

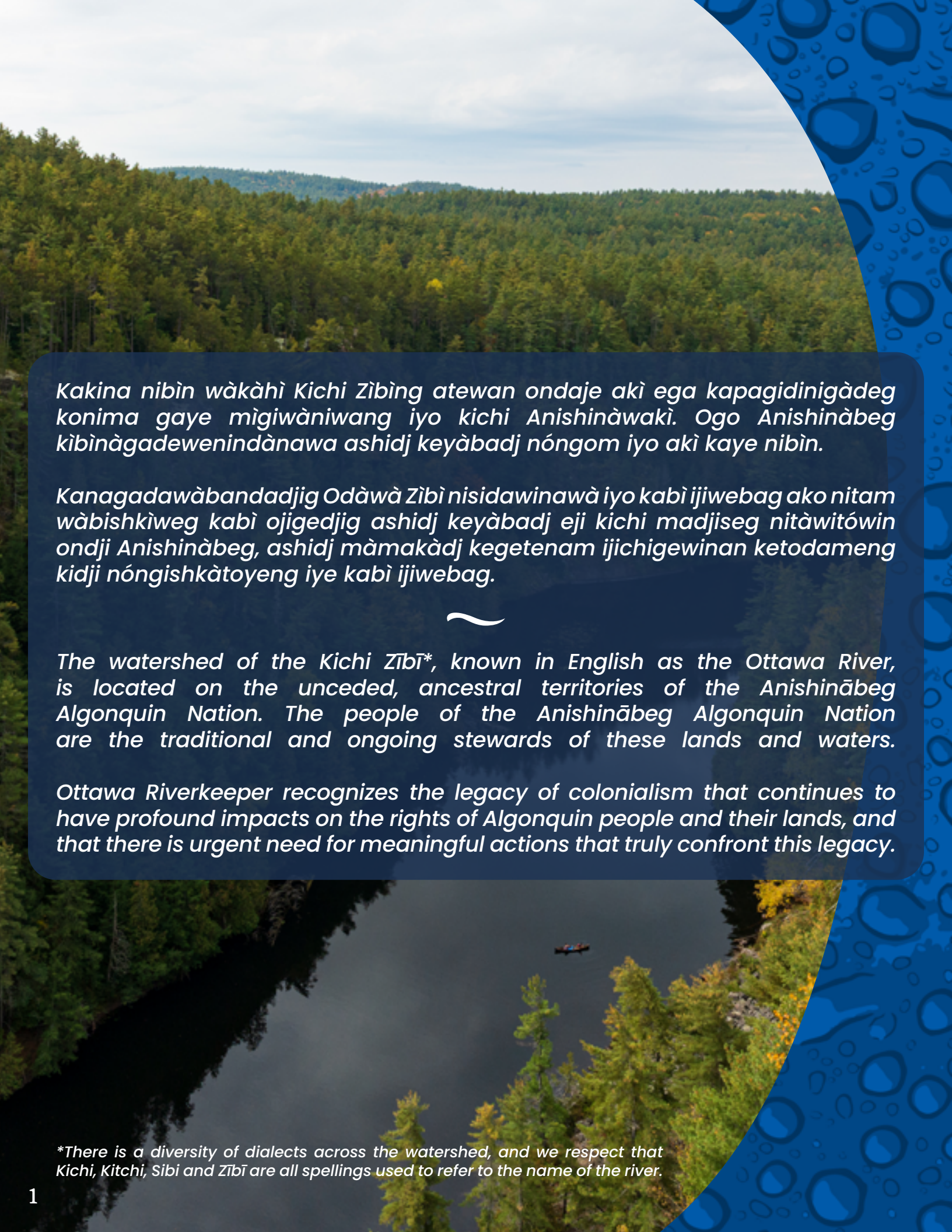


Ottawa RIVERKEEPER®
GARDE-RIVIÈRE *des Outaouais*

20
25



Annual Report



Kakina nibìn wàkàhì Kichi Zìbìng atewan ondaje akì ega kapagidinigàdeg konima gaye mìgiwàniwang iyo kichi Anishinàwakì. Ogo Anishinàbeg kibìnàgadewenindànawa ashidj keyàbadj nóngom iyo akì kaye nibìn.

Kanagadawàbandadjig Odàwà Zìbì nisidawinawà iyo kabì ijiwebag ako nitam wàbishkìweg kabì ojigedjig ashidj keyàbadj eji kichi madjiseg nitàwitówin ondji Anishinàbeg, ashidj màmakàdj kegetenam ijichigewinan ketodameng kidji nóngishkàtoyeng iye kabì ijiwebag.



The watershed of the Kichi Zìbì, known in English as the Ottawa River, is located on the unceded, ancestral territories of the Anishinābeg Algonquin Nation. The people of the Anishinābeg Algonquin Nation are the traditional and ongoing stewards of these lands and waters.*

Ottawa Riverkeeper recognizes the legacy of colonialism that continues to have profound impacts on the rights of Algonquin people and their lands, and that there is urgent need for meaningful actions that truly confront this legacy.

**There is a diversity of dialects across the watershed, and we respect that Kichi, Kitchi, Sibi and Zìbì are all spellings used to refer to the name of the river.*

Welcome!

Dear friends and river lovers,

This past year has been another amazing chapter in growing love and appreciation for the Ottawa River. Together, we are paddling toward a healthy Ottawa River for all species and all generations. We wouldn't be on this journey without you!

In this report, you'll see how your actions and support shaped a year of big wins for the river. Perhaps you stopped by River House to explore the new interpretive exhibits, joined as a community science volunteer, or contributed to the Big River Give campaign, helping to power this work for years to come. Maybe you attended an event or stayed connected through newsletters and social media, cheering the river on.

However you chose to get involved this year, the successes you'll read about—including new programs in education, science, advocacy, and community outreach—reflect your commitment to a healthy, thriving river.

Thank you, merci, and miḡwech—for your commitment to the Ottawa River.

In the river spirit,



Colleen Westeinde
Chair of the Board of Directors



Laura Reinsborough
Riverkeeper & CEO

Table of Contents

2	Welcome	7	Outreach	14	Learning Lab
2	Table of Contents	9	Advocacy	15	Our People
3	Science	11	Events	17	Our Financials
5	Education	13	Big River Give	18	Your Support

Science

Watershed Health Assessment and Monitoring

Our Science team has been busy! After the release of our Watershed Report Card last year, we have been producing accompanying reports that give a more comprehensive and in-depth look into individual indicators of watershed health. This year, we have released reports on invasive species and land use, with more in the works.

Blogs and news stories have helped bring our science programs to new audiences, resulting in greater awareness and inspiring more community scientists to report their observations in the watershed.

But we haven't been working alone! This has truly been a year of collaboration. One of these new and exciting collaborations is a committee formed to address the health of Lake Temiskaming and the Ottawa River in the northwestern part of the watershed. We also continued benthic invertebrate sampling with Kebaowek and Timiskaming First Nations communities, and we partnered with the Ville de Gatineau to collect baseline water quality data within the Ottawa River, as well as road salt data as part of their new Ecological Neighbourhood project.



Community-based Monitoring

Our community-based monitoring programs continued to evolve this year, helping to grow our understanding of the health of the watershed. We welcomed many new community scientists from throughout the region to join these programs!

We also released new self-guided training modules for our summer observational monitoring programs—invasive species and algal blooms—and improved our road salt monitoring methodology to make it easier for volunteers to collect reliable data all year-round.



167

community scientists

over

400

samples collected

190

monitoring locations

over

750

reports and observations

Invasive Species

This year, we revamped our invasive species monitoring program to make it more accessible and to get more people involved in tracking these species. Our fun and engaging new training quizzes help make the identification of our 15 priority invasive species a breeze.

Additionally, our new invasive species mapping program gave us a clearer picture of how invasive species are spreading throughout the watershed. Using data from this program, we worked with municipalities and conservation authorities to identify which species are present in their areas and discuss ways to manage them. One major success story was the early detection of new patches of European water chestnut. Finding these plants early means they can be removed before this rapidly spreading species can form large colonies. Our summer staff joined a major cleanup operation to remove water chestnut from Baie de Lochaber in collaboration with COBALI.

1,415
invasive
species reports

648
quizzes
completed

Recreational Water Quality Testing

This summer, we welcomed new seasonal staff who assisted with water quality testing at several public swimming spots throughout the watershed. This included the newly opened Dow's Lake swim docks, where we monitored water quality five days a week throughout the swim season. As always, we published the results on Swim Guide for easy access by the public!

After Ottawa Public Health shifted from daily to weekly testing, we also began monitoring at several City of Ottawa-run beaches. We used this testing, as well as historical data, in an in-depth analysis of water quality at these beaches. Our final report showed evidence of declining water quality at all City-run beaches, as well as notable differences between sites and throughout the season.

1,175
samples
collected

14
monitoring
locations

Beachgoers checked water
quality on Swim Guide

338,985
times



Education

River School

Demand for our new River School workshops has soared! This year, we launched new workshop models, introducing more hands-on and outdoor learning opportunities, with a strong connection to provincial curricula. Our modules now cover watershed science, biodiversity, and water quality.

In the spring and fall, we successfully connected thousands of students to the Ottawa River through workshops at the NCC River House and in schools, fostering environmental stewardship and appreciation for local watersheds. Additionally, we hosted summer workshops for visiting schools from Hamilton, ON and the Northern Youth Abroad Indigenous work experience program.



4,050

students
reached

162

total workshops
booked

45

workshops in the
learning lab

350

teachers
reached

15

underserved
schools



Open Hours in the Learning Lab

We continued transforming the Learning Lab into a welcoming and engaging space for all river lovers to come and learn and experience the Ottawa River. This year, we had more adult visitors who stayed longer in the lab, learning about our work and the river. We levelled the space up with the installation of our new interpretive exhibits, and introduced new ways to engage with the space through a bi-weekly speaker series, which brought in new audiences.

Special thanks to the incredible group of Learning Lab Volunteers and our summer staff who made this space inviting, educational, and successful this year!

4,229

visitors to the Learning Lab



Canoeing Together

Working with Algonquin education consultant Kareena Butler, our Education team created a Birch Bark Canoe Educator Guide based on the 600-hour canoe build led by Pinock Smith and Indigenous youth. An accompanying video captures the entire process, and together, these new educational resources incorporate teachings from community members and promote a “two-eyed seeing” approach that integrates Indigenous knowledge and Western science in watershed education.

On July 1st, the birch bark canoe officially launched from the shores of the Ottawa River at the NCC River House. It was a celebration of the canoe build with A7G, in collaboration with ONEC. The launch was followed by four paddling sessions for the youth who built the canoe, which culminated in a guided trip with Celine Whiteduck and Jan Cote.



Outreach

The WaterSHED

Early in 2025, we made it easier than ever for community members and groups to get out on their own schedules and keep our waterways clean with our new WaterSHED loan program. This repurposed shipping container is full of educational resources, shoreline cleanup equipment, and bothing supplies the public can borrow to take river education and protection on the road.

We were so pleased with the success of the loan program this year. Thank you to everyone who borrowed materials and helped keep our watershed clean this year, and a special thank you to volunteers who kept the WaterSHED running smoothly.



Education resources were borrowed

15
times

Shoreline cleanup equipment was borrowed

10
times



787

volunteers collected nearly

1,300 kg

of waste

Shoreline Cleanups

We hosted nine shoreline cleanups this year, including returning to Stanley Park in Ottawa and Kettle Island in Gatineau, as well as community-focused cleanups with the EU Delegation, Welch LLP, and several school groups.

Between those cleanups and WaterSHED loans, hundreds of volunteers helped out with shoreline cleanups, collecting a literal ton of garbage from riverbanks this year. This is a significant amount of waste that was prevented from entering our waterways.

Thank you to all volunteers who took an active role in protecting and preserving our watershed.

Community Fundraisers

The community really stepped up for the river in 2025, organizing events in support of the Ottawa River!

Courons Gatineau took place on a beautiful sunny Saturday overlooking the Ottawa River, and for the second year, Ottawa Riverkeeper was the proud beneficiary of the event, with runners donating over \$1,000 for river protection programs! Over 200 people visited our booth, where we shared information on road salt and educated children with our Go Fish activity.

Big River Give cabinet member Jeff Parkes made a splash with an incredible catch and release Fishing Derby, which raised funds for our major fundraising campaign. This celebration of the Ottawa River highlights the importance of keeping it healthy, for all species, for generations to come.

Plus, this summer, marathon swimmer Sarah Dobbin swam an incredible 50 km along the Ottawa River in a single day, creating a new marathon route while simultaneously fundraising for Ottawa Riverkeeper and raising awareness about open water swimming. A huge, heartfelt thank you goes out to everyone involved!



\$1,116 raised at Courons
Gatineau

over

\$130,000 raised by Jeff's
fishing derby

over

\$16,000 raised by Sarah's
marathon swim

Advocacy

Water Quality at Ottawa Beaches

Near the start of the 2025 swimming season, we learned that Ottawa Public Health had cut back testing at the five City of Ottawa-run beaches from daily to weekly testing. We spoke out about this abrupt change, raising significant concerns regarding this reduction in services and the associated risks swimmers face when less information about water quality at their beaches is available.

We launched a petition, which received strong support from Ottawa residents and earned significant media attention, and we also performed our own analysis of what the changes in the testing regimen will mean for data on Ottawa beaches. Our report, which included historical data and our own monitoring, showed decreasing water quality at all City-run beaches, as well as drastic differences in water quality between beaches and months in the season, all nuances that were lost in Ottawa Public Health's simpler assessment.

Near the end of the swimming season, we presented our analysis and petition to the Ottawa Board of Health, after Ottawa Public Health dismissed many of our concerns. Despite the public attention and our in-depth analysis, the Board of Health decided to continue testing once a week during the swim season. We're thrilled that community members expressed their sincere support for more frequent testing, clearly showing they understand the power of data to influence decisions and stay informed about water quality.



1,863

petition signatures
submitted to the
City of Ottawa

PFAS: the “Forever chemicals”

This year, we stepped up our work on PFAS “forever chemicals” by launching our own monitoring program. We have regularly raised concerns about the limitations of the government’s approach to PFAS monitoring, and that it overlooks the Ottawa River watershed, so we decided to collect our own data. We completed two rounds of monitoring, the first round in July and the second round in November. The results, to date, have confirmed the presence of PFAS at every location sampled, and we anticipate completing a full data analysis over the 2025-2026 winter season.

We also continued to submit comments during review periods for this chemical of emerging concern, including in May when we voiced our concerns on the federal government’s proposed PFAS risk management plan. We’re disappointed with long timelines for implementation and that fluoropolymers remain excluded from Canada’s risk management plan. While PFAS, excluding fluoropolymers, have been listed under CEPA, we believe that all PFAS should be listed as a priority on Canada’s toxic substances list.

Road Salt

This was a big year for our road salt monitoring program, as we launched a five-year review and analysis of the results of community-based monitoring. The report detailed the alarming levels of road salt we have found in urban streams every winter, which are at levels toxic to freshwater ecosystems for most of the winter, and into the summer at some locations. It also outlined a series of recommendations for large property owners, municipalities, and individuals to help shift us away from our culture of salt overuse.

We also launched a road salt reduction pledge, inviting individuals and businesses to reduce their road salt use. This was part of our third annual Road Salt Reduction Week at the end of January, when we also shared information and tips to help people avoid salt overuse.

Finally, we collaborated with Ecology Ottawa in their petition to the City of Ottawa and OC Transpo, which referenced our analysis to push for better salt management from both entities. This culminated in the passing of a motion from Councillor Rawlson King directing City staff to conduct a review of Ottawa’s use of road salt.



27

sample sites selected

5

years of road salt monitoring

358

signatures on our road salt reduction pledge

90%

samples exceeded chronic toxicity threshold

Events

Riverkeeper Gala

It was a magical evening at Gatineau's Jacques Cartier Park, as the Riverkeeper Gala, presented by Insurance Bureau of Canada, returned to an open-air setting by the river!

This year's Gala was a smashing success, with food from Thyme & Again, amazing music, and stellar auction items. The focus was on fundraising for the future of the river, with an exciting paddle raise and live auction that together raised over \$55,000 for our Big River Give campaign.

The evening's programming kicked off with a hoop dance performance and a welcome to Algonquin territory. Later, the dance floor came to life thanks to Big Smoke Brass, and guests were enchanted throughout the evening thanks to an aerialist, mermaids, and a harpist. What a night!

381

tickets sold

over

\$300K

in total raised for the river

\$48,300

raised in auctions

\$27,000

raised in the paddle raise





Current Conversations

This summer, we launched a brand new speaker series at River House. Current Conversations was our way to bring our community new ways to interact and learn about the Ottawa River.

In six events over 12 weeks, attendees heard from speakers on a broad range of topics, covering science, recreation, and even art inspired by the river! For the inaugural event, Ottawa's poets laureate and other local poets wrote poems celebrating the river, and in subsequent events, guests learned about the amazing caves and mussels under the river, what it takes to prep for a 50KM swim marathon, what rights rivers should have, and more.

Thanks to everyone who came out to our events, and the guest speakers for their time and stories!

264

attendees

6

events



THE BIG RIVER GIVE

The Big River Give, Ottawa Riverkeeper's first-ever major fundraising campaign, has nearly reached its \$5M goal!

Already, your generosity has made incredible new programs possible:

- Over 8,000 students have taken part in hands-on River School workshops, building knowledge and confidence to become stewards of the river.
- Our new Learning Lab interpretive centre has welcomed over 11,000 visitors, connecting them to the river through exhibits on biodiversity, pollution threats, benthic invertebrates, otters, recreational water quality, and more.
- New research and action initiatives are underway to ensure a healthier river for generations to come.

Thanks to Big River Give donors, the dream has come true! The dream of a home on the river for Ottawa Riverkeeper, new and expanded science programs, a River School, and a place for the public to connect with and learn about the river are all now real and flourishing.

\$5M

97%

over
\$4.8M
raised so far!

\$4M

\$3M

\$2M

"It's a place where magic will happen in years to come, where future water leaders will be inspired. And the impact that will be created by the work Riverkeeper does and its partners, because of this space, will be game-changing for the watershed and beyond."

~ Geoff Green
Chair Emeritus



Learning Lab Levels Up

This summer, our Learning Lab levelled up! The space has always been about bringing the public and the river closer together, and we've hit a huge milestone: the installation of several museum-quality exhibits, which teach people about the watershed and its ecology.

The displays include a large, detailed map of the watershed, information on threats to the river and what you can do to help. There are also three special activity tables on the mysteries of benthic invertebrates, the importance of measuring water quality, and the cheerful and charismatic river otters that call the river home!

These engaging displays and activity tables have received fantastic feedback so far, and we're so excited to welcome even more visitors to experience them—and the wonders of the Ottawa River—when the Learning Lab re-opens in the spring of 2026.



"It's hard to believe Ottawa Riverkeeper was once run out of an ordinary office whose only connection to water was through its street name: Bay."

*~ Caroline Phillips
Cabinet Member, Big
River Give campaign*

Our People

Staff

Riverkeeper & CEO

Laura Reinsborough

Managing Director

Dave Rayner

Director of Philanthropy

Chloe Hillier, CFRE

Director of Science & Policy

Larissa Holman

Communications Manager

Matthew Brocklehurst

Outreach & Events Manager

Caroline Gomersall

Communications & Outreach Coordinator

Mark Bernards

Scientist

Liam Nguyen, PhD

Educator

Maxime Chaumont-Lessard

Operations Coordinator

Naomi Davies

Science Programs Coordinator

Elizabeth Grater

Donor Stewardship Coordinator*

Meryem Alami

Fundraising Coordinator

Leah Smith

Donor Stewardship Coordinator

Martha Boyd

Outgoing Staff

Ian Atwell

Julia Ostertag

Jocelyn Sutherland

Seasonal Staff

Kevin Adeli

Nina Contrás-Wolfe

Celine Debassige

Maya Lawson

Sydney Miller

Andrea O'Halloran

Noémi Pound

Lorna Sheridan

We want to acknowledge and thank everyone who has been a part of the Ottawa Riverkeeper team this year. Your work and dedication are so valuable in keeping the Ottawa River clean for us all!



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Vice Chair & interim Treasurer

Margot Sunter

Secretary

Colleen Mooney

Directors

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Jason Jacques

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Riverkeeper Emerita

Meredith Brown

Chair Emeritus

Geoff Green

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Rt Hon. Beverley McLachlin

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Mark and Diana Carney

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Kathleen Edwards

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Water Leaders

Sunshine Tenasco

Stig Larsson

Sen. Rosa Galvez

Founders of Ottawa Riverkeeper

Pacte de l'Amitié

Mission 100 Tonnes

River Surf Ottawa-Gatineau

Autumn Peltier

Paul Dewar

de Gaspé Beaubien Foundation

Jim Watson

Gord Nixon

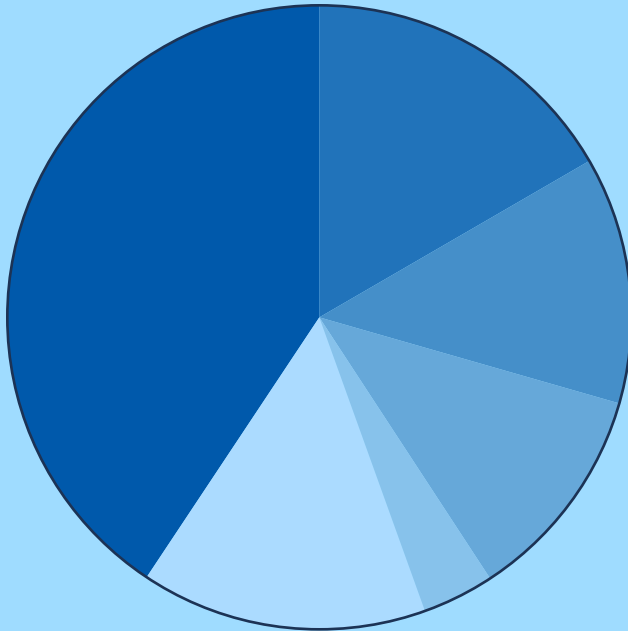








Our Financials

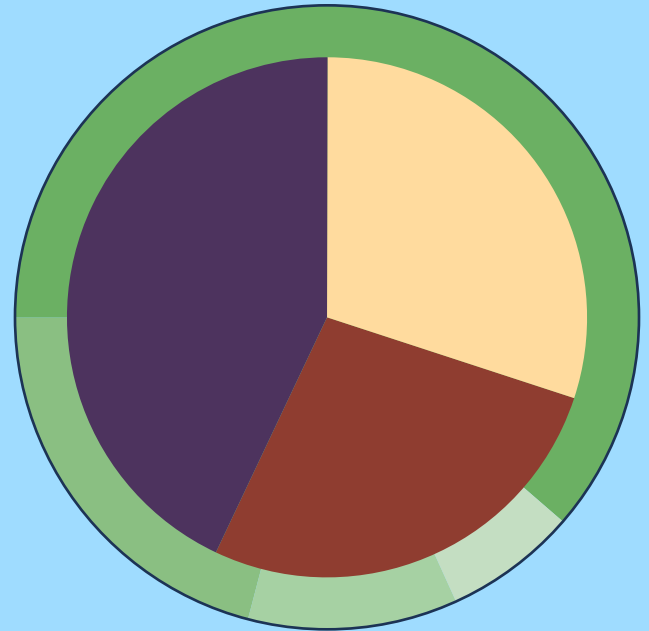
For the fiscal year ending March 31 2025

Revenue: \$ 1,948,214




Expenses: \$ 1,978,439







	Foundations	28%
	Events	20%
	Corporate	18%
	Individual gifts	16%
	Other revenues*	13%
	Governments	5%



Inner Circle - Programs

	Science	44%
	Education	37%
	Action	19%

Outer Circle - Total

	Programs	62%
	Fundraising	23%
	Administration	9%
	Campaign Fundraising**	6%

* Other revenues include amortization of deferred contributions received in prior years relating to capital assets

** Activities related to the Big River Give

Your Support

For the fiscal year ending March 31 2025

\$ 100,000 +

RBC Foundation

\$ 50,000 - \$ 99,999

Anonymous (2)
Barbara Crook & Dan Greenberg, The
Danbe Foundation
Canyon Foundation*
Echo Foundation
Franklin Holtforster & Birgitte Alting-
Mees
Insurance Bureau of Canada
Ottawa Community Foundation
Taggart-Parkes Foundation
The Crabtree Foundation
The Ontario Trillium Foundation

\$ 25,000 - \$ 49,999

Anonymous
Barry Sims
Five B Family Foundation
Fondation Choquette-Legault
Government of Canada - Canada
Service Corps
Government of Canada - Canada
Summer Jobs
MakeWay Foundation
RAM Foundation Fund - OCF
TD Bank Group

\$ 10,000 - \$ 24,999

Anonymous
Arthur and Audrey Cutten
Foundation
Bayne Family
Bloomberg Philanthropies
Brigil
Brookfield
Bytown Catering
Cement Association of Canada
David McPhedran
Dentons Canada LLP
Devcore Group
Leacross Foundation
Kruyne Family Foundation
TD Friends of the Environment
Foundation
The Mosaic Company
Welch Community Foundation

\$ 5,000 - \$ 9,999

Anonymous
Caroline Laroche & Jakob Uecker
CroLife Canada
City of Gatineau
Derek & Michaela Tokarski
Diana & Mark Carney
Dominion City Brewing Co.
Dream Community Foundation
Emond Harnden LLP
Enbridge Gas
Hydro Ottawa
JD Brule Equipment
Juxta Architects
Labarge Charitable Foundation
Ledcor Group of Companies
Level Six
Mark Zekulin & Linsey Sherman-
Zekulin
Star Motors
The GAL Family Foundation
The Hill Times
United Way East Ontario
WCPD Foundation
Whitewater Brewing Co

\$ 1,000 - \$ 4,999

Anonymous (5)
Abacus Data
Adobe Inc.
Air North
Arlo
Ashbury College
Bass Pro Shop & Cabela's Outdoor
Fund
Bill & Margaret Dean Perpetual
Motion*
Big Rig Brewery
Boreal River Rescue
Brian Toller
Catherine Bélanger
Chic + Swell Event Designers
Cliniconex
Colleen & Jeff Westeinde
Dave Rostenne
David Runnalls
Drop in Sports
Ed Brunet & Associates Canada
EnerGlad Inc.
EscarpAction
Esri Canada Limited

\$ 1,000 - \$ 4,999 (cont'd)

ExecHealth
GGFL Chartered Professional
Accountants
Global Public Affairs
Government of Canada - RIMNet
Hot Shoe Productions
Jean & Richard Van Loon
Jérôme Photographer
Josh Bragg
Kōena Spa
MacEwen
Madawaska Kanu Centre
Margot Sunter & Chris Cobb
María Rocha-Hug
Mathieu Fleury
Michael & Diane van Aanhout
Milestone Environmental Contracting
Mohawk Group
Mountain Web Media Inc.
Muktuk Adventures
National Capital Commission
Nordik Spa Village
Ocean Conservancy
Patagonia Ottawa
Peter Colbert
Peter Mackechnie & Anik Bedard
Robert Slater
Rotary Club of Ottawa-Stittsville
Rotary Club of West Ottawa
Roundell Lee Family
Samonix
Sandeep Aggerwal
Shirley Westeinde
Steve Bews
Stewart Family
Susan Rayner
The Burton Charitable Foundation
The Metcalf Foundation
The Right Honourable David Johnston
and Mrs. Sharon Johnston
University of Victoria
Weider Family
William M. Laidlaw

< \$ 1,000

We recognize and thank the over
1,000 donors who contributed at
this level.

* Fund established at the Ottawa Community Foundation

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