



# CREATING EQUITABLE ACCESS

2022 Annual Report



## HONORING OUR LEGACY, BUILDING OUR FUTURE

Over the course of 30 years, Tualatin Riverkeepers has been the voice for protection in a watershed that now supports half a million residents. As we look back on 2022, Tualatin Riverkeepers continued the critical work that's at our core – advocating for policies and legislation that lead to better water quality, ecosystem sustainability, and the overall health of the Tualatin River watershed. Our success is possible because of the commitment of more than 500 members, many of whom volunteer significant time in service to our advocacy, stewardship, and river experiences work.



Our work as an unwavering advocate for the watershed will remain at our core. A large part of advocacy success, however, can be attributed to a love of and connection to the Tualatin River that our members feel so deeply. This connection is built through paddling on the river, working to steward many of the beautiful natural areas in the watershed, and by celebrating what the Tualatin River means for us collectively. As we look toward 2023 and beyond, we're planning more opportunities to paddle and explore the river, reviving important traditions such as Tualatin River Discovery Day, and drawing upon these traditions to reach a broader group of future Riverkeepers!

In this report, you'll read about the completion of our first phase of our Equitable Access work, an initiative that will ensure the Tualatin River is a resource for all of our watershed's residents, with a focus on increasing access to historically underserved residents. In 2023, we'll take the next step in equitable access as we begin to work with communities to develop plans to expand access to the river.

As we work on plans to expand access, we'll look for new opportunities to engage diverse communities with activities on the river and to steward the watershed. Our 2023 Discovery Day will begin at Rood Bridge Park in Hillsboro, and the event will embrace and celebrate the diverse communities and cultures in the upper watershed. Our new Tualatin Restoration Leader program will train a cohort of volunteer leaders, providing them the tools (physical and otherwise!) to lead small groups of volunteers on restoration projects throughout the watershed.

For Tualatin Riverkeepers to continue to protect and restore the watershed, it's critical that we engage more diverse voices, particularly those likely to be disproportionately impacted by a changing climate. We're committed to this work, and we're committed to accomplishing it in the spirit of the community members who founded our organization in 1993 – through exploration, hard work, and just the right amount of celebration of a river and watershed we all love.

Glenn Fee,  
*Executive Director*

The Tualatin River watershed includes traditional village sites of the Tualatin band of Kalapuya, the Atfalati, along with other tribes present since the last ice age, creating communities and seasonal encampments to harvest and use the plentiful natural resources of the area. This valley has a complex and layered history; we make a commitment to learn it, to recognize, support, collaborate with and advocate for Indigenous People, and to consider the convergence of legacies that bring us to where we are today as we paddle its waters. We offer gratitude for the land itself, for those who have stewarded it for generations, and for the opportunity to learn, work, and be in community on it.

## MONITORING IMPACTS FROM NEW DEVELOPMENT IN OUR WATERSHED

Washington County is a hotspot for development, and Tualatin Riverkeepers continues to track the impacts of urban growth in King City, Tigard, Beaverton, and Hillsboro. We sit on several advisory committees that engage stakeholders at the city and county level, and we consistently comment on permit applications to ensure compliance under city code, state regulations, and federal law.

In 2022, we submitted 20 written comments advocating for specific actions to protect water quality, air quality, forests, and other resources in the Tualatin watershed. Tualatin Riverkeepers members answered our call on nine action alerts calling for community input, sending hundreds of comments to public officials over the course of the year. Our engagement led to some important wins for the watershed, including our partnership with 1,000 Friends of Oregon to prevent the Cornelius Pass road extension through rural and natural lands.

There is more work to be done in the coming year as planning decisions are finalized. Metro recently approved a land swap that incorporates approximately 500 acres of Washington County into the urban growth boundary. Tualatin Riverkeepers provided input on the proposed land swap and will be advising the City of Tigard during the planning phase.

## WHAT IS A RIVERKEEPER?

Tualatin Riverkeepers is part of a global advocacy network, known as the Waterkeeper Alliance, which connects us to more than 350 waterkeepers across the world. The names of these organizations - Riverkeeper, Soundkeeper, Baykeeper - are often chosen to reflect the main body of water they protect. Our founders chose to pluralize our organization name because we believe everyone is a riverkeeper and that we all have a responsibility to protect our watersheds. Most Waterkeeper Alliance organizations have a riverkeeper on staff, often an individual with formal legal training, to lead its advocacy efforts, and Victoria Frankeny currently leads our efforts in consultation with our Watershed Watch Committee.



Our Riverkeeper, Victoria Frankeny, attacks rapids with the same tenacity she applies to defending our watershed.

# DEFINING AND CREATING ACCESS FOR ALL

## WHAT IS EQUITABLE ACCESS?

Tualatin Riverkeepers has steadfastly advocated for additional and more equitable public access to the Tualatin River, and we continue to focus education and outreach efforts on underserved communities. Over the course of 2022, through support from the Oregon State Marine Board, we assessed current launches along the river and worked with community partners to better understand current and historic barriers to access of the river.

We reviewed the status of public access, active projects, and plans for future development; discussed what equitable access is and looks like for the Tualatin River; listened to community priorities and needs in terms of access locations and features; and worked on a common vision of what equitable access to the Tualatin River National Recreation Trail means and looks like.

As the map of the river and its launches shows, there are significant gaps, particularly as you move toward the upper watershed. For many of our watershed's residents, barriers to access don't show up on a map. These barriers include transportation, fewer parks adjacent to the river, and a historic lack of inclusion in the fields, and decision-making, of outdoor recreation and conservation. For some, inequitable access could mean the ability to get in or out of a boat easily.

In December, we collaborated with The Intertwine Alliance to convene a forum of stakeholders in the management of public land along the Tualatin River and held in-person and virtual Community Roundtables for those who wade, swim, fish, boat, and float on the river. The work of defining equitable access is slow, challenging, and of the utmost importance. How we define it and with whom will ultimately determine our success in developing innovative and inclusive solutions and strategies.



## MARIA DAVILA BORES, 2022 GREEN HERON AWARD WINNER



Our Green Heron Award is given each year to recognize someone who has done significant and important work to move forward the Tualatin Riverkeepers' mission of protecting, restoring, and providing equitable public access to the Tualatin River and its watershed. Maria Davila Bores, Parks Project Specialist for the City of Hillsboro, was our unanimous choice in 2022. As the project manager for Rood Bridge Park's public watercraft launch, Maria shepherded grants and contracts that led to development of an accessible launch site within a welcoming city park that additionally provides many amenities for families looking to recreate and celebrate near and in the water each summer. For the past two years of our Equitable Access project, the Rood Bridge Park signs launch has been an invaluable way for us to provide even more access opportunities with kayak and canoe rentals to the historically-underserved upper watershed. Without Maria's work, this would have been impossible for us.

# WAYS TO GIVE

Thank you to our major corporate and foundation sponsors from 2022!

- Autzen Foundation
- Backyard Bird Shop
- Bullitt Foundation
- Clean Water Services
- Healy Foundation
- Jackson Foundation
- Juan Young Trust
- LAM Research
- Meyer Memorial Trust
- NW Cannabis
- Oregon Jewish Community Youth Foundation
- Oregon Metro
- Oregon Parks Foundation of Oregon Community Foundation
- Oregon State Marine Board
- Pacific Community Design
- Portland General Electric
- Reser Family Foundation
- City of Tigard
- City of Tualatin
- Tualatin Soil and Water Conservation District
- Tualatin Valley Trout Unlimited
- Willamette Week Give Guide

## SUPPORT TUALATIN RIVERKEEPERS

Tualatin Riverkeepers is incredibly thankful for ongoing support from our members, from community foundations, and from businesses that call our watershed home. Many of our donors choose to support us through one-time gifts or at our annual Green Heron Fundraiser, but there are a number of options to support Tualatin Riverkeepers.

### Monthly Gifts

Monthly contributions allow for more certainty in our planning over the course of the year. Our monthly donors (“Riverbankers”) can choose to contribute via an automatic checking account deduction or through Network for Good.

### Equipment Donations

Donations of gently used canoes, kayaks, and personal flotation devices are always welcome, as well tools, trailers, and even pickup trucks to help support our burgeoning stewardship efforts.

### Corporate Engagement / Matching Gifts

A number of companies choose to support their employees through matching their donations or via a set contribution per volunteer hour. Check with your Human Resources Department to see whether you have a matching gift program, and consider inviting your company to sponsor an event or program.

### Bequests, Stock and Estate Gifts

The need for protecting our watershed will continue well into the future. Please consider a bequest, stock or estate gift to help ensure that Tualatin Riverkeepers will be here for generations as the voice for clean water.

For more information, visit our website or reach out directly to our Executive Director, Glenn Fee.

## BECOME A VOLUNTEER LEADER

As a small organization, Tualatin Riverkeepers relies upon a dedicated core of volunteer leaders to help us project, restore, and enjoy the Tualatin River. Some of the roles you can play as a volunteer leader:

### Paddle Team Member

Hop in a boat and help others enjoy the recreational opportunities that the Tualatin River provides. A Paddle Team leads and supports every group on paddles, ensuring safe and successful trips while sharing personal experiences and serving as ambassadors for our work.

### Restoration Crew Leaders

Tualatin Riverkeepers Restoration Leaders assist or lead on group volunteer habitat enhancement events throughout the watershed! Once trained, we ask that Restoration Leaders commit to a minimum of four projects throughout the year.

### Watershed Watch Committee

The Watershed Watch Committee supports our advocacy work by providing expertise in a wide variety of areas. Our advocacy program would not be possible without our volunteer specialists, whose background ranges from ecology to engineering!

### Riverkeeper Ambassadors

Our Riverkeeper Ambassadors represent Tualatin Riverkeepers at events throughout the watershed, from public events such as volunteer fairs and Farmer’s Markets to some of our own events. All we ask is that Ambassadors possess a passion for our work and a desire to engage with residents of the watershed.



Mark Fitzsimons, River Experiences Coordinator, paddles with future Riverkeepers!

## BOARD of DIRECTORS

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## STAFF

Caitlin Costello, *Volunteer and Outreach Coordinator*

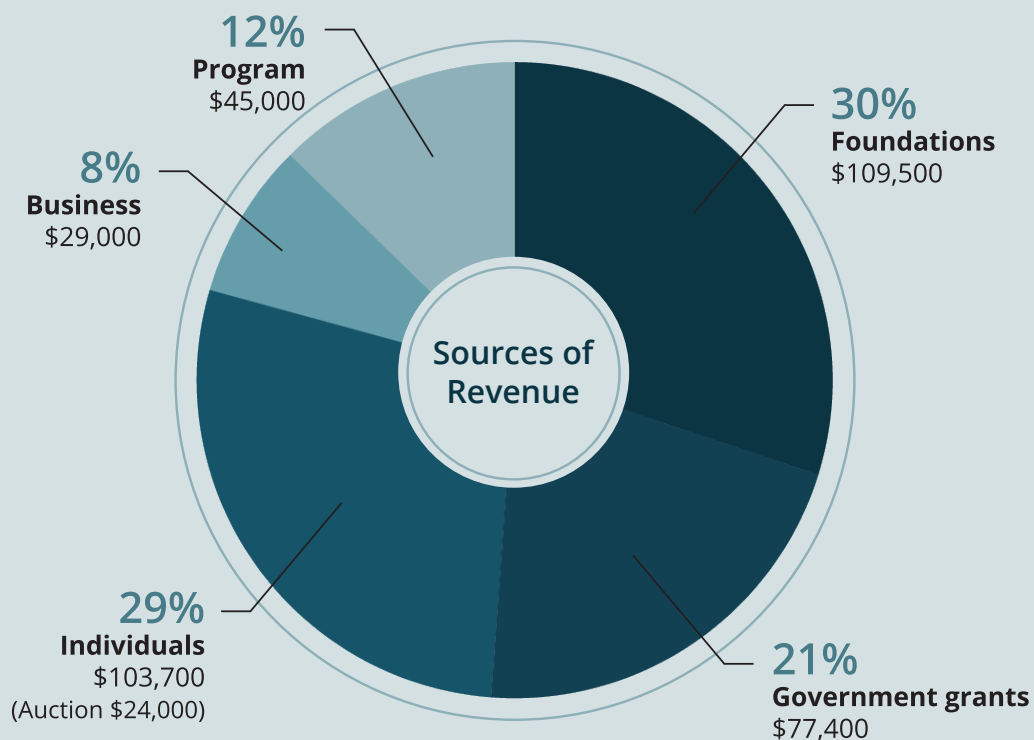
Glenn Fee, *Executive Director*

Mark Fitzsimons, *River Experiences Coordinator*

Victoria Frankeny, *Riverkeeper and Staff Attorney*

Jessica Parsons, *Admin and Membership Coordinator*

# FINANCES



Volunteers make a difference in our watershed!

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