



WILD RIVERS

ST. CROIX CONSERVANCY NAMEKAGON



ANNUAL REPORT 2021

REALIZING THE RIVER'S REACH

Dear River Friends,

When looking back at last year's accomplishments I'm still amazed to see what transpired. One huge achievement in 2021 was formalizing a new relationship with the Horst Rechelbacher Foundation. We are delighted to have made a long-term agreement with them for our office to reside in Boulderwall, a historic building on The Acreage at Osceola.

Working together, with our board, staff, supporters, volunteers and PARTNERS has always been and will always be the only way to accomplish our mission. Last year, renowned artist Mary Pettis approached us about partnering on an exhibit that would inspire a deeper awareness of, connection with, and appreciation for our wild and scenic rivers. Mary stated her hope that her paintings express our shared love for this valley, and that they will inspire continued stewardship of our sacred river and its watershed. A total of 554 people visited the exhibit and 29 paintings sold. The Conservancy received a donation from each sale, and the new connections we made were priceless. Partnering with Mary was a natural, though unexpected twist in our unceasing efforts to protect this place. It really hit home to me that I can still underestimate the reach of our Riverway. It touches so many people in unexpected ways.

With the new year came more changes. Thankfully, Covid loosened its grip, allowing for more in-person events and activities. Craig Hansen is now the Superintendent for the St. Croix National Scenic Riverway. More recently, several of our staff members have taken other positions. With change comes opportunity. We are exploring ways to restructure our staff and create redefined positions that reflect the changing and growing needs of the Riverway and our organization. Two high priorities have been identified: growing our volunteer base and implementing climate adaptation strategies. The Conservancy team will soon define new roles to serve these priorities.

I am honored to work alongside all of you to conserve the Riverway and connect people to its amazing array of assets – clean water, beautiful scenery, rare plants and animals, high-quality outdoor recreation. And I look forward to seeing what more we can accomplish together, ever-expanding the reach of the Riverway and the Conservancy.

Ever Forward,



Deb Ryun
Executive Director



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Thank you to our outgoing Board Members.
We are grateful for your work.

**WILD
RIVERS**
CONSERVANCY

"It has been proven to me many times during my first few months at Saint Croix National Scenic Riverway how much it is woven into the fabric of people's lives. The Riverway is a place people connect with on so many different levels - helping people make these connections is such a huge part of the role we play."

-Craig Hansen, St. Croix National Scenic Riverway Superintendent

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Deb Ryun, Executive Director
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Kate Wright, Marketing and Events
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WORKING STRATEGICALLY

TOM SWAIN, BOARD CHAIR

A thriving watershed, forever accessible, scenic, and wild. As the board chair, I keep this, our vision, in front of the board and you. At member events and other opportunities, I also speak to our mission; inspire stewardship to forever ensure the rare ecological integrity of the St. Croix and Namekagon Riverway.

Many of you have heard me say that the Conservancy strives to be the best friend we can be to the St. Croix National Scenic Riverway. What does that mean? As the non-profit partner for the Riverway, we work with the National Park Service to support Riverway protection and enhancement and provide opportunities for people to explore and discover the St. Croix and Namekagon Rivers. We prioritize conservation activities that improve water quality, protect and enhance land, and increase stewardship efforts. We give the Riverway a voice, addressing issues that affect the St. Croix watershed and this national park.

In order to make progress toward achieving our mission, it is critical to work strategically. This annual report shares the results of our work in 2021, within our four goals:

- Engage in an innovative partnership with the St. Croix National Scenic Riverway to support the Park.
- Protect and enhance the natural resources and ecosystems in the St. Croix River watershed.
- Provide opportunities for people to discover, explore, and steward the Riverway and its watershed.
- Build a sustainable and financially resilient organization that delivers on its mission effectively.

From big efforts to small, today's Riverway reflects the commitment of people working together, including a dedicated board and talented staff. Thank you for what you do to protect this magnificent, yet fragile, national park.



BEING A GOOD FRIEND



Wild Rivers Conservancy supports projects big and small to benefit the Riverway. In 2021, we provided funding to replace several national park signs along the Riverway. We hired an expert to continue bird surveys for the Riverway, adding to decades of records. And with our support, the CAMBA connector bike trail along the Namekagon in Cable was completed.



*"Why does the NPS partner extensively with Wild Rivers Conservancy? That's easy: we can and do accomplish far more together to protect the St. Croix and Namekagon Rivers."
-Lisa Yager, SACN Chief of Resource Stewardship and Education*



NPS Park Rangers and Conservancy staff provided over 3,500 students with discovery experiences through "Rivers Are Alive!" field trips and in-classroom activities. By sharing our expertise and resources, many more people benefit from time spent outdoors and learning about this National Park's rich natural and cultural history.



Over 5,000 biocontrol beetles were raised and released in wetlands to control invasive purple loosestrife plants without the use of the herbicide. Controlling purple loosestrife can increase native habitat, wildlife diversity, and improve hydrology within the landscape.



Generations will reap the benefits of today's efforts to protect natural landscapes. Approximately 1,500 acres of land were permanently protected via conservation easements and fee-title acquisition in 2021. We help permanently protect 729 acres of land in Chisago County, one of the largest remaining undeveloped and privately held parcels along the Riverway.

"I believe guided public education is crucial to the conservation of our rivers because many landowners do not have access to or are unaware of resources that will help them to preserve their woodlands."
- Maria Young, Forestry Intern



The Conservancy is helping to restore one of the last genetically distinct winged mapleleaf mussel populations in the world. Our staff, alongside key federal partners, are conducting propagation experiments in a temporary lab at a private residence on the Riverway. The experiment looks promising!



Protecting our woodlands is a critical component of climate resiliency. Restoring and enhancing almost 20% of the forested land lost to urban and rural development drives the My St. Croix Woods program. We directly engaged over 400 landowners through webinars, newsletters, website resources, campaigns, and in-person activities to protect forested land, increase water quality, and promote climate resilience.



PROTECTING RESOURCES

OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL



The St. Croix Youth Summit virtual conference reached 224 students and teachers in 2021. They learned about environmental issues and challenges in the watershed through peer-to-peer learning, engaging workshops, and inspirational speakers. Students learned ways they can make a difference and how they can be good natural resource stewards.



"You inspire a love for the river, for conservation, for exploration, and for our hometown. The kids LOVED learning that they live near a national treasure."

- Local elementary teacher



New and more diverse audiences are exploring the Riverway through our outdoor discovery programs with the Advancement of Hmong Americans, Valley Friendship Club, Lac Courte Oreilles Boys and Girls Club, and others.



Volunteers are vital in helping everyone discover the magical qualities of the Riverway through hiking, fishing, snowshoeing, paddling, and other outdoor activities.



The Mary Pettis Watershed exhibit was not only beautiful, it also connected people to the rivers in a way that science cannot do. It allowed us to engage a broader range of potential park visitors, new donors, and future river stewards while raising funds to support our mission.



The St. Croix River Association became Wild Rivers Conservancy of the St. Croix and Namekagon. The rebrand upholds our vision of a thriving watershed, forever accessible, scenic, and wild while enhancing our visibility and relevance as an organization.



The Conservancy's move to The Acreage at Osceola is a unique collaboration that addressed the Conservancy's expanding infrastructure needs. This inspired location celebrates natural and cultural diversity; it provides space for unique visitor experiences and educational opportunities for all.

BUILDING SUSTAINIBILITY

2021 AUDITED FINANCIAL REPORT

Balance Sheet

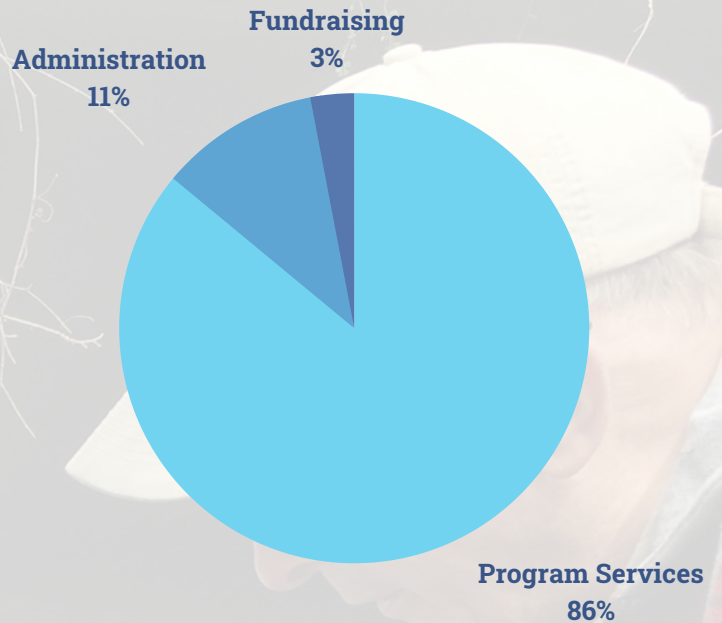
Assets

Current Assets	\$387,677
Investments	\$88,884
Property & Equipment	\$18,564
Total Assets	\$495,125

Liabilities & Equity

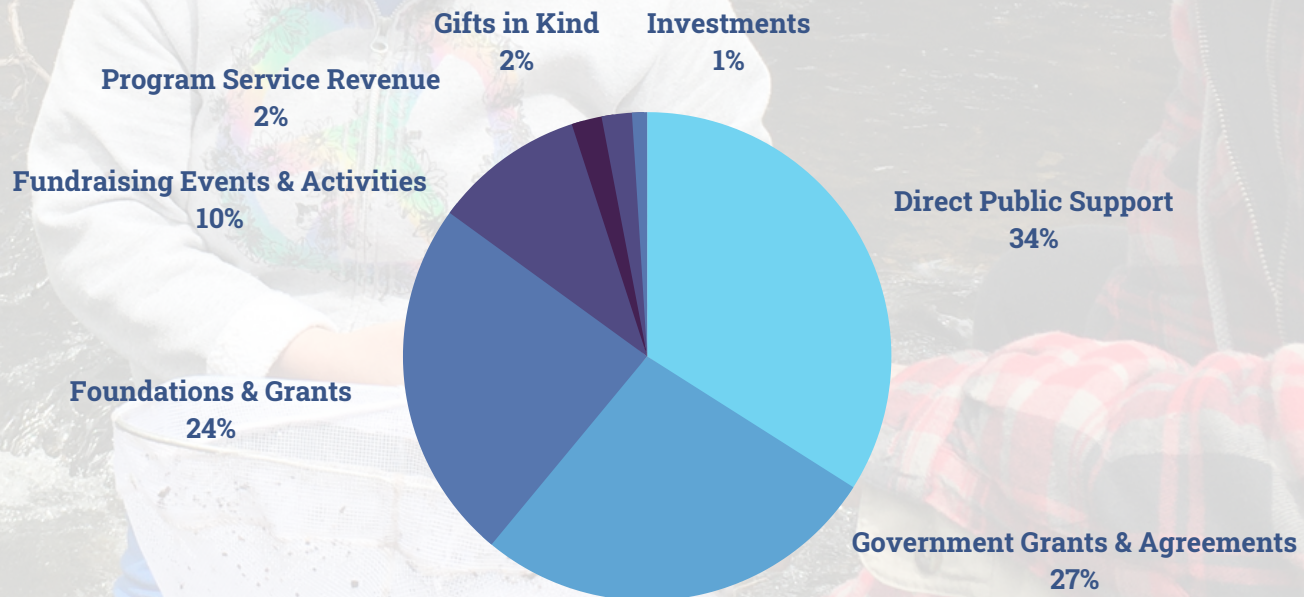
Current Liabilities	
Accounts Payable	\$23,679
Other Current Liabilities	\$48,639
Total Current Liabilities	\$72,318
Net Assets	\$422,807
Total Liabilities & Equity	\$495,125

FY 2021 Expenses \$1,184,790



Financial statements audited by CarlsonSV. A copy is available upon request.

FY 2021 Income \$1,237,899



Income shown greater than expenses due to timing of grants.

SHOW YOUR WILD IN 2022!

EXPLORE

We lead programs so people of all backgrounds and abilities can explore and discover the St. Croix and Namekagon Rivers.



VOLUNTEER

Volunteers are the lifeblood of keeping the Riverway healthy for present and future generations. There are many ways to help out!



DONATE

Whether it's an annual membership or a bequest, your donation in any amount is maximized for the greatest benefit.



THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

This list represents gifts given from January 1, 2021 through December 31, 2021 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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Grants and Agreements

Anonymous
Archie D & Bertha H Walker Foundation
Chisago County
Fred C. and Katherine B. Andersen
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Friends of the St. Croix Wetland
Management District
HRK Foundation
Mortenson Family Foundation
National Park Foundation
National Park Service
Outdoor Heritage Fund
Pine County
St. Croix National Scenic Riverway Fund of
the St. Croix Valley Foundation
Stillwater Area Community Foundation, an
affiliate of the St. Croix Valley Foundation
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Washington Conservation District
Weyerhaeuser Family Foundation
Wisconsin Dept. of Natural Resources
Xcel Energy Foundation

Gifts Given in Memory of:

Vicky Aldridge
Leonard "Joe" Boler
Doug Burnett
Vicky Cross
Steven DeCoster
Jack Delaney
Pietro DiLorenzo
Kyle Erickson
Robert Farnham
John Haack
Doug Hackman
John Helland
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Bruce LeBert
Piers Lewis
Robert MacGillivray
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Walter Mondale
Mary Strom

Gifts Given in Honor of:

Sally Arneson
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Brian Hoffman
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Amy Short
Tom Swain
Burt and Helen Swanson
The Dakota People
Chad Wade
Natalie Warren





LOOKING FORWARD, REFLECTING BACK

BETHANY COX, DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT

In 2008, Walter Mondale evoked a call-to-action when he shared this reflection with 60 leaders that were convened to commemorate the 40th Anniversary of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act:

“The assaults on the St. Croix watershed by development, run-off, and loss of habitat put at risk the ribbon of Riverway we protected 40 years ago. Without a renewed commitment to the protection of the river and its watershed, we could lose the most unique National Wild and Scenic River in the nation. While there is much excellent effort underway on the St. Croix, we need to do more—and we need to do it now.”

The seeds for the expanded work of Wild Rivers Conservancy were planted that day. In the 13 years since this meeting, the Conservancy has grown to be the watershed organization former vice-president Mondale knew was needed, exceeding expectations and expanding beyond the ideas and ambitions of those 60 leaders. Walter Mondale asked for a renewed commitment to protect this river, and you, the individuals and businesses that experience the reach of the riverway, continue to step up.

In 2021, business giving grew by over 65%. Andersen Corporation’s former director of sustainability and environment shared, “Our location here on the banks of the St. Croix River serves as a daily reminder of what it means to be a good steward of our shared natural resources.” And it’s not just businesses.

Last year, 269 new individuals and families joined the Conservancy in support of our important vision - a thriving watershed, forever accessible, scenic, and wild. The Conservancy has proven over the last 13 years that it is the trusted organization for the conservation of this Riverway and its watershed. Legacy and planned gift commitments from this last year show how much our community believes in the the future of our work.

Wild Rivers Conservancy has big plans and we invite you to join us. Whether you share one of our programs with your neighbors, invite your adult children to the fall annual fundraiser, or show your support of the Riverway with a business sponsorship, the Conservancy is here to creatively partner with you. We are dedicated to supporting you in your stewardship so that the reach of this, “...most unique National Wild and Scenic River in the nation,” is protected now and for generations to come.



WILD RIVERS

ST. CROIX CONSERVANCY NAMEKAGON

PO BOX 938

OSCEOLA, WI 54020

715-483-3300

WILDRIVERSCONSERVANCY.ORG

@wildriversconservancy



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FOREVER WILD



GET WILD FOR YOUR RIVERS!
2022 ANNUAL **09.08.22** FUNDRAISER



**GET WILD
FOR YOUR RIVERS!**
Thursday, September 8 | 5-8 pm

The Acreage at Osceola
2585 WI-35, Osceola, WI 54020
(just north of downtown Osceola)

EAT. DRINK. CELEBRATE. GIVE.

You're not going to want to miss this FUNdraising party for our park!

Let's get funky with sounds from the Under Groove and spice things up with Caribbean eats from Pedros del Este.
Bid on exciting live auction items and raise your paddle to support our wild & scenic rivers.

Be a champion for your rivers and reserve your seat today!

RSVP: wildriversconservancy.org/support/foreverwild or call 715.483.3300