

Water works wonders

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

2024
ANNUAL REPORT



PHOTO: S. Longmire

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EDITOR: Stephen Longmire
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We Can Work Wonders

This is our 26th year. The cumulative impact of our work to protect, enhance, and restore freshwater systems is measurable and significant. In the Ausable watershed alone, we've raised and leveraged funds to restore stream function, replace undersized road culverts, protect private property and critical local infrastructure near waterways, and build flood resilience in communities. Over \$6,000,000 in investment, producing many times that value in public safety, reductions in flood damage, increased water quality, and enhanced ecosystems and fisheries.

That's not all. In 2016, our lake scientists discovered road salt contamination in Lake Placid's Mirror Lake that interrupted the lake's capacity to turn over each spring and fall. We provided technical support and funds to the community as it pursued solutions. Mirror Lake is healthier today. We continue to monitor its health. Our biologists have used environmental DNA assessment to identify and protect strongholds of threatened fish species, such as brook trout and Atlantic salmon, throughout New York's Lake Champlain basin. They've also identified the native plant species that thrive best on streambanks, providing shade, cooling water, securing delicate banks. Led by that same science staff, our river stewardship programs have educated thousands of school kids and adults and intercepted as many river users to ensure they do not spread invasive species in our cherished waters.

The Ausable Freshwater Center is at the cutting edge of work that makes a difference for freshwater systems in the Adirondacks and for its communities. For you and the places you love.

Continuing this work is essential. No one else, no other group does it quite like us. If you are reading this, you live, work, and/or play in an Adirondack watershed that we serve. We need your financial support this year. Right now, more than ever, our ability to continue making a difference is under threat. Please use the envelope enclosed to give. Or contact us to find out more about how your gift can make a difference.

Kelley Tucker
Executive Director

FINANCES

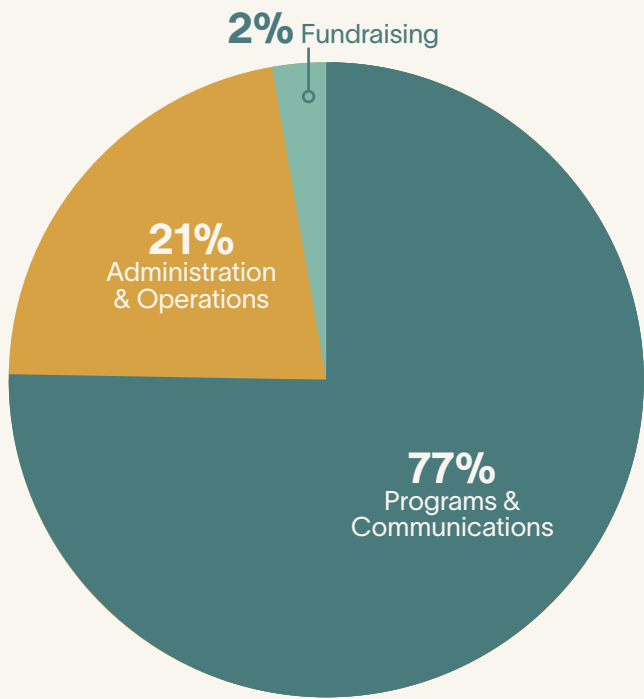
FINANCIAL POSITION

As of December 31, 2024 (per independent audit)

Assets	
Cash & Savings	\$ 319,693
Property & Equipment	\$ 207,764
Other Assets	\$ 238,045
Total Assets	\$ 765,502
Liabilities & Net Assets	
Current Liabilities	\$ 186,591
Unrestricted Net Assets	\$ 536,479
Operating Liabilities	\$ 42,432
Total Liabilities & Net Assets	\$ 765,502



HOW YOUR SUPPORT WAS ALLOCATED



STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

As of December 31, 2024 (per independent audit)

Revenue and Other Support	
Contributions	\$ 618,602
Restricted Grants	\$ 693,664
Program and Other Revenue	\$ 69,932
Interest	\$ 24
Total	\$1,382,222
Expenses	
Programs & Communications	\$ 976,076
Administration & Operations	\$ 263,380
Fundraising	\$ 27,112
Total	\$ 1,266,568

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.

EAST BRANCH RESTORATION PROGRAM, PROJECT 13
ESSEX AND CLINTON COUNTY, NY



We're the Ausable Freshwater Center

We're building a better future for the Adirondacks, through effective science-based stewardship of freshwater systems. Why? Because we believe water works wonders. Freshwater is essential to life—human and wild. Ensuring the vitality of Adirondack waters depends upon addressing the many challenges to streams, lakes, wetlands and the communities that rely on them.

The Ausable Freshwater Center stands up to threats to Adirondack water integrity. We stand for science-based action that provides lasting solutions for freshwater systems. Our professional staff listens to ecosystems, collecting data to understand gaps and needs, and we listen to communities to understand their priorities, values, and constraints. We find common ground. We keep an eye on the big picture, going beyond short-term fixes to address root causes with innovative, lasting solutions. We're always learning and always sharing our knowledge and technical expertise. We live here. It's our home, and the people who live here are our neighbors and friends. We value the history and culture of this place.

We are strengthening the vitality of the Adirondacks by restoring its freshwater systems, safeguarding habitat and water quality, and empowering stewardship.

"We're all talking about flood resilience, but AFC is out there building it. They're getting projects done that make a difference for people, streams, and ecosystems, working side by side with communities throughout the Adirondacks."

Cali Brooks, CEO, Adirondack Foundation

"I'm impressed by AFC's laser focus on tackling challenges that matter—however complex—bringing serious expertise to bear and getting results. It's a high-impact operation."

Steve Burrington, Board Chair, Adirondack Land Trust

Restoring Freshwater Systems

Self-sustaining streams and lakes are the foundation of ecosystem health and community vibrancy in the Adirondacks. AFC assesses and repairs freshwater systems. Where streams have lost their capacity to function, we reestablish floodplain access to absorb floodwater and ice, rebuild banks to reduce erosion, and recreate deep cooling

pools and oxygenating riffles to ensure water, sediment, wood, and cobble are transported efficiently. To maximize the benefits of healthy streams and lakes, we propagate and plant native buffers of grasses and woody plants—habitat for a myriad of species. It’s a painstaking process, but the rewards are great.

2024 HIGHLIGHTS

AFC founded the Ausable Conservation Nursery to meet the growing demand for native plant stock in the Adirondacks. In its first year of operation, two dedicated full-time staff propagated over 20,000 stems, collected over 110,000 seeds, constructed an 18 x 96-foot hoop house for propagation, and planted four acres of cover crop in our new production field. And that’s just the beginning. We’ve built a strong foundation for exponential growth to meet local and regional plant needs.

Our stream restoration staff provided design specifications and construction oversight for three culvert replacement projects in the Boquet River watershed, in partnership with The Nature Conservancy.

We completed a comprehensive assessment of a 27-square-mile subwatershed of the Sacandaga River in Hamilton County for the Soil and Water Conservation District. The assessment included a summary of the geomorphology of its rivers and streams, with a prioritization plan for restoring the hydraulic and geomorphic function of Elbow Creek.



“AFC gets meaningful stream and habitat restoration done in and for rural communities. Their expertise is observable in every project. And their work is held in the highest regard among national practitioners. There’s no other nonprofit like them.”

Carl Schwartz, former leader, US Fish and Wildlife Service NYS Partners Program

Safeguarding Habitat & Water Quality

“AFC staff experience and boots-on-the-ground knowledge of scientific data collection in Adirondack waters is the lynchpin of the SCALE partnership.”

Kevin Rose, PhD, Associate Professor, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute
Director, The Darrin Freshwater Institute
Director, SCALE

2024 HIGHLIGHTS



AFC staff piloted methods for the upcoming Survey of Climate in Adirondack Lake Ecosystems (SCALE). Working with partners from Cornell, RPI, Syracuse, CUNY, and NYS DEC, we sampled 47 lakes throughout the Adirondacks.

Our goal: to test sampling methods to meet rigorous quality standards and ensure the resulting data will be consistent, replicable, and of value to lake managers throughout New York, and beyond.

We completed geomorphic surveys and assessed native fish and macroinvertebrate species at 16 sites spread across the East and West Branch Ausable Rivers. That’s thousands of survey data points for comparison across time and sites, and over 1,200 macroinvertebrate specimens counted, identified, and logged. These data will help refine the argument for natural stream restoration methods.

2024 was the fifth and final year of intensive research to understand the effects of road salt on Mirror Lake and to inform strategies that have improved its health. The project relied on a long-term partnership with Paul Smith’s College Adirondack Watershed Institute and was funded by the Lake Champlain Basin Program, the Village of Lake Placid, North Elba LEAF, the Mirror Lake Watershed Association, and businesses and residents throughout the watershed.



The Adirondacks host myriad freshwater habitats essential to plant and animal species, from commonplace to rare. Brook trout, rusty blackbirds, the mudpuppy salamander, the eastern pearlshell mussel, Bebb’s willow, and tussock sedge all have one thing in common. They need cool, clean freshwater to survive and flourish: streams, lakes, specialized wetlands, and ecosystem connectivity. But even in the

Adirondacks, freshwater systems face constant threats, big and small. Indeed, it’s the small changes that too often go unnoticed until their impacts become significant. Working with an array of partners, we monitor the small changes, assess their effects, share our findings widely, and take appropriate action when needed.

Empowering Stewardship

We're awakening wonder and curiosity by opening people's eyes to the complexity of healthy freshwater systems and ways to live respectfully with them. We give people and communities the knowledge and tools to be smart stewards of rivers, lakes, streams, and wetlands. AFC staff members provide technical assistance to towns, work side by side with municipal

road crews, and meet with streamside landowners to solve problems that can arise when, for example, stream flooding encroaches on homes and roads. We offer school programs and annual events that provide opportunities to learn about, enjoy, and experience Adirondack freshwater systems.

2024 HIGHLIGHTS



After multiple flood emergencies on local roads in 2024, AFC's staff provided technical assistance to several towns as they coped with infrastructure damage. We helped them consider options, make thoughtful repairs quickly, and identify potential projects—culvert replacements, roadside

management, and in-channel restoration—that would build flood resilience. Our goal is to make sure towns have access to a full range of emergency responses that are long-lasting, cost-effective, and that protect freshwater systems.

We hosted our 13th Ausable River Steward. The steward worked from May to October engaging anglers and maintaining ten wader wash stations at key fishing access points. They conducted extensive vegetation surveys on several miles of riverbank and lake shorelines, actively monitored for new occurrences of aquatic and terrestrial invasive species, and coordinated management of previously identified infestations with regional partners.

Are you Stream Wise? Through this regional accreditation program AFC staff members provide streamside landowners with guidance on riparian habitat preservation, fish population management, forest health assessment, species identification, and property maintenance. In 2024, we connected with 20 landowners through our inaugural Stream Stewardship Symposium, providing guidance and property assessments. Six of those qualified as Stream Wise, joining our growing community of savvy stream stewards.

"Our rivers connect our towns. What affects us upstream goes downstream. The solutions we have to find we can't find in isolation. We need the support of many stakeholders. AFC is the glue that holds our ongoing efforts together."

Joe Pete Wilson, Supervisor, Town of Keene



PHOTO: B. WITSEE

Thank You!

We rely on the support of donors who care about Adirondack freshwater systems. Together we make a difference.

\$10,000+

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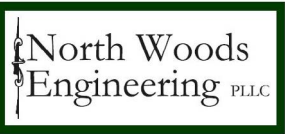
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Ausable Freshwater Center makes every effort to ensure the accuracy of this donor list. If you find any errors, please contact us.

Business Partners

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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Long Run Wealth Advisors
WIT Advisers

SODA RANGE (\$100-\$499)

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High Peaks Cyclery
NRS
Rivermede Farm
Summit Physical Therapy
Ward Lumber

AUSABLE Conservation Nursery

In 2024, AFC launched the Ausable Conservation Nursery to propagate native plants. Startup funds were provided by the Lake Champlain Basin Program, NEIWPCC, and private donations. Our partners at the Uihlein Foundation are providing a home for the Ausable Conservation Nursery in Lake Placid—a greenhouse and office space, room for indoor and outdoor nurseries, and facility management support. Replanting native vegetation is essential to AFC's efforts to restore damaged streams, reducing flood impacts and enhancing ecosystem resilience in the Adirondack region. The Ausable Conservation Nursery propagates native plants that support sustainable restoration, bolster climate resilience, and improve habitat connectivity.



You can work wonders—
donate today!

