

2019 IMPACTS

A LOOK BACK
A LOOK AHEAD



2019 IMPACTS

6,594
groups connected
across all **50** states

135
customized
consultations or other
direct support

3,437
people trained and
educated through
77 events

87,207
people informed
through our
website, newsletter,
and social media

10,959
volunteers
deployed to **83**
communities

We truly believe that the greatest hope for the rivers and waters of our country is through deep and sustained local-level engagement by those who are connected to community. Our role is to give these local efforts the tools, training, and resources they need to succeed, connecting them to others facing similar challenges and encouraging alignment for greater collective action.

Today, the nationwide network of these local efforts is nearly 6,600 organizations strong, including nonprofits, government agencies, tribes, and utilities working for healthy rivers and clean water across the United States. It touches every congressional district, city, river basin, and major ecosystem. ***We remain the only national nonprofit organization whose sole purpose is to connect and strengthen this network through our focus on key issues and leadership at the intersection of water, equity, diversity, and inclusion.***

Join us as we remind ourselves of what we have achieved this past year, how we add value, and the stories of grit and promise that have emerged along the way. Four salient words emerge for us as we consider our past year's work and where we are heading:

-  ACCESS
-  TRUST
-  DIGNITY
-  INFLUENCE

River Network remains committed and more inspired than ever to build on this year's efforts as we push forward. We are grateful to everyone who has been part of our journey, and we invite you to join us as we reflect on our impacts in 2019 and look ahead to our work in 2020 and beyond.

With gratitude,



Nicole Silk
President



Rebecca Wodder
Board Chair



NICOLE SILK



REBECCA WODDER

A FUTURE WITH FARMS

“I don’t think we would be where we’re at without River Network’s resources. The relationship with the Walton Family Foundation was huge. We wouldn’t have been on their radar without River Network’s involvement.”

–Michele Meyer, Community Agriculture Alliance • Steamboat Springs, CO

In northwestern Colorado, a coalition of local charities and national nonprofits embarked upon the creation of the [Yampa Integrated Water Management Plan](#) with support from River Network. Together, this coalition—which includes The Nature Conservancy, Trout Unlimited, local Natural Resources Conservation Service staff, the Community Agriculture Alliance (CAA), and area ranchers—worked together to plan for progress on the Yampa River. Through collaboration, this coalition resulted in buy-in from agricultural producers as well as environmental groups and agencies, identified funding sources, and created the technical scope of work to protect existing and future water uses in the basin.

Work outlined in the plan started in the summer of 2019. River Network’s role of coordinating stakeholder efforts resulted in almost \$650,000 in funding from public agencies and private foundations, including the Walton Family Foundation, to study and plan for the future of the river and those who rely on it—and the Yampa isn’t alone in planning for progress. We are supporting communities across Colorado as they build trust, scope plans, and apply for funds.

Coalition member Michele Meyer, of CAA, expressed gratitude for the power of the network. “I had no background in water, but CAA was being asked to step up, and River Network has educated me and been a resource on the process to make it truly collaborative and inclusive.”

WHAT’S AT STAKE

80%

of water consumed in the US is used by agriculture

133 billion gallons

every day irrigate the food and fiber we depend upon

\$157 billion

spent yearly to address water pollution from fertilizer run-off

OUR IMPACT

500+

individuals educated at **19** trainings

86

organizations engaged through **10** staff presentations

4

articles and new online resources including the new [Colorado SMP Library](#)

2020 AND BEYOND...

River Network will embrace our unique role alongside stakeholders advocating for policies and funding that help farmers and ranchers reduce agriculture’s impacts on waterways. We’ll continue to support a spectrum of solutions from voluntary partnerships to legal and regulatory actions, while advocating against policy changes that attempt to rollback clean water protections.

DRINKING WATER FOR ALL

“Sometimes you get accustomed to doing things your way until someone shows you a better way. Learning from cohort members who had been in a similar situation as us helped us change for the better.”

–Kim Gaddy, Clean Water Action • Newark, NJ

This year, we dove into drinking water in a big way, releasing a first-of-its-kind, free-to-use [Drinking Water Guide](#), available online and accessible to all. Developing this guide with support from the C.S. Mott Foundation and leaders on the front lines of communities facing drinking water challenges across the United States and in particular in the Great Lakes, we have created a much-needed tool we can use to galvanize regional change and a national network of advocates for safe, clean, affordable, and sustainable drinking water and drinking water systems. Driving such conversations with fellow national, regional, and local leaders proved invaluable in ensuring the guide reflects the needs of ALL communities.

With support from the Kresge Foundation, our efforts also included bringing together a drinking water, equity, and climate peer learning cohort, connecting seven groups and their community partners over an 18-month period to promote collective learning, equip participants with effective tools, and develop a cadre of national leaders. Participants developed local action plans and presented lessons learned in their communities to advocate for access to clean, safe, and affordable drinking water for all. As cohort member Aly Shaw, of Pittsburgh United, puts it, “It’s so powerful to share what’s possible because it’s so easy to get bogged down in your city’s issues and politics. It’s more powerful to be working together than to be fighting separately.”



WHAT'S AT STAKE

63 million

Americans exposed to unsafe drinking water in the last decade

13.8 million

US households face unaffordable water bills

80%

US residents of color worry “a great deal” about the purity of their drinking water

OUR IMPACT

600+

individuals educated at 26 trainings

71

organizations engaged through 8 staff presentations

4

articles and new online resources including our [Drinking Water Guide](#)

2020 AND BEYOND...

River Network will continue championing clean, safe, affordable drinking water for all by providing leadership and backbone networking for groups regionally and nationally, turnkey resources to increase understanding of drinking water systems, processes for building trusting relationships between utilities and communities, and support for campaign and advocacy efforts.

ACCESS

DIGNITY

BUILDING RESILIENCE

WHAT'S AT STAKE

80%

of the US population lives in cities

98%

of US cities have experienced temperature increases since 1970

13%

of the US population is at risk from flooding along rivers

OUR IMPACT

750+

individuals educated at 20 trainings

76

organizations engaged through 3 staff presentations

6

articles and new online resources

“The Urban Waters Learning Network has benefited our work through new ideas, peer mentoring, funding collaboration, rejuvenation, and a renewed vision for our work.”

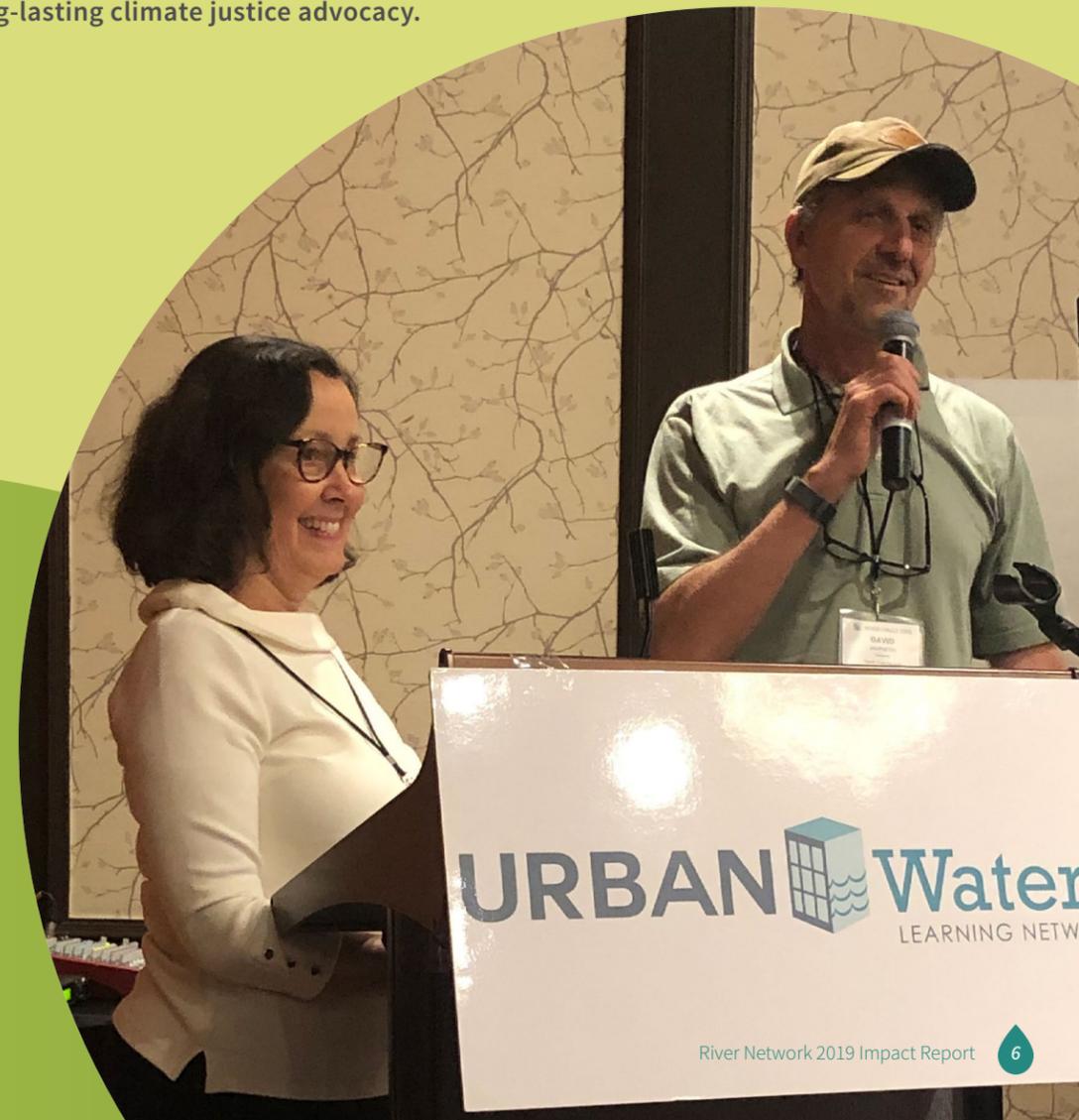
–Gail Heffner, Plaster Creek Stewards/Calvin College Grand Rapids, MI

2020 AND BEYOND...

Building resilient communities *equitably* requires powerful community leadership and expertise, locally generated solutions, and participatory approaches. Next year we will publish a toolkit and provide trainings to help organizations use these strategies to advocate for resilience and equity in their communities and help access the financial resources necessary for forward progress.

As a founder of the Urban Waters Learning Network (UWLN), we have a unique opportunity to work with front-line communities to explore how our urban areas can effectively live with and adapt to a changing climate. This past year, we elevated inclusive processes being used by communities facing more frequent flooding and extreme weather events to build equity into solutions from the ground up, an increasing focus across this network that now includes hundreds of participants from cities across our nation. Our role is to find and help transfer what is working in one location to others facing similar challenges.

For example, Providence’s Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council is deploying door-to-door surveys in Health Equity Zones to assess community members’ disaster preparedness and climate change perceptions. A first step towards helping residents better prepare for increased flooding and heat effects, the project also began building community leadership to shape future climate solutions. In Newark, the Ironbound Community Corporation developed the Newark Resilience Action Plan, built on strategies identified by neighborhood residents, with elements of community empowerment to foster long-lasting climate justice advocacy.





A VOICE FOR WATER

“Working with River Network and all the other groups in the Southeast elevated our own legitimacy... I had a lot of conversations that opened up because I was involved in the [report writing] process.”
 –Curt Chaffin, Alabama Rivers Alliance
 Birmingham, AL

A powerful tool for policy collaboration, we released the second edition of our [Protecting and Restoring Flows in Our Southeastern Rivers – A Synthesis of State Policies for Water Security and Sustainability](#) this year, cementing its status as the quintessential report on the roles and influence of state-based policies in tackling threats to southeastern rivers. To summarize the status of the policies reviewed in the report, we developed a scorecard illustrating how each state rates in each policy area and highlighting other states where model policies have been implemented.

The update process—completed with feedback from many partners including Alabama Rivers Alliance (ARA)—proved an effective catalyst for collaboration. It not only provided a clear, current policy synthesis, but also empowered local groups, opening doors that might otherwise have remained closed. We have shared the updated report widely, including through presentations by River Network staff at many state water resource conferences and other meetings, with more ahead. The ARA staff keeps it top of mind. “The report and scorecard have been excellent tools. It’s clear when you look at it that we’re behind our neighboring states. The scorecard itself may be the best thing we have to communicate that,” says ARA’s Curt Chaffin. “We have the scorecard up around the office. It’s a reminder of the issues we’re working on.”

WHAT’S AT STAKE

45

EPA deregulatory actions currently in development

18% of streams and

51% of wetlands would lose protection under the Dirty Water Rule

27 million

Americans are served by water systems violating Safe Drinking Water Act standards

OUR IMPACT

900+

individuals educated at **44** trainings

198

organizations engaged at **13** staff presentations

10

articles and new online resources including [Delaware Basin story maps](#)

2020 AND BEYOND...

We see an important opportunity to build on our state-level policy work, keeping local water protectors aware of innovative state-level clean water policies that can serve as models elsewhere. Through data collection, analysis, and training, we hope to share these models to leverage further action, especially around infrastructure investments that advance sustainability and equity, a priority area identified by the network.

INFLUENCE



OUR UNIQUE APPROACH

ANNUAL CONFERENCE TO ACCELERATE CHANGE

“[River Rally 2019] is the most inspiring conference I’ve ever had the opportunity to attend. I have so many new ideas on engaging my community about watershed issues to become stewards of the long term. Thank you for this opportunity.”

–Taylor Brook, Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe

River Rally’s 3+ day program is high-energy, inclusive, and thought-provoking. The conference includes change agents, practical workshops, field trips, and idea exchanges related to the key issues central to addressing today’s water crisis and other topics essential to helping water leaders succeed. River Rally 2019 was our most diverse event to date.

A BACKBONE FOR NATIONWIDE CONNECTIVITY

River Network connects water protectors working at the local level from coast to coast. We deliver tools, training, and resources that add value, provide opportunities to exchange ideas and solutions that work, and help leaders align for greater impact and collective action. We are the only national nonprofit that serves this unique niche.

“River Network has been instrumental in taking citizens-based research and giving it validity, bringing us to the table with stakeholders that we hadn’t been able to interface with before, and then raising the social justice component through Nicole’s leadership.”

–Monica Lewis-Patrick, We the People of Detroit Detroit, MI

6,594

groups connected across all 50 states

2,448

network members

To see which groups are protecting the waters near you, view our [Water Protectors Map](#).

526

registrants from 44 states with 209 receiving scholarships

90

learning opportunities and very high approval ratings

23%

identified as people of color or indigenous

ADDING VALUE AND LEADERSHIP

STANDING WITH EQUITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION

We strive to be a catalyst and partner in building a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive movement for our nation's rivers. We use tools that test and encourage us to do more related to equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI). Just as biodiversity strengthens natural systems, water protection work is made stronger by the contributions, experiences, perspectives, and values of different people and communities.

"I appreciate the commitment and humility of River Network's leadership to not only take a hard 'look in the mirror,' but to support their vast network in intentional transformation that will help us all achieve safe, healthy, affordable, equitable, and well-managed water systems across this country, particularly for our most climate-vulnerable communities."

–Jalonne White-Newsome, Kresge Foundation

14%
of trainings addressed EDI topics

29%
of digital storytelling included diverse perspectives

54%
of content at River Rally addressed EDI

BUSINESS PARTNERSHIPS FOR HEALTHY RIVERS

We make it easy for business partners of any size to have local impact in the communities they serve with turnkey volunteer events, workshops, and innovative water-stewardship activities like [Project Rain Barrel](#), supported by Coca-Cola, and our many Anheuser-Busch river restoration and cleanup events. We also drive corporate investment to local projects through our partnership with the Bonneville Environmental Foundation.

"We're Coca-Cola. We know how to make beverages; we don't necessarily know how to restore watersheds. We rely on our partners to identify those areas of need, and know what mitigation steps need to be taken to repair them."

–Jon Radtke, Water Resources Sustainability Director, Coca-Cola North America

10,959
volunteers deployed to **83**
community events

256,268
pounds of litter removed
from waterways

4,619
trees and
shrubs planted



OUR TEAM LOOKS FORWARD



“I love to see the impact for clean and safe water that we’re able to leverage when connecting groups across the country with each other and to essential resources.”
–Katherine Baer, Science and Policy Director • Carrboro, NC



“I’m excited by the opportunity to continue to build a national network of support for community watershed scientists. The work of restoring watersheds is complicated, but strong science can help us prioritize our actions and build support for restoration in our communities.”
–Adam Griggs, Science Manager
Middletown, MD



“I’m looking forward to forming new collaborative partnerships and strengthening existing relationships with the many local organizations who host River Network-supported volunteer events and workshops.”
–Zak Lance, Community Engagement Manager
Boulder, CO



“From exploring new storytelling formats and platforms to expanding how the network shares learning, I’m excited about the connectivity we can create over the coming years by elevating our diverse voices, and motivated by the challenge of utilizing new tools to expand the reach of our mission.”
–Amy Boal, Marketing and Communications Manager • Boulder, CO



“We have incredible opportunities to add value to water leaders working at the local level across the country, accelerating the pace of change toward a future where everyone has access to healthy rivers and clean water. Better solutions are within our reach, particularly when we work together. Let’s go!”
–Nicole Silk, CEO/President • Boulder, CO



“I’m excited about our drinking water work and look forward to supporting groups across the Great Lakes region that are working toward clean, safe, and affordable drinking water accessible for all communities regardless of race or socioeconomic status.”
–Sheyda Esnaashari, Great Lakes Drinking Water Program Manager • Chicago, IL



“I’m excited to learn from (and work with) community leaders to determine the best policy and regulatory strategies to achieve community-driven water equity and justice objectives.”
–Gayle Killam, Science and Policy Deputy Director • Portland, OR



“There is no shortage of inspiration, drive, and power in this network. I am excited and eager to provide more meaningful opportunities to connect with leaders and give leaders a platform to exchange their own stories and experience.”
–Carly Schmidt, Operations and Membership Associate • Denver, CO



“I am looking forward to working with others to continue to build to our collective ability to ensure our water is managed sustainably and equitably so everyone has access to safe, affordable water.”
–April Ingle, Science and Policy Manager • High Point, NC



“I’m excited to see conversations about the importance of building climate-resilient communities in a way that increases equity quickly move to the public sphere, and look forward to helping members of our network make headway by trying creative and bold approaches to do just that.”
–Diana Toledo, Leadership Development Director • Asheville, NC



“Inspiring the next generation of leaders to address difficult issues like climate change by relying on science and welcoming new voices into the conversation keeps me motivated.”
–Brenna Goggin, Mid-Atlantic Leadership Development Manager • Wilmington, DE



“River Network is all about connectivity and I am excited to bring that spirit to my work—to connect people, companies, and foundations seeking to make a meaningful impact on our waterways to the groups and champions driving that very change through their work on the ground.”
–Katie Murphy, Director of Philanthropy • Boulder, CO



“Many of the river restoration and protection initiatives we helped start in 2017 will begin to bear fruit in 2020. I’m excited to see how our help bringing Colorado communities together to plan for healthy rivers turns into on-the-ground project ideas and strategies to keep water in our rivers!”
–Nicole Seltzer, Science and Policy Manager • Oak Creek, CO

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Ann Arbor, MI

Paul Ward
Yakima, WA

VOLUNTEERS AND INTERNS

We are deeply grateful to the following individuals who donated their time, expertise, and services to make our work possible this year.

Frank Alfone
Alice Baker
Melissa Barth
Marilyn Bay Drake
Stacy Beaugh
Geoff Blakeslee
Phil Brink
Jackie Brown
Ronda Chapman
Maddie Chism
Cody Cirillo
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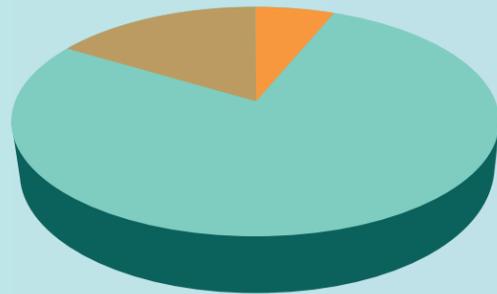
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Kristine Oblock
Emily Ollervides
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Ariana Soto
Patrick Stanko
Chris Sturm
Amy Thompson
Kent Vertrees
Corita Waters
Jennifer Wellman
Mark Williams

SUPPORT A STRONG NETWORK



SUPPORT & REVENUE

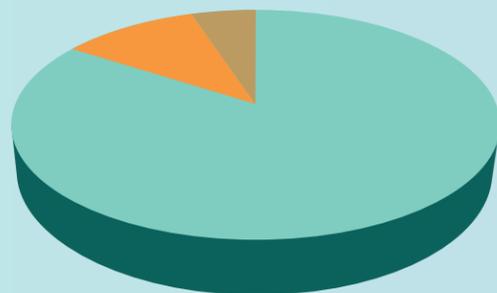


- Individual—6%
- Grants*—77%
- Earned Revenue**—17%

* Includes Foundation, Corporate, and Government Grants

** Includes Registrations, Membership Dues, and Technical Assistance Fees

EXPENSES



- Program—84%
- Fundraising—11%
- General & Admin—5%

“As a fly fishing guide and board member of a small river watchdog organization, I have a front seat view of the threats to our waters and the profoundly important role played by local groups facing overwhelming challenges. I support River Network because they remain hyper-focused on local action and deliver practical help through tools, training, resources, and nationwide connectivity. They are a great investment.”

—Clay Moorhead • Jackson, WY

84% of every dollar you give goes to programs that empower local water protectors across the network.

Your gift will enable us to connect, empower, and expand the efforts of thousands of individuals, groups, and coalitions like those whose stories appear here. Learn more and support these water protectors at

[RIVERNETWORK.ORG/DONATE](https://rivernetwork.org/donate)

OUR SUPPORTERS

Our heartfelt gratitude goes to the following individuals, foundations, corporations, nonprofits, and government agencies for charitable contributions, grants, and awards to River Network during our 2019 fiscal year. Your support makes everything we do possible and empowers our team to create impact.

FOUNDATIONS, GOVERNMENT, AND NONPROFITS

Amazon Smile Foundation
Arkay Foundation
Brookby Foundation
C. S. Mott Foundation
Colorado Water Conservation Board
Community First Foundation
Eaglemere Foundation
Earth Share of Oregon
Fresh Sound Foundation
Gates Family Foundation
Keel Haulers Canoe Club
Keith Campbell Foundation
Kresge Foundation
Mills River Partnership Inc.
Pisces Foundation
Steven Leuthold Family Foundation
Sweetgrass Foundation
US Forest Service (USFS)
United Way of Central Maryland
Walton Family Foundation
Wege Foundation
William Penn Foundation

BUSINESSES

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National Association of Clean Water Agencies (NACWA)
Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC)
Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District (NEORS)
Oak Hill Fund
Patagonia
Pisces Foundation
PRADCO Outdoor Brands
The Rain Barrel Depot
Paul Sloan
Storm Water Systems, Inc.

StormTrap
US Geological Survey (USGS)
Walton Family Foundation
Wege Foundation
Water Foundation

INDIVIDUALS (UNDER \$1,000)

Anonymous
Hilary and Seth Arens
Katherine Baer
Margery Bare
Guy Bateman
Joellyn Beckham
Liza Berdnik
Curtis Berkey
Elizabeth Birnbaum
Storey and Beau Blackwell
Julia Blatt
James Blose and Sarah Rubin
Bill and Ruth Botzow
Chris Brown and Mary Rollefson
Paul Bubelis
Jeff Burt
Annie Callender
Rob and Ellen Cochran
Peter Coha
Kevin Coyle
Sarah Culclasure
Stuart Dalheim
David Deen
Virginia De Lima
Dr. David and Deborah Dressler
Christopher du Pont Roosevelt
Thomas and Ellen Ennis

Andres Esparza
Andrew Fahlund
Debra and Kevin Fillo
Steven Fleegal
Mary Freeman
Laura Ganus
Gary Collins
Andrea Geisser
Francesca Giancoli
Jim Giattina
Dave Grusin and Nancy Newton
Merix and Brian Gustin
David and Linda Harrison
George Hawkins
B. Carter Hearn
Mark Higbie and Gretchen Knoell
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Barb Horn and Steve Krest
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Samuel and Sarah Paul
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Tom Stuart
Greer Tidwell
Marilyn Timpone-Mohamed
Diana Toledo
Elizabeth Toledo
Ryan Unterreiner
Jumana Vasi
Brad Webb
M.D. Wilken
Wendy Wilson
Robert Zimmerman

IN KIND

Budget Dumpster
Flewelling & Mitton, PC
JetBlue
McGuckin Hardware
Patagonia Boulder
Rebecca Wodder and James Van Erden



The Headwaters Society recognizes individuals and families who contribute \$1,000 or more annually to River Network. We thank the following Headwaters Society members for their generous support during our 2019 fiscal year.

Todd Ambs and Beth Wentzel
Catherine and Paul Armington
Bill and Joanne Brandt
Lynn Broaddus and Marc Gorelick
Dell Brooke
Margaret Brownell
Britt and Judy Butler
Yvon and Malinda Chouinard
Susan Clark
James Coleman
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Margo Farnsworth and Jim Pascoe
Valerie Friedman
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Katherine Moore
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Joyce and Preston Quirk
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Brian Richter and Martha Hodgkins
Cary Ridder and David Alberswerth
George Rieger
Richard Roos-Collins
Thomas Silk and Kathleen Foote
Arlene Silk and Doug Giancoli
Paul and Margaret Sloan
Bill Stetson and Jane Watson Stetson
Marion Weber
Suzi Wilkins Berl
Rebecca Wodder and James Van Erden

River Network empowers and unites people and communities to protect and restore rivers and other waters that sustain all life. We envision a future with clean and ample water for people and nature, where local caretakers are well-equipped, effective and courageous champions for our rivers. We believe that everyone should have access to affordable, clean water and healthy rivers.

WWW.RIVERNETWORK.ORG

