



20  
23

A group of approximately ten people, mostly women, are standing on a grassy area. They are wearing life jackets and some are holding up white signs with blue letters that spell out "LRWP". Some people are waving. In the foreground, the red hull of a kayak is visible, with a black seat and a paddle resting inside. The background shows a line of trees under a cloudy sky.

# ANNUAL REPORT

# A Message from the Board

Dear Friends of the Lower Raritan Watershed --

In the following pages you will learn about a few ways in which Lower Raritan Watershed Partnership works to improve water quality, build community around concern for the environment, enhance environmental resiliency, and nurture deep connections with our natural landscape.

We also share a snapshot of 2023 fundraising and expenditures, and say a sincere THANK YOU to those who have supported our work in so many ways.

We believe that the Lower Raritan Watershed Partnership exemplifies the positive impact that environmental non-profits can have on our local communities. Through the community boat build, water quality monitoring, stream and river cleanups, stormwater management, environmental restoration, and educational programming we aim to enrich the lives of people in central New Jersey and prepare our watershed community for a more resilient and thriving future.

We invite you to join us to continue this work in 2024 and beyond.

## *The LRWP Board*

Amy Braunstein, Esq  
Nandini Checko  
Heather Fenyk, Ph.D, AICP/PP  
Anton Getz  
Missy Holzer, Ph.D

Doriann Kerber  
David Tulloch, Ph.D  
Johnny Quispe, Ph.D  
Alex Zakrewsky

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# LRWP Vision, Mission & Approach to Action

## LRWP VISION:

**A HEALTHY RARITAN RIVER AND LOWER RARITAN WATERSHED COMMUNITY, RESTORED AND SUSTAINED THROUGH COLLABORATION, PARTICIPATORY SCIENCE, AND STEWARDSHIP.**

## LRWP Mission:

The mission of the Lower Raritan Watershed Partnership (LRWP) is to restore, enhance, and conserve the natural resources of “New Jersey Watershed Management Area 9” (the Lower Raritan Watershed) through community-based participatory science and stewardship, environmental and ecological education, and innovation.

## LRWP Approach to Action:

The LRWP seeks to foster environmental appreciation and stewardship by staging and supporting nature-centered activities in the Lower Raritan Watershed, by cultivating science through community participation and collaboration in watershed research activities and by communicating scientific findings about the watershed to both residents and established decision-making bodies for informed decision making about policy, land use, and landscape change.



# About LRWP

*The LRWP is grateful to our volunteer Board and the dozens of Rutgers, County and other volunteers who help coordinate and provide oversight for our work.*

## Board President

Heather Fenyk, Ph.D., AICP/PP

## Board Secretary

Amy Braunstein, Esq.

## Board Treasurer

Alex Zakrewsky

## Water Quality Monitoring Outreach Coordinator

Jocelyn Palomino

## Boat Build Team

Derek Hartwick, C. Brian Smith, Nick Schmidt

## Legal Counsel

Philip George, Eric M. Bernstein & Associates, LLC

## Web Development

Atanas Entchev, EntchevDotCom, LLC

## GIS Special Project Intern

Gavin Wagner

## Report Development

Maya Fenyk

## Rutgers Partnerships

In 2023, dozens of Rutgers students conducted research and analyses and contributed to LRWP program and/or project development through courses taught or coordinated by Heather Fenyk, Karen O'Neill, David Tulloch and Michele Bakacs.

Many thanks to these students and educators. Thanks also to Rutgers Professors Nicole Fahrenfeld and members of her lab including Genevieve Ehasz & Piash Ahamed. Special thanks to Dan Van Abs and the Rutgers' Raritan Scholar Internship Program Interns Chris McLaughlin and Maxim Pavon.

# Engagement Snapshot

4,256 volunteer hours x \$31.80\* =  
**\$135,357** in donated labor!

## Fundraising

Total Individual Contributors: 100  
Total Contributions from Individuals: \$45,096  
Corporate / Foundation Contributions: \$31,235  
Grants & Project Revenue: \$18,535



1.4k followers



759 followers



503 followers



35 subscribers

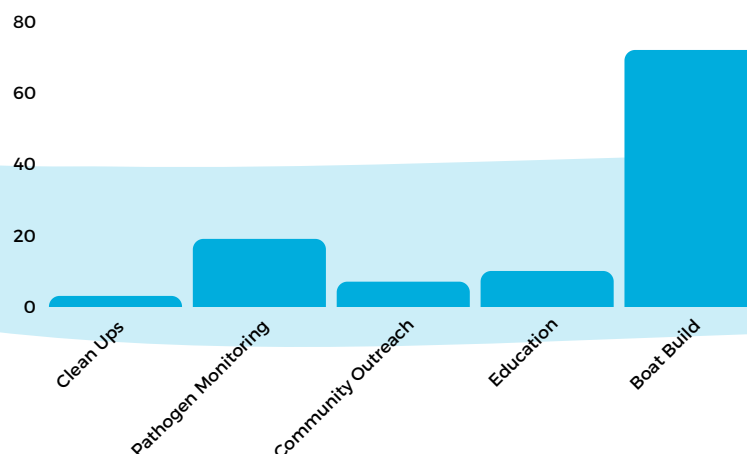


Website Page  
Views: 28.7k  
annually



Newsletter  
distribution:  
2,232

## LRWP hosted 110+ Events in 2023



*\*Based on the 2023 estimated hourly work value of \$31.80/hr reported by Independent Sector and the Do Good Institute.*

# 01: Environmental Monitoring

## Pathogens Monitoring

Conducted in partnership with Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Middlesex County, the Interstate Environmental Commission, and the Rutgers Fahrenfeld Lab, our pathogens monitoring programs helps us track water quality issues including disease causing pathogens, fish kills, and harmful algal blooms (HABS). Every Thursday from May - September we report when the Raritan River is unsafe for boating, fishing or primary contact recreation. We monitor at 6 sites in the Lower Raritan Watershed: **Site #1:** Riverside Park, **Site #2:** Rutgers Boathouse, **Site #3:** Edison Boathouse, **Site #4:** Ken Buchanan Waterfront Park, **Site #5:** South Amboy Waterfront Park, **Site #6:** 2nd Street Park.

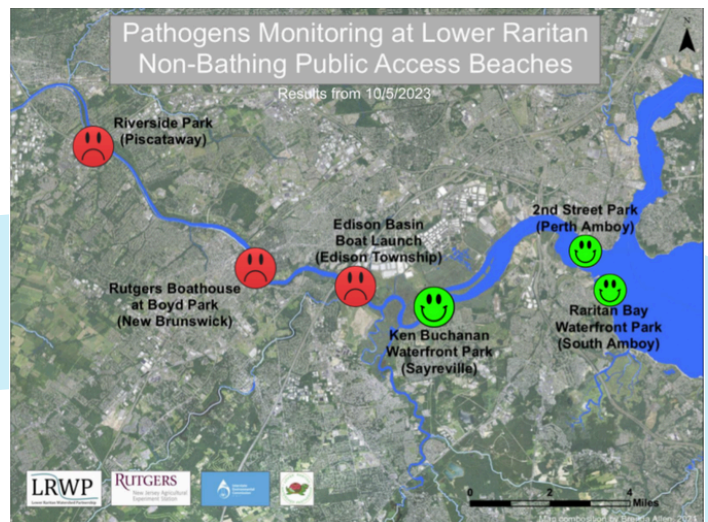
*2023 waters were the “cleanest” yet!*

- Conducted every week for 22 weeks.
- Weekly results are reported in English and Spanish on the LRWP webpage and shared via the Rutgers Hydrological Observatory: <https://tessera.rutgers.edu/rrho/>
- 52.8% of sampling events were below federal threshold for concern.

Raritan River Pathogens Monitoring Results for 10/5/2023 :

Site Name	Time sampled	Enterococcus in CFUs	Fecal Coliform in CFUs	Status
Riverside Park	8:07 am	160	570	☹️
Rutgers Boathouse	8:43 am	190	600	☹️
Edison Boathouse	9:18 am	220	520	☹️
Ken Buchanan Waterfront Park	10:25 am	70	290	😊
South Amboy Waterfront Park	11:00 am	7	170	😊
2 <sup>nd</sup> Street Park	11:35 am	20	200	😊

Enterococci results are reported in Colony Forming Units or CFUs.  
 Suitable enterococci levels for primary contact should not exceed 104 cfu/100ml.  
 \*\*TNTC = too numerous to count\*\*  
 These results are preliminary and awaiting Quality Control.



Many thanks to our 2023 Pathogens monitors:

- Jocelyn Palomino
- Frank Dahl
- Irene Riegner
- Rose Lawless
- Colleen M Georges
- Monica Orso
- Genevieve Ehasz
- Piash Ahamed
- Sheyla Casco
- Andrew Gehman

Scan Here for Raritan River Water Quality Status



# 01: Environmental Monitoring

## Pathogens Monitoring Results

ALL years 2019- 2023 (n= 90ish)

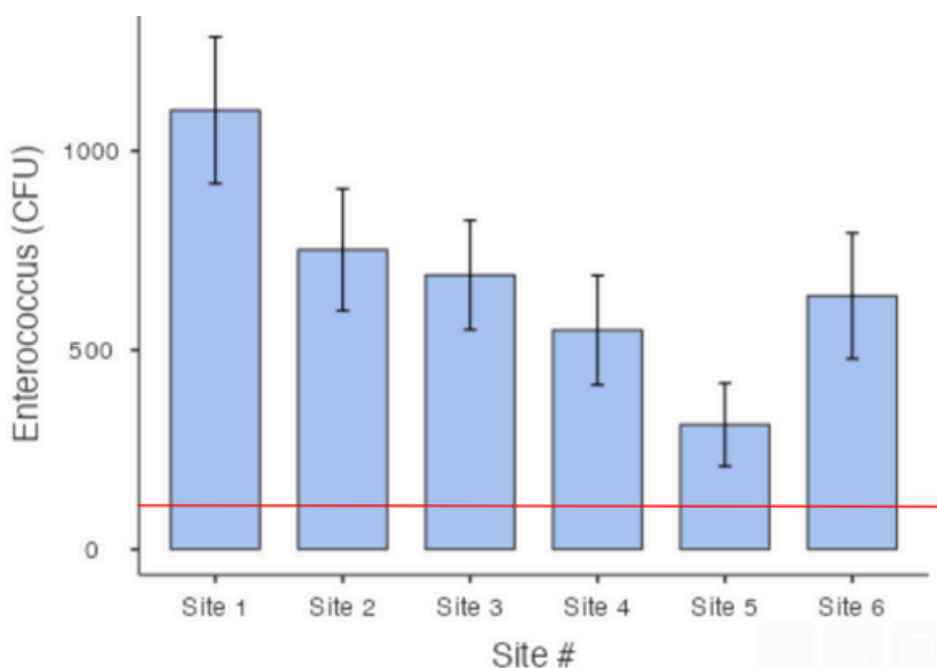
Site Name	# of Exceedances	Percent Exceedances
<b>Site 1:</b> Riverside Park	72	80%
<b>Site 2:</b> Rutgers Boathouse	56	62%
<b>Site 3:</b> Edison Boathouse	56	62%
<b>Site 4:</b> Ken Buchanan	39	43%
<b>Site 5:</b> South Amboy	16	17%
<b>Site 6:</b> Perth Amboy	34	37%

### Other Measured Variables:

- 2-day antecedent precipitation
- Air and water temperature
- Salinity
- Conductivity
- pH
- Dissolved Oxygen
- Tides
- Barometric Pressure
- Chlorophyll

\*Enterococcus Standard= 104 cfu/ 100ml for a single sample or 30 cfu/ 100ml for a 30-day geometric mean

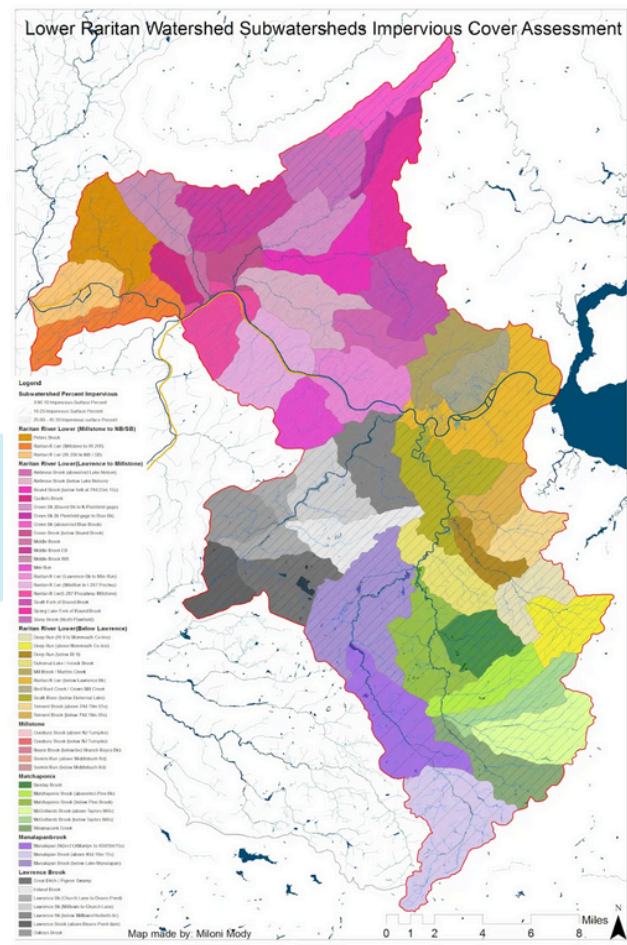
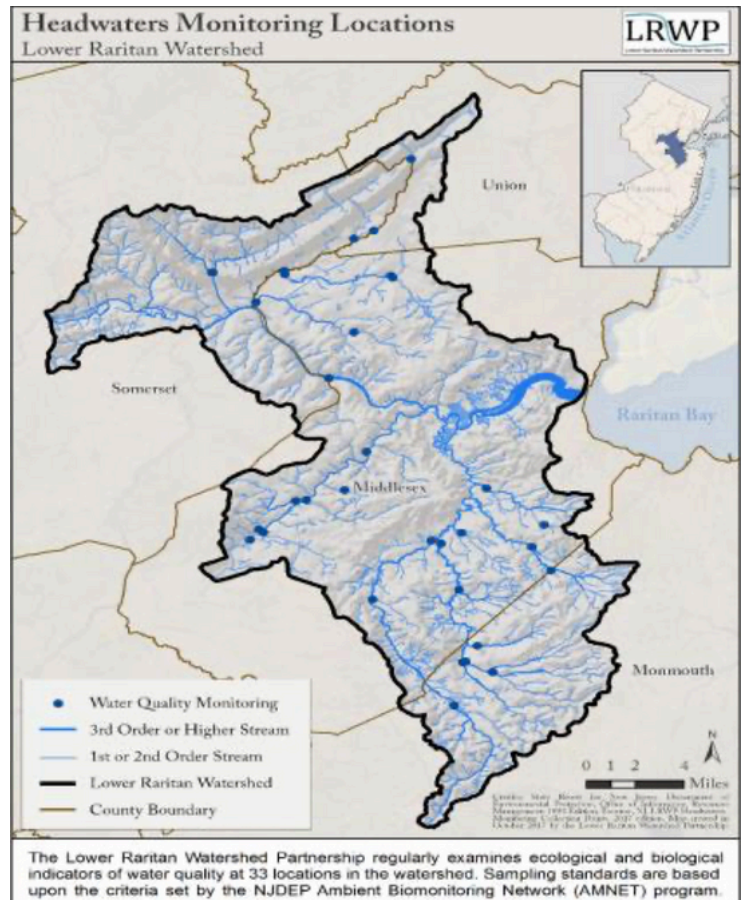
The chart shows the historic levels of enterococcus bacteria in our six monitoring locations for years 2019-2023. We see routinely high exceedances at Site 1, Riverside Park. Site 5, South Amboy Waterfront has the lowest rate of exceedance. Site 2 (Rutgers Boathouse), Site 3 (Edison Boathouse), Site 4 (Ken Buchanan Waterfront), and Site 6 (Perth Amboy Waterfront) have moderate exceedance rates.



# 01: Environmental Monitoring

## Streamkeepers

The LRWP's growing community of Streamkeepers help implement water quality monitoring efforts at sites across our watershed. The primary goals of this program are to gather and report data, evaluate the health of area streams, and measure the impact of stream restoration projects and stormwater management.



## Our 2023 Streamkeepers

Amy Braunstein & Sean Monahan  
Frank Dahl  
Jon Dugan  
Susan Edmunds  
4H EcoManiacs  
Michael Vacca  
Greg Cosentino

**STREAMKEEPERS WANTED!**  
*If you would like to be a streamkeeper, 33 streams in 6 sub-watersheds are “up for adoption”!*

# 02: Watershed Resilience

## South River Ecosystem Restoration Project

### *Working toward Resilience*

Since 2021, working under a \$249,639 National Fish and Wildlife Foundation grant, the LRWP and partners have shaped a 60% engineered design for a 165-acre coastal eco-park along the South River. The goals are multifold:

- Reduce coastal inundation and erosion along 2.5 miles of shoreline for neighboring flood-prone communities;
- Enhance breeding and foraging habitat for 10 state-listed threatened and endangered avian species; and
- Expand recreational access to blue and green spaces on the South River.



*Board Member Johnny Quispe, Ph.D assessing marshland with NOAA's Carl Alderson.*

### Proposed Project Plan



# 03: Watershed Restoration

## Litter Trap Planning

In partnership with the Borough of Dunellen, and with Cornell Dubilier Superfund settlement funds, the LRWP prepared to implement a Litter Trap collection device for the Green Brook. Installation in 2024 will coincide with development of metrics to assess device impact on plastics and trash reduction.



### Location

Approximate Coordinates:  
40.599305, -74.463213

- Green Brook at Jefferson Avenue (Dunellen and Green Brook)
- Access via New Jersey American Water property and/or Dunellen or Green Brook property
- Downstream from Plainfield Transfer Station



### Trash Trap

The Bandalong can operate year-round at a variety of different flow conditions without any mechanical assistance.

*The Litter Trap project was selected for implementation as part of the Cornell-Dubilier Electronics Natural Resource Damage Assessment and Restoration (NRDAR) Restoration Plan. This plan is an example of how the nation's strong Superfund Laws truly hold polluters accountable for environmental damages in our communities.*

# 03: Watershed Restoration

## Stream Cleanups

[Earth Day Cleanup of Mile Run Brook](#)

New Brunswick & Franklin Township

[Multi-site Green Brook Cleanup](#)

Dunellen, Green Brook, Middlesex Township, Plainfield, South Plainfield and Scotch Plains

[Green Brook Cleanup at Mountain View Park](#)

Middlesex Borough



*The Green Brook before the clean up*



*A group of our youngest volunteers, an early love of the environment is important to instill!*

# 04: MS4 Compliance

Through the LRWP's Municipal Stormwater Management Assistance Program, we work directly with municipalities to help them meet federal stormwater management requirements and to increase understanding of how our waterways and streetways are connected.

Examples of the direct assistance the LRWP provides:

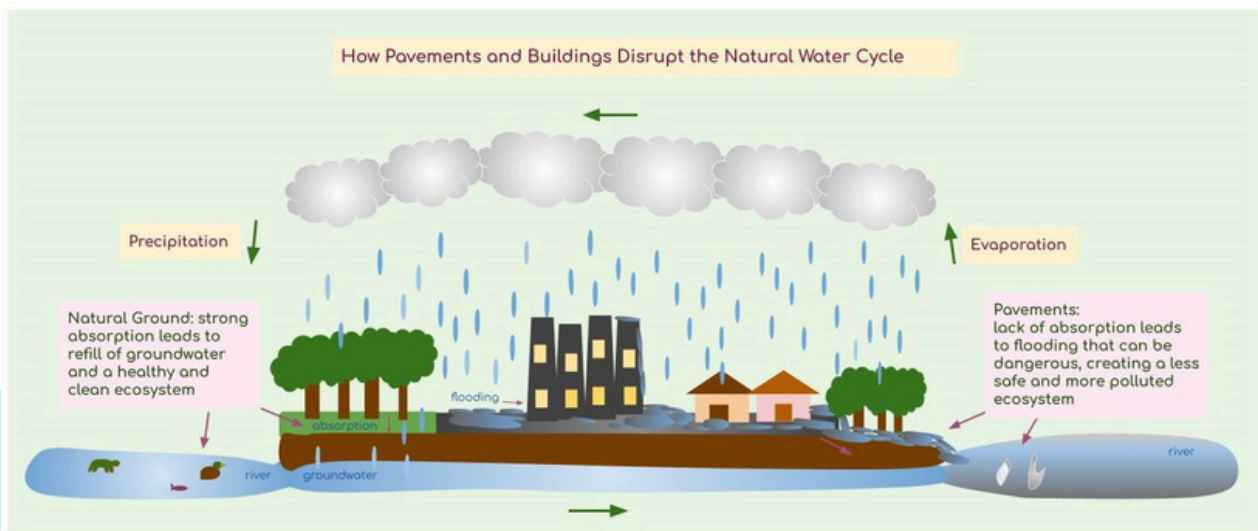
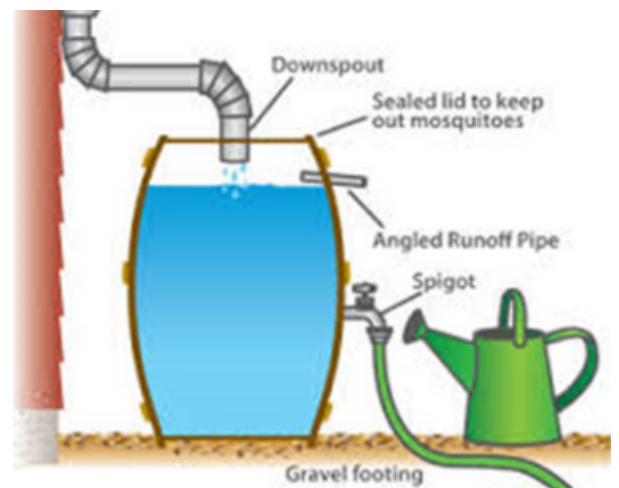
General Public Outreach

Target Audience Outreach

School/Youth Education & Activities

Community Involvement Activities

Watershed Regional Cooperation



An MS4 (Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System) is called a separate system because it does not combine with the sanitary sewer system and it is designed to gather water on the streets via storm drains and pipes and release it, without treatment, into local streams and rivers. Poor stormwater management in our communities not only leads to compromised water quality, but also flooding.

# 05: Watershed Education

## Summer Institute for Kids #lookfortheriver

For our 4th Summer, the LRWP partnered with coLAB Arts Summer Institute, engaging local children in watershed education.

This year's focus was to enliven the scientific study of watershed mechanics through creative expression, highlighting the symbiotic relationship between the two. The summer program culminated with 60 students creating a large map of New Brunswick's hidden streams and performing a choreographed "flash mob" demonstrating how stormwater flows, check out the video on our YouTube page!



*The Rock Dance Collective's movements depicted the journey of a drop of water traveling down Paul Robeson Boulevard to Boyd Park. This thought-provoking performance aimed to raise awareness about construction-induced flooding.*

**The Run Off**

• LRWP • RDC

Rock Dance Collective & Lower Raritan Watershed Partnership present  
**The Run Off**

Free Event  
October 8th at 12pm  
Boyd Park 515 NJ-18 N  
New Brunswick, NJ

ROCK DANCE COLLECTIVE LRWP coLAB ARTS MIDDLESEX COUNTY NJ JERSEY ARTS

# 06: Boat Build



The LRWP Boat Build Project aims to establish the inaugural fleet for a community-based rowing program on the Raritan River.



Our new boat house at 101 Raritan Avenue, Highland Park got a makeover! This space, a former abandoned filling station, has become a hub for community members of all ages to develop woodworking skills by building paddles and 'stable recreational' rowing vessels that will serve as the inaugural fleet for a youth rowing program.

72 Build Days

864 Volunteer Hours

2 Boats Completed



*Many thanks to boat build leads: Derek Hartwick, C. Brian Smith, Nicholas Schmidt, Amber & Colin Nickel, and of course, all of our volunteers!*

# 07: Boat Launch



## The Inaugural Launch!



On July 8, in the pouring rain, the LRWP hosted its inaugural boat launch and open house event. Despite the downpour, dozens of attendees, including boat-builders and members of the public, grabbed their paddles and got on the water with us to celebrate the completion and launch of our first handmade boat.

Thank you from the LRWP Board:  
*"There is absolutely no feeling that compares to realizing a job well done in the company of truly giving, community-minded people. Gratitude to our volunteers for the gifts of their vision, their hearts, and their hands. These fine vessels float!!!"*



# 08: Paddles and Walks

The LRWP organizes guided land- and water-based excursions to foster a deeper connection with all parts of the watershed



## 2023 Paddles:

- July 2 – moonlight fireworks paddle
- July 22 – Weston’s Mill Pond morning paddle
- July 29 – kayak & wooden vessel launch
- August 26 – South River to abandoned ferry guided paddle



*Many thanks to our paddle leads Anton Getz and Gregg Bucino!*

## 2023 Walks:

- January 1 – New Year’s Day Hike
- January 29 – Mac’s Brook (Bridgewater) Stormwater Flows Walk
- April 1 – Walking the (lines) in the Watershed: the Henry Hudson Trail

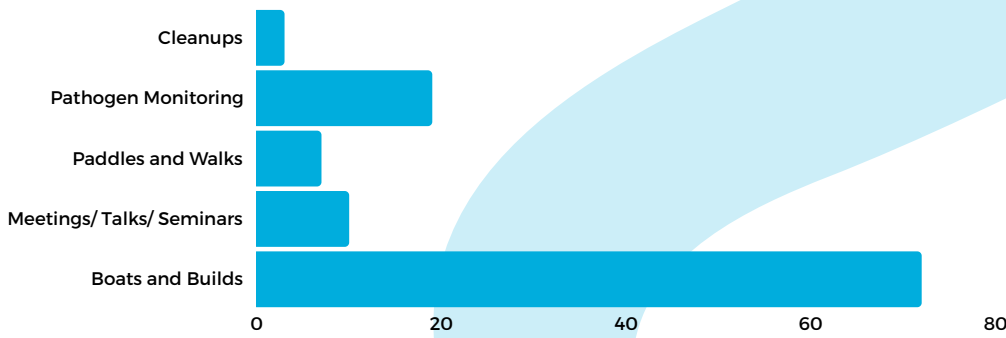


LRWP Board member David Tulloch led guided walks along historic trails and even along the streams and detention basins at Bridgewater Mall, showcasing the interconnectedness of the watershed and fostering appreciation for its beauty and ecological relationships in surprising locations.



# 09: 2023 Events Recap

**LRWP  
hosted 110+  
Events in  
2023**



## Boats and Builds

Build a Rain Barrel  
Build your own paddle  
Inaugural Boat Launch  
2x/weekly Boat Builds

## Meetings and Talks

Launch NJ Clean Waters Coalition  
Lessons in Water Biology Tour of Rutgers Lab  
What's in Your Water? Lunchtime talk  
Holiday Potluck  
The "Run-Off" Stormwater Flows Performance  
Stormwater Basin Retrofit Project  
Tours

Virtual Lunch & Learn, Lessons from Historical Streams of the Lower Raritan Watershed.  
2023 Book Club: "Serviceberry"  
LRWP at Franklin Township Library  
LRWP in conversation with National Park Service RE: Scenic & Natural River Status

## Paddles

Guided moonlight fireworks paddle  
Guided morning paddle – Weston's Mill Pond  
Kayak & wooden vessel launch event  
Guided paddle – South River to the abandoned ferry

## Clean Ups

Earth Day Clean Up  
International Cleanup Day  
Multi-site Green Brook Clean-up

## Water Quality Monitoring

Trainings & Collection for Pathogens and Habitat Assessment  
All Summer Long!

## Walks

New Year's Day Hike  
Walk in the Watershed: Mac's Brook  
Walking the Watershed: the Henry Hudson Trail

# 10: Donors

*Many thanks to our donors for their generous support.  
We will only realize a cleaner Lower Raritan with your help!*

## Generous Individuals

Anonymous

Anonymous

Anonymous

Anonymous

Grace Agnew

George & Claudia Bateman

Donald Beetham

Staci Berger

Ed Bort

Amy Braunstein

Nina Broadhurst

Amanda Brockwell

Gregg T. Bucino

Theodore Chase

Dini & Tim Checko

Susan & Ed Clerico

Susan Stevens Cuyler

Rebecca Dahl

Caitlin Doran

Susan & Lowell Edmunds

Cynthia Fenyk

John & Dianne Fenyk

Julie Fenyk

Heather Fenyk

Maya Fenyk

Mathew Flannery

George & Leona Fluck

Karen Flotte

Lois & James Fruen

Elizabeth S. Garlatti

Anton Getz

Bertila Gomes

Kim Hammond

JeanMarie Hartman

William Hillsinger

Missy Holzer

Stanislav Jaracz

Skip Jonas

Joan Kaplan

John Keller

James Kelly

Doriann Kerber

Kopp-Anello Family

Steven Kuchinsky

Ellen Lambeth

Wayne Lancaster

Nancy LaParo

Tod Marder

Ileana Marrero

Edward Marsh

Melanie & David

McDermott-Hughes

William Meier

Anna & Peter Merrett

Claudio Mir

Joseph Mish

Denise Nickel

Al Nigrin

Elisabeth Oberhollenzer

William Ogilvie

Organigaya Cafe

Monica Orso

Dillon Patel

Chester F. Pauls

Maria Petrova

Linda Powell

Johnny & Paulina Quispe-

Aquije

Brian Rak

Jens Reidel

Irene E Riegner

Meredith Rogers

Rainer Rogers

Parthena Rosahl

Dan Ross

Rosella Sabatini

Janet Sacklow

Valerie Price Schierl

Allison Severino

Anne Singer

Emilie Stander

Jenn Stuart

Suydam Corkery Family

Howie & Anne Swerdloff

Yashoda Tammana

Doug Tilton

Tonya & David Tulloch

Dan Van Abs

George Ververides

Tina Weishaus

Heather Wilkerson

Allan Williams

Keith Josef Wilson

Donna Wilson

Joyce Wroblewski

MaryJane Jenkins Yaede

Ken Yetman

Alex Zakrewsky

# 10: Donors

# Grantors

*Many thanks to the following grant-makers for their generous support.  
We will only realize a Healthier Lower Raritan with your help!*



Grant funding has been provided by the Middlesex County Board of County Commissioners  
Through a grant award from the Middlesex County Cultural and Arts Trust Fund.  
Made possible by funds from Middlesex County, a partner of the New Jersey State Council on the Arts.

# Community Partners

*Many thanks to the partners that put the 'Partnership' in LRWP!*

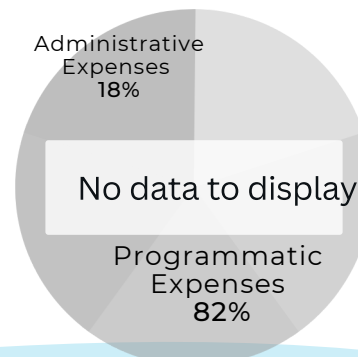
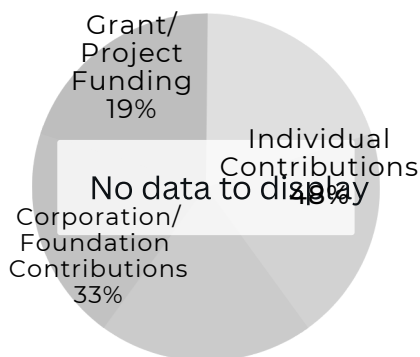


# 11: Financial Statement

The majority of the LRWP's 2023 income stream in the amount of **\$49,590** came from grant funding, project funding and/or corporate gifts. These funds were provided by:

- Middlesex County Board of County Commissioners through a grant award from Middlesex County Cultural and Arts Trust Fund
- PSEG Foundation
- Duke Farms Foundation
- Johnson & Johnson Matching Gifts Program
- NJ Clean Communities Council, Inc.
- Magyar Bank Charitable Foundation

An additional **\$45,096.36** came from individual donors, leaving the LRWP's grand total for the year 2023 at **\$94,686.84**. We could not be more grateful to all those who contribute and ensure our continued operations.



In 2023 expenses totaled **\$51,100**. Eighty-two percent (82%), equal to **\$41,972**, was directly programmatic (boat build, water quality monitoring, and municipal stormwater management MS4 assistance). Eighteen percent (18%), **\$9,128** total, went to general administration including: insurance, accounting/legal, web hosting & management, volunteer expenses (first aid training), and office supplies.



# 12: New for 2024

## Eel Monitoring



In Spring 2024, in partnership with NY/NJ Harbor & Estuary Program, the LRWP will study the presence of juvenile glass eels in the Green Brook. By building and installing artificial eel habitats in the Green Brook, and conducting eel counts, we aim to establish baseline data for this freshwater tributary of the our volunteers will engage in conservation efforts aimed at supporting the threatened American glass eel.

## Teacher Workshops on Watershed Awareness

Join us throughout 2024 for a series of interactive teacher workshops to support New Jersey science teachers for grades 3-12 with the education and knowledge to integrate watershed programming into their classrooms.

## English/Spanish Video Training Series

We continue to create quality educational videos in English and Spanish to support our water quality monitoring programs. New in 2024 will be a training series to support our pathogens monitoring work. Please consider underwriting one of our releases!

**Lower Raritan Watershed Partnership**



**@lowerraritanwatershed**

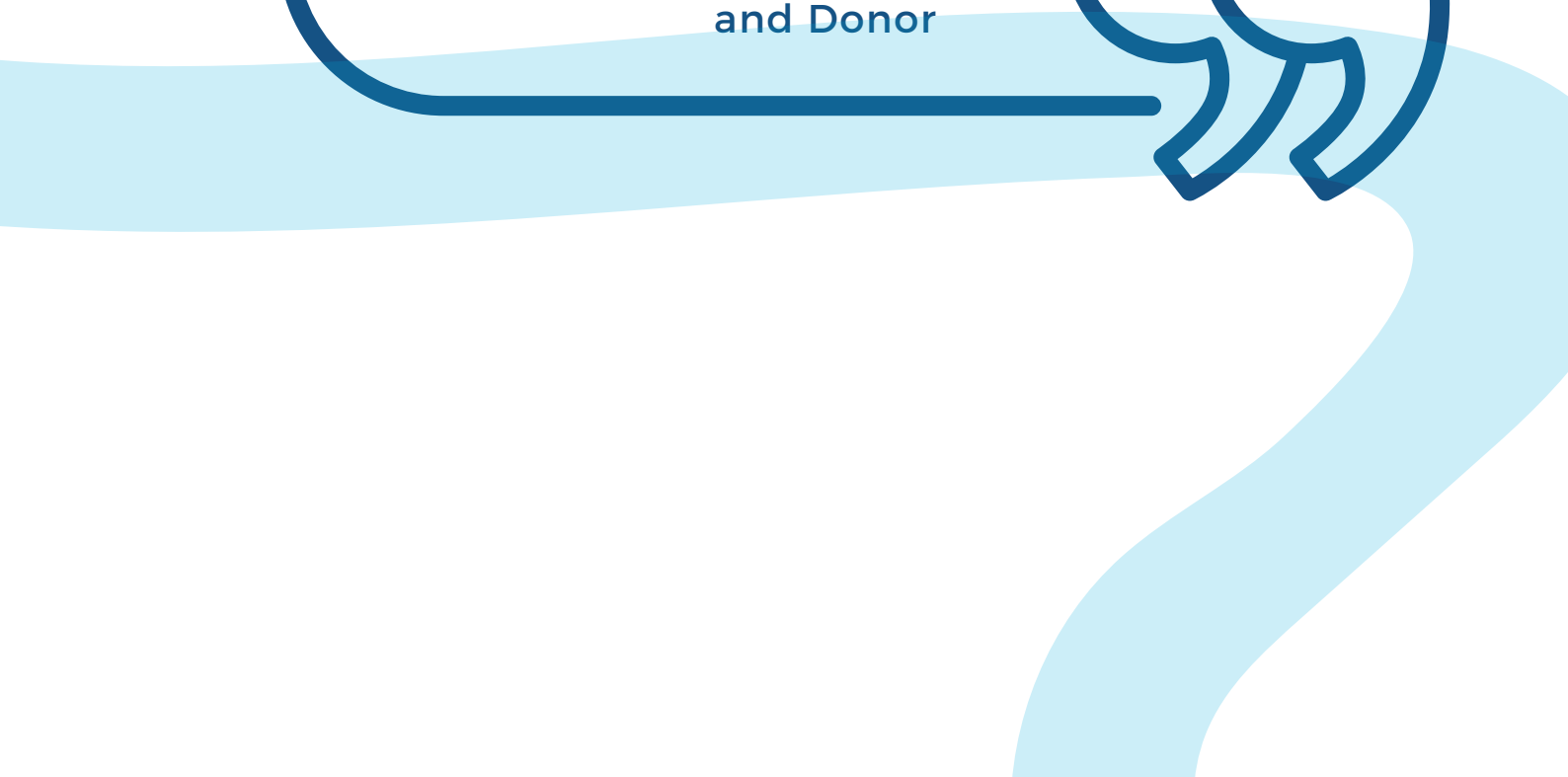
**23 educational Videos, with More To Come!**





I really do believe that we have a moral obligation to be responsible for the environment. And we have a responsibility to remind others of this, which I do by volunteering with and donating to the Lower Raritan Watershed Partnership (LRWP). The higher principle here is around supporting the LRWP with my volunteer work and donations, and this will carry the message of environmental care further than just my town or county, to throughout the watershed and the rest of the state.

-- Dillon Patel, LRWP  
Boat Build Volunteer  
and Donor





**The Lower Raritan Watershed Partnership (LRWP)**  
is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization.  
Federal EIN #47-3574185.  
The LRWP is based in New Brunswick, NJ.

## Contact

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New Brunswick, NJ 08903  
908.349.0281

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[info@lowerraritanwatershed.org](mailto:info@lowerraritanwatershed.org)

