Making Connections
Models for conservation success

Clean water, healthy streams, diverse habitats, and an informed public protecting and enjoying the river: these are AsRA’s goals for the Ausable River watershed. We work toward them one project at a time. We dream, question, discuss, research, survey, plan, fund, implement, report, monitor, and then dream again. We’re always looking for ways to be more effective and to ignite in others our passion for this river.

We remove an undersized culvert from under a roadway – where 40 feet of a stream may have been buried for decades – and we replace it with a broad arch, restoring the stream underneath so fish can swim upstream and animals can cross under safely. It saves time and money for road crews, it gives landowners peace of mind, it allows a group of school kids to apply mathematical concepts in the field - learning to solve problems, it brings officials from far and wide to wonder how we did that with less cash and many partners, it sends a member of a town road crew to learn more about hydrology and stream morphology. The connections don’t end there.

The Ausable is a model. It’s a river that was put to work – connecting communities, housing factories and extractive industries, moving timber, waste, and effluent. It was altered significantly, survived, and repaired itself to some degree because people cared. But the river needs our ongoing help and protection. AsRA’s conservation programs, whenever possible, provide connections and transferable solutions to the issues that challenge many rivers: the effects of road salt on aquatic life and drinking water; the effectiveness of early detection, education, and outreach in reducing invasive species threats; the importance of clean water and healthy streams for native wildlife, some rare and threatened. By supporting and protecting the Ausable, we provide the tools and knowledge for helping many other watersheds.

Your membership and support makes it possible for us to turn our dreams and ideas into practical projects that make a difference for the river, the human and wild communities that rely on it, and watersheds beyond ours. Thank you!

AsRA’s 2016 Annual report is chock full of stories of hard work, dedication, and big results. Read through and find out for yourself. Share a copy with a friend. Join us on Facebook, sign up to receive our e-newsletters, check out our web-page, or contact us to start a conversation or ask a question. Your ideas and your passion are welcome.

Cover: Participant in Discovering the Ausable: An Aquatic Stewardship Program sampling benthic macroinvertebrates on Marcy Brook. Below: Fly fishing on the West Branch.
Playing in your local stream has been a favorite past time of children for decades. Building dams, throwing rocks, and turning over stones to find bugs are all experiences that help connect children to the natural world. In recent decades, there has been a growing concern over what some refer to as “nature deficit disorder.” Kids are increasingly interacting with the digital world rather than the natural world.

At the Ausable River Association we recognize the importance of nurturing young people’s connections to the natural world. After all, they will be serving as the stewards of our beautiful watershed after we are gone. Fortunately, the Ausable River watershed provides an incredible array of resources for building those connections.

In 2016, we ran two programs focused on connecting youth to nature and engaging them in the sciences. Kelley worked with 6th and 7th graders at Keene Central School to teach them about the impact culverts have on aquatic organism passage. In spring, the students visited a undersized culvert in the Town of Jay, where Jay Mountain Road crosses Otis Brook. They learned basic stream survey techniques and collected data documenting the culvert as a barrier to aquatic organism passage. During the summer, AsRA coordinated the replacement of this culvert with a climate-ready, fish-friendly culvert design. In the fall, the students revisited the updated culvert and collected new data to compare with the data they collected in the spring.

This program provides local middle-school students with a hands-on learning opportunity in the sciences. Not only do they grasp concepts about aquatic ecology and the importance of connected ecosystems, they also get hands on experience with basic surveying tools. They measure stream velocity, identify the size and composition of streambed material, and measure streambed slope with a professional laser level. The greatest part of this program is that they get to see and measure the transformation of the stream channel after the culvert has been replaced.

The second program AsRA is involved in is the Discovering the Ausable: An Aquatic Stewardship Program. This five-day program exposes teens age 14-17 to both outdoor recreation and the aquatic sciences. It is a collaborative program between AsRA and the Adirondack Mountain Club that is designed to be immersive and high impact.

Participants spend five-days camping in a lean-to at the Adirondack Mountain Club’s Wilderness Campground. With the guidance of ADK program staff they cook dinner each night on camp stoves, learn about Leave No Trace and backcountry preparedness, and get a full day of canoe instruction and safety training. Throughout the program, they work together to accomplish tasks, learning how to be responsible members of a group.

Much of the program is focused on learning about the aquatic sciences and watershed stewardship. After learning about basic limnological sampling, the group conducts a comparative study between Heart Lake and Mirror Lake, including graphing the data they collected, and discussing how land use and development affect water quality. They also learn how to assess the health of a stream by identifying benthic macroinvertebrates; they visit the Adirondack Wildlife Refuge; and they learn how to identify aquatic invasive species from an Adirondack Watershed Institute Watershed Steward. On the last day of the program, they paddle the Ausable Marsh as a group and fill their canoes with trash pulled out of the river.

In each of these programs our area youth literally get their feet wet. Working alongside AsRA staff, they learn about the interconnectedness of a watershed, how to use science to understand the world around them, and see the positive impact of well-informed management decisions.
The goal of natural channel design is to restore a stream’s ability to manage sediment. A stable stream in equilibrium will transport water and sediment coming from its watershed and maintain its width, shape, slope, and its placement of key features – pools, steps, or riffles. Stable streams in equilibrium improve water quality, provide habitat for diverse species, and respond efficiently during flood events – reducing threats to human infrastructure and private property. Projects to restore equilibrium include reinforcing a streambank to reduce erosion, planting a dense native riparian streambank buffer, replacing an undersized culvert that blocks fish and water flows, or reconstructing the shape, slope, and pattern of a stream channel.

**Rocky Branch Channel Restoration**

AsRA worked with our stream partners, US Fish and Wildlife Service, Trout Unlimited Adirondack Chapter, and the NYS Department of State to restore a streambank collapse on Rocky Branch in the Town of Jay. 300 years ago, before alterations by 19th century industries and the building of a network of roads, the downstream end of Rocky Branch was a multi-channel fan of water – a delta much like at the mouth of the Mississippi but at a much smaller scale. Today it is a single ribbon of that passes under a bridge on its way to meet the Ausable.

The high flows produced by Tropical Storm Irene quickly overwhelmed the single channel and sought to reclaim the abandoned delta. The resulting cuts along the banks of Rocky Branch flushed hundreds of cubic yards of sediment into the Ausable during Irene. The banks continued to erode and collapse in flows after heavy rains or snowmelt. In response, we used trees with root wads and cobble to rebuild an inner berm and bankfull bench, to slow higher flows. In the channel, we set grade controls with large boulders and rebuilt the riffle-pool structure. Thoughtful engineering rebuilt a lasting natural channel that allowed for flood flows, stabilized the stream, and increased aquatic habitat.

**Otis Brook Culvert Replacement**

AsRA with its partners, the Town of Jay, US Fish and Wildlife Service, Adirondack Chapter of The Nature Conservancy, Essex County, and NYS Department of State restored an upstream portion of Otis Brook. Like Rocky Branch, Otis Brook is full of small brook trout, bugs, frogs, toads, and salamanders; mammals and birds frequent it; all are reliant on its cool, pure waters. Small streams such as these are sources of clean water and ecologically rich havens for plants and animals.

We replaced the undersized, 30-inch pipe culvert running under Jay Mountain Road – a frequent source of flooding that required repeated maintenance by the town highway department – with a 17-foot wide aluminum arch culvert designed and sized specifically for this site. Our new culvert matched the steep natural grade of the stream, replacing the seven-foot drop at the old outlet with a continuous step-pool system modeled on the stream’s natural pattern. The new culvert allows Otis Brook, its population of native brook trout, and other wildlife to move unimpeded under the road. High flows move efficiently through, reducing maintenance costs for the town and reducing damage to the road and adjacent property.
Volunteers Make A Difference
One tire and bag of trash at a time

Last year, AsRA volunteers made a difference in the Ausable River watershed. On August 27th, volunteers of all ages from the local community and beyond participated in a paddling river clean-up that improved the health and beauty of the Ausable River. AsRA hosted the clean-up on the Main Stem of the river in Peru in partnership with the Kayak Shack of Plattsburgh, NYS Department of State, NYS Department of Conservation (NYS DEC), and Casella Resource Solutions. Over two dozen volunteers, including Ausable watershed and New York State residents, vacationers from out-of-state, and visitors from Canada participated.

Volunteers brought their own kayaks, or were provided a boat free of charge by the Kayak Shack, and paddled the last two miles of the Ausable River’s Main Stem removing trash and tires from the banks and channel. The section of the river they cleaned up is ecologically significant because the river flows through an important wetland and wildlife management site before entering Lake Champlain. Tires and other trash directly harm sensitive habitat, reduce water quality, and create hazards for recreational users.

Once the paddlers reached Lake Champlain, they brought their boats to a Casella dumpster located in the NYS DEC Ausable Point Campground. Additional volunteers as well as Kayak Shack staff helped unload the boats and sort the trash. Over 200 tires, a dozen bags of garbage, and hundreds of pounds of scrap metal were removed from the river, completely filling the 30 yard dumpster.

The trash that was removed posed a risk to wildlife because fish and other aquatic animals can accidentally ingest or become entangled in it. Scrap metal could be dangerous to swimmers and paddlers, and the tires were an eyesore to many who paddled this beautiful stretch of the river.

AsRA recognizes the importance of engaging community members and inviting them to help us protect and restore the river and watershed. Clean-up volunteers and other members of the community were amazed at how many tires were removed from such a small stretch of river and they were eager to participate in future river clean-ups. AsRA hosts volunteer tree plantings and clean-ups every year, so check out our website or Facebook page if you would like to participate.
1. Participants in the *Discovering the Ausable: An Aquatic Stewardship Program* posing with trash they collected in the Ausable marsh.
2. Corey Laxson with the Adirondack Watershed Institute sampling stormwater flowing into Mirror Lake.
3. The completed Otis Brook culvert.
4. Raffle winner Dan Kelleher with his new Salsa Cycles bike donated by High Peaks Cyclery at Ride for the River.
5. Executive Director Kelley Tucker conducting a survey of the East Branch of the Ausable River.
Ride for the River

2016 was the fifth year AsRA hosted the Ride for the River. This event is an opportunity for us to celebrate the Ausable River and the communities it connects. For riders and the community, it’s a chance to support AsRA and our efforts to protect clean water, healthy streams, and diverse habitats. Each year we see return riders and a bunch of new faces. It is wonderful to see such passion for the Ausable River.

Last year High Peaks Cyclery joined the organizing team. They laid out new routes and offered a guided gravel road tour. They were also gracious enough to donate a Salsa Cycles Vaya Deore bike to be raffled at the event. Over 80 riders participated in the Ride. Collectively they rode over 2,200 miles. That is the equivalent of riding from Wilmington to Yellowstone National Park. This is an incredible show of support for the Ausable River and communities that call our watershed home.

We would like to thank the many sponsors that helped make this event possible. Consider thanking these businesses for their support of the Ausable River. Many of these businesses have been sponsors of Ride for the River since the inaugural Ride in 2012. If you would like to sponsor this event please email us at ride@ausableriver.org.

For 2017 we will be making the ride more experiential and better supported. There will be three stops along the routes where riders can receive support and learn about the Ausable River and the work AsRA is doing. Riders will have the opportunity to learn how to monitor the river for road salt contamination, how we assess and replace undersized culverts, and the work our River Steward does to combat the spread of invasive species. As always, the Ride will be followed by an after-party with live music, local craft beer, and great food prepared by the Hungry Trout.

Please mark your calendar for this year’s Ride for the River; join us in our celebration of the magnificent Ausable River!

Save The Date!

Ride for the River
Sunday, July 16th, 2017
Hungry Trout Resort

2016 Porta-John Program Sponsors

Ironman Foundation
Fallen Arch
Hungry Trout Fly Shop
SubAlpine Coffee

Barkeater Trails Alliance
Tri-Lakes Chapter of Trout Unlimited
Mountain Tomboy

Platinum Sponsors
High Falls Gorge
High Peaks Cyclery
Hungry Trout Resort
Blue Line Design and Apparel
Patagonia
Nancie Battaglia
The Mountaineer

Gold Sponsors
Golden Arrow Lakeside Resort
Adworkshop
LOCALadk Magazine
Great Adirondack Brewing Company

Silver Sponsors
Merrill L. Thomas, Inc.
B.A. Straight Real Estate
Champlain National Bank
Mountain Orthotics & Prosthetics
Eye Peek Optical

Bronze Sponsors
Adirondack Realty
Lake Placid Family Dental
McDonough’s Valley Hardware
AuSable River Two Fly Shop
Briggs Norfolk, LLP
Gordon W. Pratt Agency, Inc.
Adirondack Premier Properties, Inc.
Torrance Construction
Alpine Country Inn & Suites
Black Mountain Design Build, LLC.
Placid Planet Bicycles
Crowne Plaza
The Birch Store
Lake Placid/Whiteface Mtn. KOA
Green Goddess Natural Market
Pepsi
Financial Activities

Income

Expenses

$250,000

$200,000

$150,000

$100,000

$50,000

$0

$-50,000

Program Income

Restricted Grants

Donations & Fundraising

Personnel

Office & Technology

Professional Services

Communications & Fundraising

Insurance

Change in Net Assets

$219,261

$228,066

$47,125

$30,985

$500

$78,610

$2,010

$76,600

$78,610

$39,250

$0

$217,950

$5,785

$290,923

$45,674

$21,831

$-50,000

$8

Activities

Support and Revenue

Donations & Fundraising.......................................................... $73,886

Restricted Grants...................................................................... $135,170

Program Income ........................................................................... $10,205

TOTAL  ...............................................................$ 219,261

Expenses

Programs.......................................................................................$60,334

Communications ...........................................................................$1,460

Fundraising.....................................................................................$7,533

Office & Technology.....................................................................$17,555

Personnel....................................................................................$129,035

Insurance.........................................................................................$1,286

Professional Services...................................................................$10,863

TOTAL................................................................$228,066

Financial Position

As of December 31, 2016 (unaudited)

Assets

Cash & Savings............................................................................ $47,125

Accounts Receivable................................................................. $30,985

Other Current Assets................................................................... $500

TOTAL ASSETS........................................................................... $78,610

Liabilities & Equity

Accounts Payable........................................................................ $2,010

Net Assets.................................................................................... $76,600

TOTAL LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS........................... $78,610

Matching Grants

In 2016, AsRA received funds from three Local Waterfront Revitalization Program Grants (LWRP) through the New York State Department of State under Title 11 of the Environmental Protection Fund. These grants reimburse AsRA program and personnel costs under the terms of each grant contract and must be matched 1:1 with non-federal funds.

2010 LWRP thru Town of North Elba

Total Grant.................................................................................... $39,250

Funds Remaining.................................................................... $0

2012 LWRP thru Essex County

Total Grant.................................................................................. $217,950

Funds Remaining.................................................................. $5,785

2012 LWRP thru Essex County

Total Grant................................................................................. $290,923

AsRA Portion............................................................................ $45,674

AsRA Funds Remaining........................................................ $21,831

How Your Support is Allocated

Communications & Fundraising 12%

Programs 65%

Administration 23%

A copy of the latest annual filing for the Ausable River Association, Inc. may be obtained, upon request, from the organization or from the New York State Attorney General’s Charities Bureau, Attn: FOIL Officer, 120 Broadway, New York, NY 10271.
Thank You

We rely on the support of members who care about the river, love its natural beauty, clean waters, the wildlife it supports, and the vibrant communities that call the Ausable watershed home. Together, we make a difference.

Members of the Headwaters Council ensure the future of AsRA by providing annual contributions of $1,000 or more. Their donations safeguard the continuity of our programs, strengthen our position in the community, and allow us to leverage matching funds for grants from agencies such as the NYS Department of State.

$15,000+
- Evergreen Foundation, Inc.
- Cloudsplitter Foundation

$1,000-$14,999
- Adirondack Trail Improvement Society
- Chorske Foundation
- William Chorske
- Columbia Sportswear
- Susan Doolittle
- High Falls Gorge
- Kathryn Reiss
- Ironman Foundation
- Donald P. Jones Special Projects Fund - Adirondack Foundation
- Mirror Lake Watershed Association
- Patagonia
- River Stone Wellness
- Anne and Ken Stuzin
- The Mountaineer
- Vinny McClelland
- Town of North Elba
- Village of Lake Placid

$500-$999
- Mountain Tomboy
- Town of Wilmington
- SubAlpine Coffee

$250-$499
- Essex County Adirondack Garden Club
- Nan Boardman & Steve Amstutz
- Barkeater Trails Alliance
- Christian Brammer & Jane Haugh
- Liz & Michael Clarke

Linda & G. Robert Cooley
Janeway Family Fund
Robert Jeffrey
Nancy Jeffrey
Joan & Miles Kulukundis
Rhoda & Paul Morrisroe
Lisa Sarajian
The Fallen Arch
Tri-Lake Trout Unlimited
Whiteface Mountain Regional Visitors Bureau

$100-$249
- Adirondack Premier Properties, Inc.
- Adirondack Realty
- Lake Placid Advertisers Workshop, Inc.
- Adele & Tom Connors, Tim Kelleher
- Alpine Country Inn & Suites
- Bill & Judy Woldy
- Mary Ashmead
- AuSable River Two Fly
- Tom Conway
- B.A. Straight Real Estate
- Mary Barrie & Ted Stork
- Jim & Joan Barton
- Anna Battigelli & Paul Johnston
- Mary Bell & Bill Joplin
- Rebecca Bennett
- Black Mountain Design Build
- Jesse Schwartzberg
- Tom & Alana Both
- Christine Bourjade & Alex Randmanovich
- Briggs Norfolk, LLP
- Joan Burchenal
- Champlain National Bank
- Crowne Plaza
- Art Lussi
- Dartbrook Rustic Goods
- Pete & Kathy DeFina
- Patti & Bill Dilworth
- Nevton Dunn
- Lorraine Duval
- Charles & Lisa Eaton
- Dominic & Melissa Eisinger
- Eye Peek
- David & Judy Doebler
- Robert Farkas & Anne Scavo
- Richard Feldman
- Sue & Bob Gettens

$500-$999
- Margaret & Ken Brownell
- David Brunner & Rhonda Butler
- Laura & Robert Devinney
- Golden Arrow Resort
- Jennifer Holderied
- Leslie Kopec
- In Memory of Lewis Gordon
- Larry Master
OUR GENEROUS DONORS

Rocco & Mandy Giampaolo
Tony & Bunny Goodwin
Gordon Pratt Agency
Ed Harrington
Jim Herman & Dave Mason
John & Patti Hopkinson
Hurricane Mtn. Chapter of ADK
Christopher & Audrey Hyson
Donna & Wayne Ignatuk
Inspired Performance Coaching
Chuck Graziano
Georgia Jones
Charles Kilbourne
KOA Campground
Chip Gunderson
Susan Lacy & Jim Bernard
Ben Lacy
Lake Placid Family Dental
Dr. David Ballistrini
Peter Landau & Hilari Connington
Susan Lourie & Eric Mosher
McDonough’s Valley Hardware Co.
Paula McDonough
Dean & Sandra Melville
Lesley Mendenhall
Merrill L. Thomas Real Estate
Nick & Roby Politi
Ellen Metcalf
Mountain Orthotic & Prosthetic Services
Deb & Jeff Erenstone
Jill & Scott Murray
Sylvia Norton & Joseph McCranels
Nancy & William Paternotte
Michael Peabody
Robert & Karen Peters
Carol Pinney
Placid Planet Bicycles
Dan Plumley
Kevin & Connie Prickett
Michael Raymaley
John Sargent
Normand & Judy Smith
Ginnie Styles
Pete Suttmeier
The Birch Store
Marion Jeffers
Torrance Construction
Town of Jay
Kelley Tucker & Stephen Longmire
Eva Turel & John Longmire
Penny Von Eschen
Jeanne Warner
Nick & Daui Woodin

Under $99
Accounting Associates of Lake Placid
John Huttlinger

Kate Asselin
Meg Balassone & John Mills
Vincent & Zandy Barrett
Nancie Battaglia Photography
Lee-Ann Baxmeyer
Lisa & Peter Bellamy
Robert Biesemeyer
Terry Blank Family Fund
Andrew & Barbara Bloomberg
Suzanne Bohning
John & Kathleen Braico
Craig Brashear & Rebecca Kelly
Cascade Cross Country Ski Center
Jennifer & Art Jubin
Penelope Clute
Robert & Nancy Cressey
James De Goyler
Anita & John Deming
Tim & Kay Driscoll
Richard Erenstone
Yvonne Farmer
Stephen Farrelly
Anthony Fiacco
M. Patterson Field
Rachel Finn
Diane & Peter Fish
Kathy Ford
Kelly Frady
Sharon & David Fuerst
Joshua Furr
William & Christine Gremp
Janis Hansen
John Haverlick & Debra Whitson
Brett Heineman
James Helmbrecht
Renee Hooker
Arthur F. Hopper
David & Barbara Hunt
Michael & Nancy Ingersoll
Ronald W. Jacobsen
William & Lynne Johnson
David & Lynn Johnson
Joe & Linda Kahn
Edward & Beverly Kerr
Leslie & Carl Kopec
Warren & Lorraine Kries
Ruth Kuhfahl
Sam Lacy
Gilles & Shawn Lamarche
Donald & Melissa Lang
Philip Lobo
Roland & Pam Machold
Ed McNeil
James McSparron
Philip Merlino
Mary Lou Moore
Connie Morrison

Marcy Neville
Marianne & David O’Connor
Rosemary Olmsted
Olympic Regional Development Authority
John Peipon
Christine & Scott Pionteck
Seymour Preston, Jr.
Anne Rast
Bobbi & Scott Renderer
Debora Rice & Dan Mason
Susan Riggins
Charles & Louise Robinson
Richard Rogers
Seth & Trudy Rosenblum
Peter Rowley
Nancy Sinkoff & Gary Dreiblatt
Amy Smith & Donald Ream
Caleb Smith
John & Susan Spissinger
Bill Stokes & Karen Rappaport
Evan, Gerrit, Lense & Kate Stover
Pam & Fairman Thompson
Charlotte Underwood-Miller
Linda Vaught
William & Katherine Wellman
Brendan Wiltsie
Shawn Wiltsie
Bob & Blaikie Worth
Cecil & Gilda Wray
Louise Youngbear

In-Kind
Asgaard Farms
Ausable Brewing Company
Blue Line Design & Apparel
John Braico
Columbia Sportswear
Forever Wild Beverage Company
Green Goddess Natural Market
High Peaks Cyclery
Hungry Trout Fly Shop
Hungry Trout Resort
Melissa & Brian LaVallee
LOCALadk Magazine
Nancie Battaglia Photography
Patagonia
Pepsi
Sugar House Creamery
Ward Logging
Our mission - is to identify, conserve, and restore the natural and recreational resources of the Ausable River watershed for their ecological value and for the benefit of human communities.

Rising Temperatures

In 2015, AsRA deployed thirteen temperature loggers at locations across the watershed. Since then, the loggers have been in the river, recording water temperatures on an hourly basis. Our goal is to maintain a network of loggers throughout the watershed so that we can better understand long-term changes in water temperature.

Last year we experienced a long period of drought and warm temperatures. As a result, water temperatures in the river increased substantially. The figure above is of hourly temperature data collected by one of our loggers placed in the West Branch below Wilmington. This portion of the river is regarded by anglers as one of the premiere sections of the Ausable River, but it faces challenges. In 2016, water temperatures in this section of the river reached a high of 86°F, and exceeded 77°F (the lethal temperature to brook trout) a total of 45 days. As water temperatures reach these levels it is critical that our native trout have access to cool waters. Our culvert replacement work ensures this access.

Other organizations and agencies remove their temperature loggers during the winter. AsRA continues to monitor water temperature this time of year because fluctuations in water temperature during the winter can also be stressful to fish. These data will be increasingly valuable to our understanding of how climate change is impacting our rivers and streams.