

# ALABAMA RIVERS ALLIANCE 2019 ANNUAL REPORT



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# FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

In today's divisive environment, it sometimes seems as if nothing is getting done or nothing can be done to move things forward. I am blessed to work in a job everyday with people and partners who consistently defy those sentiments. The river protection movement in Alabama is as strong and effective as ever! The Alabama Rivers Alliance continued to successfully play our role as connector, convener, and creator in 2019 to achieve important outcomes for clean water and healthy rivers across Alabama.

In this report, you will read about how we utilized our hardworking staff and our shoestring budget to [connect](#) people across the state with decision-makers and local organizations.


We [created](#) impactful documentary films that lifted up the voices of our partners and communities doing important work to protect Alabama's air, land, and water and we used those films to build awareness and actions from thousands of Alabamians across the state.

We [convened](#) like-minded organizations to come together and build a stronger voice for their region of the state and for our statewide policy advocacy efforts to protect clean water. Our work in 2019 brought new voices to the table and strengthened existing leaders in the movement by creating spaces for all voices to be heard.

This is how we fight through the muck of grid-locked politics and divisive rhetoric. [We do it by standing up, speaking out and doing the work.](#) I'm so proud to be a part of this important movement and I hope you will feel as excited as I am when you read how much we accomplished in 2019!

Overlay this with all the equally impressive reports from our partner organizations and you will know why Alabama is moving forward toward a clean water future for all living things!

Water IS Life,

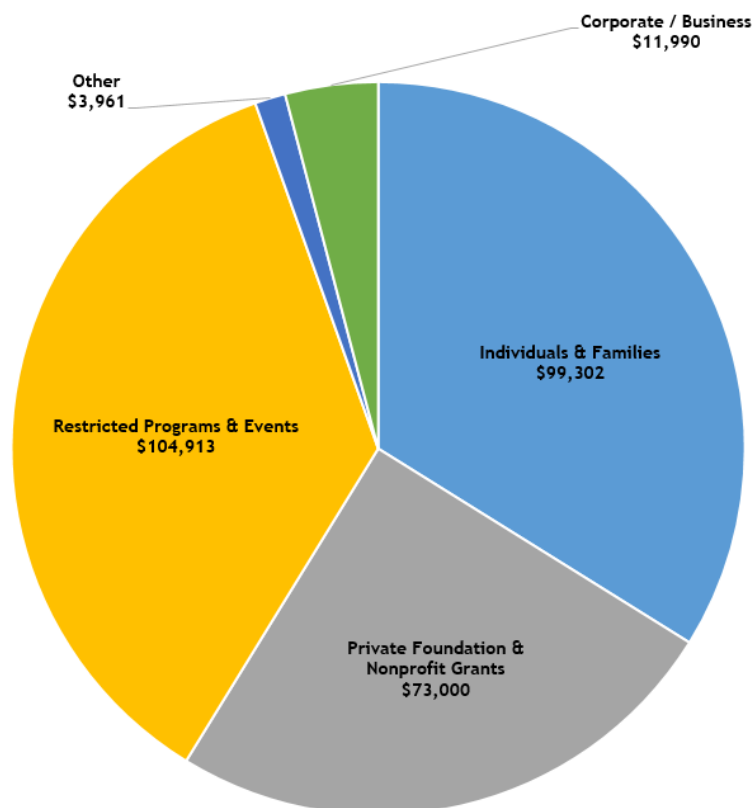




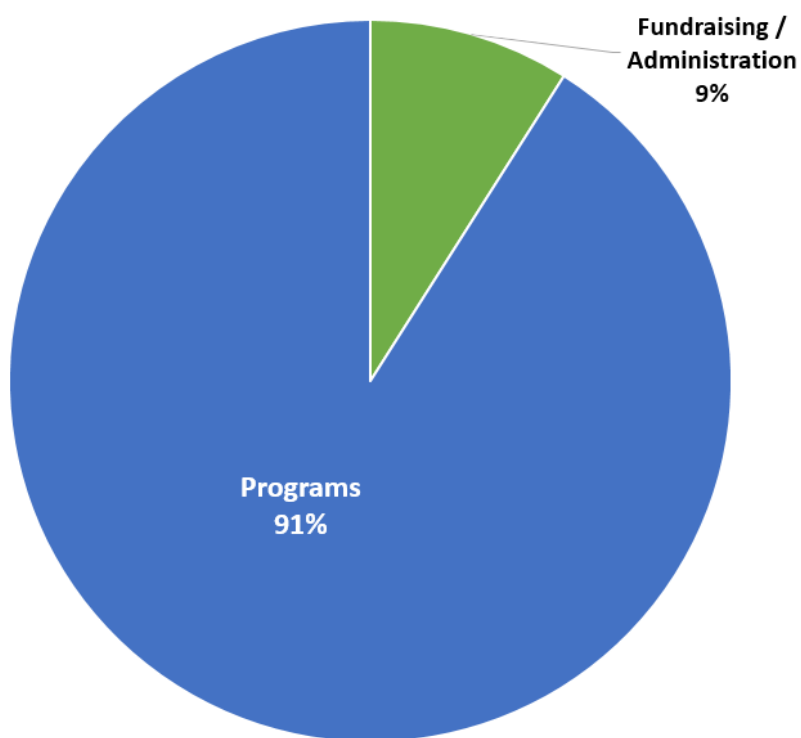
# FINANCIAL INFO

The Alabama Rivers Alliance operates an annual budget on the calendar year. Your individual contribution is very important to help us continue to provide essential statewide support to Alabama's growing Alliance of local river advocates and partners. Please consider renewing your membership today at [www.AlabamaRivers.org](http://www.AlabamaRivers.org).

## INCOME 2019



## EXPENSES 2019



Detailed financial information available by request.

In addition to the many generous individuals who make our work possible, we would like to thank the following foundations, partners & businesses for their support of our work in 2019:

ABAHAC • Across the Pond • Alabama Chapter of the Sierra Club • Alabama State Council on the Arts • Alabama Waldorf School • The Altamont School • Auburn University at Montgomery • Benchmark Mortgage • Community Cleaning and Maintenance • Creative Montessori School • Curtis & Edith Munson Foundation • Discovering Alabama • Downtown Huntsville • EBSCO • ECO three • Eva Bank • Godwin Piano Studios • Higher Ground Coffee • The Hugh Kaul Foundation • J. Key Properties • Land Trust of North Alabama • LPL Financial • Mike & Gillian Goodrich Foundation • Mrs. Clean Green • National Endowment for the Arts • Patagonia, Inc. • Phase Gym • Red Clay Brewing Company • REI Huntsville • ROJO • Royal Cup Coffee • River Network • Ruffner Mountain • Southern Environmental Law Center • Strain Foundation • Straight to Ale Brewing Company • This is Alabama • Westwind Foundation • Whole Foods Market Huntsville • Wild South

# THE WORK ADDS UP

It takes a whole movement to protect Alabama's 132,000 miles of rivers and streams. Here are some highlights of the Alabama Rivers Alliance's activities to lead, support and promote that movement in 2019:

## 5 & 40

### REGIONAL MEETINGS

Convened five small groups across the state, including some one time issue-based discussions and two new recurring regional coalitions in the Huntsville/North Alabama communities and the Auburn/Opelika communities. More than 40 organizations participated in these meetings across the state to plan, collaborate & learn from each other.



## 125

### ALABAMA WATER RALLY ATTENDEES

Hosted the 21st annual Alabama Water Rally conference with more than 125 local river group leaders, students, professionals and concerned citizens from all across the state.



## 20+

### SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

Participated in more than 20 speaking engagements across Alabama including college classes, grassroots partner's annual meetings and statewide conferences.

## 4

### SOUTHERN EXPOSURE FILMS

Created four incredibly engaging short documentary films about Alabama environmental issues as part of our Southern Exposure film fellowship program.



Initiated and/or attended 18 meetings with state agencies, appointed commissions, and elected officials outside of their regular legislative session activities.

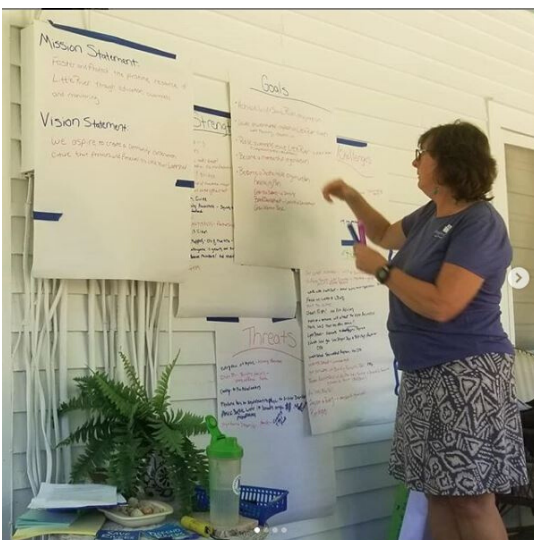
## AWARENESS BUILDING OPPORTUNITIES

## FILM SCREENING EVENTS ACROSS ALABAMA

16

Engaged in 16 meetings with four partner organizations for one-on-one organizational development planning and/or issue campaign planning

Traveled more than 10,000 miles across Alabama to hear from community members and partner organizations -- carpooling whenever possible!



# OUTCOMES

All of our activities have a purpose, which is laid out clearly in our mission and more detailed in our strategic plan: to Empower Citizens, Build Partnerships and Advocate for Sound Water Policy and its Enforcement. Here are some important outcomes for these strategies in 2019:

## EMPOWERING CITIZENS

- More than 2,000 individual Alabamians participated in our annual events, including Alabama Water Rally, Rivers of Alabama Lobby Day and Southern Exposure/Wild & Scenic film screenings across the state. These events are all designed to provide engaging information and avenues for participants to take action on important issues to protect clean water!
- More than 1,900 Alabama Rivers Alliance actions were taken by supporters to contact their elected officials or state regulatory decision makers in 2019 as a result of our activities.
- More than 1,000 new people joined our email list in 2019 to become more informed and engaged in clean water issues and activities.

## BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS

- Local, all volunteer groups in the Huntsville area and in the Auburn area are meeting regularly to discuss their common interests and plan how to work together to be a stronger voice for conservation in these fast growing regions of our state, as well as participate more actively in statewide policies that affect their waterways.
- Two watershed based partner organization have new strategic plans and/or organizational development strategies to ensure their organization are remaining strong and better able to protect their important rivers.
- Creating spaces and opportunities, such as Alabama Water Rally and Rivers of Alabama Lobby Day, for impactful connections and meaningful conversations is building our movement and uniting all of our collective efforts to #DefendRivers across Alabama.

## ADVOCATING SOUND WATER POLICY & ITS ENFORCEMENT

- A new campaign to designate one of Alabama's most pristine rivers, the Little River, as a National Wild & Scenic river is now underway and more than 1,400 signatures have been obtained in support of this campaign. (Key Partner: Little River Waterkeeper)
- Improvements are being made to the Alabama Fish Consumption Advisories to make them more accessible and more understandable to ALL Alabamians. (Key Partner: Coosa Riverkeeper)
- A new group of citizens has formed downstream of the Harris dam on the Tallapoosa to participate in the relicensing of the hydropower dam that is impacting their property, the health of the river, and recreational opportunities.
- Thousands of Alabamians have a better understanding of the effort to roll back the protections of the Clean Water Act and have been empowered to make comments to the damaging new rules proposed by the EPA and Army Corps of Engineers. (Key Partner: SELC)
- Thousands of Alabamians and hundreds of citizens across the country are now aware of the environmental injustices experienced by the residents of the North Birmingham and are ready to take action to support and stand with them in their efforts to clean up their community. (Key Partner: Gasp and PANIC)



# THE ALLIANCE

We could not do the work we do without our incredible and hard working partners throughout the state. Please take a moment and check out our alliance directory on our website at [www.AlabamaRivers.org/category/partners](http://www.AlabamaRivers.org/category/partners)



Is your organization not included in our directory or is your information not current? Please let us know! Email Martha at [mhunter@alabamarivers.org](mailto:mhunter@alabamarivers.org) to correct your information or to include your organization.

## NEWS BITS

ARA partnered with Land Trust of North Alabama and REI co-op in Huntsville in support of a joint conservation and recreation initiative. REI funding will help support ARA's efforts to convene community conservation partners in the Huntsville area to achieve a common conservation vision and enhance public opportunities to experience nature.

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The Southern Exposure films are now streaming for free on Roku and Amazon Fire! Download the channel today!

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ARA was proud to be honored by the Environmental Education Association of Alabama with their Best Environmental Education Community Project Award and by the Cahaba River Society with their Cahaba Partner Award!