

Voice of the River

2017 Annual Report



Inside: Planning For The Future - Education Programs Inspire - Protecting Infrastructure





Getting Work Done

A Field-Based Approach, Grounded In Science

Over the past five years, AsRA has grown. Our staff and budget are larger, allowing us to get more work done on the ground – using rigorous science to identify and test solutions, strengthening relationships in our communities, setting goals, delivering on promises. Our reputation has also grown. Eight years ago, John Davis, a local conservationist admired across the country for his work on wildlands connectivity, noted that AsRA was the best kept secret in Adirondack conservation. The fact that he saw the quality of our work then was encouraging. The idea that AsRA was a secret...that has taken time and hard work to address.

Why? Because to us it isn't just about brochures and press releases. These are important pieces of the puzzle, but they must be tied to work achieved, work that serves a mission and an organizational philosophy. Our philosophy? Get scientifically informed work done in the river, on lakes and floodplains, on small essential tributaries, and anywhere in the watershed where threats exist to clean water and healthy streams. Our mission is helping Ausable communities to protect our streams and lakes. This kind of thoughtful, labor-intensive work – gathering data in streams, monitoring lakes, educating kids, testing samples in labs, building culverts, tagging fish, pulling invasive plants, planting native trees – takes staff, planning, equipment, volunteers, colleagues, willing landowners, time, and financial support.

Our field-based approach is what makes us different. Join us. Support work grounded in science that protects our local waterways.

If you are already a member, thank you! Consider passing this report on to a friend who you think will appreciate what a small dedicated group of professional staff, supported by a volunteer board, with exceptional colleagues and an engaged community can get done.

Elizabeth Clarke
Chair - Board of Directors

Kelley Tucker
Executive Director

Cover: Aerial view of the phase 1 restoration of the Dream Mile along the West Branch of the Ausable River. Below: AsRA's Executive Director, Kelley Tucker, and Board Chair, Liz Clarke discussing a river restoration project on the West Branch.



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SCIENCE & STEWARDSHIP DIRECTOR

Brendan Wiltse

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





Planning For The Future

AsRA Adopts New Strategic Plan

In December of 2017, AsRA's Board of Directors approved a new strategic plan – advancing our organizational mission to help communities protect our streams and lakes. The intensive planning effort began in late 2015 with a series of staff and board meetings to define the scope and purpose of planning. We included feedback from community members through informal one-on-one conversations. This conceptual phase led to a focusing of AsRA's mission, vision, and organizational goals, development of a framework for a planning document, followed by several months of drafting and revising.

The result is a five-year flexible plan that guides AsRA's staff and board, redefines programs, and lays out a strategic staff expansion. Our goal is to enhance our capacity to serve our communities and protect the waters of the Ausable watershed by building added efficiency, credibility, and strength in our work. Specifically, the new strategic plan strengthens our current science, technical, and education programs that our communities rely on and trust, by shifting more staff time to these core goals: clean water, healthy streams, engaged communities. It expands our commitment to protect near and instream habitats and the native wildlife that depend on them – creating a new staffed program to protect biodiverse habitats, focusing first on native brook trout and other vulnerable species. And it identifies two additional hires in the short to mid-term: a full-time communications manager to plan, design, and implement communications and marketing strategies that elevate the goals and programs of AsRA, increasing public awareness, and expanding AsRA's member, donor, and volunteer base; and a part-time finance and operations director supporting AsRA programs including: organizational bookkeeping, financial strategy, grants tracking, contract compliance, and more. It also refines the committee structure of our talented volunteer board.

Our communities, our members, colleagues and donors, and the hundreds of people our program work directly affects every year inspire us to ensure that our work is efficient and effective. You can view our priority action and our full plan on our website under the About Us tab.

AsRA's Vision

We envision a community of watershed residents and visitors enjoying the Ausable River, its lakes and tributaries and working to protect its clean waters, healthy free-flowing streams, and the diverse habitats that sustain its native plants and wildlife. This community supports and works in partnership with AsRA to inspire future generations to cherish and protect our watershed.

AsRA's Mission

Helping communities protect our streams and lakes.

AsRA's Goals

Clean Water: Streams, lakes, wetlands, and aquifers capable of supporting a full complement of human and ecosystem needs.

Healthy Streams: Shaded, cool waters, with ample floodplains and self-regulating flows sustaining ecological diversity and thriving communities.

Biodiverse Habitats: Habitats and ecosystems fostering native plant and animal species in and alongside streams, lakes, and wetlands.

Enjoying our Waterways: Responsible, low-impact recreational opportunities protective of Ausable waterways and adjacent lands.

Engaged Communities: Informed residents and visitors caring for the health of the watershed where they live, work, and play.

A Voice for the River: A strong, sustainable Ausable River Association working in partnership to achieve shared goals.



Education Programs Inspire Next Generation

AsRA's education programs get kids outside and in streams



Participants in *Discovering the Ausable: An Aquatic Stewardship Program* taking a break during a paddling cleanup on the Ausable.

Public stewardship is key to maintaining the health of the Ausable River watershed long-term. AsRA supports education and stewardship activities that promote the value of the Ausable system, the threats facing it, and the role the community must play. We have developed and expanded field-based youth programs that expose students to hydrology, climate change, ecology, and biology and to methods for surveying streams, monitoring water quality, and creating biological inventories.

Two of these programs designed for teenagers are *Discovering the Ausable: An Aquatic Stewardship Program* and the Keene Central School (KCS) Culvert Lab. *Discovering the Ausable* is a partnership program between AsRA and Adirondack Mountain Club that teaches teens outdoor recreational skills, provides them hands on experiences with scientific methods, and inspires an ethic of environmental stewardship. The Culvert Lab teaches children from Keene Central School the basic concepts of stream flow, hydrology, and wildlife connectivity. They take their classroom learning straight to the field to measure, survey, and identify the relationships essential to a healthy culvert. It's a model we hope to expand to other schools.

Discovering the Ausable is a high impact program hosted during the summer that exposes youth to the aquatic sciences and watershed stewardship in an immersive learning environment. During its five days, participants learn paddling and mapping skills, conduct a comparative study of two lakes, survey for benthic macroinvertebrates, and learn how to be good stewards of the watershed along the way. AsRA and Adirondack Mountain Club will host the third annual event July 15-19 this year.

The Culvert Lab is a two-part program that takes 6th and 7th graders in the field in June to study, measure, and discuss the impacts of an undersized culvert. The same group then return to the site after it has been transformed by AsRA and partners into a free-flowing, Climate-Ready Culvert and discuss the changes they observe. In 2017, students visited a culvert on Nugent Road in Jay that, at low flows, was a barrier to fish passage and caused extensive road flooding at high flows. They also returned to a culvert they had seen the previous year on Otis Brook in Upper Jay to see the dramatic transformation from a six-foot perched culvert to a large (big enough to walk under!) open-bottom arch culvert with a beautiful natural stream flowing unimpeded under the road.

At Nugent Road, the students conducted the same surveys and measurements that AsRA does before replacing a culvert. They measured the slope of the stream with a laser level, performed a Wolman Pebble Count to determine streambed composition, and conducted biological surveys of near and in-stream flora and fauna (one of the favorite activities on a hot day). After completing the lab, the students gain an understanding that replacing these culverts benefits both human and natural communities in the watershed by allowing safe passage for fish, and other aquatic and terrestrial organisms, and greatly reduces the chance of road flooding.

AsRA's outreach programs encourage participants to become good stewards of the places they live. They learn that we all can care for our rivers, streams, lakes, and watersheds.



Protecting Infrastructure & Reconnecting Streams

Culvert replacement on Nugent Road in Jay

In 2017, AsRA completed the replacement of a culvert over a Rocky Branch tributary on Nugent Road in the Town of Jay. Because of the deteriorating and undersized pipes used to move the stream under it, Nugent Road flooded frequently in storms making it impassable for residents, emergency services, and for access to Town of Jay water supply infrastructure. The undersized pipes exacerbated erosion and cut off habitat access for aquatic wildlife trying to swim upstream to cooler waters.

AsRA provided geomorphic surveys and design requirements for engineering, obtained permits and supervised removal of the undersized pipes under the road. They were replaced with a 19.1-foot aluminum arch that spans both banks. The new structure easily manages 100-year flood flows with room to spare. The stream channel, that had not seen daylight for decades, was restored to its appropriate width, depth, slope, and roughness. The brook can now function fully, better manage sediment and debris, its waters visibly clearer. Amphibians and fish, especially native brook trout, immediately began reclaiming the entire reach of the stream.

The project was surveyed and designed by AsRA, engineered by North Woods Engineering of Saranac Lake, constructed by Zielinski's, Inc. of Jay with support from the Town of Jay and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS). Funding was provided by the FWS, the NYS Department of State, The Nature Conservancy-Adirondacks, and Patagonia through The Mountaineer.



Top: Nugent Road culvert before replacement.
Bottom: Culvert after replacement during high water.

Replanting Riparian Cover

Once a culvert is replaced, we return to the site to restore native riparian cover above and below it. This is a critical step in safeguarding the stream. Good cover provides shade to help keep waters cool. It contributes leaf litter and other organic matter that serves as the base of the stream foodweb. Native plant root systems minimize bank erosion. Whenever possible, we work with local schools to get their students involved. In the photo to the right, students from North Wood School's LEAP program help plan trees at a culvert we replaced on Jay Mountain Road in 2016.





1



2



10

LOOKING BACK *The Year*

1. Students from the Paul Smith's College Chapter of the [unclear] along the Dream Mile restoration site.
2. Paul Smith's College student Austin Tremblay collecting [unclear] planting techniques.
3. Corey Laxson from the Adirondack Watershed Institute [unclear]
4. Participants in the *Discovering the Ausable: An Aquatic* macroinvertebrates in Marcy Brook.
5. Trees staged on a gravel bar in the West Branch to be [unclear]
6. Volunteers helping to clean tires and other trash from [unclear]
7. AsRA volunteer, Janelle Hoh, filtering water for eDNA [unclear] native brook trout.
8. AsRA's Science and Stewardship Director, Brendan W [unclear]
9. AsRA's Executive Director, Kelley Tucker, teaching Kee [unclear] culvert replacement.
10. AsRA's Executive Director, Kelley Tucker, standing in the [unclear] length of the East Branch of the Ausable.



9



8



ACK: in Photographs

the Society for Ecological Restoration helping to plant trees
g data to monitor the success of different riparian

te preparing to deploy a YSI EXO 3 sonde in Mirror Lake.
Stewardship Program sampling benthic

used to reconstruct the riverbank along the Dream Mile.
n the river.

analysis to help us understand the distribution of our

iltse, sampling on Mirror Lake on a snowy December day.
ne Central School students about a recently completed

he river during a day of field work to survey the entire



3

4

5

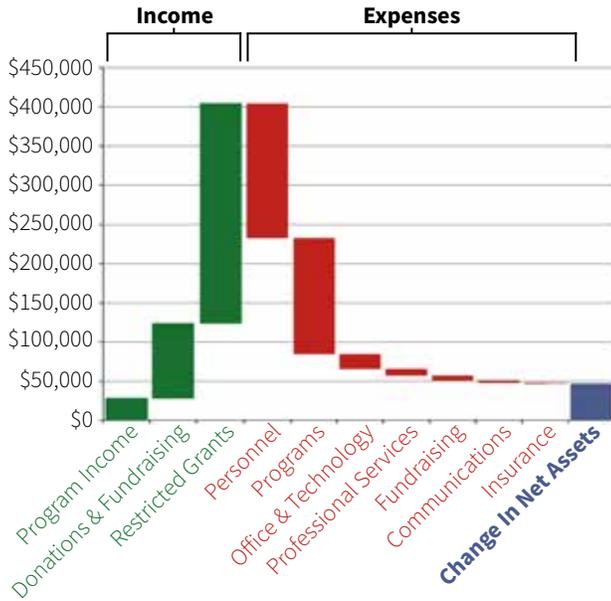
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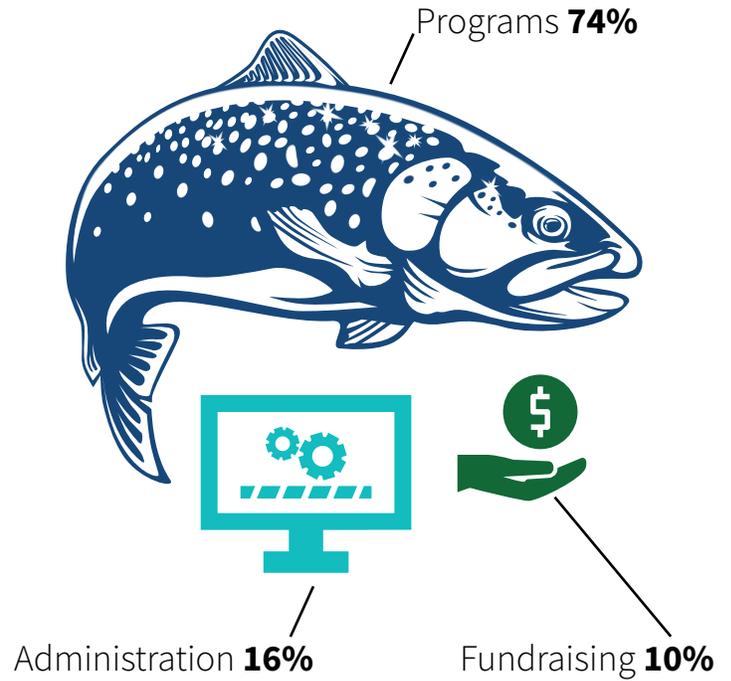


FINANCES

Financial Activities



How Your Support Is Allocated



Activities

As of December 31, 2017 (unaudited)

Support and Revenue

| | |
|------------------------------|------------------|
| Program Income..... | \$28,095 |
| Donations & Fundraising..... | \$95,470 |
| Restricted Grants..... | \$280,568 |
| TOTAL | \$404,133 |

Expenses

| | |
|----------------------------|------------------|
| Personnel..... | \$171,603 |
| Programs..... | \$148,227 |
| Office & Technology..... | \$18,621 |
| Professional Services..... | \$8,363 |
| Fundraising..... | \$5,879 |
| Communications..... | \$3,415 |
| Insurance..... | \$1,425 |
| TOTAL..... | \$357,533 |

Financial Position

As of December 31, 2017 (unaudited)

Assets

| | |
|--------------------------|------------------|
| Cash & Savings..... | \$125,292 |
| Other Assets..... | \$500 |
| TOTAL ASSETS..... | \$125,792 |

Liabilities & Net Assets

| | |
|--|------------------|
| Current Liabilities..... | \$2,592 |
| Unrestricted Net Assets..... | \$55,728 |
| Temporarily Restricted Net Assets..... | \$67,472 |
| TOTAL LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS..... | \$125,792 |

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.

663
Anglers
and Others
Educated
About Aquatic
Invasive
Species

18.6 Miles
Of Stream Surveyed for
Brook Trout using eDNA

139,908
Water Quality Data
Points Collected

50%
of
River
Channel
Directly
Adjacent to
Roads

952
New Followers
Online

147
New Members

10,225
Tons of Excess
Sediment Entering
The East Branch

Thank You

We rely on the support of members who care about the Ausable River, its lakes and tributaries. Together, we make a difference.



Headwaters Council

Great Range: \$10,000+

Evergreen Foundation, Inc.
3M Foundation
Cloudsplitter Foundation
Patagonia

Sentinel Range: \$2,500-\$9,999

Adirondack Foundation - Adirondack Gives
Adirondack Foundation - Holderied Family Community Fund
Adirondack Foundation - Mirror Lake Inn Charitable Fund
Columbia Sportswear
IRONMAN Foundation
Johanson Family
Meg Parker

Soda Range: \$1,000-\$2,499

Adirondack Trail Improvement Society
AuSable River Two Fly
On Behalf of John Tucci
Branch Creek Organics
Margaret and Ken Brownell
William Chorske
Susan Doolittle
High Falls Gorge
Mirror Lake Watershed Association
Anne and Ken Stuzin
SubAlpine Coffee
The Mountaineer
Town of Keene
Town of North Elba
Village of Lake Placid
Wally and Terry Walters

\$500-\$999

ADKHighpeaks Foundation, Inc.
David Brunner and Rhonda Butler
Golden Arrow Resort
Donna and Wayne Ignatuk
Janeway Family Fund
Carol MacKinnon Fox
Larry Master
Rhoda and Paul Morrisroe
Lise Strickler and Mark Gallogly
Town of Black Brook

\$250-\$499

Essex County Adirondack Garden Club
Nan Boardman and Steve Amstutz
Constantin Apostol
Barkeater Trails Alliance
Liz and Michael Clarke
Linda B. and G. Robert Cooley
Laura and Robert Devinney
Nevton Dunn
Lorraine Duvall
Leita and William Hamill
Robert and Anne Jeffrey
Lesley Mendenhall
Ellen Metcalf
Jill and Scott Murray
Norte Maar
Northeast Arboricultural Associates
The Fallen Arch
Tri-Lakes Trout Unlimited
Bob and Blaikie Worth

\$100-\$249

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Adirondack Riverwalking
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Georgia Jones
Michael Jay Kapolka
Edward and Beverly Kerr
Charles Kilbourne
Lake Placid/Whiteface Mtn. KOA
Joan and Miles Kulukundis
Ben Lacy
Daryl Liro
In Memory of John Lafferty
Susan Lourie and Eric Mosher
Claire Love and Justin Potter
Paul Martin
Kathleen McCleary
McDonough's Valley Hardware Co.
Ed McNeil
Merrill L. Thomas Real Estate
Marcy Miller
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Sylvia Norton and Joseph McCranels
Ms. Mary Jane O'Neill



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 Whiteface Mountain Regional Visitors Bureau
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 Tad Winterbottom
 Nick and Dauir Woodin
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In Honor of Susan Lacy

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 Suzann Fay
 Adam Fernandez
 Anthony Fiacco
 M. Patterson Field
 Diane and Peter Fish
 Barry Fitz-James
 Michael French

In Memoriam

We appreciate gifts in memory of loved ones who cared for the Ausable. John Lafferty was Chair of the AsRA Board of Directors for many years. His patience, enthusiasm, and wise council helped lead the organization toward its current success. Brian Parker was remembered for his love of fishing the Ausable's many streams. We were also grateful to receive a donation in memory of Phillip Moore.

Erin Fuller
 David Gallipeau
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 Lauren and Jason Gundlach
 Ethan Gundlach
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 Brett Heineman
 Michelle Idler
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 Timothy Wasnock
 Marjorie Waterson
 Gray Watkins
 Don Wegeng
 William and Katherine Wellman
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In Memory of John Lafferty
 Tom Wemett
 Kathleen Wiley and Jeff Leavitt
 Willkommen Hof B&B
 Brendan Wiltse

In-Kind

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 Big Slide Brewery
 Crowne Plaza
 Evan Bottcher
 Great Adirondack Brewing Company
 High Peaks Cyclery
 Hungry Trout Resort
 Lorraine Duvall
 Patagonia
 Pepsi
 The Nature Conservancy
 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
 Ward Lumber
 Zielinski's Inc.

OUR GENEROUS DONORS

Save The Date!

Ride for the River Sunday, July 15th, 2018 Hungry Trout Resort

Join us for the 7th annual Ride for the River as we celebrate the magnificent Ausable River and vibrant communities it passes through.

Learn more about this years ride at www.ridefortheriver.org.

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 High Peaks Cyclery
 Hungry Trout Resort
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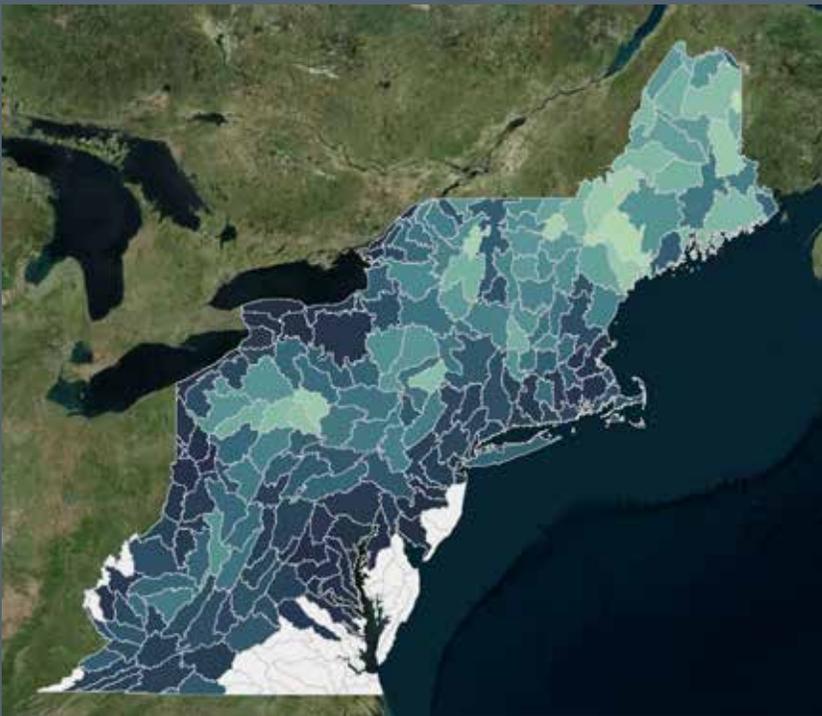
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RIVER**
Association

Inspiring Responsible Stewardship

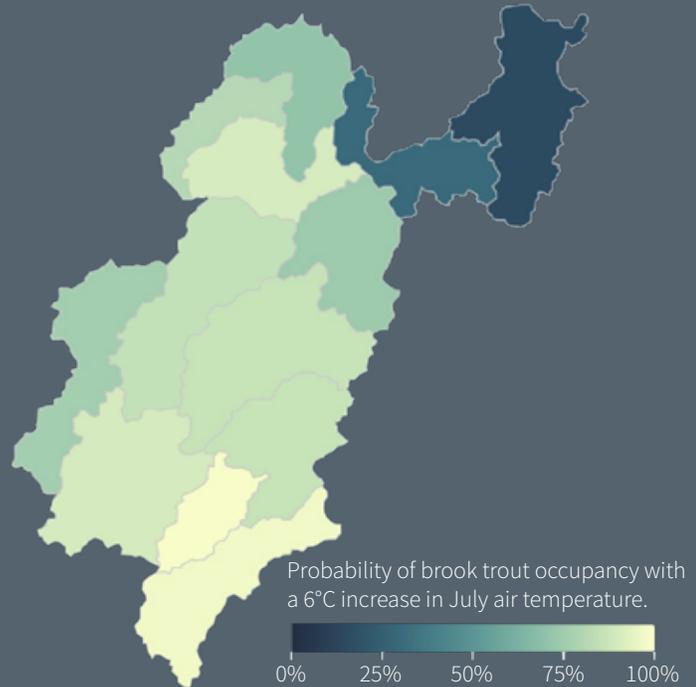
1181 Haselton Rd | PO Box 8
Wilmington, NY 12997

Our mission - is to help communities protect our lakes and rivers.

Climate Refuge for Brook Trout



Date Source: SHEDS (ecosheds.org)



A model of brook trout occupancy under severe future climate warming reveals that the Ausable River watershed, particularly small tributaries to the East Branch, as a climate refuge for our native wild fish. The entire Ausable River watershed has the third highest probability of brook trout occupancy under the most extreme warming scenarios. As we dig into the data even further, we find that small streams draining to the Ausable Lakes and Johns Brook have the highest probably of occupancy out of the entire native range of brook trout. Luckily, these small streams are protected by the NYS Forest Preserve and Adirondack Mountain Reserve.

Lack of riparian cover and habitat fragmentation from undersized culverts decrease the probability of occupancy elsewhere in the watershed. The good news is that both of these issues can be addressed, helping to further protect our native coldwater fish from a warmer future. Our on the ground approach to conservation, by replacing culverts and replanting riparian buffers will help make sure brook trout are always found in the Ausable watershed.

Follow Us

