

Science Looks Different Here

Our mission is to advance science and stewardship of Adirondack waters.

AUSABLE Freshwater Center

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PHOTO: B. Wiltse

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AUSABLE Freshwater Center

2023
ANNUAL REPORT



PHOTO: S. Longmire

Shifting Gears

We're celebrating 25 years of service to the Ausable River watershed! Our 2023 Annual Report is full of accomplishments and marks a notable change.

We're shifting into high gear. More than ever before, we are ready to serve the freshwater systems of our home watershed. But we're also ready to serve the communities and waters of the Boquet, Saranac, Upper Hudson, Sacandaga, Raquette, St. Regis, and more. Indeed, we have projects underway in several of these watersheds.

We're growing. More staff, greater reach, a wider network of partners, more science, more stewardship, more solutions to keep our waters healthy, resilient, fun. And in this, our 25th year, we're marking these exciting developments by changing our name.

Say hello to the Ausable Freshwater Center.

We're Adirondack-wide, but our home and laboratory for exploration is still the Ausable watershed. Our hallmark science-based stewardship – restoring streams, protecting native habitat and aquatic species, safeguarding water quality – unlocks knowledge of how freshwater systems work and applies it to real-world challenges. Our goal is to be a hub – a center for innovation in freshwater science and stewardship. We'll share our technical skills to help Adirondack communities, municipalities, peer nonprofits, landowners and residents protect and restore their watersheds efficiently.

We're building a better future for Adirondack communities through effective, science-based freshwater stewardship. Join us. Help us maintain and share our service to the streams, lakes, and wetlands you love.

Kelley Tucker
Executive Director

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EDITOR: Stephen Longmire
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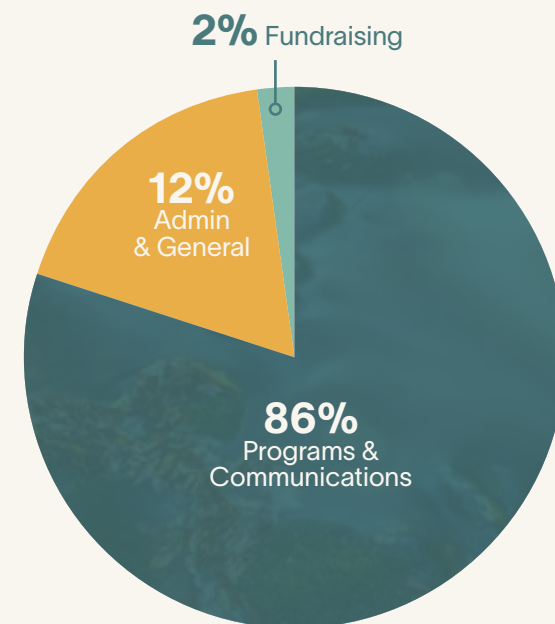
FINANCIAL POSITION

As of December 31, 2023 (per independent audit)

Assets	
Cash & Savings	\$ 299,877
Other Assets	\$ 186,538
Total Assets	\$ 486,415
Liabilities & Net Assets	
Current Liabilities	\$ 65,590
Unrestricted Net Assets	\$ 420,825
Temporarily Restricted Net Assets	\$ 0
Total Liabilities & Net Assets	\$ 486,415



HOW YOUR SUPPORT WAS ALLOCATED



STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

As of December 31, 2023 (per independent audit)

Support and Revenue

Income	
Contributions	\$ 196,381
Restricted Grants	\$ 972,302
Program and Other Revenue	\$ 162,770
Interest	\$ 19
Total	\$ 1,331,472

Expenses

Programs & Communications	\$ 1,169,958
Administration & General	\$ 172,625
Professional Development	\$ 15,830
Fundraising	\$ 23,441
Total	\$ 1,381,854

A copy of the latest annual filing for the Ausable Freshwater Center, Inc. may be obtained, upon request, from the organization (PO Box 8, Wilmington, NY 12997) or from the New York State Office of the Attorney General, Records Access Officer, The Capitol, Albany, NY 12224 (www.charitiesnys.com) or by contacting 212-416-8401. You can obtain a description of the programs and activities that your contribution will support by contacting us at the above address.

Healthy Streams

We're stream doctors. We diagnose problems by looking past the symptom – an eroding bank, for example – to find its cause, a blocked floodplain, perhaps, or an undersized culvert. We know streams can heal themselves, given enough time and space, but where communities are at risk we can intervene, diagnose

the problem, and find a lasting remedy. Using only native stone, trees, and biodegradable fabric, and a lot of science and math, we can restore a stream's self-sustaining health. It's good for wildlife, good for communities, and good for our streams.

Stream restoration staff conducted detailed geomorphic surveys on over 23,500 feet (almost 4.5 miles) of stream and river channels in the Ausable and Boquet River watersheds.



I wonder what the range of scour depths are around these large boulders.

2023 HIGHLIGHTS

We implemented our largest stream restoration project to date. Project Area 2, on the East Branch Ausable River in Upper Jay, was a priority site identified by the 2019 East Branch Restoration Plan, developed in response to Tropical Storm Irene. Three years in planning, with grant funds from four agencies, it protects critical road infrastructure in floods, alleviates ice jamming, and restores the health of the river.

Stream restoration staff conducted detailed geomorphic surveys on over 23,500 feet (almost 4.5 miles) of stream and river channels in the Ausable and Boquet River watersheds.

Ausable Freshwater Center's staff completed a two-year effort to develop regional guidance on the proper sizing of channels for stream restoration in the Ausable and neighboring watersheds. We identified and surveyed stable channels throughout the watershed. Then we used the data to understand why some sections of rivers and streams in our region can sustain their form and function despite the increase in extreme precipitation events that has occurred since the 1990's.



Clean Water

We're boots on the ground. We all need clean water...people, animals, plants. But there are a host of challenges to our freshwater: phosphorus, road salt, microplastics, oxygen depletion, harmful algae blooms, warming lakes and streams. We do the fieldwork. Collecting the samples, logging the data, covering the

miles, monitoring changes, understanding their implications, and helping communities respond. We navigate lakes and streams of all sizes, working alongside academic partners and public agencies to get critical knowledge that protects freshwater systems over time.

Our team tested new techniques for eDNA collection and the evaluation of biological samples to map metabolic pathways using stable isotope analysis.

2023 HIGHLIGHTS



periods, including spring/early summer and late summer/early fall. Our team tested new techniques for eDNA collection and the evaluation of biological samples to map metabolic pathways using stable isotope analysis. Forty-two additional lakes were sampled to examine the quality of dissolved organic matter and its role in the recent widely observed phenomenon known as lake browning.

We continued to work closely with Paul Smith's College Adirondack Watershed Institute to monitor salt reduction efforts on Mirror Lake, thanks to a North Elba LEAF grant that extends through 2024.

Ausable Freshwater Center staff maintained our long-term water quality record from five lakes in the Ausable watershed, both branches of the Ausable River, and associated tributaries. These records are vital to understanding the current conditions of these waterbodies and to sensing and managing future changes.

Fieldwork began for the pilot phase of the landmark Survey of Climate Change in Adirondack Lake Ecosystems, a collaborative water quality research effort known as SCALE. Eight lakes of varying characteristics from around the Adirondack Park were sampled intensively during two



With a changing climate and shifts in lake chemistry, what responses will we find in biological communities?

PHOTO: J. Levine

Celebrating 25 Years of Ausable Stewardship

For 25 years we've served the Ausable watershed—restoring streams, protecting native wildlife and their habitats, and safeguarding water quality. With your support, we've grown from an all-volunteer organization with a tiny budget to a staff of 10 full-time professionals dedicated to effective science-based stewardship of freshwater systems throughout the Adirondacks.



1999

The Ausable River Association (AsRA) is incorporated as a 501c3 nonprofit.



2010

The first River Steward begins providing summer outreach to river users to stop the spread of invasive species. Going strong 14 years later.



2011

AsRA's first stream restoration project, supported by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and constructed in 2010 on the West Branch, weathers Tropical Storm Irene, protects property and the river channel, and becomes a model for nature-based community flood resilience.

2015

AsRA inaugurates the Teen Aquatic Stewardship Program with the Adirondack Mountain Club – an intensive five-day, four-night adventure in camping and aquatic stewardship for teens.



2017

The first climate-ready culvert is designed and constructed by AsRA on Nugent Road in the Town of Jay. It becomes a model for communities seeking no-maintenance, flood resilient, fish friendly options for road-stream crossings.



2022

The Adirondack Lake Survey Corporation is merged into the Ausable River Association.

2024

Ausable Freshwater Center...!

Biodiverse Habitats

We're detectives. Fish, water insects, birds, frogs, trees, ferns...our job is to know how they live, where their favorite hangouts are, and what they need to survive and reproduce. We provide the knowledge and data that government agencies, landowners and managers use to protect native species, rout invasives,

and restore the freshwater habitats that build diversity and ecosystem health. This involves cutting-edge science and long days in the field, in the water, in the lab. We're working to understand and protect the web of ecosystems essential to Adirondack watersheds.

Empowering Stewardship – Informing Communities

We walk the talk. We're listeners, teachers, and stewards. We care for all things fresh water and help everyone we meet do the same. From porta-johns to cleanup days, from in-depth scientific assessments of stream systems to town board meetings, we bring the science to decision-making. At the household level, that's about caring

for a backyard or neighborhood brook. At the town and county level, it's big stuff, protecting roads and ensuring people are safe in floods, choosing to put precious tax dollars to work to restore streams, supporting an approach that helps communities and protects freshwater systems.

2023 HIGHLIGHTS



ecological and geomorphic effects of stream restoration in the Ausable River watershed. We're analyzing eight stream sites over the grant period (2023-2025), combining geomorphic assessment and measured changes in fish and aquatic insect communities. We'll be documenting signs of degradation in unrestored areas and investigating whether habitat uplift occurs in restored habitats.

Our biologists fostered stewardship and conservation efforts across the watershed, providing tailored technical support to 20 private landowners in 2023. They offered guidance on riparian habitat preservation, fish population management, forest health assessment, species identification, and property maintenance.

Careful planning and successful grant acquisition laid the groundwork for the Ausable Conservation Nursery. This long-term project will propagate and grow tens of thousands of native trees and shrubs annually to enhance stream health and ecosystem resilience in Lake Champlain Basin watersheds.

We're committed to documenting the long-term impacts of our stream restoration initiatives. Thanks to a grant from Lake Champlain Basin Program, Ausable Freshwater Center scientists embarked on a three-year comprehensive monitoring project to evaluate the

2023 HIGHLIGHTS

In its 12th year, our River Steward program continued to safeguard the Ausable River watershed through on-river education and outreach to anglers and other river users about preventing the spread of invasive species.

Over 160 volunteers, including members of the Adirondack Garden Club, Adirondack Riverwalking, and St. Joseph's Addiction Treatment & Recovery Centers, contributed to tree planting, native seeding, river cleanup, and watering initiatives last summer, enriching our restoration efforts with their support.

AFC supported AdkAction's launch of a regional road salt outreach campaign to spread the word about the dangers of road salt and promote effective low-salt alternatives for sidewalks, driveways, and public roads.

For the second year in a row, working with local schools, the Lake Champlain Maritime Museum, Lake Champlain Sea Grant, and Paul Smith's College, we brought a giant map of the Lake Champlain Basin to 50 fifth and sixth grade students in Au Sable Forks. Students learned from the map and then tested their new knowledge in the river.



Thank You!

We rely on the support of donors who care about the Ausable River, its lakes, and tributaries. Together we make a difference.

\$10,000+

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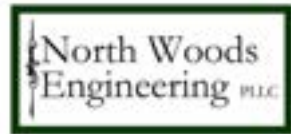


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We greatly appreciate our business partners' support for our programs and events. You are making a difference for the health of our watersheds.

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