

## 2022 ANNUAL REPORT



## A Message from Leadership

#### Dear Friends,

"Think global, act local." Remember that phrase? That is what you are doing when you support CRWA: you are taking action to protect the environment in your own community, where it affects you the most.

If the past years have taught us anything, it's that the Charles River is the heart of our community—and we must do everything in our power to protect what we love, for ourselves and for future generations.

We have come a long way from the "Dirty Water" of the past. Today, our river teems with renewed life and is safer for rowers, paddlers, and wildlife alike.

But our work is far from over, and the progress we have made is now at risk.

Climate change is causing more intense rainstorms, interspersed with more frequent drought. These are both dangerous to our river and all who call it home. More intense rainstorms bring more polluted stormwater runoff, and more sewage discharges. Drought imperils all life that relies on the river. That's why we're building our organization's capacity and centering climate at the heart of our work—our five program areas respond to the numerous challenges of our time with real, tangible solutions that will allow us to achieve our shared vision of a clean, resilient Charles River.

But we can't do this without you—you are the key to this growth. As you turn through these pages, know your investment, however big or small, is the reason every single achievement here is possible. Thank you for your continued support, and we look forward to all we can achieve together in 2023.



Sincerely,

Emily Norton Executive Director



## Recognizing Indigenous Stewardship

CRWA humbly recognizes the Massachusett, Wampanoag, and Nipmuc Nations, as our work is carried out across their traditional territory, and acknowledge them as past, present, and future caretakers of this land.

We are committed to creating respectful engagements and relationships with Indigenous communities in our watershed to learn, uplift, and support their relationship and wants with the river.



## **Building Resilient Communities, Together**

**Climate change isn't coming—it's already here.** Each year, another unprecedented drought, flood, extreme storm, and heatwave puts our river and all who depend on it at risk. And this is only the beginning—the next decades will bring even more frequent, more powerful storms.

**What does this mean for our communities?** Catastrophic flooding. In our highly urbanized watershed with over a million people, our homes, businesses, critical infrastructure, and more are vulnerable to flood damage.

**But, we are rising to this challenge.** We know flooding doesn't follow political boundaries—ensuring a climateresilient future must be a collective effort. Formed in 2019, the Charles River Climate Compact aims to do just that—bringing together local leaders from twenty-eight cities and towns, led by CRWA, the team is working together for big, bold climate solutions.

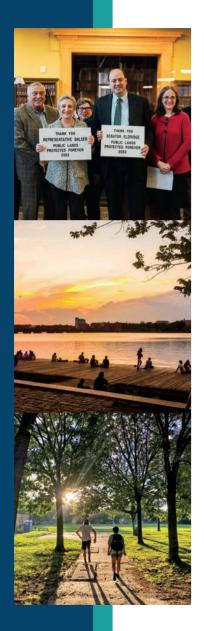
**Enter the Charles River Flood Model:** a watershed-scale tool that shows when and where flooding will occur as our climate changes and tests out the impact of potential flood reduction solutions. This tool is crucial for helping our cities and towns adapt at the speed and scale needed. In 2022, we identified **fifty sites for nature-based solutions** like green infrastructure, flood storage, wetland restoration, land conservation, and more. Now, we're helping cities and towns leverage state and federal funding to **put these projects into action** to respond with the urgency required of this moment.

Your support makes all of this possible—together we can advocate for real solutions to build the resilient future our children deserve.

### TOGETHER, FOR A CLIMATE RESILIENT FUTURE CRWA.ORG/WATERSHED-MODEL

66 CRWA is the organization that has been responsible for transforming the Charles River from a polluted, toxic river to a resource that can be enjoyed by millions of people each year. Their work is not complete because there are still negative environmental impacts harming the river today."

Jeryl Oristaglio, CRWA Board of Advisors



## Preservation in Perpetuity for Public Lands

Over fifty years ago, Massachusetts voters like you approved Article 97 of the state constitution to protect our vital public open spaces. Now, after twenty years of tireless advocacy, we put this intent into practice when the **Public Lands Preservation Act became law!** 

The Public Lands Preservation Act ensures "no net loss" of our vital protected lands—requiring anyone looking to sell or develop public green space to replace it with land of comparable acreage, location, and natural resource value. This law will ensure that we don't lose critical open spaces—be it a small pocket park in an otherwise highly developed area or wildlife habitat—that are playing such an important role in protecting biodiversity, reducing flooding, cleaning the air and water, and keeping us cool.

This is a momentous step to ensure that all, regardless of income, race, and ability, have access to the numerous benefits that public lands provide—health and wellness, a vibrant ecosystem, cooler, cleaner neighborhoods, and safe, regenerative spaces to play, exercise, rest, and relax.

**This achievement would not be possible without our community!** For two decades your crucial support allowed our coalition of advocates, state and local leaders, and ordinary river lovers like you to continue this fight. Special thanks to State Representative Ruth Balser and State Senator Jamie Eldridge for their extraordinary leadership, hard-working advocate the late Phil Saunders who championed this cause, and former Governor Charlie Baker for his support.

## TAKE ACTION J CRWA.ORG/ADVOCACY-CENTER

**6** The degradation of watersheds and human communities have common roots, and so the work CRWA has done around environmental justice makes CRWA so relevant. Tying together the watershed's health and equity among people is essential."

Marshall Carter, CRWA Board of Advisors



## **A Free-Flowing Charles River**

The Charles River once flowed freely and Indigenous people relied on its vibrant population of migratory fish for food and cultural survival. With the construction of dams, migratory fish lost a staggering two-thirds of their available habitat, and the consequences were stark and swift. **Today, more than one hundred defunct dams continue to interrupt the Charles River and its tributaries**—harming water quality, aquatic life, and reducing nature's ability to adapt to climate change.

That's why we're advocating for the removal of defunct dams to restore our river. Of the 3,000+ dams in Massachusetts, a handful do still serve a purpose—be it flood control, fire suppression, water supply or power. However, the vast majority do not: they are costly to repair and failure can be catastrophic. Across the state, more than sixty relic dams have been removed from our rivers. By removing functionless barriers and allowing nature to take its course, our river could again be a welcome place for all people, plants, and wildlife—and save our cities and towns money as it's less expensive to remove a dam than to upgrade it to modern standards.

Let's set the Charles River and its tributaries free—starting with Watertown Dam, Charles River Dam in Natick, and Eagle Dam in Wrentham. Your support allowed us to achieve some amazing progress in 2022—in Wrentham, we continue to build support through community engagement; in Watertown, where twelve strong letters from local leaders, including Watertown City Council, numerous Conservation Commissions, and allies, have urged the Governor to remove the state-owned dam; and in Natick, where after years of deliberation and analysis, the Select Board voted 4-1 in favor of dam removal river restoration!

## JOIN THE MOVEMENT 🥕 CRWA.ORG/DAM-REMOVAL



## **Curbing Stormwater Pollution**

After years of advocacy from CRWA + Conservation Law Foundation—including the threat of litigation—U.S. EPA will now require certain **large private property owners to do their share** and manage their own stormwater, reducing pollution in Boston's three urban rivers; the Charles, Mystic, and Neponset.

This is a first-in-the-nation big deal. Stormwater pollution is the greatest threat to healthy urban rivers, carrying excess phosphorus and nitrogen that causes toxic cyanobacteria blooms, rampant invasive species growth, and fish kills.

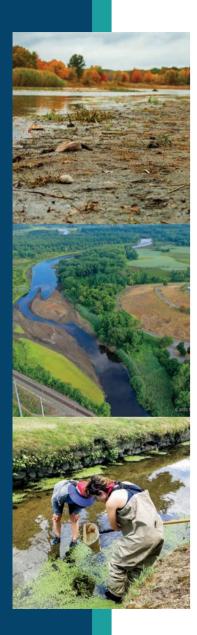
Large impervious surfaces, including big box stores and malls, only make up 20% of our watershed, yet are the source of up to 50% of the stormwater pollution according to EPA. Now, under residual designation authority (RDA) of the Clean Water Act, these large polluters will be required to reduce stormwater pollution and obtain permits to discharge stormwater from their properties, giving our cities and towns a fighting chance to meet goals for reducing phosphorus and nitrogen.

Together, with your support, we can keep stormwater pollution out of our river in the first place by pushing for strong regulations, helping cities and towns build solutions, and bringing nature back into the built environment with green infrastructure.

## BRINGING NATURE BACK CRWA.ORG/STORMWATER-SOLUTIONS

6 CRWA has been an invaluable partner in advocating for cleaner, safer waterways for our community. Their work along the Muddy River—the central artery of the Emerald Necklace park system—has shined a spotlight on the urgent need for sustainable, resilient green infrastructure to support our community and protect the health of its ecosystem in the face of climate change and extreme weather."

Karen Mauney-Brodek, Executive Director, Emerald Necklace Conservancy



## Amid Devastating Drought, Relief for Rivers

With climate change, droughts are becoming more frequent, long-lasting, and severe. In 2016, our watershed experienced the most significant drought since the 1960s. Then again in 2020. And now, 2022.

After weeks of little rain and record-breaking extreme heat, in the summer of 2022 the Charles River was reduced to a mere stream in Millennium Park, tributaries disappeared entirely, and our volunteers recorded some of the lowest water levels ever observed. **This has devastating consequences for the river ecosystem, wildlife, and all of us who depend on healthy rivers for drinking water, recreation, and enjoyment.** 

**But this year we secured a big win for our rivers**—after years of advocacy, with your support, the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection strengthened protections for our vital water resources! For the first time, 63 public water suppliers and 87 golf courses will now be required to conserve water during devastating droughts, closing a long-standing loophole that excluded certain water users and allowed the overuse of water resources at the expense of our rivers.

And this is only the beginning! Together, we can secure further protection for our beloved river in times of drought by passing the Drought Management Bill in the coming year.

## PROTECTING OUR RIVERS *CRWA.ORG/DROUGHT*



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This year marked the 50th anniversary of the Clean Water Act, the landmark legislation established in 1972 that called for all waterways in America to be "fishable and swimmable" by 1983, and the elimination of all discharges of pollutants into navigable waters by 1985.

While this ambitious goal has yet to be achieved, in the five decades since its passage, your vital support has guided **the transformation of our river** from the "Dirty Water" of the past—rife with industrial pollution, sewage, trash, and even cars—to the Charles River we know and love today, **one of the cleanest, most celebrated urban rivers in the country.** By setting a broad vision for restored waterways and providing a regulatory framework to achieve it, the Clean Water Act provided the necessary leverage to hold polluters accountable and **together, we demanded a better future for our river.** 

**But the work is far from over**—climate change is bringing new challenges for water quality, ecosystem health, public safety, and enjoyment of our beloved Charles River. That's why we're excited to announce our **Keepin' It Clean campaign**—a year-long effort to restore our river's resilience to climate change.

**We know what we're capable of if we come together**—every gift given, every hour dedicated, and every voice raised brings us closer to fully realizing our shared vision of a clean, resilient Charles River for future generations.

## OUR IMPACT, TOGETHER 🦫 CRWA.ORG/IMPACT



## **FY22 Financial Summary**

#### **Revenue & Support**

Event	40
Program	767
Contribution	369
Campaign \$168,0	000

Total

\$1,542,976

#### **Funding Sources**

Individual	\$574,356
Corporation	\$224,823
Foundation	\$674,587
Government	\$29,840
Other	\$39,370

Total

\$1,542,976

#### Expenses

Programs	. \$956,429
Fundraising	. \$179,680
Admin	. \$228,916
Events	. \$64,323

Total

\$1,429,348

#### **Program Expenses**

Outreach & Education	
Climate Resilience	
Advocacy	
Stormwater Solutions	16%
River Science	10%



## **Our Impact: By the Numbers**





**6663** WATER QUALITY SAMPLES TO PROTECT PUBLIC HEALTH

**7,487 lbs** OF WATER CHESTNUTS



FLOOD SOLUTIONS IDENTIFIED



LETTERS OF SUPPORT FOR DAM REMOVAL

**1,200+** STUDENTS EDUCATED



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SUCCESSFUL VOTE FOR DAM REMOVAL IN NATICK



LAWSUIT TO KEEP STORMWATER POLLUTION OUT OF THE RIVER

98 outreach events, 21 community site walks, 33 virtual events, 17 school visits

## **Charles River Watershed Association Donors**

Your support sustains a powerful combination of sound science, advocacy, and the law to address today's threats to our watershed and all who call it home. CRWA is grateful for all the individual donors, foundations, corporations, and other groups whose generous contributions made during our fiscal year spanning October 1, 2021 to September 30, 2022 provided critical support for our work.

All efforts were made to accurately reflect each listing as expected. If you find an error, please accept our sincere apology and contact us at (617) 540-5650.

#### Blue Heron Society \$25,000 and up

Anonymous (6) Barr Foundation Tilia Klebenov Jacobs and Douglas Jacobs Richard Saltonstall Charitable Foundation

#### American Shad Society \$10,000-\$24,999

Bilezikian Family Foundation, Inc. Eaglemere Foundation Eversource Energy Foundation Foundation for MetroWest Barbara and Amos Hostetter Patricia King and Tom Powers Paddle Boston Charles River Canoe and Kayak Margo Seltzer The Episode Foundation Paul and Jennifer Walsh

Alewife Society \$5,000-\$9,999

Anonymous (2) American Tower Foundation Boston Duck Tours Brown Advisory Charitable Foundation E & L Campbell Family Foundation Bruce Green Leslie Harrison Mrs. Francis W. Hatch Head Of The Charles Regatta Bruce and Alice Houghton Amey Moot and William Stewart Jerome Murphy and Cameron Tucker Next Generation Fund of the Roy A. Hunt Foundation North and South Rivers Watershed Association **Oristaglio Family Foundation** Mrs. Lee Spraque The Robert Cushman Woods Van Nostrand Memorial Fund Dr. and Ms. Thomas Thornhill

#### Headwaters Society \$2,500-\$4,999

Anonymous (2)

Ralph and Ellen Abele Acadian Asset Management Beacon Hill Garden Club Ted Benford CarriageHouse Consulting, Inc. **Clif Bar Family Foundation** David and Katherine Moore **Family Foundation** Gunnel Clarke and John DeVillars Laurie and Christopher Doyle Suzanne Dworsky Peter Fernandez and Eliza Grinnell Google Harvard and Radcliffe Rowing Harvard University Toni Hicks and Kevin Dutt Jennifer and Chris Hillenmever Houghton Chemical Corporation Joy Huana Francis and Emily Hunnewell Holly and Bruce Johnstone Virainia Lawrence Aberly and Larry Lebowitz Grant and Audrey Lepore Madewell Mimecast

The Morgan Palmer Foundation David and Shirley Parish Sappi North America Thermo Fisher Scientific Molly Upton Village Bank Summer Zeh and James Wexler

#### River Champion \$1,000-\$2,499

Anonymous (4) Mrs. Charles Adams Akamai Technologies Ameresco Sharon and Jim Barrett Sue and Henry Bass Edith Jones Bastian and Dr. James F. Bastian Blueprint Medicines Bluewave Solar Tom Boreiko and Alison Coolidge Boston Water and Sewer Commission C.J. Brucato Courtenay Cabot Venton Cambridae Boat Club **66** I continue to support CRWA because the importance of natural systems will only increase as climate change puts more stress on our cities and towns." **Larry Yu,** *CRWA Board of Directors* 

Mr. Marshall Carter Mr. and Mrs. Damon Carter, Jr. **Charles River Apparel** Chestnut Hill Realty **Eugene and Meredith Clapp** John and Carolyn Clark **Clearview Healthcare Partners** Steven and Alexi Conine Chuck Cossaboom Ellen Curren Dianne DesRoches Sally Edmonds Edward Mover Farm Road Estate Jane T.N. Foaa Trudi and Robert Fondren Douglas Foy Timothy Fulham and Lise Olney Dwight and Helaine Golann Becca Gould and Bob Lagoyda Aaron Hachen Diane and Steve Hall Frederick Hewett and Chervl Mazaik **HGA** Architects Horsley Witten Group Stephanie Hsia Ironwood Pharmaceuticals Susan Jarvi Joseph Kahan and Claudia Davidoff Nick King and Margaret Pantridge Christopher and Susan Klem

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Woodard and Curran Sara L. Wragge Elizabeth Yntema Larry Yu and Melissa Nelson-Yu Thomas and Lisa Zappala Robert Zimmerman

#### River Advocate \$250-\$499

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**66** I served on the Board of CRWA in the mid-1980s. While there have been many changes since then, one thing that hasn't changed is CRWA's focus-like-a-laser on strategies that work to restore the Charles River. CRWA is strategic, science-based, and effective - and that's why they continue to have my strong support."

Judy Nitsch, Former CRWA Board of Directors

The Kiley-Nivola Family Foundation Andrew Thomas and Robin Lepore Roger Urell Willem Wolter Van der Gaast Abhishek Verma Walking Stick Family Fund Ann and Brad Wallace Mercy Wheeler Nancy Woods Margaret Zeitouny

#### River Associate \$100-\$249

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To learn more, visit crwa.org or contact us at 617-540-5650 or charles@crwa.org



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