



2024 ANNUAL REPORT



LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Friends,

I want to start off by thanking you for continuing to move our organization and our mission forward. 2024 has been an amazing year for Living Lands and Waters. Most notably, our new education barge, the Mississippi River Institute, has been in full swing. It has been such an excellent addition to our fleet and our education programs! We currently have it parked under the St. Louis Arch. Since July, we have had **22** organizations utilize the space for meetings, and we have educated **377** students in our free river-related career workshops since we have been in the St. Louis area.

One of my favorite accomplishments this year is that the LLW team set a crew record by pulling **52** cars out of the three rivers in Pittsburgh within **4** days! In the past **26** years, I have never seen so many people on the street stopped with their jaws dropped in awe of what we are doing. It was extremely rewarding and impactful work, to say the least. We then proceeded to unload the cars at the scrapyard and focused on sunken boats! This year, we acquired a hopper barge to add to our fleet simply due to the volume of trash we remove from the rivers.

Another record set this year - we distributed and planted **180,432** trees this year AND planted our **2 millionth** tree for the MillionTrees Project! A huge thank you to everyone who has participated in this beloved program over the years, from wrapping trees, to helping at giveaways, to planting saplings in your yards, businesses, schools, and parks. Together, we are making an impact!

We have worked in some new areas this year, including the Detroit River and in North Carolina, and we will end our year down with all our equipment, including our new classroom barge, down in Memphis, which is where we will kick off the 2025 season with our annual Alternative Spring Break program.

I'm so proud of the crew and their incredible dedication to our mission. They pour their energy into producing tangible results, creating connections with the river for thousands of students and volunteers, and showing up day after day to make an impact. As our fleet expanded and crew logistics became more complex in 2024, the crew never stopped bringing energy, passion, and enthusiasm to our programs. Our volunteers and students also continue to amaze and motivate us with their work ethic, commitment to their local stretch of river, and excitement to engage and make an impact. Thank you to all the teachers, students, and volunteers who have made 2024 a successful and memorable year on the river!

We hope to continue to exceed your expectations as your continued support means the world to us!

Sincerely,
Chad
Chad Pregracke
Founder & President

CUMULATIVE GARBAGE STATS

Bags	158,674	Mattresses	143	Portable Toilets	45
Tires	98,175	Boats	167	Tractors	20
Styrofoam (sq ft)	110,851	Duck Decoys	380	Aquariums	1
Barge Line (ft)	71,614	Big Wheels / Kid's Bikes	97	Truck Toppers	3
Balls	25,562	Sunken Barges	4	Oxygen Tanks	8
Milk Crates	2,101	Hot Water Heaters	420	Outboard Boat Engines	9
Mannequin Parts	18	Washing Machines	179	Campers	6
Cars/Trucks/Vans	105	Bowling Balls	130	Sinks	160
Refrigerators	978	Clown Shoes	2	Pianos	4
BBQ Grills	186	Toilets	143	Bath Tubs	39
5-Gallon Buckets	9,794	Hot Water Heaters	412	Ammunition (lbs)	5
Stoves	200	Baby Dolls	790	Guns	3
55-Gallon Barrels	13,354	Bags of Police Riot Gear	6	Couches	95
Messages in Bottles	106	Computer Printers	2	Motorcycles	12
Patio Chairs	640	Navigational Buoys	850	Shower Stalls	2
Air Conditioners	74	John Deere Combine	1	Ping Pong Table	1
Trash Cans	1,215	Propane Tanks	1,189	Trampoline	1
Shopping Carts	78	5th Wheel Trailers	1	Typewriter	1
Car Engines	21	Tops of School Buses	1	20th Century	
Computer Monitors	147	Windmills	1	Steam Boat Boiler	1
Lawn Mowers	61	Fire Extinguishers	168	Electric Scooters	18
Televisions	486	Freezers	155	Helipad	1
Civil War Mortar Shells	1	Life Jackets	417	Playstation	1
Prosthetic Limbs	13	Jet Skis	14	Vintage Barbie Doll	
Construction Cones	741	Safes	31	Collection	1
Helmets	81	Electric Guitars	2	Grandfather Clocks	2
Kegs	3	Dishwashers	71	Box of Military Coins	2
Waste Oil (Gallons)	537	Bicycles	147	Laptop	3
Unicycle	1	Hot Tubs	19	Dryers	3
Coolers	1,152	Gas Cans	776	VCR	

MEET THE CREW



CALLIE SCHASER
PROGRAMS MANAGER

LEAH CAFARELLI
MARKETING MANAGER

RHIANNON ROGSTAD
DEVELOPMENT COORDINATOR

CAPTAIN SCOTT
TOWBOAT CAPTAIN

DAVID SOLBRIG
CREW MEMBER

MIKE COYNE-LOGAN
EDUCATIONAL FACILITATOR

DEREK MITCHELL
OPERATIONS MANAGER

CARSON LUND-FULLER
CREW MEMBER

BRIAN CRESS
FLEET MANAGER

RACHEL LOOMIS
MISSISSIPPI RIVER INSTITUTE MANAGER

ANDREW LAYER
PROGRAMS MANAGER

SHELLY HAMM
FINANCE MANAGER

KAITLYN STRICKER
EDUCATION MANAGER

DAN BREIDENSTEIN
VICE PRESIDENT

CHAD PREGRACKE
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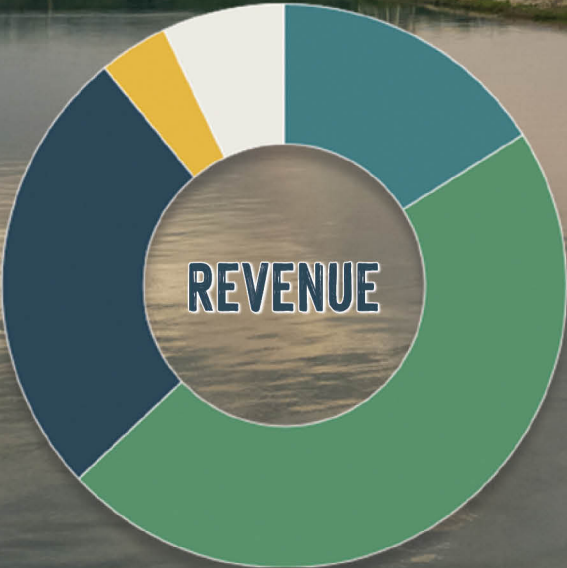
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87% PROGRAM SERVICES
10% MANAGEMENT & GENERAL
3% PUBLIC RELATIONS



CORPORATIONS 47%
FOUNDATIONS 26%
INDIVIDUALS 16%
OTHER 7%
GOVERNMENT 4%

A WORD FROM THE BENCH

By all measures, 2024 was another banner year for Living Lands and Waters (LLW). This report touches on many of the highlights of the year, ranging from planting trees, cleanups, education, and pulling cars out of the river.

I am excited to report that our new Mississippi River Institute was parked right under the Arch in St. Louis in 2024 and, in 2025, will educate students and other interested parties in Memphis and St. Paul. The schedule is packed for 2025 for a multitude of LLW activities.

These things don't happen without the energetic team of LLW's dedicated women and men that leverage our resources by leading literal boatloads of volunteers to help further our mission. Chad continues to lead the team, while others have stepped up in larger roles as the organization grows. At the end of 2024, the Board engaged in reviewing all LLW jobs and compensation to make sure our people are in line with the changing market. We also added four great individuals to our Board —two men and two women—with new skills and fresh ideas for the year ahead.

None of the activities recapped in this report occur without the generosity of our donors. We are all aware that costs are higher, and non-profits are not exempt from that pressure. Those higher costs, coupled with our program expansion, create an ongoing need for generous donations from our supporters. Thank you, in advance, for your continued support of LLW. It truly matters in so many ways.

Cheers,
Rick Calhoun
Chairman

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Founder and President

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MISSISSIPPI RIVER INSTITUTE



The Mississippi River Institute (MRI) completed its inaugural full year of Workforce Development workshops and events, opening students' eyes to the vast opportunities along the mighty Mississippi. Anchored in the Quad Cities during the spring and St. Louis in the fall, students came aboard the barge to experience the mighty Mississippi River in a new, inspiring way.

Over the course of the year, the MRI hosted **26 workshops**, engaging **540 high school students** and highlighting the vital economic and ecological roles of our nation's rivers. Participants met with a wide range of river professionals, including captains, deckhands, river ecologists, national park rangers, commercial fishermen, and dispatchers.



They even toured towboats, discovering firsthand the diverse and exciting career paths the river offers.

Beyond student workshops, the barge also welcomed the community, hosting **30 events** for **489 attendees** in the Quad Cities and St. Louis regions. From board meetings and volunteer celebrations to leadership conferences, the MRI barge proved to be a unique and inspiring venue, offering unmatched views of the river.

Next up, the MRI barge will make waves in Memphis, TN, during Spring 2025, before heading to St. Paul, MN, for its summer and fall programs. Stay tuned for more opportunities to explore the incredible potential of the Mississippi River!

To learn more, head to mississippiriverinstitute.org



RIVER CLEANUPS



This year, our cleanup journey began early, launching in January with backwater efforts along the Mississippi River in Illinois City. By the end of the month, we tackled a swift excavator cleanup before diving headfirst into our Alternative Spring Break season in Memphis come March.

With our dedicated crew and volunteers, we powered through **127 cleanup missions** across **11 waterways**: the Mississippi, Illinois, Ohio, Tennessee, Rock, Cumberland, Des Plaines, Allegheny, Monongahela, Fontana Lake, and Eagle Creek Reservoir.

2024 marked an exciting expansion of our efforts as we added three new rivers—the Little



Tennessee, Allegheny, and Monongahela—to our cleanup map, along with our first-ever cleanups in North Carolina. These additions bring our cumulative totals since 1998 to **29 rivers** cleaned across **22 states**.

Thanks to the relentless dedication of **1,118 volunteers** and the heavy lifting of our trusty “Game Changer” excavator, we removed a staggering 458,919 pounds of trash from America’s waterways this year. These efforts bring our all-time total to an extraordinary **13,775,259 pounds!**



2024 ADOPT A RIVER MILE ADOPTEES

214 MISSISSIPPI RIVER | 158 TENNESSEE RIVER | 43 ILLINOIS RIVER | 13 OHIO RIVER | 126 OTHER RIVERS

GREAT MISSISSIPPI RIVER CLEANUP STATS: 172 VOLUNTEERS | 731 POUNDS REMOVED

ALTERNATIVE SPRING BREAK



Our 2024 Alternative Spring Break was nothing short of extraordinary! Over three weeks, **79 passionate college students** from 8 universities—Allegheny College, Carroll University, University of Central Arkansas, UW-Stevens Point, Illinois State, Harvard, Iowa State, and the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign—teamed up to tackle McKellar Lake's trash problem. Their combined efforts resulted in an impressive haul of **93,792 pounds** of trash—13,000 pounds more than in 2023!

The excitement didn't stop there. This year, our cleanup saw an incredible boost from our sponsors and partners, including Cargill, Continental Cement, ADM, Memphis Botanic Garden, and our very own board member, Mark Werning, who rolled up their sleeves and joined the fun.

Together, these partnerships and dedicated volunteers made 2024's ASB a season to remember!



PITTSBURGH DIVE CLEANUPS



Monumental Moment Alert! When we heard about up to 100 abandoned cars and boats polluting the Allegheny, Monongahela, and Ohio Rivers in downtown Pittsburgh, we sprang into action. With our excavator barge and mini towboat, our crew teamed up with the Hamilton County Police Association Search and Recovery Squad and Pittsburgh River Rescue EMS to safely locate and remove the debris.

In just three days, we pulled 52 cars—**totaling over 100,000 pounds**—from the rivers. A second sweep added 56,440 pounds of boats, metal docks, and other large debris, making this one of our most successful and efficient cleanups to date.

Thanks to the incredible support of our new partners at PCNA, we restored beauty to these waterways while removing hazardous waste and eyesores for good.





In 2024, the MillionTrees Project celebrated a landmark achievement: the planting of our **2 MILLIONTH TREE** at Arconic!

Over **57 events**—including 7 tree plantings and 50 tree-wrapping sessions—we distributed **181,631 trees** across multiple states, bringing us closer to a greener future.

While we missed the incredible support of AmeriCorps NCCC this year, we look forward to partnering with them again in the future. Thanks to our dedicated crew and **3,329 enthusiastic volunteers**, we still made remarkable progress. A special shoutout goes to the Quad City schools and educators who hosted tree-wrapping events, fostering community engagement and environmental stewardship.

2 million trees & PLANTING!



In 2024, our invasive species removal efforts made a significant impact, with **569 volunteers** participating in **ten restoration events**. Volunteers tackled invasive plants like bush honeysuckle, burning bush, and buckthorn at various locations throughout the year.

Groups from Ford, Modern Woodmen, John Deere, Future Farmers of America, and Suppliers Partnership for the Environment each brought their energy and dedication to individual events, helping us achieve remarkable results.

This year also brought an exciting new endeavor: building wave attenuators and a floating wetland structure in Eagle Creek Reservoir, Indianapolis, IN, with volunteers from Envita. Floating wetlands offer a natural solution to improving water quality by filtering pollutants, providing habitat for wildlife, and reducing harmful algal blooms.





EDUCATION WORKSHOPS

In 2024, our Floating Classroom educational workshops reached new heights, engaging **370 students** from **14 schools** across **17 sessions** in cities like Augusta, Rabbit Hash, Cincinnati, Louisville, and Lawrenceburg. Together, these students removed an impressive **6,937 pounds** of trash from local waterways while learning about watershed dynamics, water quality testing, and conservation.

Our educational impact didn't stop there. Summer camps in Buffalo, IA, and Rock Island, IL, welcomed **61 students** to explore river life through activities like our Mussel Memory activity and scavenger hunts on the river.

Additionally, we incorporated educational discussions into lunchtime during Alternative Spring Break and delved into environmental topics with **76 college students**.

Beyond the riverbanks, our outreach efforts connected with **1,926 students** through in-person and virtual presentations, bringing the total number of students educated in 2024 to an inspiring **2,433!**



BARGE PARTY FUNDRAISERS

MARITIME GOES GREEN
BARGE PARTY

This year, we were thrilled to host not one, but two unforgettable barge parties!

The inaugural **Maritime Goes Green** barge party was a sold-out triumph, bringing together industry leaders on the river in Nashville, TN. A heartfelt thank-you to everyone who joined us in celebrating the maritime industry's dedication to a greener future. This milestone event would not have been possible without the incredible support of our co-hosts, the WIMOs Association.

In June, we returned to the banks of the Mississippi River at Beacon Harbor—our future HQ—for our annual **LL&W Barge Party**. Despite looming storms, over 700 enthusiastic supporters came together to make it one of our most successful events yet. Thanks to the generosity of our attendees, we raised vital funds to amplify the Beacon Harbor space for future community impact.



LL&W
BARGE PARTY



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Living Lands & Waters
17624 Route 84 North
East Moline, IL 61244



**SCAN HERE TO STAY UPDATED
ON ALL THINGS LL&W!**



OUR MISSION

To aid in the protection, preservation, and restoration of the natural
environment of our nation's major rivers and their watersheds.

To expand awareness of environmental issues and responsibility encompassing
our rivers.

To create a desire and opportunity for citizens to take an active role in helping
to make a cleaner river environment.

LIVINGLANDSANDWATERS.ORG