

# KENTUCKY WATERWAYS ALLIANCE



**Mission:** Celebrating 30 years of working to protect, restore, and celebrate Kentucky's Waterways

**Vision:** KWA envisions a Kentucky that sustains and celebrates our vast network of healthy waterways to support thriving aquatic ecosystems, healthy fish and wildlife populations, abundant recreation, and dependable, clean water supplies for future generations.

**Website:** [www.KWAlliance.org](http://www.KWAlliance.org)

**Contact:** Michael Washburn, Executive Director  
[michael@kwalliance.org](mailto:michael@kwalliance.org)

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## ACCOMPLISHMENTS: 1993-2023

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### Watershed Partnerships

- As an Alliance, we have placed a priority on working with communities across the state on local watershed issues.
- We helped over 50 watershed groups across the state from Paducah to Prestonsburg, Louisville to Bowling Green, Covington to London protect their river or stream and educate the community about the importance of clean water.
- KWA was instrumental in the founding of Watershed Watch of Kentucky, resulting in thousands of citizens who have been trained to take water samples and have learned about their local streams as well as about their larger watershed.
- In 2022, KWA's Watershed Network program was established to continue increasing collective impact to improve water quality for wildlife and people who rely on clean water.
- KWA is the National Wildlife Federation state affiliate.

### Protection

- As an Alliance we advocate for better policies and programs at the state and national levels.
- KWA staff has reviewed and commented on hundreds of permit applications, helping to improve the permits and thereby protect our waterways.
- We have provided hundreds of hours of environmental education to students and communities to increase awareness about the value of protecting waterways as a natural resource.
- We fought and succeeded to keep a cold-water habitat designation for 16 Kentucky streams, which protected their use as trout streams.
- We coordinated and hosted septic workshops, sharing resources and the importance of protecting the Red River from sewage discharge.
- We repaired/replaced 25 failing septic systems for low-income families that were polluting the Red River watershed.

## Restoration

- KWA co-authored a Watershed Planning Guidebook used by watershed groups across Kentucky to restore impaired, polluted waterways.
- KWA has co-authored many watersheds plans across the Commonwealth.
- We have coordinated thousands of volunteers in waterways cleanups across the state and removed hundreds of tons of trash from our waterways.
- KWA began implementing the Red River Watershed plan in Eastern Kentucky six years ago.
- KWA established and managed the Kentucky Aquatic Resources Fund (KARF) to provide a sustainable source of funding for aquatic ecosystems in Kentucky.
- Outcomes from the KARF partnerships resulted in the removal of the Green River Dam 6 in 2017 and the Barren River Dam 1 in 2022.

## Celebration

- KWA believes when we celebrate recreational opportunities, beauty, and joy that healthy waterways offer, individuals are inspired to protect and restore our most valuable natural resource.
- On 8/18/2023, KWA is holding our 30th anniversary celebration, an evening of music and film at Waterfront Botanical Gardens on the bank of Beargrass Creek, Louisville's primary urban stream.
- We believe that our waterways are worthy of celebration through participation in community events, art, music, film, photography, and writing. Celebrations have included:
  - >The Wild & Scenic Film Festival, held 15 years in a row.
  - >Establishment of a KWA artist-in-residence program, Earth Month events and cleanups, photography contests, book discussions, and participation in the Kentucky State Fair.
  - >Annual Make-A-Splash WaterFest in Eastern Kentucky schools.
  - >Annual Wild & Scenic Red RiverFest in Clay City, Kentucky.

## Looking to the Future

- KWA is working with the National Wildlife Federation and other partners on the creation of an Ohio River Restoration Plan which will be presented to Congress.
- KWA will work with Louisville Metro, US. Army Corps of Engineers, and local watershed groups on the restoration of Beargrass Creek, Louisville's primary urban stream.
- KWA will work towards environmental justice with Appalachian, Black communities, and communities of color who bear a disproportionate burden from polluted water and other environmental harms.
- KWA will continue to engage with communities across Kentucky using the arts as a point of connection to celebrate our waterways, including publication of a water themed literary journal and a documentary about tire dumping in the Red River.
- KWA, alongside our members and community partners, will continue to strive to improve the quality of our waterways, for all Kentuckians and our neighbors downstream.