



PHOTO BY PAULINA SOBCZAK

ALABAMA RIVERS ALLIANCE ANNUAL REPORT 2021

STAFF

Cindy Lowry
Jack West
Martha Hunter
Kelly Marshall
Martin Taylor

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Tony Diliberto, president
Jack Key, treasurer
Julie Lay, secretary
Ben Ferrill
Maggie Johnston
Jonathan McNair
Paul Perrett
Cory Pettway
Charles Miller
Vickey Wheeler

JUNIOR BOARD

Dawn Lee, co-chair
Katie Fagan, co-chair
Matthew Bailey
Hank Hershey
Jess Lingle
Laura Quattrochi
Alyssa Prater
La'Tanya Scott

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

We often tout that the Alabama Rivers Alliance has been building, supporting and playing a leadership role in Alabama's river and water protection movement for 25 years, but what does that *really mean*? The Movement Strategy Center describes "movement building" as:

The long-term, coordinated effort of individuals and organized groups of people to intentionally spark and sustain a social movement. Movement builders constantly engage core allies, the public, and people in positions of power to address systemic problems and promote alternative visions or solution.

For us at the Alabama Rivers Alliance, all of our activities and programs are developed and implemented with this idea of movement building in mind -- and bringing people and organizations together to advocate for clean water, healthy rivers, and equitable access to all the benefits that clean water and healthy rivers provide.



Check out our reflection of activities and outcomes in this annual review of 2021 and stay tuned as we take more steps forward -- *together* -- in 2022!

Craig Long

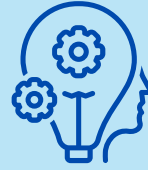
CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

ACTIVITIES

- 23rd annual Alabama Water Rally - The largest gathering of water advocates in the state was held virtually once again, but that didn't stop us from coming together to learn, network, and take action.
- Water is Life Zoom Talk Series - The wildly successful weekly series continued for the second year featuring timely and relevant topics ranging from climate to coal mining to coastal restoration, further informing and engaging the public in our powerful movement.
- Southern Exposure Film Fellowship - Our four fabulous film fellows from all across the country once again created compelling stories in collaboration with impacted communities and partners from all over the state. The film topics included timely policy issues concerning hydropower and wastewater infrastructure along with historically significant until-now untold stories of civil rights heroes and new legacies created by Alabama's own legendary caretaker of Flagg Mountain. [Click here to see the films.](#)
- Wild and Scenic Film Festival - We successfully hosted our 14th annual Wild and Scenic Film Festival On Tour in Alabama, virtually, in partnership with Waterkeepers Alabama, Energy Alabama and Flint River Conservation Association.



OUTCOMES



8

hours of Water Rally inspiration, motivation and planning added to our video library



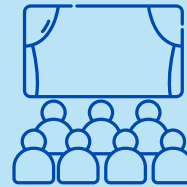
37

hours of new discussions added to our video library



79

new members



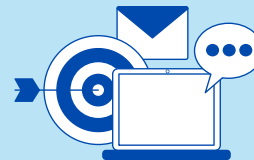
250+

participants in the virtual premiere of the 2021 Southern Exposure films



20K+

unique views of Southern Exposure films



89%

increase in Instagram reach from 2020

21%

increase in Facebook reach from 2020



378,900

Twitter impressions



7,700+

supporters in the movement

POLICY & ADVOCACY

The Alabama Rivers Alliance works with dozens of local, statewide, regional and national partners to advance policies protecting clean water, healthy rivers and equitable access to the benefits of clean water and healthy rivers.



ARA'S 2021 POLICY INITIATIVES INCLUDED:

- Advancing water equity and equitable water / wastewater infrastructure
- Keeping Little River Wild by advocating for a National Wild & Scenic River designation
- Improving hydropower dam operations through community participation in the federal relicensing process on the Tallapoosa and Coosa Rivers
- Strengthening regulations for the disposal of industrial waste sludge, including land application of poultry processing plant waste and coal ash storage
- Seeking effective and just climate solutions through analysis of methane emissions of reservoirs and aligning with organizations across the Gulf South to build an intersectional movement for climate justice #GS4GND

ADVOCACY ACTIONS

Produced Southern Exposure documentaries to engage advocates in Alabama and beyond:

- Equitable water infrastructure
[*Wastewater: A Tale of Two Cities*](#)
- Responsible operation of hydropower dams
[*Heal the River*](#)
- Preserving land in Alabama's Black Belt, home of the civil rights movement
[*54 Miles to Home*](#)
- Celebrating and educating about a couple of Alabama's treasures: Flagg Mountain on the Pinhoti Trail and Nimblewill Nomad
[*The Last Last Hike*](#)
- Created website to educate and increase public awareness, while encouraging direct action in hydropower relicensing on the Tallapoosa River www.HealTheRiver.com

- Convened public meeting and helped facilitate creation of new group, Alabama Waste Sludge Awareness
- Convened and/or participated in hundreds of collaborative partner meetings on a variety of policy issues

Little River Wild & Scenic campaign:

- Gained support from UA's Center for Economic Development, state senators and the Tennessee Aquarium.
- Met with Representatives Aderholt, Rogers and Sewell's offices as well as Senators Tuberville and Shelby's offices to discuss Little River Wild and Scenic designation
- Drafted study legislation for Little River Wild & Scenic Designation

PUBLIC COMMENTS DEVELOPED AND FILED

- Low Income Housing Water Assistance Program comments to Office of Water Resources
- Regulations of land application of waste sludge to Alabama Department of Environmental Management (ADEM)
- Coal ash storage permits to ADEM
- Alabama Power's Preliminary Licensing Application to Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC)
- FERC's Environmental Impact Statement on relicensing of seven dams on the Coosa River
- Alabama Power's Preliminary License Application for a pumped storage hydropower project in the Big Canoe Creek watershed to FERC

WELCOME NEW BOARD MEMBER

Jonathan McNair, *Black Warrior River watershed*



Jonathan is a Birmingham native who grew up in the West End community. As a child, Jonathan spent many weekends and summers on the family farm in Fordyce, Arkansas where he gained a strong value of mankind's relationship with the land. He has extensive firsthand knowledge of Alabama's waterways and he is an avid paddler and boater.

"I believe that having a personal connection to nature is important for all humans. But this connection is vital for those charged with shaping policies that will either protect or destroy it."

Jonathan has worked a long time as an educator and media technologist. His key professional interest is at the intersection of education and technology. He is particularly interested in drawing attention to issues dealing with racial and economic equity in environmental policy.

MEET THE 2021 INTERNS

ASHLING LANDERS

Ashling is a current junior at the University of Alabama at Birmingham pursuing both a B.Sc. in Public Health and a Masters in Public Health with a concentration in environmental and occupational health. She is an active member of Green Initiative at UAB, a student organization focused on fostering a greater culture of environmentalism on campus and in Birmingham. She hopes to pursue a future career in the non-profit sector.

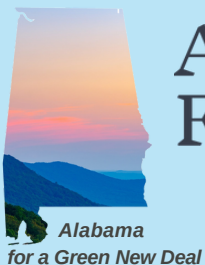
EMILY MAGDA

Emily Magda, from Montgomery, is a member of the University Honors Program (UHP) and is pursuing dual degrees in Political Science and International Studies at UAB. She is an active volunteer with the Desert Island Supply Company (DISCO), empowering Birmingham City School students to express their worlds through poetry and art, and with Green Initiative, an environmental sustainability student organization at UAB. In the near future, she hopes to explore her interests in public policymaking and how she can help secure justice for disenfranchised peoples nationwide.



MOVING TOGETHER

We believe that working together, in collaboration and consensus, with other movements is essential for water protection throughout Alabama and the southeastern region. These allied movements were key to enhancing our work to #DefendRivers and more in 2021.



ALABAMA
FORWARD



Alabama River
Diversity Network



CLEAN WATER FOR ALL



BUSINESS | ORGANIZATIONS | FOUNDATIONS

In addition to the individuals who donated their time, energy, resources, expertise and money to Alabama Rivers Alliance in 2021, we wish to also thank the following businesses, organizations and foundations for their financial support of our work.

ABAHAC Foundation

Alabama Forward

Aqualateral

Curtis & Edith Munson Foundation

Daniel Foundation of Alabama

Ebsco

Hancock Timber Management

Lush Handmade Cosmetics

Neighborhood Preservation Coalition

Patagonia

Red Clay Brewing Company

REI

River Network

Royal Cup Coffee & Tea

Sierra Club Alabama Chapter

Southern Environmental
Law Center

Stephens Foundation

Strain Foundation

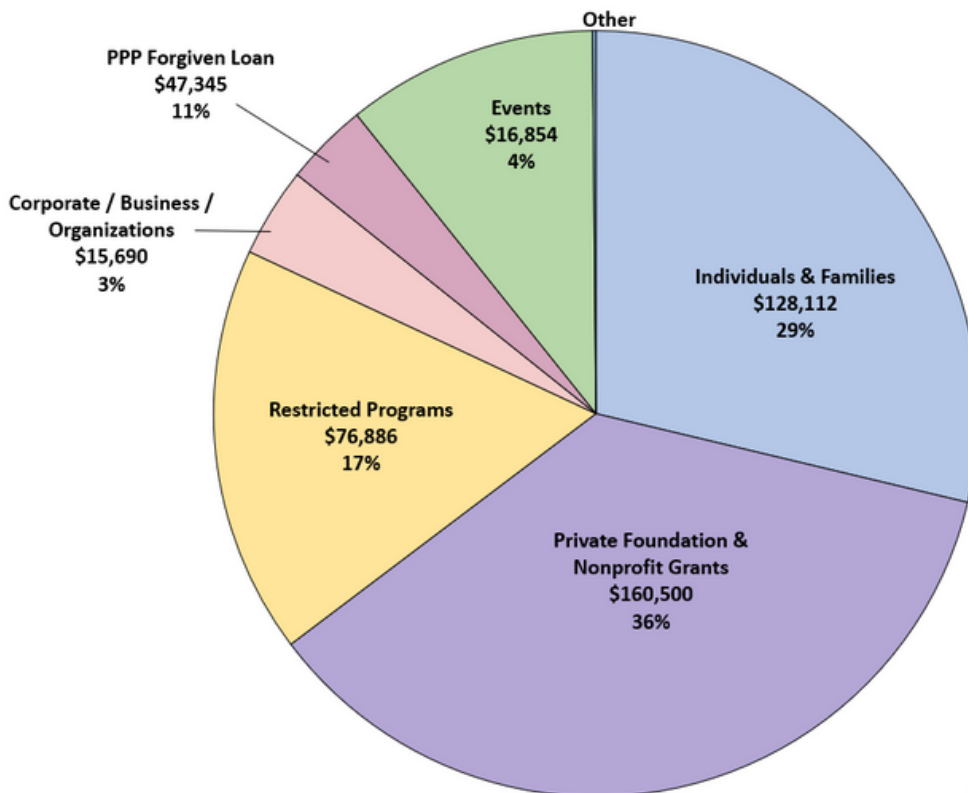
The Phoenix Lofts

Tides Foundation

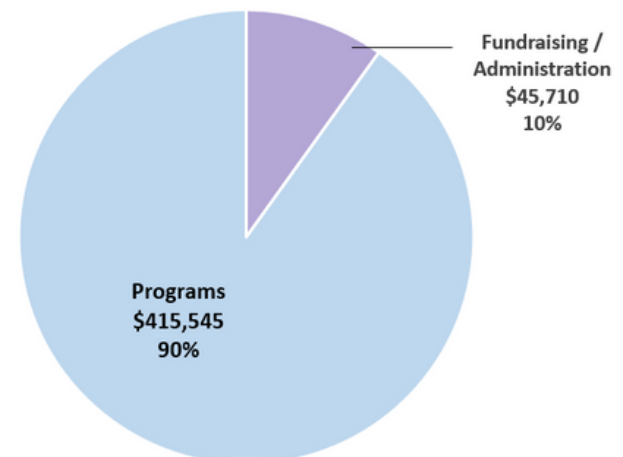
WestWind Foundation

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

INCOME



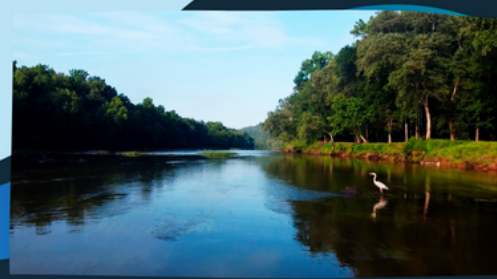
EXPENSES



2022 ALABAMA WATER RALLY

Reuniting for Clean Water

March 25 & 26 | Camp McDowell



In celebration of 25 years of the Alabama Rivers Alliance and 50 years of the Clean Water Act, we invite you to **REUNITE** with us at Camp McDowell March 25 & 26. After two years of virtual gatherings, we are so excited to get back together in person as we reinvigorate the movement at the [24th annual Alabama Water Rally](#) – in a shorter form!

ALABAMA WATER RALLY 2022 DEEP DIVES: Clean Water Act | Civic Engagement | Movement Building

The Clean Water Act is one of our nation's most fundamental environmental laws and Alabama's water advocates have played a huge role in using it to protect our amazing rivers, biodiversity, and health throughout its storied history. Alabama Water Rally 2022 will reflect on the history of the Clean Water Act, highlight some of our Alabama successes and share insights of the work still to be accomplished.

Make your plans now to join us for 25 hours of deep discussion, action planning, movement building and celebration with cake, fire and dancing! —
as we reunite together to **#DefendRivers**.

www.AlabamaRivers.org/WaterRally