



2017 ANNUAL REPORT



FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Dear Friends and Allies,

In spite of the many obstacles facing our environment and our communities in 2017 -- from the rolling back of important environmental protections to natural disasters and political gridlock -- the environment and conservation movement came together like never before. I saw everyone from international groups to local all-volunteer groups participating in activities and actions across the country to protect clean water and the living things that rely on it.

Alabama's river movement was no exception.

The Alabama Rivers Alliance grew our outreach & partnership activities exponentially throughout the year. Each action taken was a strategic move toward protecting clean water and our 132,000 miles of rivers & streams.

Through our **partnership** with the Southern Environmental Law Center, we were able to commission public opinion polling which revealed that 4 in 5 Alabamians want an Alabama Water Plan.

As a supporter of ARA, you know that our years-long fight for this plan is important and we must continue to push for it in this election year until a plan is in place to protect stream flows & provide equitable solutions in times of water shortage.

By **collaborating** with Alabama's eight Waterkeeper organizations, the Alabama Department of Environmental Management and sewer utilities, we have made progress towards improving the way the public is notified of sewage spills in their community and this vital information has been made more accessible to people across the state.

By **partnering** with Sierra Club Alabama Chapter, Conservation Alabama, and the national Sierra Club, we educated citizens on the legislative process and provided extensive training on how to talk to elected officials about their concerns for clean water and a protected environment.

By **collaborating** with American Rivers, River Network, the Cahaba River Society and other local partners, we are continuing the critical work to find solutions for protecting natural stream flows and vital fish habitat through existing regulations.

The list of successes in 2017 through our strategic **partnerships and collaborations** goes on and on and you will see many of them highlighted throughout this report. As an Alliance, having a strong network of watershed and community based partners is the key to success in advocating for Alabama's rivers. We value these organizations and individuals who make our organization possible and who are willing to collaborate beyond their local watershed or community to solve statewide threats to clean water and public health.

As we look back at a successful 2017 and our 20-year history, we are even more excited about the next 20 years. Thanks to your support this year, we were able to add 440 new members, grow our email list by 136%, and increase our reach on Facebook (15%), Twitter (24%) and Instagram (34%). It is only with this strong foundation that we are able to create a hopeful vision for the future and take on new initiatives like the inspiring and engaging Southern Exposure Film Fellowship program.

I hope you will continue on this important journey with us as we work toward a future of clean water and healthy rivers for all in Alabama. Please visit our website and social media platforms often to stay up to date on how you can help throughout 2018.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Cindy Lowry".

Cindy Lowry
Executive Director

A SPECIAL THANK YOU
to Southern Environmental
Law Center & Sierra Club
Alabama Chapter for their
above and beyond support
in 2017.

"Having [Trey] Glenn now in charge of the entire region,
it should be alarming to everyone who cares about clean water.
***He's made his allegiance to business and industry interest
over the environment and public health.***"

***- Cindy Lowry in the Washington Post 8/24/17 responding to the
appointment of former ADEM Director as EPA Region 4 Administrator***

WELCOME NEW BOARD MEMBERS

MICHAEL FREEMAN, Board of Directors



Michael has served as an Environmental Health and Safety Professional for Auburn University since 2006 where he deals with environmental compliance, response and mitigation. He grew up playing in the creeks, rivers and lakes of upstate South Carolina before serving in the US Army. He began to monitor waterways as an AWW Citizen Monitor in 2009 and later helped to implement the Mill Creek and Parkerson Mill Creek Watershed Management Plans as a stakeholder, monitor and volunteer organizer.

VICKEY WHEELER, Board of Directors

Vickey is a founding member of the Friends of Big Canoe Creek, and has worked extensively with them on mission development, fundraising and communications since 1990. A lifelong artist and educator, Vickey has exhibited, taught and implemented art based programs in schools and other institutions. As a creative visionary, Vickey has kept volumes of personal illustrations and narratives for decades that manifest the relationships between natural and spiritual realms. She currently is exploring the connectivity between aesthetics and environmental integrity.



JUNIOR BOARD



L-R: Dillon O'Hare, Dawn Lee, Sabrina Zizo, La'Tanya Scott, Charles Miller, Laura Quattrochi, Matt Bailey, Matthew Grcic
(not pictured: Liza Slutskaya, Darlena Garner, Zac Napier)

As part of Alabama Water Rally planning for our 20th anniversary celebration, we reached out to professionals who are early in their careers

and interested in water protection. We charged them with developing a plenary at Water Rally diving in to the future of environmental protection in Alabama. The energy was palpable as they shared their vision for the future of our state and their role in defending rivers for the years to come.

Our Junior Board was born from these early conversations and we are thrilled to have them help shape the future of the Alabama Rivers Alliance.

Read all about them on our website!

2017 BOARD OFFICERS

Jennifer Patterson, *President*
Georgia Pearson, *Vice President*
Tony Diliberto, *Secretary*
Paul Perret, *Treasurer*

2017 DIRECTORS

Barbara Burke
Tony Diliberto
Ben Ferrill
Henry Hughes
Jack Key
James Lowery
Stephen Stetson
Robert Tate
Julian Walthall

OF COUNSEL

William L. Andreen, J.D.

STAFF

Executive Director
Cindy Lowry

Program Director (until July)
Mitchell Reid

Alliance Coordinator
Martha Hunter

Communications Director
Kelly Marshall

Administrative Assistant
Gilda Brame

2017 INTERNS

Morgan Pennington
Margot Woolverton
Lillian Nelson

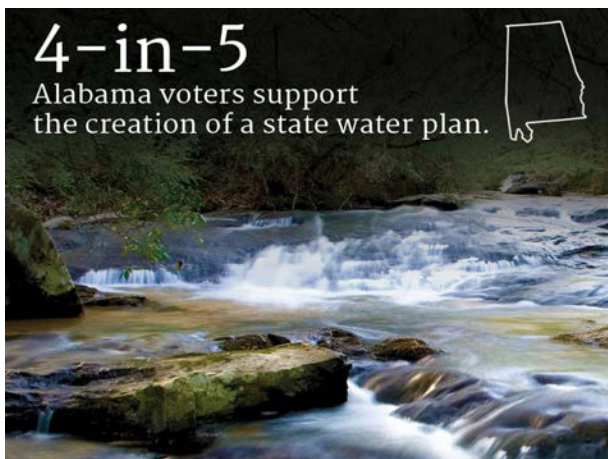
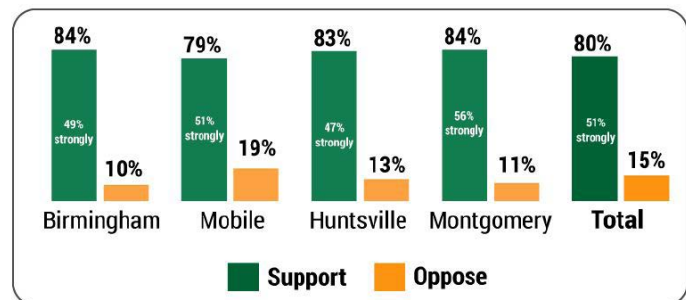
ALABAMA WATER PLAN UPDATE

The Alabama Rivers Alliance continued our full court press to lead the grassroots advocacy for an Alabama Water Plan in 2017. While politics and state leaders were not as cooperative as we hoped, important policy initiatives continued throughout the year and we are still progressing in the right directions.

Some of our successes this past year include:

- Engaged hundreds of citizens to write letters to Governor Ivey asking that the Alabama Water Agencies Working Group report be released to the public (report contains recommendations for the development of a plan).
- Kept this issue alive through the change in leadership in the Governor's office via social media, letter writing campaigns, media articles and op-eds and more.
- Worked with American Rivers to get the entire Mobile Basin designated as one of America's Top Ten Most Endangered Rivers due to lack of a statewide water plan.
- Introduced a strong bill from Representative Patricia Todd to address gaps in water laws that are hindering the ability to develop a plan protecting stream flows and accounting for water use.
- Worked alongside SELC to commission polling and messaging around this issue that will be used in the coming election year and legislative session (see graphic).
- Garnered significant media attention throughout the year, even during the Senate special election in December.
- Agencies released the Surface Water Assessments and Groundwater Assessments that were completed with funding from the general fund over the past few years. The lack of data regarding water consumption and availability has been a hindrance in developing a plan.

"The Alabama Rivers Alliance, an environmental watchdog, is concerned that the state remains without a plan in an era when droughts have parched the South." -- *Decatur Daily editorial* November 27, 2017



"We don't wait to plan for a hurricane or a tornado until it happens, so why wait to plan for water shortage until there is a crisis? With this move, the Governor is ignoring years of work and millions of taxpayer dollars spent by all of the agencies governing Alabama's water resources. Rather than kicking the can down the road yet again, we need leadership that prioritizes water stewardship and protection."

-- *Cindy Lowry, Decatur Daily, November 23, 2017*

State Senator Gerald Dial, R-Lineville, is calling on Alabama to develop a Water Plan: "The fact that we haven't been able to put a plan in place is an immense disservice to the people of Alabama."

-- *Alabama Political Reporter, January 15, 2018*

SUPPORTING LOCAL PARTNERS

As the Alliance Coordinator, I traveled the state talking to partners from all of Alabama's watersheds and meeting with concerned citizens from all four corners of our state. This past year was an exciting one for our efforts to support and strengthen local groups in order to have a strong Alliance protecting clean water and healthy rivers across Alabama. By my last count, I met with **33** groups across Alabama and participated in **36** different partner organizations' events to listen, learn, support and spread the word about the importance of working together for clean water.



In January, we hosted a screening of the Wild & Scenic Film Festival at Straight to Ale Brewing. The event brought in more than 200 attendees and proceeds were shared with three organizations in the Tennessee Watershed.

In March, we hosted our annual Alabama Water Rally at Camp McDowell on Clear Creek in the Black Warrior Watershed, where we celebrated our 20th anniversary as an organization. The event had record attendance, boasting

a 70% increase from the previous year. Harnessing the palpable energy from Water Rally, we turned our focus to Montgomery and the Alabama River for Rivers of Alabama Day in April. With more than 40 participants in Montgomery talking directly to their elected officials, the event highlighted the importance of talking to legislators about protecting rivers.

Heading into May, our collaboration moved back to Birmingham, where we worked with both national and local partners to host the first Renew Alabama climate change conference. During the summer, I led a Leadership Development Training for Friends of Turkey Creek Nature Preserve. Ensuring local partners are strong internally is a key service that we offer our Alliance member groups. As fall approached, our work



once again turned to the all-important task of empowering groups and citizens to talk to their elected official about environmental issues. Partnering with Sierra Club and Conservation Alabama, our Volunteer Lobbyist Training workshop helped attendees gain the tools and confidence to approach local and state elected officials about issues of concern. As I look back on the year, I am proud to be a part of this vibrant Alliance, I am grateful for the connections made and look forward to more successes together in 2018!

Matthew Hunter

ARA BY THE NUMBERS

420+ NEW donors in 2017

560+ Wild & Scenic Film Festival attendees in **3** cities

125+ paddlers on the Alabama River at the #DefendRivers paddle



COMING SOON...



We are thrilled to announce we will be assuming the role as primary sponsor of the prestigious Southern Exposure Film Fellowship program beginning in January 2018. SELC was the sponsor from 2012 – 2016.

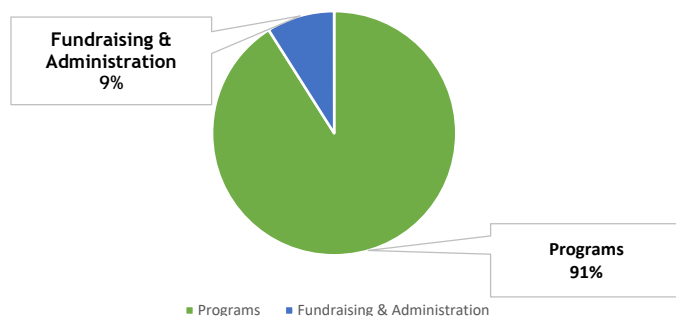
SOUTHERN EXPOSURE is a film fellowship program that is actively raising awareness about Alabama's incredible natural resources and important environmental issues that impact all of us. This innovative summer fellowship brings emerging filmmakers from across the country to tell authentic, engaging stories through short documentary films about Alabama's environment — and the people who cherish it — from the mountains to the coast.

"ARA is proud to be the new home for the Southern Exposure Film Fellowship program, which continues to be extremely important to the environmental community throughout Alabama and beyond," Cindy Lowry said. "We are excited to lead this tremendously successful program, bringing in emerging filmmakers to Alabama to meet with local community members, elected officials, scientists, business owners, riverkeepers and other conservation groups to create short documentaries that highlight Alabama's environmental heritage, as well as the threats facing our state."

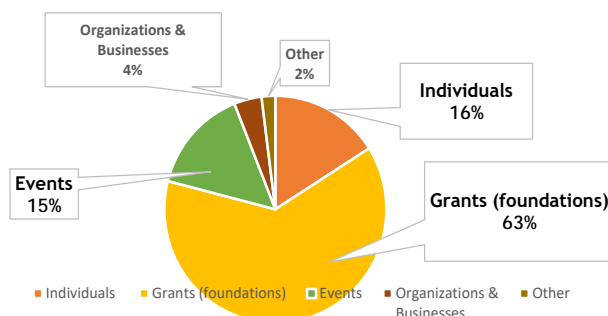
FINANCIAL INFORMATION

The Alabama Rivers Alliance operates an annual budget on the calendar year. Your individual contribution is very important to help us continue to provide essential statewide support to Alabama's growing Alliance of local river advocates and partners.

2017 EXPENSES



2017 INCOME



Detailed financial information available upon request.

IN ADDITION TO THE MANY GENEROUS INDIVIDUALS WHO MAKE OUR WORK POSSIBLE, WE WOULD LIKE TO THANK THE FOLLOWING FOUNDATIONS, PARTNERS AND BUSINESSES FOR THEIR SUPPORT OF OUR WORK IN 2017:

ABAHAC • Alabama Chapter of the Sierra Club • Alabama Waldorf School • American Rivers • Auburn University at Montgomery • Autauga Creek Improvement Committee • brick & tin • Cahaba Brewing Company • Canoe Alabama • CB&S Bank • Charles Stewart Mott Foundation • Community Foundation of Greater Birmingham • Creative Montessori School • Curtis & Edith Munson Foundation • Discovering Alabama • Druid City Brewery • EBSCO • ECOthree • el barrio • Energy Alabama • Energy Foundation • Flint River Conservation Association • Friends of the Locust Fork River • GASP • Ghost Train Brewing Company • Good People Brewing Company • Hancock Timber Resources, Inc • Hueytown Chiropractic Clinic • The Hugh Kaul Foundation • Paramount • Patagonia, Inc. • ROJO • River Network • Saxon Environmental Services • Singin' River Brewing Company • Southern Environmental Law Center • Stephens Foundation • Strain Foundation • Straight to Ale Brewing • Trim Tab Brewing Company • Westwind Foundation • Yellowhammer Brewing

I WANT TO BE A MEMBER OF THE ALABAMA RIVERS ALLIANCE!

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Day Phone: _____ Evening Phone: _____

Email Address: _____

INDIVIDUAL & FAMILY PARTNERSHIPS

☐ Protector \$5,000 ☐ Sustainer \$1,000 ☐ Patron \$500 ☐ Supporter \$250
☐ Friend \$100 ☐ Family \$45 ☐ Individual \$35 ☐ Other _____

Mail to: 2014 6th Ave North, Suite 200 • Birmingham, AL 35203 • Phone: 205-322-6395

Join or donate online at www.AlabamaRivers.org

ALABAMA WATER RALLY

HOSTED BY ALABAMA RIVERS ALLIANCE

Water Rally is THE premiere educational, networking and celebratory event
for all Alabamians interested in advocating for Clean Water
and in the protection of all of Alabama's waterways.

MARCH 16 - 18, 2018 | MONTGOMERY

COMMUNICATE. COLLABORATE. **ACT!**

Water Rally gives you the opportunity to learn the latest from experts from across the country, share successes and challenges with like-minded folks, and mix & mingle with the most fun group of people this side of the Tombigbee.

PLUS: River Heroes' Banquet | After Party Under the Stars at EATSouth
Dinner, Drinks, Poker & Darts | Field Trips

Find more information and register at AlabamaRivers.org



Alabama Rivers Alliance
W a t e r I s L i f e

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