards are weakened.

EXPOSING GLOBAL CONTAMINATION

Building on the Phase II PFAS Monitoring Report released in June 2025 in partnership with the Hispanic Access Foundation and 22 Waterkeeper groups across 19 states, we continued expanding PFAS monitoring, advocacy, and public engagement efforts. Waterkeeper groups are generating critical data about contamination in their watersheds while bringing local impacts to national and international decision-makers.

In 2026, PFAS advocacy efforts included:

- Submitting input to the United Nations Special Rapporteur on toxins and human rights, incorporating Waterkeeper Alliance monitoring results and policy recommendations.
- Hosting webinars in English and Spanish to support community education and advocacy.
- Organizing a virtual advocacy week, congressional meetings, and a congressional briefing to elevate PFAS concerns with policymakers.
- Supporting Waterkeeper groups and community advocates engaging decision-makers.
- Elevating PFAS concerns through media outreach, radio interviews, and opinion pieces.

BUILDING A GLOBAL PFAS RESPONSE NETWORK

To strengthen coordination across the movement, we launched our first-ever PFAS cohort, bringing together Waterkeeper groups working on PFAS issues around the world. The cohort will strengthen collaboration on monitoring efforts, support peer learning, coordinate advocacy strategies, and amplify local campaigns to advance stronger PFAS protections.

HOLDING POLLUTERS AND DECISION-MAKERS ACCOUNTABLE

As federal PFAS protections face growing threats, Waterkeeper Alliance is using legal and advocacy tools to defend communities' right to safe water. We filed a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request with EPA seeking records related to the agency's efforts to delay and weaken national drinking water standards for PFAS.

The request seeks communications, environmental analyses, and an unreleased toxicity assessment that could provide insight into the agency's decision-making around PFAS protections. Access to this information is critical for understanding the basis for regulatory changes and ensuring communities have the information needed to advocate for clean water protections.

Waterkeeper Alliance also continued challenging the expansion and inadequate oversight of PFAS through other regulatory pathways, including:

- Submitting public comments opposing weakening of PFAS regulations and highlighting risks to waterways, drinking water, and public health.
- Urging federal agencies to maintain science-based chemical protections.
- Submitting a letter for the congressional record during consideration of revisions to the Toxic Substances Control Act, calling for meaningful PFAS regulation based on the best available science.

Waterkeeper voices helped bring the impacts of PFAS contamination to broader audiences through interviews with *The Weather Channel* by Upper Potomac Riverkeeper, as well as regional radio and television appearances by Haw Riverkeeper and Cape Fear Riverkeeper. Black-Sampit Riverkeeper and Detroit Riverkeeper also published op-eds highlighting the impacts of PFAS on communities that rely on local waterways for drinking water, fishing, and recreation. Waterkeeper Alliance published an op-ed in the *Long Island Press* urging EPA Administrator Lee Zeldin to uphold federal drinking water protections for PFAS, while CEO Marc Yaggi joined global experts in the June issue of *H_2O Global News* to discuss the growing PFAS crisis and the need for coordinated international action.

PFAS-RELATED COMMUNICATIONS REACHED **NEARLY 1.2M PEOPLE** THROUGH MEDIA COVERAGE, RADIO INTERVIEWS, DIGITAL ENGAGEMENT, AND PARTNER AMPLIFICATION.

EXPANDING REACH THROUGH WATERKEEPER STORYTELLING

Our advocacy contributed to tangible policy action. Following Virtual PFAS Advocacy Week, Senators Kirsten Gillibrand and Patty Murray sent letters to the U.S. Department of Defense demanding accountability for delays in cleaning up PFAS-contaminated military sites. During congressional meetings, Waterkeeper groups reinforced concerns raised in Waterkeeper Alliance's October 2025 letter urging the agency to accelerate cleanup efforts.

EXPOSING GLOBAL CONTAMINATION

"For decades, plastic pollution has been flowing from this plant into our waterways–ending up in our bays, our shorelines, and in the fish, birds, and oysters that call these waters home. No more. The line is drawn and we demand zero discharge of plastic."

– Diane Wilson, San Antonio Bay Estuarine Waterkeeper and renowned activist who won the largest U.S. Clean Water Act settlement against the plastics industry.

STOPPING PLASTIC POLLUTION BEFORE IT REACHES WATERWAYS



Plastic pellet pollution is a preventable source of microplastic contamination that threatens waterways, wildlife, and communities. Through the International Plastic Pellet Count, Waterkeeper Alliance, partners, and Waterkeeper groups are generating critical data to expose pollution hotspots, strengthen accountability efforts, and advance solutions that stop plastic pollution at its source.

DOCUMENTING PLASTIC PELLET POLLUTION THROUGH COMMUNITY SCIENCE

In 2026, the second annual International Plastic Pellet Count engaged more than 1,000 volunteers who surveyed waterways at 249 sites across 31 states, the District of Columbia, and six countries, documenting nearly 1.1 million plastic pellets. Seventeen Waterkeeper groups participated in the effort, collectively recovering and removing more than 724,000 pellets from shorelines and waterways around the world.

The data helped demonstrate the scale of pollution near plastic production and transportation facilities, including a major hotspot along Texas' Victoria Barge Canal near Dow's Seadrift Operations Facility, where San Antonio Bay Estuarine Waterkeeper collected approximately *715,000 pellets. These findings supported calls for stronger corporate accountability and zero-discharge standards for plastic pellets, flakes, and powder.

* *Because the sample was so large, San Antonio Bay Estuarine Waterkeeper weighed the collected material, subtracted the container weight, and multiplied the net weight (32.5 pounds) by an estimated 22,000 pellets per pound to calculate approximately 715,000 pellets. Additional pellets at this site were collected by other volunteers.*

EXPANDING REACH THROUGH WATERKEEPER STORYTELLING

A short-form video collaboration featuring footage from San Antonio Bay Estuarine Waterkeeper's nurdle hunt brought plastic pellet pollution to new audiences and highlighted the scale of this emerging threat. In one week, the post generated more than **444,000 impressions**, driven primarily by organic engagement, with additional reach from targeted promotion. The collaboration showcased how Waterkeeper-led storytelling can amplify local efforts and engage broader audiences in protecting clean water.

TURNING DATA INTO ACCOUNTABILITY



Waterkeeper groups used monitoring data to support legal and advocacy efforts to prevent plastic pollution at its source. San Antonio Bay Estuarine Waterkeeper and Congaree Riverkeeper continued pursuing legal action against plastic manufacturers, while San Diego Coastkeeper reached a settlement to prevent plastic pellet spills from trains along California's coastal railways.

ADDRESSING CLIMATE CHANGE AND PROTECTING WATER FUTURES

Climate change is accelerating threats to waterways through rising seas, extreme weather, ecosystem disruption, and increased pressure from fossil fuel development. Waterkeeper Alliance works with Waterkeeper groups and partners to ensure climate solutions protect both communities and ecosystems while advancing a transition toward sustainable, water-secure futures.

EXPOSING GLOBAL CONTAMINATION



ADVANCING COMMUNITY-LED OFFSHORE DRILLING ADVOCACY

Through coordinated campaigns in The Bahamas and Sénégal, Waterkeeper Alliance and local partners are elevating community concerns about offshore drilling and advocating for stronger protections for marine ecosystems, fisheries, and coastal communities.

PROTECTING THE BAHAMAS' OCEAN ECONOMY AND CLIMATE FUTURE

The Our Islands, Our Future Coalition (OIOF)—including Waterkeepers Bahamas, the Bahamas Reef Environment Educational Foundation, and Waterkeeper Alliance—is advancing a campaign calling for a nationwide ban on oil drilling in The Bahamas. The coalition continues to raise awareness about the risks of offshore drilling to the country's marine ecosystems, fisheries, tourism economy, and climate resilience, while advocating for a future centered on healthy oceans, clean energy, and thriving communities.

ELEVATING PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

As new threats from fossil fuel interests emerged, the coalition worked to ensure offshore drilling remained a public priority. Ahead of the national election, OIOF developed and distributed a candidate questionnaire focused on climate change, offshore drilling, and renewable energy, bringing environmental protection and energy policy into public discussion and helping voters understand candidates' positions on these issues.

The coalition also convened a roundtable with Bahamian scientists, environmental experts, community advocates, and leaders to discuss the risks of offshore drilling and sustainable alternatives. Through strategic communications, including an op-ed published following the acquisition of Challenger Energy Group by Sintana Energy, the campaign elevated concerns about continued offshore oil expansion and the disconnect between fossil fuel development and climate commitments.

ELEVATING SÉNÉGALESE VOICES AGAINST OFFSHORE DRILLING

In Sénégal, the Sauver la Mer et la Pêche (Save Our Coast and Fisheries, Aar Guedj Gui Ak Napagi) campaign, led by Hann Baykeeper, Bargny Coast Waterkeeper, and Waterkeeper Alliance, continued to highlight the environmental, economic, and public health risks of offshore oil and gas expansion.

In January 2026, Waterkeeper Alliance released *Threat Below the Surface: Offshore Drilling in Sénégal Poses Environmental, Economic, and Human Health Risks*, a white paper developed with Sénégalese Waterkeeper groups that examines how fossil fuel expansion threatens coastal ecosystems, fisheries, community well-being, and climate resilience. The report identifies risks associated with offshore drilling, including impacts on local economies, food security, public health, and water security, while outlining recommendations for stronger protections, renewable energy investment, and greater transparency.

Timed with the 2026 UN Water Conference preparatory meeting in Dakar, campaign leaders presented the report's findings to elevate local concerns in global water and climate discussions. The campaign also engaged communities through meetings with women and youth focused on climate change and the impacts of offshore drilling, while a petition campaign called for greater protection of Sénégal's coastal resources.

CHALLENGING INDUSTRIAL AGRICULTURE POLLUTION

Industrial agriculture continues to place significant pressure on waterways through nutrient pollution, manure management failures, hazardous air emissions, and industrial systems that can worsen existing environmental harms. Waterkeeper Alliance is working with Waterkeeper groups and partners to hold polluters accountable, strengthen protections, and advance solutions that protect clean water, healthy communities, and more sustainable food systems.

ADVANCING ACCOUNTABILITY FOR INDUSTRIAL POLLUTION

Waterkeeper Alliance continued legal and advocacy efforts to address pollution from concentrated animal feeding operations, slaughterhouses, and related industrial agriculture systems. We challenged EPA's withdrawal of updated pollution control standards for slaughterhouses and rendering facilities, joining partners in a petition before the U.S. Court of Appeals



for the Ninth Circuit. We also continued litigation challenging EPA's exemption of industrial animal operations from reporting hazardous air emissions, including ammonia and hydrogen sulfide, under the Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act.

Waterkeeper Alliance also advanced basin-level advocacy efforts focused on slaughterhouse pollution, working with 11 Waterkeeper groups across six states to identify facility permit violations, strengthen draft permits, and develop coordinated strategies to improve water pollution controls.

PROTECTING NORTH CAROLINA WATERS FROM AGRICULTURAL POLLUTION

Waterkeeper Alliance supported locally led projects across North Carolina to address water pollution associated with industrial agriculture. We supported monitoring, research, advocacy, community engagement, and efforts to strengthen accountability and advance long-term solutions.

Haw River Assembly investigated agricultural pollution and worked with farmers and local partners to identify practical solutions for protecting water quality. The project also supported broader advocacy for stronger management of poultry waste.

White Oak Waterkeeper documented persistent water quality problems in the New River watershed and investigated potential pollution sources. The project strengthened the information available to communities and regulators while supporting future enforcement and restoration efforts.

Yadkin Riverkeeper conducted water quality monitoring, documented pollution, engaged the community, and advanced advocacy to address pollution concerns and build support for stronger protections in the Yadkin River watershed.

Cape Fear Riverkeeper monitored industrial poultry and swine operations throughout the Cape Fear River Basin, documented violations, and held polluters accountable. The project strengthened oversight and garnered media attention, increasing public awareness of industrial agriculture's impacts on clean water.



CHALLENGING HARMFUL FARM POLICIES AND SUBSIDIES

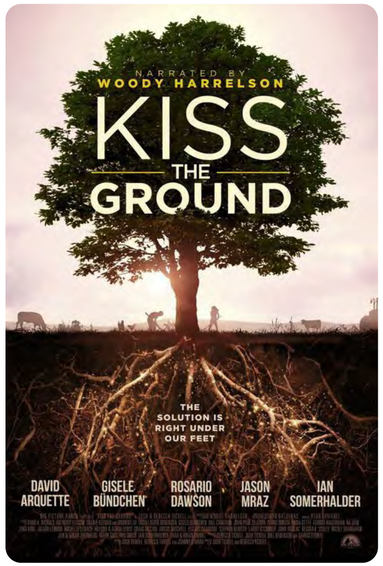
Waterkeeper Alliance continued advocating for federal agricultural policies that protect water quality and rural communities. Together with Waterkeeper groups and partners, we submitted a petition urging the U.S. Department of Agriculture to end federal funding for anaerobic digesters located at industrial livestock operations or using livestock manure through the Rural Energy for America Program. The petition highlighted concerns that factory farm biogas systems can perpetuate harmful manure management practices, increase pollution risks, and direct limited public funding away from more sustainable renewable energy solutions.

Waterkeeper Alliance also raised concerns about harmful biogas subsidies through public outreach, including an op-ed by Cape Fear Riverkeeper published in *The Fayetteville Observer* highlighting the petition and the need for reforms to ensure conservation funding does not support industrial manure digesters that perpetuate pollution risks. The placement reached a potential audience of more than 45,000 print readers and contributed to broader visibility through *The Fayetteville Observer's* digital platform, which receives more than 1.5 million monthly pageviews. The piece helped bring attention to the impacts of factory farm biogas and the need for stronger safeguards on federal agricultural funding.

We also engaged on Farm Bill and agricultural funding policies to ensure future federal investments include meaningful water protections and support approaches that benefit communities and ecosystems.







ELEVATING COMMUNITY IMPACTS AND SOLUTIONS

Waterkeeper Alliance worked with partners to highlight the impacts of industrial agriculture on communities, including Indigenous communities affected by concentrated animal agriculture. At the 2025 World Bank Annual Meeting, Lumbee Tribe member Jeff Currie, who was the Lumber Riverkeeper at the time, spoke about the impacts of industrialized animal agriculture and the need for more equitable agricultural systems.

Waterkeeper Alliance is also supporting storytelling and education efforts that highlight solutions for the future of our food systems, farms, waterways, and communities. As a promotional partner for *Common Ground Redux*, a free educational version of the award-winning documentary *Common Ground*, Waterkeeper Alliance is helping expand access to resources that explore how regenerative agriculture can address challenges within current food and farming systems. The 45-minute film features farmers, ranchers, educators, and advocates discussing practices that can restore soil health, protect clean water, strengthen local food systems, and build more resilient communities.

Waterkeeper Alliance also supported broader efforts to elevate regenerative agriculture through storytelling, including the documentary *Groundswell*, which joins *Kiss the Ground* and *Common Ground* in highlighting how regenerative practices can restore soil health, protect waterways, strengthen local food systems, and address pressing environmental challenges. Together, these stories amplify the voices of farmers, advocates, and communities working toward a healthier, more resilient future.

BUILDING WATERKEEPER CAPACITY THROUGH TRAINING

This year, we provided the following learning opportunities attended by 325 Waterkeeper group participants, strengthening the network's ability to respond to emerging threats, advance advocacy, and protect waterways.

Trainings included:

- **Factory Farm Biogas** – Interactive webinar on methane capture from industrial animal agriculture operations.
- **Clean Water Act WOTUS Roundtable** – Discussion on the scope of Clean Water Act protections following *Sackett v. EPA* and regulatory changes to "waters of the United States."
- **Slaughterhouse Effluent Limitation Guidelines** – Webinar on EPA's withdrawal of updated wastewater pollution standards for slaughterhouses and rendering plants.
- **PFAS Advocacy Training** – Training to prepare Waterkeeper groups for PFAS-focused congressional advocacy.
- **"Source of Life? Rivers, Hydropower, and the Climate Crisis"** – Webinar on hydropower advocacy and climate impacts.
- **Stopping Oil Drilling in The Bahamas** – Roundtable on threats from offshore oil development and campaign strategies.
- **WOTUS Definition Roundtable** – Discussion on proposed changes to Clean Water Act jurisdiction and impacts on watershed protections.
- **Rail Networks as a Source of Plastic Pellet Pollution** – Webinar on plastic pellet pollution from rail networks.
- **What's the Cost of Methane Dams?** – Webinar on methane emissions from hydropower dams and climate impacts.
- **Global PFAS Roundtable** – Discussion on PFAS work across the Waterkeeper network and opportunities for coordination.
- **Citizen Suits: Emerging Defense Arguments** – Litigation training on emerging challenges to citizen enforcement actions.
- **Introduction to PFAS** – Introductory webinar on PFAS issues.

Expanding the Reach OF THE CLEAN WATER MOVEMENT

STORIES CREATE UNDERSTANDING. UNDERSTANDING CREATES ACTION.

Protecting waterways requires people to understand what is at stake and see their own connection to clean water. Through storytelling, digital engagement, and strategic partnerships, Waterkeeper Alliance brings the voices of water defenders to new audiences while highlighting the communities and ecosystems they work to protect.

From the *Who Is Waterkeeper* profile series to the *Equity In Every Drop* podcast, our communications platforms share the experiences, expertise, and solutions of Waterkeepers around the world. These stories help supporters better understand the challenges facing waterways and the people leading the fight for clean water.

In FY26, communications efforts continued to expand the visibility of the Waterkeeper movement:

STORYTELLING IMPACT

EQUITY IN EVERY DROP

23+ Waterkeepers featured through the *Equity In Every Drop* podcast since launch

11 Waterkeepers featured on the podcast in FY26

100+ countries reached through podcast audiences since launch

46% increase in monthly podcast downloads in FY26

GROWING DIGITAL ENGAGEMENT

74% increase in website users in FY26, helping more people discover Waterkeeper stories, priority campaigns, and opportunities to engage

46% growth on Instagram

22% growth on LinkedIn

600%+ growth on TikTok

Together, these efforts help ensure that Waterkeeper stories are reaching more people, strengthening connections across the global movement, and inspiring broader support for the protection of clean water.

WHO IS WATERKEEPER

Each year, we shine a light on the work and impact of one Waterkeeper each month. Though they are separated by distance, they are united in our common mission of providing clean water for all. Profiles highlight Waterkeepers and their work during the reporting period.

AFRICA



KENYA

Roniance Adhiambo
Kenya Lake Victoria Waterkeeper

Roniance works to protect Lake Victoria by advancing water quality monitoring, wetlands restoration, community education, and conservation efforts. Inspired by a lifelong commitment to environmental advocacy and the communities that depend on the lake, she works to address pollution, overfishing, and habitat loss while empowering local residents to protect one of Africa's most important freshwater ecosystems.



UGANDA

Godfrey Kitimbo,
Kyoga Nile Waterkeeper

Godfrey protects Uganda's Lake Kyoga and the Nile River by addressing industrial pollution, agricultural runoff, and weak environmental enforcement through water quality monitoring, community partnerships, and public education. Rooted in a lifelong connection to the watershed, he empowers local communities and young people to advocate for clean water while advancing long-term ecosystem restoration and climate resilience.



KENYA

Millicent Olal-Muchilwa,
North Basin Lake Victoria Waterkeeper

Millicent Olal-Muchilwa works to protect Lake Victoria, one of the world's most important freshwater ecosystems and a resource that supports millions of people across East Africa. Inspired by her children's environmental advocacy, Millicent focuses on addressing plastic pollution, industrial contamination, and threats to the lake's biodiversity through community engagement, youth leadership, and public awareness. She brings a long history of civic advocacy to her work, helping build a movement to restore and protect the lake for the communities that depend on it.



SÉNÉGAL

Cheikh Fadel Wade
Bargny Coast Waterkeeper

Fadel works to protect Sénégal's Bargny coastline by addressing coastal erosion, sea-level rise, industrial pollution, and unsustainable development through community advocacy, legal action, and international climate engagement. Inspired by his lifelong connection to the coast, he empowers local communities to defend their environment while advancing stronger protections for vulnerable coastal ecosystems.

ASIA



INDIA

Raman Kant
Hindon River Waterkeeper

Raman works to restore India's Hindon River through water quality monitoring, scientific research, community engagement, and advocacy. Drawing on decades of river conservation experience, he combines technical expertise with public education to build awareness, strengthen environmental stewardship, and advance the long-term recovery of a vital river system.



BANGLADESH

Tofazzal Sohel
Khowai River Waterkeeper

Tofazzal protects Bangladesh's Khowai River by addressing pollution, illegal encroachment, unsustainable sand mining, and cross-border water management challenges through community advocacy and public engagement. Inspired by a lifelong connection to the river, he works with local leaders and residents to restore the watershed, strengthen environmental stewardship, and reconnect communities with the waterways that sustain them.

WHO IS WATERKEEPER

EUROPE/MIDDLE EAST



SWEDEN

Siri Lundström
Älvräddarnas Waterkeeper

Siri Lundström has spent her life connected to Sweden's rivers and ecosystems. As Älvräddarnas Waterkeeper, she advocates for healthier waterways by challenging the impacts of hydropower development, supporting river restoration, and promoting a balance between renewable energy production and ecological protection. Her work focuses on ensuring that rivers are recognized as living systems with ecological, cultural, and social value.

LATIN AMERICA



COLOMBIA

Elizabeth Ramirez
Cartagena Waterkeeper

Elizabeth works to protect Cartagena Bay and the Ciénaga de la Virgen wetland by advancing environmental justice, community engagement, and legal advocacy. Drawing on her background as an attorney, professor, and judge, she connects science, law, and local knowledge to defend water as a shared right while supporting communities whose livelihoods and cultures depend on healthy ecosystems.

NORTH AMERICA



UNITED STATES

Benjamin Ford
Miles-Wye Riverkeeper

Ben works to protect Maryland's Miles and Wye rivers by addressing agricultural runoff, stormwater management, and the impacts of development through collaborative, community-based solutions. Drawing on a lifelong connection to the Chesapeake Bay, he partners with farmers, residents, and local leaders to advance restoration efforts, improve water quality, and expand access to healthy waterways for future generations.



UNITED STATES

Matt Pluta
Choptank Riverkeeper

Matt works to protect Maryland's Choptank River through policy advocacy, community engagement, and efforts to address pollution affecting the Chesapeake Bay watershed. A lifelong connection to water led him to a career in environmental science, where he focuses on tackling challenges such as agricultural runoff, sewage infrastructure, and long-term water quality solutions. Through initiatives like the Maryland Freedom Swim, Matt helps strengthen public connections to the river and inspire communities to become advocates for clean water.



UNITED STATES

Amy Wicks
Great Salt Lake Waterkeeper

Amy Wicks led efforts to protect Utah's Great Salt Lake, one of the Western Hemisphere's most important wetland ecosystems and a critical stopover for millions of migratory birds. Drawing on her background in child advocacy, public service, and a lifelong connection to Utah's waters, Amy worked to address the lake's decline through conservation, public engagement, and policy advocacy. Her work focused on advancing solutions to restore the lake while protecting the communities, wildlife, and ecosystems that depend on it.

OCEANIA



AUSTRALIA

Dr. Michelle Ryan
Hawkesbury-Nepean Waterkeeper

Michelle works to protect Australia's Hawkesbury-Nepean River by advancing waterway restoration, aquatic research, and community engagement. Through pioneering platypus monitoring, habitat restoration, and partnerships with First Nations peoples, local communities, and landholders, she uses science to strengthen freshwater conservation and inspire stewardship of one of Australia's most biodiverse river systems.

Partnerships in ACTION

Every donation and partnership helps strengthen Waterkeeper groups, advance scientific research, support litigation, convene regional summits, train Waterkeepers, and elevate community voices. This year's partnerships—from corporate supporters to major collaborative initiatives helped expand the reach and impact of the movement while ensuring local communities had the resources needed to protect their waterways.

ADVANCING THE WATERKEEPER MISSION IN A NEW ARENA

The Waterkeeper Alliance Invitational brought clean water advocacy to a new and expansive audience by connecting the Waterkeeper movement with the reach and visibility of collegiate athletics. Through ESPN and ESPN digital platforms, the 2025 Invitational reached 429,000 viewers, with an additional 3.7 million paid advertising impressions across digital, email, and in-arena channels.

The event created meaningful opportunities to introduce new audiences—including students, athletes, fans, and potential partners—to the importance of clean water protection. Through broadcast visibility, in-arena storytelling, and digital engagement, the Invitational demonstrated how strategic partnerships can bring the Waterkeeper mission into new spaces and inspire broader support for protecting the waterways that communities depend on.







LIQUID I.V.: ADVANCING CLEAN WATER ACCESS

Liquid I.V. partners with Waterkeeper Alliance around a shared commitment to clean water as a human right. Their support strengthens Waterkeeper groups and communities working to protect waterways across the United States and around the world.

Liquid I.V.'s support has helped:

- **Strengthen the Waterkeeper Movement:** Support regional summits that brought Waterkeepers together to share strategies, build skills, and strengthen collaboration across the global network.
- **Protect U.S. Watersheds:** Advance efforts to safeguard rivers, streams, lakes, and groundwater.
- **Combat PFAS Pollution:** Support monitoring, advocacy, and action to address PFAS contamination and protect communities.
- **Strengthen Water Protections:** Support work with the Center for Water Security and Cooperation to advance water policy and legal frameworks.
- **Elevate Community Voices:** Support collaboration with the Hispanic Access Foundation to ensure communities disproportionately affected by water pollution are represented in clean water advocacy.

Together, these investments are building the capacity of Waterkeepers, strengthening clean water protections, and helping communities advocate for the waterways they depend on.



With support from Liquid I.V., Waterkeeper Alliance and partners—including Betsy Nicholas of Potomac Riverkeeper Network, Brent Walls of Upper Potomac Riverkeeper, Bob Bowcock of Integrated Resource Management, Inc., and Hispanic Access Foundation—briefed congressional staff in Washington, D.C., on PFAS contamination and its disproportionate impacts on frontline communities, highlighting monitoring results and the urgent need for national action.

Photo credit: Hispanic Access Foundation



Photo Credit: Robert Coady, Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper

HSBC: INVESTING IN RESILIENT COMMUNITIES

HSBC's partnership with Waterkeeper Alliance combines philanthropic support with hands-on employee engagement to strengthen urban waterways and the communities that depend on them. Working alongside local Waterkeeper groups, HSBC employees have participated directly in restoration projects designed to improve water quality, restore habitat, and build climate resilience.

Together, this work supports:

- **Shoreline Protection:** Planting trees, restoring oyster reefs, and strengthening natural shorelines to reduce erosion and help protect communities from storm impacts.
- **Healthier Ecosystems:** Removing invasive species and restoring native habitat to improve water quality and support biodiversity.
- **Climate Resilience:** Restoring wetlands, shorelines, and other natural systems that can help communities adapt to climate impacts while providing important habitat.
- **Community Stewardship:** Connecting HSBC employees with local Waterkeeper groups through hands-on projects that build awareness of local waterways and contribute directly to their restoration.

By pairing financial support with on-the-ground action, HSBC is helping Waterkeeper groups restore waterways, strengthen ecosystems, and build more resilient communities.

SPOTLIGHT

NIAGARA RIVER CORRIDOR RESTORATION PROJECT

Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper is leveraging nature-based solutions to restore water quality and vital habitats across the Niagara River Corridor. This project serves as a hub for hands-on environmental stewardship with ongoing opportunities for HSBC employees to join restoration activities that protect shorelines, enhance biodiversity, improve water quality, and support communities throughout the region.



Photo Credit: Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper

Thank you TO OUR DONORS

$1,000,000+

- Anonymous

$250,000 – $999,999

- Anonymous
- HSBC
- Liquid I.V.
- Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors
- Estate of Donna Skraboly

$100,000 – $249,999

- Broad Reach Foundation
- Dechomai Foundation, Inc.
- Foundation for the Carolinas
- Marisla Foundation
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- Spectrum Sleep Solutions

$50,000 – $99,999

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- Michele and Gordon Brown
- Sandy & Ronald Curtis Trust
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- San Diego Coastkeeper
- Estate of Tortorich

$25,000 – $49,999

- Anonymous
- Dancing Tides Foundation
- Den Enterprises
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- Kay Family Foundation
- Rich Family Foundation
- Lessing Stern
- Jane Smith Turner Foundation
- Alexandra and Kent Weed

$10,000 – $24,999

- American Endowment Foundation
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- Etienne Gabel
- F. Daniel Gabel
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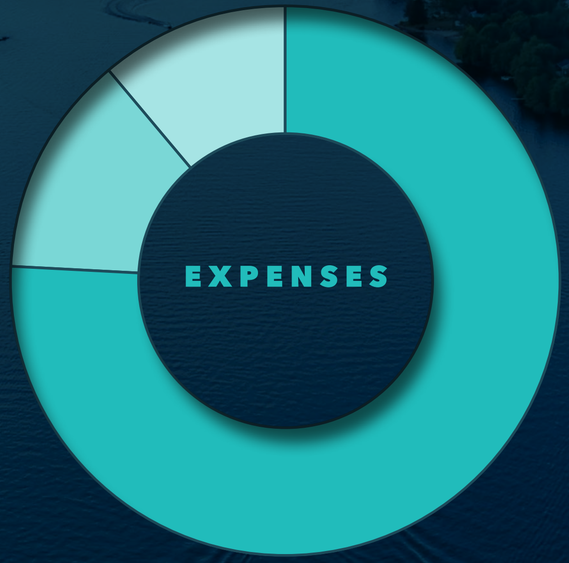
- Berger Family Foundation
- Margaret R. DeRivera
- Todd Hoffman Foundation
- Holdfast Collective
- Janis and James Nania
- Martinus Nickerson
- The Pollack Family Gift Fund
- William Smith
- Margaretta Taylor
- Linden and Judith Welch Charitable Fund

Financials

FISCAL YEAR 2025-2026



Individuals	$2,992,656.00	49%
Corporations	$1,464,820.00	24%
Direct Mail	$511,485.00	8%
Foundations	$681,844.00	11%
Other	$406,167.00	7%
TOTAL REVENUE	**$6,056,972.00**	



Program	$5,183,324.64	76%
Fundraising	$886,621.32	13%
Administration	$750,218.04	11%
TOTAL EXPENSES	**$6,820,164.00**	

Income	$6,056,972.00
Program Expenses	$5,183,324.64
Fundraising Expenses	$886,621.32
Administrative Expenses	$750,218.04
YEAR END NET ASSETS	**$3,951,386.00**

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Our Board of Directors brings a wealth of experience and a commitment to clean water and environmental justice. Each member contributes unique insights and expertise, guiding Waterkeeper Alliance in its mission to protect waterways and empower communities around the globe. The Board members listed reflect the reporting period.

Glenn R. Rink, *Chair*
Abtech Industries

Sally Bethea
Retired founding director of Chattahoochee Riverkeeper

Tonya Bonitatibus
Savannah Riverkeeper

Gordon Brown
Brown Investment Group, Inc.

Kemp Burdette
Cape Fear Riverkeeper

Patricio Chambers
Guayllabamba Waterkeeper

Xavier Cortada
Xavier Cortada Foundation

Dan Gerard
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