



# Essential Strategic Plan 2020-2023

## OVERVIEW

2020 is a time of tumultuous and intersecting environmental, social, public health and economic challenges affecting the world at large and our Merrimack River Watershed. There is a renewed focus and sense of urgency to address the threats of pollution, climate change, habitat degradation, and environmental racism within both Massachusetts and New Hampshire. Furthermore, a change in staff and board leadership at MRWC has opened up an opportunity for us to grow into a regional leader on these issues, with a reinvigorated commitment to our core values of collaboration, inclusivity, and integrity. This three-year plan illuminates a path to think bigger, to act bolder, and to sustain our organization to match the scale of the problems we see before us.



## MISSION

To improve and protect the health of the Merrimack River Watershed for all people and wildlife.



## VISION

A Merrimack River Watershed where community and nature flourish together.



## CORE VALUES

Collaboration  
Inclusivity  
Integrity



# Strategic Goals and Outcomes

## GOAL 1: INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY

*Expand and innovate inclusive community engagement and education.*

- A. Dynamic Engagement:** Engage the public in a two-way street of interactive programs, activities, and feedback loops
- B. Environmental Justice:** Co-create space for frontline communities and individuals to lead on EJ issues
- C. Education:** Educate the public through in-person and virtual events
- D. Volunteers:** Develop a consistent and impactful volunteer program

## OUTCOMES ACHIEVED BY 2023

- We grew community engagement with year-to-year consistency and increased a) participation, b) diversity of participants, and c) number and breadth of communities involved
- Our team is more representative of the communities we serve
- We increased number of single-event and long-term returning volunteers
- Evaluations demonstrate that volunteer and educational experiences are satisfying, relevant, and impactful

## GOAL 2: WATER, LAND & CLIMATE

*Establish robust and sustainable science and restoration programs.*

- A. Water Quality:** Increase consistency and sustainability of water quality testing
- B. Restoration:** Develop and launch an ecological restoration program
- C. Climate:** Develop a pilot climate resilience program in select municipalities

## OUTCOMES ACHIEVED BY 2023

- Each year we conducted consistent, quality-assured water quality monitoring and data analysis
- Multiple ecological restoration projects were completed or in progress- centered on source water protection, habitat enhancement, and stormwater absorption
- Climate resilience programming was initiated and under development- centered on infrastructure resilience projects, education, and regional leadership

## GOAL 3: HEIGHTENED CAPACITY

*Increase internal organizational capacity.*

- A. Fundraising:** Implement diversified fundraising strategy to build capacity
- B. Finances:** Advance our financial management capacity to meet organizational growth
- C. Staff:** Increase staff, diversify staff, improve staff employment longevity and security
- D. Board:** Create Board structure that supports staff and implementation of strategic plan

## OUTCOMES ACHIEVED BY 2023

- Budget increase to \$400K by year 3, which supports 4-5 full-time employees
- Staff and board better represents the diversity of the communities served
- Financial management tools and controls support diversifying and growing income and expense streams
- Staff benefits package and HR policies are robustly assessed and changes made as appropriate
- Board structures are defined and implemented, all board positions filled, and each board member contributes to mission

## GOAL 4: BOLDER INFLUENCE

*Increase external influence to positively impact the watershed.*

- A. Strategic Partnerships:** Grow strategic partnerships with agencies, institutions, and elected officials
- B. Voice of the Merrimack:** Become the go-to hub for scientific, policy and recreation information
- C. Advocacy:** Affect public policy through tactical advocacy
- D. Project Financing:** Innovate and advocate for financial investment in green infrastructure

## OUTCOMES ACHIEVED BY 2023

- We are working on active infrastructure or restoration projects in multiple municipalities
- We are the regional leader and go-to hub for all Merrimack River Watershed issues
- A cohesive communications strategy is consistently implemented and grows our reach
- Progress on specific policy or investment advocacy is measured, made, and publicized