



**AUSABLE
RIVER**
Association



2020

ANNUAL REPORT



PHOTO: Evan Williams

MEETING THE CHALLENGE

Thank you. We deeply appreciate your continued support of our work helping communities protect our streams and lakes. At times last year, the challenges seemed insurmountable. Some advisors and colleagues suggested we rethink and reorganize, even shift away from the science that guides our work. In response, our staff and board made a conscious decision to stay on course: to work within the parameters of our strategic plan, using science and stewardship to find practical solutions for the challenges facing our local waterways.

To make this happen, when many of our usual funding sources were unable to help, we asked for your financial support. The response was overwhelming. Long-time donors increased their gifts in big and small ways. New donors came through the recommendations of others. And some folks just blew us away with their generosity. We met our financial goals and, as a result, continued to do work that made a difference in our communities. Indeed, even with all the precautions of the pandemic, we had one of our busiest and most productive years ever. Our regular community outreach events were curtailed, but we found engaging options. And our solution-based research and stream and riparian restoration work was on fire!

With the help of your funds, grants, and partner contributions, over \$650,000 was invested in community infrastructure and the health of our streams and lakes. The pages of this annual report are full of images from 2020, updates on our goals and projects, and, of course, the people behind them, supporting us.

We couldn't do this without you and the support of our communities – the people who live, work, and play here. Thank you.

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COVER PHOTO: Stephen Langdon

Kelley Tucker
Executive Director

Liz Clarke
Board Chair

FINANCES



Financial Position

As of December 31, 2020 (per independent review)

Assets

Cash & Savings	\$ 187,297
Other Assets	\$ 10,934
Total Assets	\$ 198,231

Liabilities & Net Assets

Current Liabilities	\$ 30,554
Unrestricted Net Assets	\$ 167,677
Temporarily Restricted Net Assets	\$ 0
Total Liabilities & Net Assets	\$ 198,231

How your support was allocated

Programs & Communications	85%
Administration & General	11.5%
Fundraising	3.5%

A copy of the latest annual filing for the Ausable River Association, Inc. may be obtained, upon request, from the organization (AsRA, 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.

Statement of Activities

As of December 31, 2020 (per independent review)

Support and Revenue

Income	
Contributions	\$ 239,517
Restricted Grants	\$ 371,445
Program and Other Revenue	\$ 61,510
Paycheck Protection Program Grant	\$ 44,000
Interest	\$ 9
Total	\$ 716,481

Expenses

Programs & Communications	\$ 497,221
Administration & General	\$ 31,688
Professional Development	\$ 4,707
Fundraising	\$ 20,047
Printing & Advertising	\$ 8,795
Office & Technology	\$ 11,113
Professional Services	\$ 6,680
Insurance & Depreciation	\$ 3,657
TOTAL	\$ 583,908



2020 HIGHLIGHTS

We replaced two undersized and deteriorating culverts in the Town of Jay on two native brook trout streams – improving road safety, wildlife connectivity, and stream health. Over \$350,000 of federal, state, and private funds, raised by AsRA and our partner The Nature Conservancy Adirondack Chapter, made this work possible.

Responding to an emergency, we surveyed, designed, permitted, and restored the river channel and banks around the primary water main supplying the

hamlet of Keene. Working with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, we rebuilt the bank holding the pipe and addressed the cause of erosion by restoring river function upstream.

Upstream of Keene Valley, we assisted a consortium of homeowners on the East Branch Ausable River by reopening a blocked East Branch floodplain channel and restoring an eroded bank above an historic bridge. The project minimized damage during floods, protecting homes and property.

HEALTHY STREAMS

stream *noun*

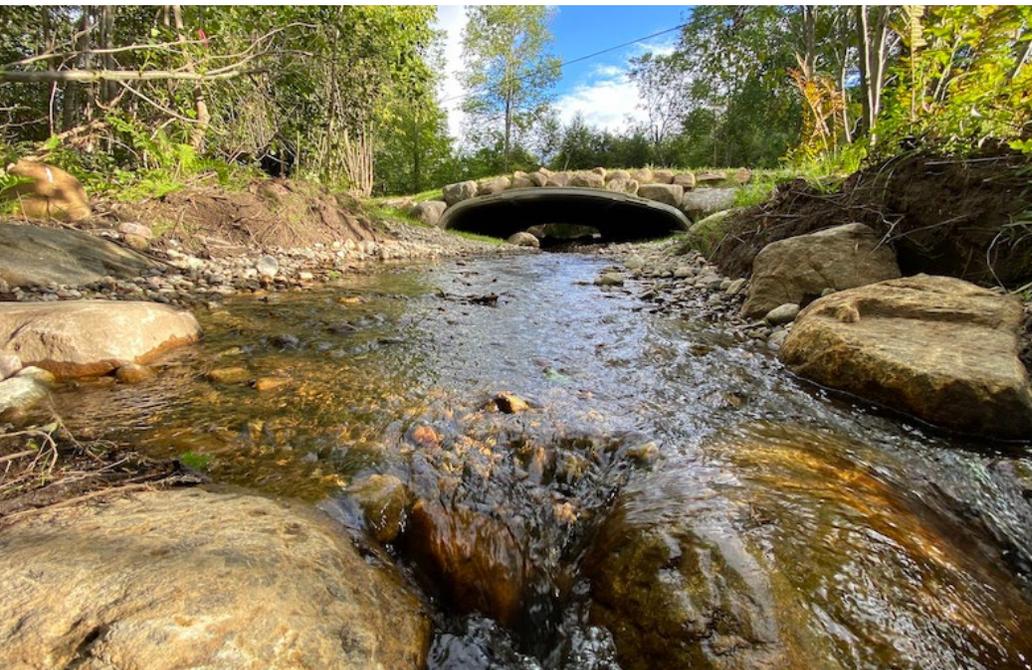
\ strēm \ 1: a body of running water (such as a river or creek) flowing on the earth

A healthy stream is self-sustaining. Water transports gravel, cobble, boulders, and wood efficiently in the stream channel and onto floodplains to build and rebuild riffles, pools, and banks.

Floodplains slow and absorb flood water, trap fine sediments and nutrients, and support plants and trees that shade and cool the stream and provide habitat and sustenance. Cut off from floodplains, armored by rip rap, overwidened by past industrial practices,

damaged streams can heal but only over time and with significant room to shift their channels. This is often not possible where roads, homes, and hamlets hug streams. Instead, stream restoration professionals can rebuild self-sustaining potential.

Our stream restoration methodology combines rigorous science, assessment, design, and monitoring to heal streams and find long-term, practical solutions for community resilience.





CLEAN WATER

clean *adjective*

\ klēn \ 1: free from dirt or pollution 2: free from contamination or disease

Mirror Lake is the centerpiece of Lake Placid, and its health is vital to the community. But the overuse of road salt for many years – on roads, sidewalks, driveways, and parking lots around the lake – has taken a toll.

Road salt washes off these impermeable surfaces and flows over land and through stormwater drains into the lake every winter and spring. This heavy, salt-laden water pools at the deepest part of the lake, reduc-

ing oxygen levels, threatening aquatic life, and disrupting the spring turnover process that is essential to the lake's health. To halt the decline of Mirror Lake, we launched the Salt Use Reduction Initiative. The Initiative relies on a robust partnership of scientific, municipal, state agency, business, and nonprofit partners. Our goal is to reduce salt concentrations to the sustainable levels documented in the 1970s and restore the natural processes essential to the health of Mirror Lake. It's one part of our Clean Water program.



2020 HIGHLIGHTS

Five continuous monitoring stations and a mid-lake sensor buoy allowed us to track road salt levels in Mirror Lake. New winter plows and tracking technology, purchased with our grant funds, were deployed by the Town of North Elba and the Village of Lake Placid.

A working group of scientists, salt use reduction experts, local officials, business owners, residents, and state agency staff helped us review data collection, management, and salt reduction strategies to protect Mirror Lake.

Our scientists continued to monitor the water quality of streams and lakes throughout the Ausable watershed every two weeks, year-round. They test temperature, dissolved oxygen, specific conductance, and pH — sensitive indicators of stream health that allow us to identify changes in water quality.

Working carefully within pandemic restrictions, our network of Porta-Johns helped to ensure a clean and healthy river and provided convenient facilities for travelers and river users.



2020 HIGHLIGHTS

Our biologists developed and tested a custom Ausable upland native seed mix for use in restoration and conservation efforts in New York's Lake Champlain basin. Intensive botanical surveys allowed us to identify this mix of hyperlocal species that thrive in a variety of challenging situations.

We were awarded a \$175,000 technical grant by the Lake Champlain Basin Program and New England Interstate Water Pollution Control Commission to use our environmental DNA expertise to identify and inform habitat protection for Atlantic salmon and trout in the Boquet and Ausable Rivers.

Test plots of native plants were monitored and new plants added. Beyond their immediate benefits of cooling streams, providing habitat, and preventing erosion, these are laboratories for improving restoration methods and classrooms for teaching volunteers, students, and colleagues.

Our work to eradicate invasive plants continued. Our river steward held a purple loosestrife eradication day, monitored Ausable waterways for new infestations, and maintained ten wader wash stations along the West Branch Ausable River to limit the spread of invasive aquatic species.

BIODIVERSE HABITATS

habitat *noun*

\ ha-bə-tat \ 1: the place or environment where a plant or animal naturally or normally lives and grows

To protect and restore habitats that support the diversity of native species, we focus on the riparian ecosystem and the stream ecosystem. We're planting and monitoring the success of trees, shrubs, and grasses carefully selected to be appropriate for the habitats we place them in.

We're restoring and stabilizing streambanks with hardy shrubs that might be damaged by winter ice yet will return, year after year,

reducing erosion. Robustly vegetated banks provide shade, lower stream temperatures, and improve water quality. They create habitat for the web of pollinators and aquatic insects that feed biodiversity on land and water, supporting our native fish. And, speaking of native fish, we're mapping the distribution of different trout species in the Ausable and neighboring watersheds using environmental DNA. Our science and stewardship create solutions for wild communities that depend on our streams and lakes.



PHOTO: Jamie West McGiver





ENGAGED COMMUNITIES

engaged *adjective*

\ in- gājɪd \ 1: involved in activity 2: greatly interested, committed

We work side by side with members of our community, including them in our efforts to protect and restore the places we love. Not just residents and landowners, but nonprofit partners, academic colleagues, visitors, elected officials, town road crews, artists, students, and more.

We're educating, holding volunteer service days and events, providing technical assistance, and inspiring responsible stewardship. Without encounters like these, we'd be work-

ing in a vacuum; with them, we learn more, have a better understanding of the needs and benefits of our waterways, and can enjoy our streams and rivers as we work to improve their health.

We held a series of nine educational river tours, free to the public and meeting pandemic safety requirements. Riverwalking, paddling, natural history, bat and moth identification, and birding trips, each led by expert staff and local naturalists.

ENJOYING THE WATERSHED

Despite the challenges of COVID-19, close to 100 riders attended an “on your own” version of the 9th Annual Ride for the River. Cyclists rode one of two established routes in the Ausable watershed with their friends and family or made up their own rides in their local neighborhoods. Riders represented two countries, 10 states, and 54 ZIP codes.

Clarkson University students and Town of Jay highway personnel teamed up with our staff for a riparian planting workshop, revegetating the construction sites of our two 2020 culvert installations.

We surveyed and provided design assistance to the Town of Keene for a series of small footbridges on Old Mountain Road, in the delicate headwaters of Nichols Brook. Currently the several crossings of small ephemeral streams have aging and collapsed pipes that attempt to move water under the Jack-rabbit Trail. Soon, simple low footbridges will enhance use of the trail while protecting these small streams.



PHOTO: Eric Adsit

THANK YOU

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



HEADWATERS COUNCIL

Great Range: 10,000+

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Lake Placid Shore Owners' Association
Patagonia

Sentinel Range: \$2500-\$9999

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We make every effort to ensure the accuracy of this donor list. If you find any errors, please contact us.

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We greatly appreciate our business partners for supporting our programs and events. You are making a difference for the health of the Ausable and Boquet River watersheds.

Platinum: \$5,000

Golden Arrow Lakeside Resort
 Patagonia



Gold: \$2,500

The Mountaineer
 River Stone Wellness Center



Silver: \$1,000

Long Run Wealth Advisors
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 North Country Public Radio

Bronze: \$500

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Supporting: \$200

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