



2021 ANNUAL REPORT



TEMPERED GROWTH

In 2021, we turned a page. We're growing, thoughtfully. Our generous donors and supporters invest in our innovative, solution-oriented approach to protecting our waterways. In return, we invest in field research to document changes, understand problems, and test solutions, provide technical support to landowners and towns, and we share what we learn – expanding the proven formula that works with and for our communities. It provides landowners, residents, community leaders, our youth, partners, and visitors with the resources, tools, and knowledge that make a difference for the Ausable and beyond.

Science + Stewardship = Solutions.

We're building staff capacity to find science-based solutions to the challenges that face our communities and the streams, lakes, wetlands, and ecosystems they rely on and love. The following pages describing our program achievements also introduce you to new staff members who bring added energy and scientific skills to our community. Your support makes their work meaningful and effective.

CONTENTS

Financials.....	1
Healthy Streams	2
Clean Water.....	4
Biodiverse Habitats	6
Engaged Communities.....	8
Donors.....	10
Headwaters Council	10
In-kind Giving	13
Business Partners.....	13

EDITOR: Stephen Longmire

PHOTO: (opposite page, left photo)
Patrick Bly

PHOTOS: Where not noted otherwise,
photo credit AsRA.

Solution-oriented science is only as effective as our ability to communicate its value and demonstrate how it works. In 2021, we expanded our commitment to science communication and education, thanks to a generous property donation from Craig and Bettyann Hadden. The property, along the East Branch Ausable River in the Town of Jay, will be the site of a new education center. Finally, a home for our educational efforts that can serve as a laboratory for sharing our work with the public. Stay tuned, we'll be telling you more about this effort in the weeks and months ahead.

We couldn't do it without you. Your contributions of time, passion, and funds make our work possible. Watch us grow.

Kelley Tucker
Executive Director

Wally Walters
Chair, Board of Directors

Finances



Financial Position

As of December 31, 2021 (per independent review)

Assets

Cash & Savings	\$ 244,816
Other Assets	\$ 179,118
Total Assets	\$ 423,934

Liabilities & Net Assets

Current Liabilities	\$ 17,765
Unrestricted Net Assets	\$ 406,169
Temporarily Restricted Net Assets	\$ 0
Total Liabilities & Net Assets	\$ 423,934

How your support was allocated

Programs & Communications	80%
Administration & General	16.3%
Fundraising	3.7%

A copy of the latest annual filing for the Ausable River Association, Inc. may be obtained, upon request, from the organization (AsRA, PO Box 8, Wilmington, NY 12997) or from the New York State Office of the Attorney General, Records Access Officer, The Capitol, Albany, NY 12224 (www.charitiesnys.com) or by contacting 212-416-8401. You can obtain a description of the programs and activities that your contribution will support by contacting us at the above address.

Statement of Activities

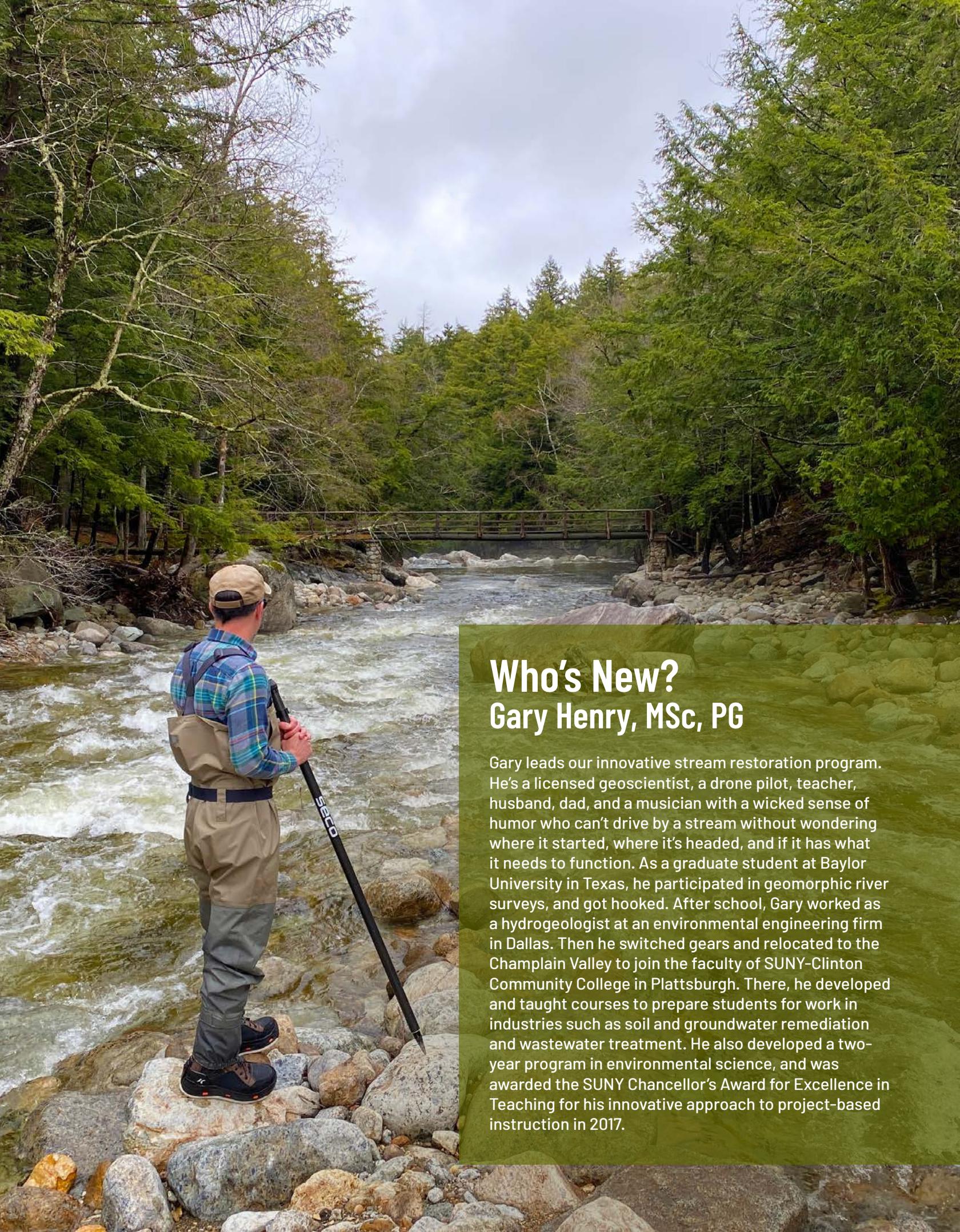
As of December 31, 2021 (per independent review)

Support and Revenue

Income	
Contributions	\$ 323,146
Restricted Grants	\$ 273,890
Program and Other Revenue	\$ 231,513
Interest	\$ 4
Total	\$ 828,553

Expenses

Programs & Communications	\$ 472,569
Administration & General	\$ 40,796
Professional Development	\$ 13,518
Fundraising	\$ 21,862
Printing & Advertising	\$ 15,675
Office & Technology	\$ 12,308
Professional Services	\$ 8,005
Insurance & Depreciation	\$ 5,328
TOTAL	\$ 590,061



Who's New? Gary Henry, MSc, PG

Gary leads our innovative stream restoration program. He's a licensed geoscientist, a drone pilot, teacher, husband, dad, and a musician with a wicked sense of humor who can't drive by a stream without wondering where it started, where it's headed, and if it has what it needs to function. As a graduate student at Baylor University in Texas, he participated in geomorphic river surveys, and got hooked. After school, Gary worked as a hydrogeologist at an environmental engineering firm in Dallas. Then he switched gears and relocated to the Champlain Valley to join the faculty of SUNY-Clinton Community College in Plattsburgh. There, he developed and taught courses to prepare students for work in industries such as soil and groundwater remediation and wastewater treatment. He also developed a two-year program in environmental science, and was awarded the SUNY Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Teaching for his innovative approach to project-based instruction in 2017.

Healthy Streams

We're restoring and reconnecting streams to improve water quality, to connect key habitats for fish, frogs, stoneflies, and turtles, and to ensure they are self-sustaining: capable of handling storms, floods, drought, and ice. The result? Healthy streams and resilience for our communities, human and wild.

We supervised the first major stream restoration project in the Town of Jay as part of the East Branch Restoration Program. The completion of Site 3, behind the former Upper Jay schoolhouse, was a big step toward flood resilience for the town that restored important habitats for water quality and native species.

We partnered with the US Fish and Wildlife Service for year two of our work to address sediment transport and eroding banks that threatened the hamlet of Keene's water main. The design included J-hooks and converging

rock clusters that direct flow away from eroding banks, and toewood benches that narrow the active channel, protecting streambanks and the town's drinking water infrastructure.

Working in partnership with The Nature Conservancy and the US Fish and Wildlife Service, we're expanding our work to replace undersized culverts in the Ausable and Boquet River watersheds. We're creating safer roads, passage for wild critters, and healthy streams with reduced erosion.

A Lake Champlain Basin Program grant, awarded in 2021, will allow us to develop hydraulic geometry curves specific to the rivers and streams in our region. There're a couple years of hard work ahead, but the end result will increase our capacity to develop effective designs for stream restoration and culvert replacement.





PHOTO: Brendan Wiltse

Clean Water

We use a combination of field science, lab work, and technology to gather information about what is changing in Ausable streams and lakes and the effects these changes have on drinking water, ecosystem health, and overall water quality. The result? Knowledge that informs long-term management and rapid response when problems arise.

Thanks to significant financial commitments by the North Elba Local Enhancement and Advancement Fund, the Village of Lake Placid (LEAF), and private donors through the Adirondack Foundation, our work to monitor and reduce road salt loads in Mirror Lake has been extended through 2025. Our goal to reduce salt concentrations to sustainable levels is in reach, with steady reductions in sodium and chloride over the past two years.

After a one-year hiatus due to Covid, we teamed up with the Adirondack Mountain Club to host the sixth year of the Teen Aquatic Stewardship Program. Nine high school teens joined us for an immersive week-long workshop. They learned about the intricacies of physical, chemical and biological sampling techniques, then took their knowledge home to create environmental action plans to apply in their communities.

We collected 117,000 data points from our year-round monitoring of 30 different stream sites. And we monitored eight lakes, collecting surface and bottom samples. We analyze that data for trends and concerns, compile the information and use it to report to the public on watershed water quality and the threats to it. AsRA's staff also provided field support to the Adirondack Lakes Survey Corporation.



Who's New? Leanna Thalmann, MSc, pCLM

Year-round, in all weather, undaunted by rain, snow, sleet, and glaring sun, in a canoe, on foot, boring through ice when needed, Leanna monitors the health of Ausable streams and lakes and works with communities to keep them healthy. A 2020 graduate of the University of Vermont, Leanna partnered with the W.H. Miner Agricultural Research Institute of Chazy, focusing her Master of Science research on nutrient runoff from agricultural fields in the Ausable watershed.

In 2019, she placed first for her presentation of this work at the joint annual scientific meeting of the American Society of Agronomy, the Crop Science Society of America, and the Soil Science Society of America. Leanna worked as a subsistence fisheries intern for the US Forest Service in Sitka, Alaska, and served as an intern with Brookhaven National Laboratory and Suffolk County Parks. In addition to her lake and stream monitoring work, she leads AsRA's water quality and salt reduction initiative in Lake Placid.

A woman with long brown hair, wearing a light green button-down shirt and dark waders, stands on a grassy bank next to a river. She is smiling and holding a black net. The river flows past her, with several large rocks in the water. The background shows a dense forest of trees under a clear blue sky.

Who's New? Liz Metzger, BSc

If it's science in the field, organizing data, or talking with passersby who have stopped to understand what those folks in waders are doing in the river, it's Liz you want working by your side. Liz joined AsRA as our 2021 river steward and we're excited that she agreed to stay on as a full-time research associate. One day she may be working side-by-side with Carrienne Pershyn to plant a streambank with native grasses and shrubs, the next she may be out with partners reducing the spread of invasive species.

Liz also supports geomorphic assessment with Gary Henry and heads out to monitor waterways when Leanna Thalmann needs an assist. If you attend an AsRA event, Liz is sure to be involved. She holds a BSc degree in Environmental Science from Juniata College, spent a summer as a stream barrier technician with The Nature Conservancy, and worked for a field season as a fisheries technician with the Wyoming Game and Fish Department.

Biodiverse Habitats

We're protecting and nurturing native biodiversity by learning what native species living in and alongside our waterways need to flourish, and how we can focus our efforts to protect, manage, and restore key freshwater habitats. The result? Strategic conservation of threatened native species and their riparian habitats.

We're mapping the spatial distribution of brook, brown, and rainbow trout and Atlantic salmon using environmental DNA. We detected trout DNA across 65 kilometers of stream in the Ausable watershed and visited salmon spawning areas on 25 kilometers of the Boquet river watershed. We identify where each fish species lives so that AsRA and our partners can prioritize future research, restoration, and conservation efforts.

Last spring, we planted 700 native trees and shrubs on streambanks and in riparian corridors.

The root systems of these native plants help strengthen banks and prevent the invasion of non-native species — a perfect complement to our stream restoration efforts.

AsRA's river steward surveyed 32 kilometers of stream for invasive species, including Japanese knotweed and purple loosestrife. We worked closely with partners at the Adirondack Park Invasive Plant Program to coordinate the removal of a large knotweed infestation on Lewis Brook and the East Branch Ausable River in Upper Jay. The coordinated management of these sites will prevent spread of the species downstream.

We coordinated thought exchange days with regional partner organizations to share achievements and challenges in our efforts to replant streambanks. These valuable lessons will inform our work in the Ausable watershed in 2022 and beyond





PHOTO: Maggie Newell

Engaging Communities

We're engaging the communities around us – residents, visitors, kids, and adults – in the processes of learning about, caring for, and enjoying the watershed. The result? There's a growing ethic of watershed stewardship in our communities: increased curiosity about how individual and community actions will affect our waterways, growing interest in the innovative methods AsRA deploys to monitor and restore them, and a desire to contribute time, energy, and donations to protect them.

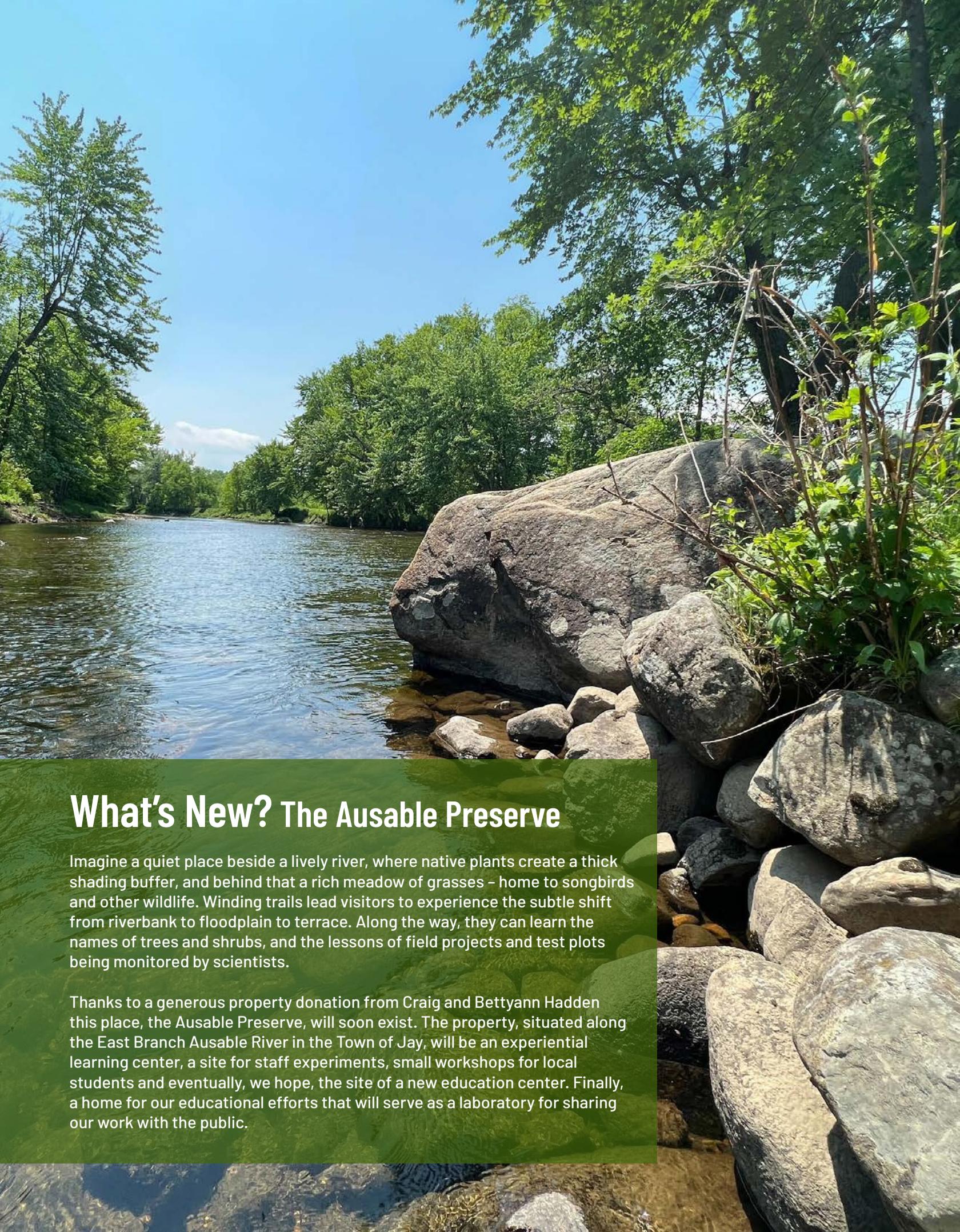
In April, over 100 volunteers removed over 2,000 pounds of roadside trash in the towns of Jay, Keene, North Elba, and Wilmington. In September, volunteers met in the community of Peru to remove several hundred pounds of trash and 138 tires from the main stem Ausable River.

Over 100 Adirondack residents and visitors joined AsRA staff and local experts for 11 educational and interpretive outdoor trips that explored art

and biology, birding, bat and moth research, tree identification, waterfalls, river ecology, local history, and fly-fishing.

Over 125 supporters joined us for the revival of our annual Friendraiser event at Ampersand Bay Resort in Saranac Lake. It's our way of saying thanks, sharing our success, and providing one-to-one conversations and hands-on learning opportunities with AsRA's staff.

We celebrated the 10th anniversary of Ride for the River, the annual family-friendly fundraising event showcasing the Ausable River and the communities surrounding it. Nearly 100 participants braved rainy July weather for a fun day of cycling, music, and food.



What's New? The Ausable Preserve

Imagine a quiet place beside a lively river, where native plants create a thick shading buffer, and behind that a rich meadow of grasses – home to songbirds and other wildlife. Winding trails lead visitors to experience the subtle shift from riverbank to floodplain to terrace. Along the way, they can learn the names of trees and shrubs, and the lessons of field projects and test plots being monitored by scientists.

Thanks to a generous property donation from Craig and Bettyann Hadden this place, the Ausable Preserve, will soon exist. The property, situated along the East Branch Ausable River in the Town of Jay, will be an experiential learning center, a site for staff experiments, small workshops for local students and eventually, we hope, the site of a new education center. Finally, a home for our educational efforts that will serve as a laboratory for sharing our work with the public.

Thank You

We rely on the support of donors who care about the Ausable River, its lakes and tributaries. Together we make a difference.



PHOTO: Patrick Bly

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