

MRWC

MERRIMACK RIVER
WATERSHED COUNCIL

2021 IMPACT REPORT





MISSION

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



VISION

A Watershed where community and nature flourish together.



CORE VALUES

Collaboration
Inclusivity
Integrity

The year 2021 was a time of tumultuous and intersecting environmental, social, public health and economic challenges affecting the world at large and our Merrimack River Watershed. This triggered a **renewed urgency** to address the threats of **pollution, climate change, habitat degradation, and environmental injustice** within both MA and NH.

As we work to transform our world, MRWC has gone through an internal transformation as well - a change in staff and board leadership at MRWC in 2019-2020 opened up the opportunity for us to grow into a regional leader on these issues. Our refreshed leadership and expanded capacity illuminated a path to **think bigger, to act bolder, and to sustain our organization** to match the scale of the problems we see before us.

The Merrimack River is the drinking water source for 600,000 residents, a recreational magnet for swimmers, boaters, and paddlers, and the home of an abundance of wildlife. Through robust advocacy, science, and education programming we choose to step boldly towards our vision that community and nature can flourish together within our beloved Merrimack River Watershed. We ask you to step with us.

Matthew Thorne
Executive Director

Dan Graovac
Board President



REGIONAL LEADERSHIP & POLICY

In 2021 MRWC willingly stepped into a leadership role throughout the Merrimack Valley to expose environmental problems, mobilize people power, and influence policy.



Our lawsuit protecting the Clean Water Act from the Trump Administration's Dirty Water Rule was a **major victory for science and public health**. Represented by the Conservation Law Foundation, this repeal protected countless important streams and wetlands.



We tirelessly advocated for and delivered testimony to direct **hundreds of millions of dollars to improve water infrastructure**, slash Combined Sewer Overflows, and develop climate resilience projects in NH and MA.



MRWC was named by the Commonwealth of MA as the Regional Coordinator for Essex County (in partnership with the Merrimack Valley Planning Commission) to assist municipalities with fixing **nonpoint-source pollution with green infrastructure solutions**.



RESTORING FISH & WILDLIFE HABITAT

MRWC launched a **watershed-scale ecological restoration effort** in 2021 that will include 9,000 trees planted over the next 3 years. The initiative utilizes the green defenses of native trees to buffer the habitats of the Merrimack River and its tributaries from climate change, stormwater runoff and development pressures.

MRWC is also kickstarting our restoration portfolio with both our first culvert replacement and our first hazard dam removal to replace aging, failing infrastructure with nature-based solutions to open up restricted, flood-prone streams for fish passage.

PROTECTING CLEAN WATER & PUBLIC HEALTH

In order to protect our drinking water, wildlife, and recreational safety, MRWC uses a combination of scientific data and input from community members to inform our own policy, restoration and cleanup priorities, and to communicate to the public about the conditions of the Merrimack River.



Victory in a long-fought transparency battle to pass the MA Sewage Public Notification Law!



MRWC to lead new NH Sourcewater Partnership to protect drinking water through \$14 million of high impact conservation projects over the next 5 years!



312 water quality samples collected and analyzed



2,215 lbs. of debris and invasive plants removed from the river and shore



2,040 Volunteer Hours and 465 Youth Participants in 2021

COMMUNITY SCIENCE & EDUCATION

The beating heart of our commitment to science is our community of learners, volunteers, youth, and event participants - our eyes and ears on the ground. They collect water samples, plant trees, enter data, and commit to learning about the natural world.



Community Science
Quality-controlled data collection performed by community members trained by MRWC staff scientists.



Youth Education
From teaching watershed science in public schools, to boat adventures on Pine Island - MRWC gets kids learning outside.

CLIMATE RESILIENCE

In the Merrimack Valley climate change is stressing our environment, safety, and health with: 1) longer, more frequent **droughts**, 2) **extreme heat**, and 3) the threat of **catastrophic flooding** as we brace for a re-run of the 2006 Mother's Day Floods.



Gathered and analyzed community input (together with our awesome partners) to incorporate into flood resilience projects that are the right fit for each community.



Developed interactive StoryMaps for residents of Lawrence, Methuen and Tewksbury to learn how and why flooding happens in their communities.



Public Art Installation under way! MRWC Artist-in-Residence Kate Delaney is preparing an inspiring series of five 8' climate panels at the Lawrence Public Library (to be completed May 2022!).

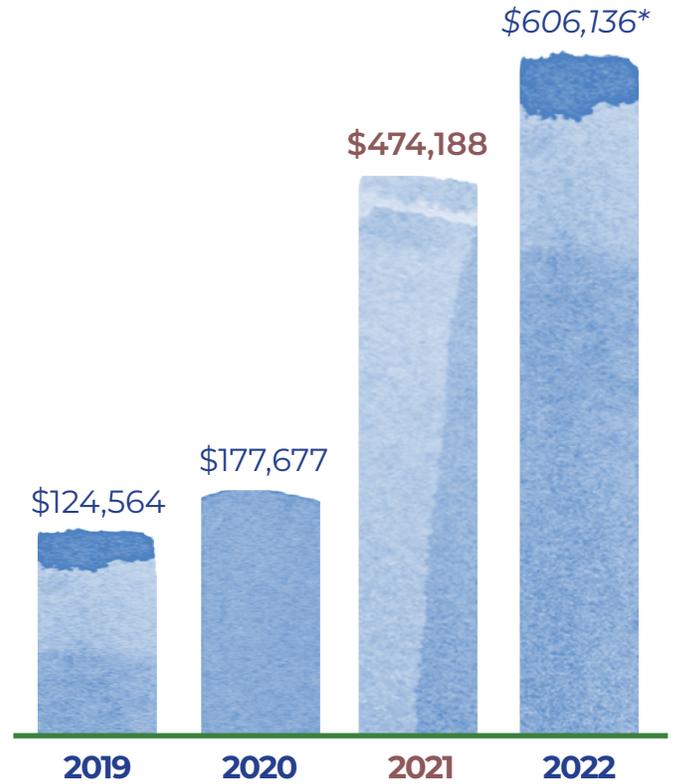


Kate Delaney

FISCAL YEAR 2021 AUDITED FINANCIALS

Through strong financial growth in FY21, MRWC significantly increased staff capacity and the scale and potency of program impact.

	FY 2021	FY 2020
INCOME		
Grants	343,657	90,500
Donations	101,610	85,884
Other	28,921	1,293
Total Income	\$474,188	\$177,677
EXPENSES		
Program	178,389	46,682
Operating	65,795	61,021
Development	47,590	15,064
Other Expense	75,844	
Total Expenses	\$367,618	\$122,767
NET ASSETS		
Beginning of Year	700,644	645,734
End of Year	807,214	700,644
Change in Net Assets	\$106,570	\$54,910



Income Growth

*FY22 Projected Budget





STAFF

Susan Bresney
MA Water Resources - Program Manager

John Macone
Policy & Education Specialist

Matthew Thorne
Executive Director

Tracey Chalifour
Director of Development

Tyson Morrill
Restoration Project Manager

Lauren Zielinski
NH Water Resources - Program Manager

Julia Halm
Community Engagement Coordinator

Jose Tapia
Program Associate for Urban Resilience

Kate Delaney
2021-22 Climate Artist in Residence

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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COOPERSTOWN environmental



Cell Signaling TECHNOLOGY



**MERRIMACK RIVER
WATERSHED COUNCIL**

60 Island St. Suite 246
Lawrence, MA 01840

***“This is the first time I rode in an actual boat before
besides in video games!”***

- Youth Participant on MRWC Field Trip to Pine Island.



To learn more and to support
our work, visit us at:

WWW.MERRIMACK.ORG

60 Island St. Suite 246
Lawrence, MA 01840

54 Portsmouth St.
Concord, NH 03301