

A wide-angle photograph of the Allegheny River in Pittsburgh. The river flows in the foreground, with the yellow steel truss Roberto Clemente Bridge stretching across the middle ground. In the background, the city's skyline is visible, featuring the PPG Place tower and other skyscrapers under a clear blue sky.

# 2025 ANNUAL REPORT

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As I look back on the past year, I am filled with gratitude for the dedication of our staff, volunteers, partners, and supporters who continue to show up in extraordinary ways—whether it's helping remove trash from our riverbanks, showing up at a community meeting and programs, signing-on to our comments to protect our clean water laws, or amplifying the work that we do together. **We can't accomplish all this without you.**

Community is central to our work, and without your voices, clean water is not possible. This year, we worked hard to work with and hear from our community—**we participated in 119 community events, connecting with almost 4,800 community members.** These moments – small and big – deepened our shared connections with our waterways, expanded our network of water advocates, and helped make watershed protection more accessible and engaging for all.

In 2025, we officially launched our new 3 Rivers Ambassador program—an experiential, three-pillar initiative that empowers participants to learn about watersheds, dive into riparian ecology, practice hands-on stewardship, and become ambassadors for clean water in their own communities. We expanded our immersive ecological arts program, Colors of the River, inviting participants to explore natural riparian pigments and discover the intimate connections between creativity, ecology, and water quality. To further broaden accessibility to watershed education, we also created weekly educational content for social media so that we can bring our waterways to you, no matter where you are.

Our team also dedicated their time to monitoring our waterways. In 2025, we spent over 765 hours monitoring and patrolling our rivers, streams, and runs, collecting 467 water samples, and producing four comprehensive regional water quality reports (PFAS, Compliance, Swim Guide, & State of our Waters Reports). These efforts led us to discovering more than 30 potential Clean Water Act violations, which were reported to state regulators—two of which resulted in enforcement actions that will help protect our waterways for years to come.

**Nevertheless, the most defining accomplishment of 2025 was our work with PennEnvironment and NELC, where we held Stryopek, a polystyrene producer, accountable for years of plastic pellet pollution into Raccoon Creek and the Ohio River Watershed.** This Clean Water Act settlement is nationally precedent-setting—it is the first case to hold plastic pellet polluters in inland freshwater systems accountable, and the first where regulators joined the settlement to establish a zero-tolerance standard for plastic pellet discharges. This victory sets a powerful benchmark for clean water protection nationwide.

We also made a major investment in our on-the-water work with the acquisition of a new, larger boat, dramatically increasing our monitoring capacity and opening the door to public EcoTours that will bring even more community members and increase accessibility of our waterways that we work so hard to protect.

We also made space for joy—celebrating small wins, supporting one another, and spending unfocused, outdoor time with each other in a way that helps us reconnect to nature and fuel our drive in the clean water movement. **Thank you for being part of this extraordinary year.** Your continued support helps us to defend, restore, and celebrate our waterways. Together, we will continue to fight for clean water and celebrate our progress along the way. Our work isn't possible without you all, and I can't wait to see what we can accomplish together. **See you on the river in 2026!**



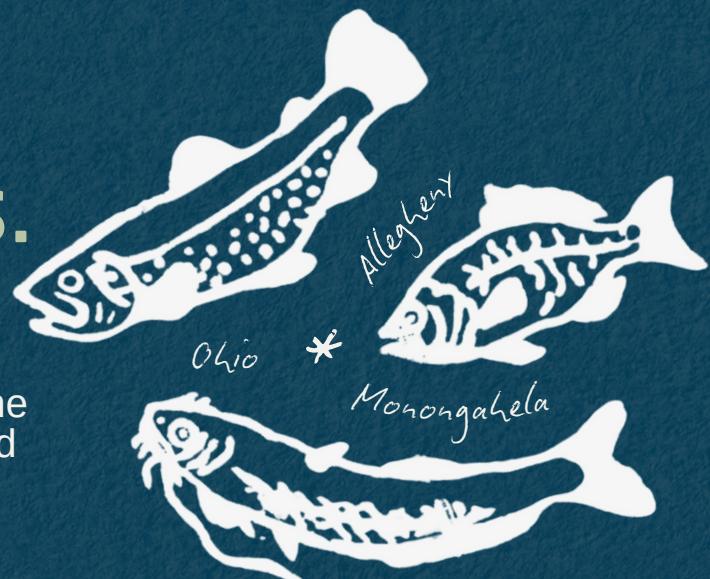
Heather Hulton VanTassel, PhD  
Executive Director, Three Rivers Waterkeeper



# PROTECTING OUR WATERWAYS FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS.

## MISSION.

Our mission is to protect the water quality of the Monongahela, Allegheny, and Ohio Rivers, and their respective watersheds.



## VISION.

Our vision is to have drinkable, fishable, swimmable water in the Monongahela, Allegheny, and Ohio Rivers for all.

**At Three Rivers Waterkeeper, we are the voice for our rivers, defending clean water and healthy ecosystems for all. Together, we safeguard our waterways to ensure they thrive for generations to come.**

## COMMITMENT TO JUSTICE, EQUITY, DIVERSITY, & INCLUSION

In order to effectively fulfill our mission, our work and people must reflect the values that cultivate a culture of respect and accountability with anti-racist practices with authentic communication. We recognize the historic inequalities associated with the environmental conservation movement, outdoor recreation, and access to waterways. Thus, we are dedicated to dismantling these systems of oppression in both the workplace and in our communities.

**The work starts with us.**





## Three Rivers Waterkeeper Team

**Captain Evan Clark, Waterkeeper**

**Liz Dubnicay, Programs Assistant**

**Jess Friss, Director of Community Programs**

**Hannah Hohman, Environmental Steward**

**Dr. Heather Hulton VanTassel, Executive Director**

**Addie Kelble, Environmental Educator & PMSC AmeriCorps Member**

**Koa Reitz, Environmental Steward**

**Sierra Weir, Community Organizer**

**Amanda Zaner, Advocacy Fellow**

## Seasonal & Past Crew

Jay Beal, University of Pittsburgh's Public Health Undergraduate Scholar

Henry Chapple, Legal Intern

Katie Duffy, Communications Manager

Tamiya Thomas, 2024-2025 PMSC AmeriCorps Member

Clara Jane Mack, Environmental Steward Intern

Owen McClure, Student Intern

Lucinda Mortimer, Environmental Steward Intern

## 2025 Board Members

Tim Fitchett      Rachel Cook  
Board President      Board Treasurer

Vishal Vyas      Annie Guadagnino

Josh Powell      Sean Brady

Emily Constantine Mercurio, PHD, PG

# GROUNDBREAKING SETTLEMENT TO REDUCE PLASTIC PELLET POLLUTION

## Three Rivers Waterkeeper and PennEnvironment settle plastic pellet pollution lawsuit against Styropek

After several years of work, Three Rivers Waterkeeper and Penn Environment reached a groundbreaking settlement with BVPV Styrenics LLC and its parent company, Styropek USA, Inc., that will reduce plastic pollution and set a precedent for other plastic facilities. Styropek's violation of the Clean Water Act was discovered years prior during patrols of the Ohio River and its tributary, Raccoon Creek, conducted by Three Rivers Waterkeeper and Mountain Watershed Association.

The settlement addresses the discharge of wastewater and stormwater that contains small plastic pellets ("nurdles") into Raccoon Creek. In addition to a \$2.6 million penalty for past violations, Styropek must also completely redesign its stormwater collection and treatment systems to capture all of its pellet waste and install cutting-edge monitoring technology at every stormwater outfall to track whether pellets escape the property. Styropek will be automatically penalized for the discharge of a single pellet, making this settlement historic in the expectation that plastic manufacturers must adhere to zero-plastic discharge into our waterways.

Of the \$2.6 million penalty, \$2 million will be set aside to remediate the environment around the facility, with \$500,000 (and any unused remediation money) to go toward improving the Raccoon Creek and Ohio River watershed. The Foundation for Pennsylvania Watersheds will manage and disburse these funds. The Pennsylvania Clean Streams Fund will receive the remaining \$100,000.

*Three Rivers Waterkeeper and Penn Environment were represented by the non-profit National Environmental Law Center (NELC).*



# THREE RIVERS WATERKEEPER EXPANDS CAPACITY WITH NEW BOAT

Our new bigger, safer, and more versatile boat has finally arrived in Pittsburgh!

What began as a wish list based on our needs slowly grew into a vision board for expanding our capacity on the water and has finally become a tangible vessel that we've gotten outfitted (shout out to Dave at Commonwealth Press for the awesome decals!) and taken community members out on.

Our new custom-built Hanko boat has a heavy-duty aluminum hull for toughness and corrosion resistance without using plastic (fiberglass). It's designed to be safe and comfortable in heavier conditions than our rivers can create, while still having a shallow enough draft for access to all but the shallowest shorelines.

It's equipped to support on the water events as a safety boat, work well on long trips as a patrol and response boat, and carry up to 12 additional passengers comfortably as a tour boat. It carries our basic science equipment and setup for mapping and sonar work as well. It has a 26' hull length that is 32' long overall. Set up as is, it has a top speed of around 50mph and cruises efficiently at around 25mph.

We are continuously strengthened by the generosity of our communities, who have trusted us with their resources, from dollars to volunteer hours. In alignment with our mission, we'll continue the use of a boat to monitor, patrol, and hold polluters accountable on our waterways.

## **Major Foundation Donations:**

*The Posner Foundation  
The Heinz Endowments  
Colcom Foundation  
Arconic Foundation  
Dylan Todd Simonds Foundation  
Andrew Fisher Memorial Fund*



# LAUNCHING OUR NEW THREE RIVERS AMBASSADOR PROGRAM

**Community members offered expanded opportunities to become well-informed water advocates**

This year, we launched the 3 Rivers Ambassadors program to help preserve and restore our local rivers and streams. Participants learn about and help steward our waterways while taking part in hands-on education and advocacy. This program provides knowledge, resources, and opportunities for community members through three main pillars of the 3 Rivers Ambassador program — 3 Rivers Watch, Art & Ecology, and Stewardship.

We hosted **six** 3 Rivers Watch events in 2025, providing hands-on educational training on how to spot and report water pollution on each of our mainstem rivers. Two of the 3 Rivers Watch training events took place on kayaks, three on our Waterkeeper boat, and one in Beaver County on foot. In total, we brought 60 people out on the water just through the 3 Rivers Watch Program — our most successful year yet!

We hosted **six** 3 Rivers Art & Ecology programs to educate and connect people to our waterways through nature-focused art and riparian ecology. Our hands-on ecology education events focused on learning about the plants and animals that live in and along our waterways, while our art-based programming focused on using materials within the natural environment to record information unique to each waterway and community.

We hosted **nine** 3 Rivers Stewardship programs that provided opportunities for hands-on efforts that improve and restore our waterways, such as water quality monitoring, riverfront cleanups, and riparian restoration efforts. We worked with community members on riverbank trash cleanups, tree and shrub plantings, nurdle sorting, water testing, and more!



# PITTSBURGH HOSTS WATERKEEPER ALLIANCE'S REGIONAL SUMMIT

More than 100 Waterkeeper leaders from across the United States and Canada attended the Summit.

Three Rivers Waterkeeper is a member organization of the Waterkeeper Alliance whose mission is to protect our right to clean water in communities around the world. The Alliance is a global movement of united organizations working for clean, healthy, and abundant water for all people and the planet.

In November, we were excited to host Waterkeepers from all over North America in our city! It was a hugely rewarding time for all who are working tirelessly in the clean water movement. This summit allows Waterkeepers to come together to share our successes and challenges and learn from one another in order to bring positive change to our watersheds.

The Summit held many panels that spanned many topics: industrial pollution and enforcement, community partnerships, advocacy tactics and policy wins, and so much more! A few of our staff members also hosted sessions or sat on panels at the summit. We also enjoyed a great evening on the Gateway Clipper through all three of Pittsburgh's rivers.

We are so inspired by the stories of our fellow Waterkeepers fighting for clean water rights alongside their communities through direct action over the last 10, 20, even 30+ years holding polluters accountable and fighting for clean water.





# GROWING THE CLEAN WATER MOVEMENT

## Educating and Engaging Our Communities

### CHANGE IS THE MOST EFFECTIVE AND IMPACTFUL WHEN WE WORK TOGETHER.

We connect community members to our waterways through education, training, and stewardship opportunities that directly and indirectly improve the health of our rivers and streams. As your Three Rivers Waterkeeper, we prioritize creating opportunities that bring our communities closer together and highlight the value of clean and healthy waterways for all.

### How we connect with community:

- 💧 **BUILD** awareness and positive connections to water
- 💧 **SUPPORT** the growth of community advocates
- 💧 **BREAK DOWN** access barriers to our waterways
- 💧 **PROVIDE** critical information about historical and ongoing activities that impact local water quality
- 💧 **WORK TOGETHER** with community groups, regional coalitions, and national environmental organizations to collaborate on tools, actions, and resources that will strengthen the clean water movement



**CONNECTING THROUGH ART:** Participants of our September Colors of the River at Wingfield Pines taking the opportunity to share out the visual data that they collected from the location's natural pigments.



## BY THE NUMBERS

# 4,823

**community members**  
participated in our programs



# 119

**community events**  
led or participated in

# 408

**water stewards**  
taken out on the waterways  
for free or at a reduced cost



# 2025 COMMUNITY HIGHLIGHTS

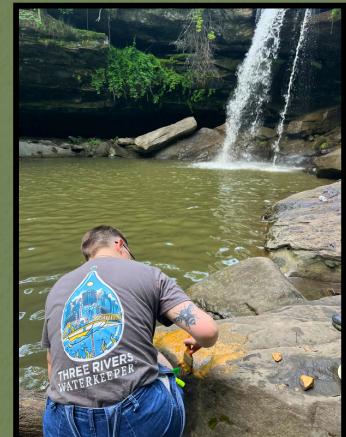


## 3<sup>RD</sup> ANNUAL SUMMER KICKOFF ON THE ALLEGHENY RIVER

We kicked off the summer with an Allegheny River sojourn from Franklin, PA to Fisherman's Cove with Outdoor Allegheny River Services - it was a success with 58 community members joining us out on the water! We celebrated our waterways by paddling in canoes, kayaks, and paddleboards while stopping along river islands to swim and observe wildlife.

## COLORS OF THE RIVER CONTINUES TO BE A HIT

2025 was our second year of Colors of the River, which included six events on rivers and tributaries between Beaver County and Pitcairn. The paintings that resulted from our art-based research demonstrated broad variation in not only ecology, geology, and people, but also water quality! Each location provided a different color palette for community members to experiment with and better understand our waterways.



## OUR FIRST EVER CLOTHING SWAP

We organized our first clothing swap at Trace Brewing. We set up tables full of free clothing and a screen-printing and stamping station while our partners at Redd Up Pittsburgh and Dress for Success Pittsburgh provided information about their services and redistributed all of the remaining clothing donations. The textile industry is a major player in the petrochemical industry, polluting our waterways throughout the process of creating, dyeing, and disposing of clothing. By taking care of the clothing we already have and consuming less plastic, we can improve the health of our waterways and our communities.

We partnered with the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh for a new presentation this year, *What's in Pittsburgh's Rivers*, where we talked with community members about the factors that influenced how our rivers came to be. After walking through time from geologic shifts to the industrial boom, we made up stories about our own fictional waterways with different components of industry, ecology, geology, and attitude. We are now giving away tap water test kits and LifeStraw water filters, so keep an eye out in 2026!





# DEFENDING WHAT WE LOVE

## Leading the Fight for Clean Water

### ADVOCACY IS AT THE CORE OF WHAT WE DO AS YOUR LOCAL WATERKEEPER.

We fight to enforce our clean water laws and fight against deregulation. Our team is dedicated to identifying gaps in the enforcement of our clean water laws and fighting the deregulation of our legal protections for clean water. As your Three Rivers Waterkeeper, we work tirelessly to hold polluters accountable to secure clean water for our future generations.

### How we advocate for our waterways:

- 💧 **HARNESS** scientific data from our water programs
- 💧 **ACTIVATE** our empowered voices from our stewardship and community programs
- 💧 **PROVIDE** technical and legal assistance, mapping tools, and access to information to community members
- 💧 **ENGAGE** with regulatory proceedings through comment writing, petitions, appeals, and litigation
- 💧 **DEFEND** our Clean Water Laws



**USING OUR VOICE:** Our Community Organizer, Sierra Weir, spoke about the importance of protecting our local waterways at Pittsburgh's Environmental Day of Action in Downtown Pittsburgh.



# BY THE NUMBERS

# 51

## advocacy actions

led or partnered on to protect our right to clean water and defend our clean water laws



# 23

## lobby visits

to local, state, and federal elected officials to advocate for the protection of our rivers

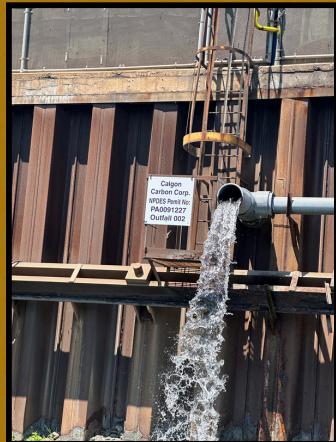
# 61

## comments or letters

from our partners that we supported by signing onto to protect our shared environment and communities



# 2025 ADVOCACY HIGHLIGHTS



## APPEALING CALGON CARBON CORPORATION'S PERMIT

On August 14<sup>th</sup>, Three Rivers Waterkeeper appealed the PA Department of Environmental Protection for their issuance of Calgon Carbon Corporation's NPDES (water discharge) permit. This appeal, sent to the company as well as to environmental agencies, identifies evidence of high levels of PFAS discharges directly into the Ohio River. Three Rivers Waterkeeper aims to set actual limitations of PFAS contamination from this facility.

## PETROCHEMICALS IN THE ALLEGHENY RIVER AT "TAR BEACH"

On August 27<sup>th</sup>, we sent a formal notice of intent to sue multiple entities for alleged violations of the PA Clean Streams Law at a heavily polluted site fronting the Allegheny River. In December, the PA DEP entered into a Consent Order and Agreement with Energy Transfer and Atlantic Richfield to fully clean up leaks from the site. We will continue to ensure the settlement will require containment and prevention of petrochemicals from flowing into the Allegheny River in the near future.



## PROTECTING OUR ENVIRONMENT FROM DATA CENTERS

As data centers emerge as a growing environmental concern for our region, we worked in coalition with many regional groups to address the redevelopment of the Homer City Generation Site. We also attended a PA Lobby Day in Harrisburg, hosted by the Center for Coalfield Justice, to discuss a range of proposed legislation on data center development with our local representatives.

## OHIO RIVER BASIN RESTORATION ACT COLLECTIVE ADVOCACY

The Ohio River Restoration Program Act was finally introduced this year after we spent years working with the Ohio River Basin Alliance and partners to encourage House and Senate members with constituents in the Ohio River Basin to create a dedicated federal program within the EPA to restore and protect the Ohio River Basin. This year, we joined with the Healthy Waters Coalition and participated in the ORBA Hill Day on September 9th. We also built a [community toolkit](#) to share with our community and participated in a call campaign to PA House Representatives to encourage the advancement of the Act.





# CONSERVATION FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

## Restoring and Improving our Waterways

### THE PERSPECTIVE OF OUR WATERWAYS REQUIRES INTENTIONAL CHANGE.

Through Stewardship, we involve and engage people in improving access, quality, and the health of our waterways. As your Three Rivers Waterkeeper, we remain committed to ensuring that our waterways are protected and restored for future generations.

### How we restore our waterways:

- 💧 **REDUCE AND REMOVE** plastics and marine debris through riverfront cleanups
- 💧 **LEAD EFFORTS** to plant riparian plants along our waterways and on our river islands
- 💧 **INCREASE** community members' intrinsic connections with the past, present, and future state of our waterways
- 💧 **PROVIDE** volunteer events for community members to participate in restoration, water sampling, and data collection efforts



**HAULING TRASH:** Hannah Hohman, our Environmental Steward is pictured hauling a large amount of debris that was cleaned up by volunteers on 6 Mile Island.



## BY THE NUMBERS

# 662

**volunteer hours**  
given by 208 volunteers



# 15,000

**approx. pounds of debris**  
cleaned up from on or around  
our waterways in this region

# 28

**site surveys**  
conducted for our watershed



# 2025 STEWARDSHIP HIGHLIGHTS



## STEWARDING 6 MILE ISLAND ON THE ALLEGHENY RIVER

Alongside Rivers to Land Stewards, we continued our 6 Mile Island restoration efforts with volunteers and additional partners (Allegheny CleanWays, Friends of the Riverfront, and more!). As of right now, most of the heavy debris has been removed from the island, and the last cleanup in October hauled out two buried cars, multiple layers of carpeting, and most notably, a houseboat! We are looking forward to our continued work to restore this important riparian zone!

## SURVEYING CREEK MOUTHS AND DELTAS IN OUR WATERSHED

This summer, we worked with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Pittsburgh District on a Creek Mouth Delta Characterization Study, collecting ecological health benefits data relevant to these understudied land forms at the intersection of streams and rivers around Pittsburgh. The data gathering included fish surveys, current vector modeling, wetland delineation, macroinvertebrate surveys, and more. Since our region has lost much of its natural floodplains, our surviving deltas are critical to preserve, and the data that we collected will be examined and shared in a report anticipated to release in the summer next year.



## TRASH TRAPPING IN THE PITTSBURGH REGION

Along with Allegheny CleanWays, we continued to establish a collaborative approach to managing trash in our waterways with passive trash-trapping systems - think "Mr. Trash Wheel". We used time-lapsed photography of trash buildup, river flow, site characterization, and research to determine the best system and location for a trash trapping system in the Pittsburgh Pool. Stay tuned for updates as we progress on this study!



## VOLUNTEERS SAMPLE FOR SALT LEVELS

We held two Salt Watch sampling days to gather regional data on the chloride levels in our waterways – we documented how salty our freshwater streams are. 39 volunteers helped us gather 42 total samples at 21 sites!

We will continue to hold volunteer sampling days so that we can use this data to advocate for the protection of our waterways! Our Salt Watch data can be found online, along with others nationwide, at [cleanwaterhub.org](http://cleanwaterhub.org).





# A WATCHDOG FOR OUR WATERWAYS

## Water Quality Monitoring and Testing

### OUR RIVERS HAVE A NEED FOR QUALITY DATA & CONSISTENT MONITORING.

Three Rivers Waterkeeper patrols and monitors our waterways for pollution by visually assessing our waters and using high-quality monitoring and sampling technologies to collect water samples for testing. As your Three Rivers Waterkeeper, we maintain a critical on-the-water presence where we focus our efforts on several forms of monitoring and testing.

#### How we monitor our waterways :

- 💧 **COLLECT** baseline & location-focused water quality sampling
- 💧 **MAINTAIN** critical on-the-water presence to deter & detect pollution
- 💧 **ANALYZE** data & produce water quality reports
- 💧 **CREATE** educational materials to facilitate accessible information for evidence
- 💧 **RESPOND** to new & known threats to our water quality



**DATA FOR GOOD:** Koa Reitz, our Environmental Scientist, taking a PFAS sample of Piney Fork using a Cyclopure sampling kit



## BY THE NUMBERS

# 765.5

**hours**

dedicated to monitoring and patrolling our waterways



# 476

**water samples**

taken to collect data about the health of our rivers and tributaries

# 32

**regulatory reports**  
of pollution and possible violations of the Clean Water Act submitted to enforcement agencies



# 2025 WATER HIGHLIGHTS



## WHAT'S LIVING IN OUR WATERS

This year, staff members and volunteers went out sampling at six locations on our waterways (2 in each river watershed) to document stream ecology. We sampled the water using our YSI handheld device, on-site identifications, and visual observations at each location. We documented a variety of aquatic and riparian species at each site and are in the process of making an accessible field guide to highlight what's living in our waterways in the Pittsburgh region. So far, we have identified over 70 different species of plants, animals, fungi and lichens!

## PFAS SAMPLING IN SOUTHWEST PENNSYLVANIA

Our PFAS Sampling in Southwestern Pennsylvania report was released in May of 2025. This effort established baseline PFAS contamination levels in Southwestern PA and provided clarity for sources of PFAS pollution where PFAS levels were relatively high. This report looked at the results of 60 samples taken at 39 sites. The full report can be read at [3rwk.org/PFASreport](https://3rwk.org/PFASreport). Since conducting the baseline sampling, we have started to identify our region's sources of PFAS contamination.



## REPORTING ON THE COMPLIANCE OF NPDES PERMITS

A massive research project was conducted by Three Rivers Waterkeeper to utilize publicly available data from state and federal government databases to summarize and analyze the industrial compliance and regulatory enforcement of the Clean Water Act within our jurisdiction. Our research found that overall, there is a lack of compliance and enforcement of the Clean Water Act, with a higher level of noncompliance in the Mon Valley. The full report can be read at [3rwk.org/NPDESreport](https://3rwk.org/NPDESreport).



## EXPANDING SWIM GUIDE SAMPLING

This year, we expanded our annual Swim Guide sampling from 5 sites a week to 12 sites a week! In addition to sampling at Point State Park, Sharpsburg Boat Ramp, Kilbuck Township Fish & Boat Ramp, Deer Creek Boat Ramp, and a rotating site, we were able to add Girty's Run, Turtle Creek, Panther Hollow Run, Big Sewickley Creek, Montour Run, and Sawmill Run to our line! This expanded sampling provides community members with a better picture of the health of our rivers! You can learn more about Swim Guide and read last year's report at [3rwk.org/swim](https://3rwk.org/swim).



# IN THE MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS

Three Rivers Waterkeeper was mentioned in 85 publications this year!



Reporting from the Mon: A river watchdog tracks chemical waste

Julie Grant, Allegheny Front

*"Whenever we are moving the sediment around, and seeing that sheen, that is another thing that leads us to believe that this is not a natural process but is because of industrial activities," said Koa Reitz, an environmental scientist with the Waterkeeper group.*



Abandoned boats haunt Pittsburgh rivers – a new law could help remove them faster

Julia Fraser, 90.5 WESA

*"The typical abandoned boat would be a mid-size, around 30 foot, fiberglass, inboard motor-powered boat in disrepair from the '80s," according to Hannah Hohman, environmental steward at Three Rivers Waterkeeper. They've often been found tied up and taking on water on the North Shore, although the bulk of abandoned boats are found on the land in streets around Pittsburgh..."*



This Pennsylvania settlement could set the standard for preventing tiny plastic pellet pollution

Joseph Winters, Grist

*"VanTassel's team kept following the pellets upstream, trawl after trawl, until they eventually reached the Ohio River's confluence with Raccoon Creek, a popular area for swimming and fishing. That's where they found the source. An industrial stormwater pipe was transporting pellets from a Styropek plastics facility and releasing them directly into the creek."*



Companies agree to \$3.3M settlement with DEP over oil pollution in Allegheny River

Reid Frazier, Allegheny Front

*"There have been various attempts by the state and previous owners to clean up the site, including a 1996 agreement with the terminal's then-owner, Sunoco. But these have not worked, said Heather Hulton VanTassel, executive director of Three Rivers Waterkeeper."*



'Pittsburgh's hidden gem': Allegheny Islands provide escape in the river

James Engel, TribLIVE

*Evan Clark said he spends most of his time on the water. The captain of local river monitoring and advocacy group Three Rivers Waterkeeper, Clark said he knows just about every inch of shore in the Pittsburgh watershed. Allegheny Islands, he said, is a spot where he always returns.*



Health of Pittsburgh's rivers has improved, but still faces threats from pollution, report says

Rachel McDevitt, 90.5 WESA

*"A new report on Pittsburgh's rivers details ongoing threats to the region's waterways and calls for stricter regulations to reduce pollution. The Three Rivers Waterkeeper's latest State of Our Waters report details the group's monitoring efforts throughout 2024."*

# 2025 STAFF HIGHLIGHTS



Sept. 2nd, 2025  
Hannah taking in the last of  
summer on our Waterkeeper boat

I had the opportunity to be a keynote speaker at the PA Master Watershed Steward Retreat! I love any chance to talk about the work we do.

— Hannah Hohman, Environmental Steward



Oct. 28th, 2025  
Jess preparing to help deliver a  
library presentation

My highlights were all the small moments with our team that make working here fun and rewarding. All the coffee shops we visited and late nights putting away event supplies and carpooling conversations.

— Jess Friss, Director of Community Programs



Sept. 2nd, 2025  
Sierra exploring 14 Mile Island  
while on a staff boat trip

One of my favorite events this year was our Clothing Swap. So many people came out to contribute clothes, upcycle with Screenprinting, and talk about all of the ways we can love and protect our rivers & streams.

— Sierra Weir, Community Organizer

# 2025 STAFF HIGHLIGHTS



Nov. 5<sup>th</sup>, 2025  
Koa posing with a giant leaf  
while surveying Raccoon Creek

This year, I had the opportunity to do ecological surveys on different waterways in our region. I got to see the breadth of wildlife we have in our region, including toads, water snakes, great blue herons, Kingfishers, a mink, and a baby catfish!

— Koa Reitz, Environmental Scientist



June 6<sup>th</sup>, 2025  
Evan readying himself to take  
people out on the river

MY FAVORITE MEMORY THIS YEAR WAS TAKING ALL OF OUR STAFF OUT ON OUR NEW PATROL BOAT. WE HAD A BEAUTIFUL AFTERNOON PICNIC ON 14 MILE ISLAND AND HAD A NICE SWIM. IT WAS THE FIRST TIME ALL OF OUR STAFF HAD BEEN OUT ON A BOAT TOGETHER.

— Captain Evan Clark, Waterkeeper



Oct. 24<sup>th</sup>, 2025  
Heather showing off her name tag mishap at our fundraiser

My favorite moment of 2025 is when we settled the lawsuit against Styroplex for plastic pellet pollution. It was years of work, but the outcome was a precedent setting case that will have national implications for protecting waterways across the U.S.!

— Heather Hulton VanTassel, Executive Director

# 2025 STAFF HIGHLIGHTS



July 17<sup>th</sup>, 2025  
Amanda searching for mussels  
with volunteers

Having the opportunity to serve on safety crew for the 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Pitt Paddle Race this year was a favorite memory of mine. It was great to support the enjoyment of these rivers and to connect with community over shared passion for our waterways.

— Amanda Zaner, Advocacy Fellow



July 25<sup>th</sup>, 2025  
Liz holding up her newly  
screen printed bandana

The most memorable part of 2025 for me has been participating in the tributary delta fish surveys. It was amazing seeing the diversity of fish species living right here in our rivers!

— Liz Dubnicay, Programs Assistant



Oct. 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2025  
Addie showing off the E. coli  
colonies that formed on an R-CARD

My favorite memory of 2025 was kayaking at the Summer Sojourn. It was the first time I spent time on the Allegheny, and the first event I spent with 3RWK. It was exciting and rewarding to connect with everyone and the river.

— Addie Kelble, Environmental Educator & AmeriCorps Member

# THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT

Three Rivers Waterkeeper is a non-profit environmental organization working to hold polluters accountable and protecting the water quality of the Allegheny, Monongahela, and Ohio Rivers. We can't do this without the generosity and support of our funders, partnering organizations, supporters, volunteers, and sponsors.

**The work that we have been able to accomplish is because of you.**



Thank you to the **220** individual donors, **4,823** program participants, **208** volunteers, numerous nonprofit partner organizations, supporting foundations and charities, and those who read and shared our work this year.

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800 Vinial Street, Suite B314  
Pittsburgh, PA 15212

412-589-9411 (office)

[www.3rwk.org](http://www.3rwk.org)

   @3RWaterkeeper

[ops@ThreeRiversWaterkeeper.org](mailto:ops@ThreeRiversWaterkeeper.org)