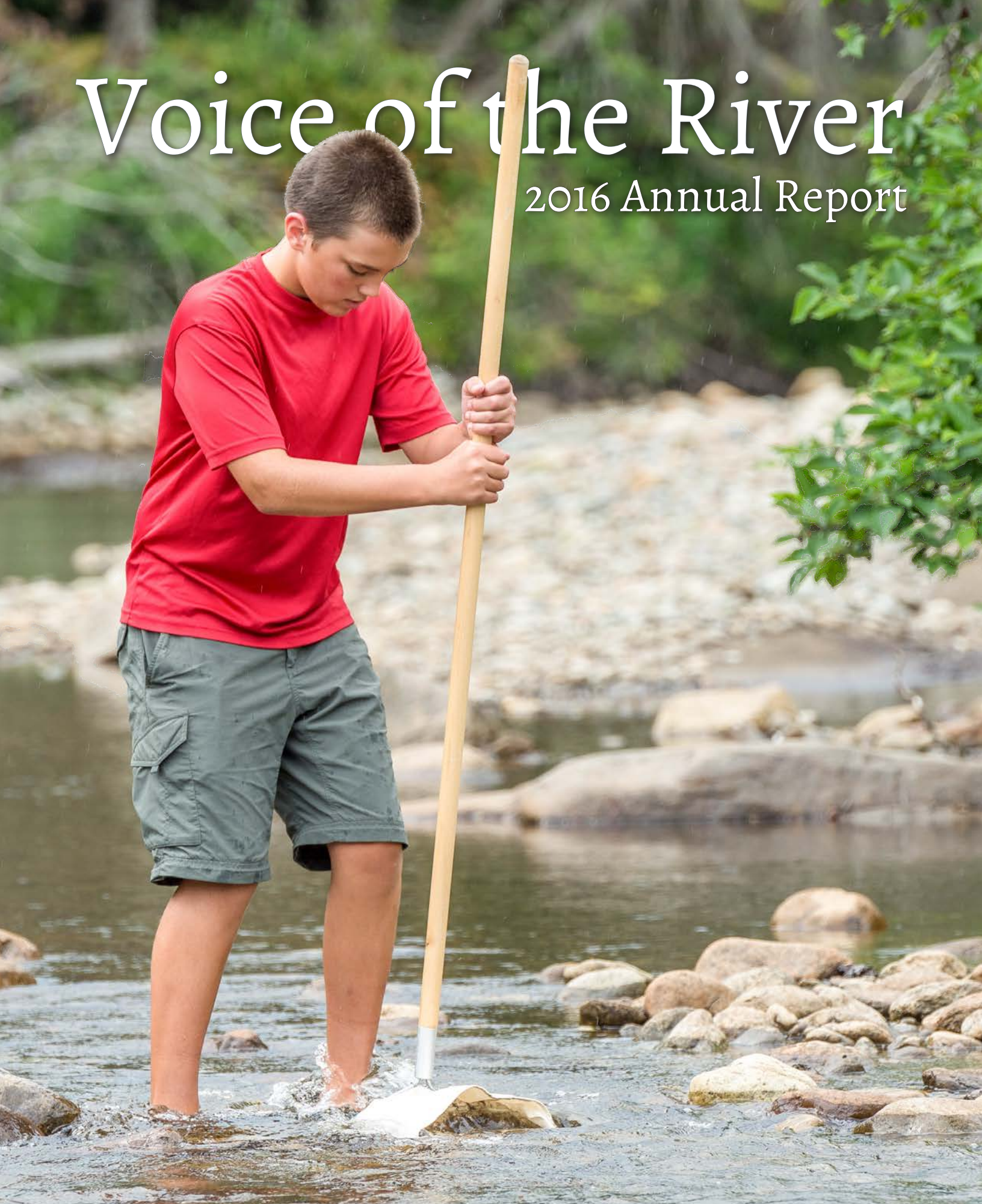


Voice of the River

2016 Annual Report



Inside: Getting Their Feet Wet - Restoring Healthy Streams - Volunteers Make A Difference



WELCOME

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.

Larry Master
Chair - Board of Directors

Kelley Tucker
Executive Director

Cover: Participant in *Discovering the Ausable: An Aquatic Stewardship Program* sampling benthic macroinvertebrates on Marcy Brook. Below: Fly fishing on the West Branch.



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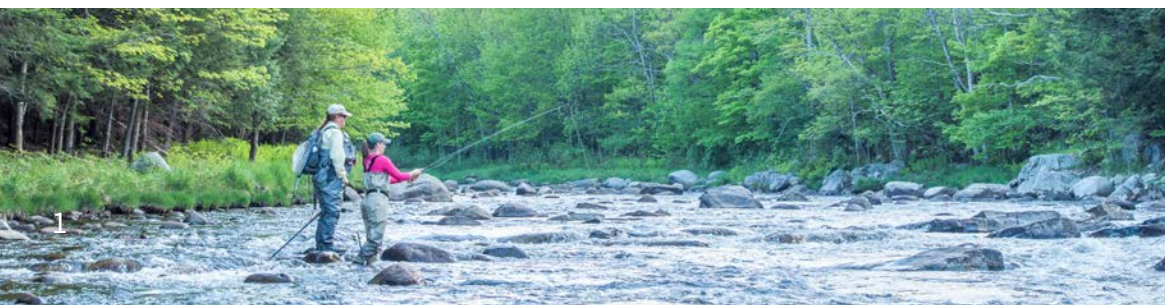
RIVER STEWARD

Nicole Pionteck

SCIENCE & OPERATIONS ASSOCIATE

Carrienne Pershyn

Ausable River Association
1181 Haselton Rd.
PO Box 8
Wilmington, NY
(518) 637-6859
contactus@ausableriver.org
www.ausableriver.org





Getting Their Feet Wet

Inspiring the next generation

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



Kelley Tucker and Nicole Pionteck in front of AsRA’s 2016 culvert project on Otis Brook with Keene Central School students.

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.





Restoring Healthy Streams

Benefits for wildlife and people



Left: Rocky Branch channel restoration. Right: Otis brook culvert before replacement, after photo in centerfold.

Benefits for wildlife and people

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.

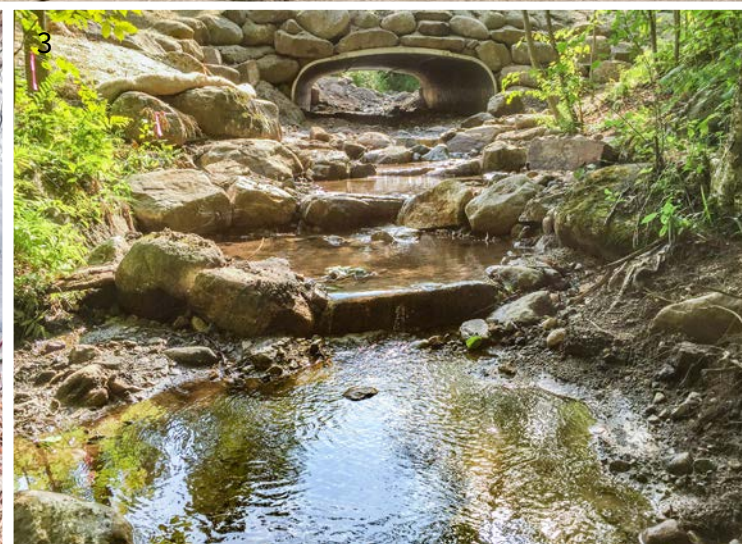
Once the paddlers reached Lake Champlain, they brought their boats to a Casella dumpster located in the NYS DEC Ausable Point Campground. Additional volunteers as well as Kayak Shack staff helped unload the boats and sort the trash. Over 200 tires, a dozen bags of garbage, and hundreds of pounds of scrap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



LOOKING BACK:



The Year in Photographs



1



5



6



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.
6. River Steward Nicole Pionteck planting trees at the Rivermede Restoration site on the East Branch.



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



2016 Sponsors

Platinum Sponsors

High Falls Gorge
High Peaks Cyclery
Hungry Trout Resort
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Patagonia
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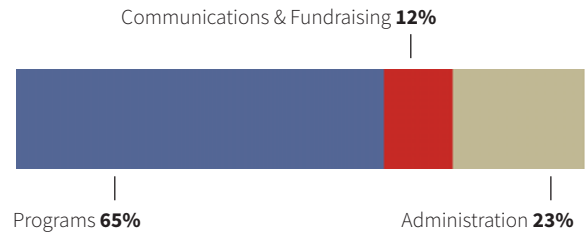
Adirondack Realty
Lake Placid Family Dental
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Briggs Norfolk, LLP
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Adirondack Premier Properties, Inc.
Torrance Construction
Alpine Country Inn & Suites
Black Mountain Design Build, LLC.
Placid Planet Bicycles
Crowne Plaza
The Birch Store
Lake Placid/Whiteface Mtn. KOA
Green Goddess Natural Market
Pepsi



Financial Activities



How Your Support is Allocated



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

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

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.

<p>309 Anglers and Others Educated About Aquatic Invasive Species</p>	<p>0 Invasive Plant Infestations Discovered</p>	<p>936 New Followers Online</p>	<p>1,475 Trees Planted</p>	<p>38.5 Miles Of River Channel Surveyed</p>
	<p>110,362 Water Quality Data Points Collected</p>		<p>22 New Members</p>	

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.



Headwaters Council



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

Margaret & Ken Brownell
David Brunner & Rhonda Butler
Laura & Robert Devinney
Golden Arrow Resort
Jennifer Holderied
Leslie Kopec
In Memory of Lewis Gordon
Larry Master

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

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Adirondack Realty
Lake Placid Advertisers Workshop, Inc.
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Tom Conway
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 Pete Suttmeier
 The Birch Store
Marion Jeffers
 Torrance Construction
 Town of Jay
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 Eva Turel & John Longmire
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 Jeanne Warner
 Nick & Dauí Woodin

Under \$99

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In-Kind

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 John Braico
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 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



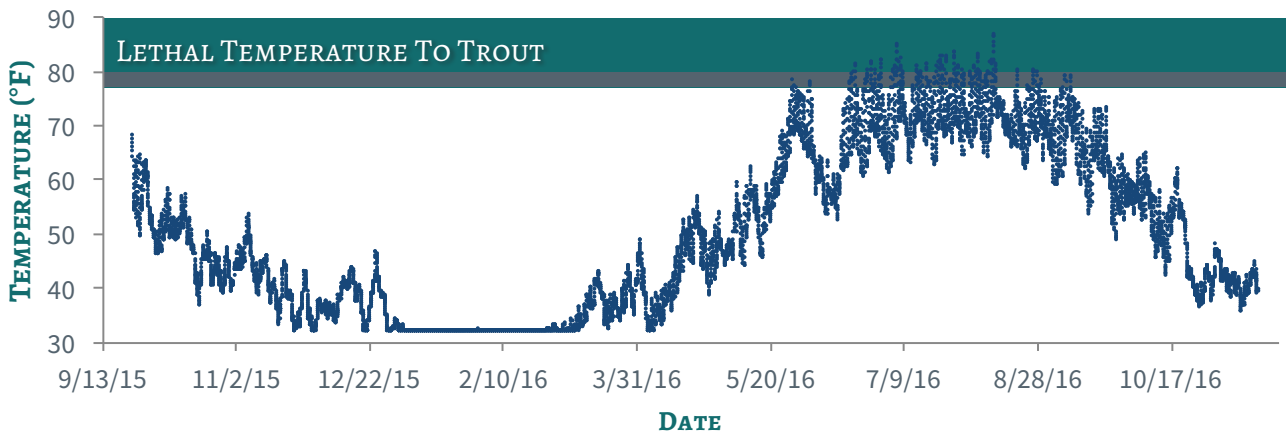


Connecting Communities, Protecting the River

1181 Haselton Rd | PO Box 8
Wilmington, NY 12997

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.

Follow Us

