



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