



# A Clean Environment for Everyone

## 2021 Annual Report



**Action  
Network**

2021 was an impressive year for Clean Wisconsin. As I reflect, it's hard to find a better year in the last 20 where across-the-board success was so apparent.

After a decade of work, we won two landmark cases before the Wisconsin Supreme Court, protecting water resources; and we won another important lawsuit, Meteor Timber, stopping the destruction of an endangered wetland for the construction of a frac sand loading facility.

We also made significant progress toward our climate, energy and water program goals, and even shored up new support to expand that work, as well as our local climate resilience work. We forged stronger partnerships with former adversaries-turned-allies in the agricultural sector, with renewable energy companies, and with university scientists, just to name a few, to further develop and hasten our efforts to improve and protect Wisconsin's air and water. Knowing that our program success depends on having strategic goals and employing smart, hardworking people to accomplish them, in 2021 we added staff to our legal, program, and communications teams, and a new member to our Board of Directors.



**Mark Redsten**  
**President & CEO**

In our communications department, with regularity, we were quoted in newspaper stories, heard on the radio and seen on tv highlighting our successes and discussing the challenges that remain in Wisconsin. We added a podcast series and produced many original videos to better tell the stories of people and places impacted by pollution or who are inspirational in their efforts to help Wisconsin's environment.

And with all these fantastic program victories and new communications content, people responded: We grew our Action Network and social media platforms, like Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, to their highest levels. We had our best fundraising year ever, and we brought our membership to the highest it's been in 10 years. As a result, we were successful in shoring up the organization's future adding significant new resources to our Doug LaFollette speakers fund endowment, our long-term reserve fund, and a new legal defense fund.

We did all of this work despite a challenging work environment, punctuated by a scary pandemic, racial injustice and difficult partisan politics. But as you read through, I hope you'll appreciate the tremendous amount of work happening on so many fronts at Clean Wisconsin. You'll read about our wins in the courtroom at the end of 2021, with the EPA throwing out the "Dirty Water Rule", and our Wisconsin Supreme Court wins to protect rural drinking water. You'll read about our past work in state agencies advancing important rules on a dangerous class of chemicals called PFAS, about our work to advance clean energy, and about our efforts to restore and protect the natural resources and communities throughout the Great Lakes and the Mississippi River Basin.

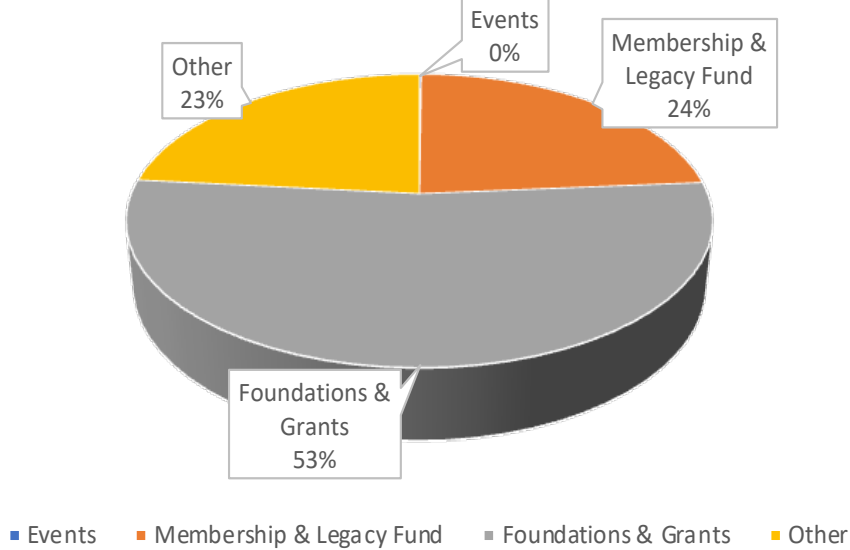
Our future plans remain ambitious, including expanding our climate program, working with agriculture and rural communities to advance natural climate and water quality solutions, growing our science program, strengthening and supporting local governments, and increasing our membership and communications. In 2022 we plan to hire at least 2 more people, and add 3-4 new board members. As always, we'll focus on elevating diverse voices, supporting environmental justice in our program work, and diversifying our board and staff.

2021 was one of our best years in the organization's 51 year history. I hope you take pride in your part supporting us, and continue to invest in the work ahead!

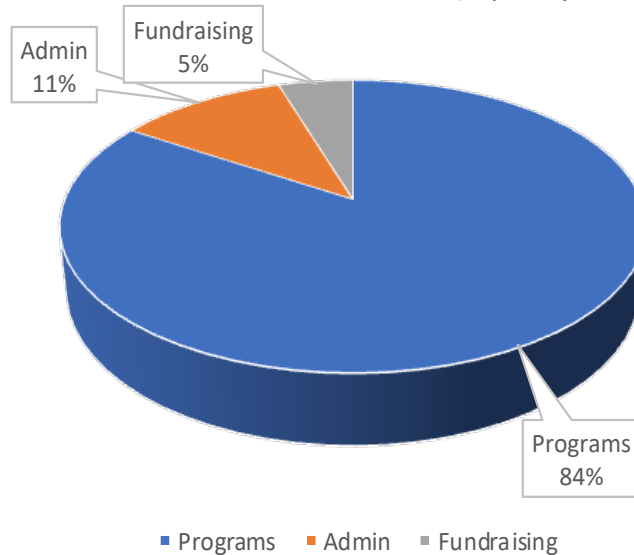
*Mark Redsten*

# Fueled by your generosity

2021 Support & Revenue: \$2,830,366



2021 TOTAL EXPENSES: \$2,266,366



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Mississippi River Restoration and Resilience Initiative  
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Wisconsin Coastal Management Program

# 2021 Success Stories

Since 1970, Clean Wisconsin has worked hard to defend our clean air, clean water and special places. Through the years, we've effectively done this by enacting or strengthening environmental policies; defending those policies when they are threatened; holding polluters and elected leaders accountable; and educating members, decisionmakers and the public on the importance of protecting our natural resources.

## In 2021, we had numerous victories:

### Advancing clean drinking water protections

For the first time, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources is using its permitting authority to require a large-scale dairy operation to monitor groundwater pollution around farm fields where it spreads manure. The move stems from a Clean Wisconsin v. DNR state Supreme Court ruling in July of 2021 that allowed the DNR to impose water quality monitoring and animal caps through its permitting process. This is a big win for clean drinking water in rural communities across Wisconsin.



In 2021, Wisconsin also took an important step in the fight against PFAS pollution. After years of work from Clean Wisconsin, our partners, and advocates across the state, the Wisconsin Natural Resources Board passed the state's first ever drinking water and surface water standards for the "forever" chemicals. The move could ultimately pave the way for widespread municipal drinking water testing and contamination site cleanup.



### Protecting Wisconsin electric ratepayers

After Clean Wisconsin and other advocacy groups intervened in Madison Gas & Electric's 2021 rate case, the utility agreed to lower its fixed charges for electricity which had been among the highest in the country and had disproportionately burdened lower-income households while disincentivizing energy efficiency. Now, fixed charges for residential customers will drop from \$19 to \$17 per month in 2022, then to \$15 per month in 2023. The Madison-based utility will also expand its smart thermostat efficiency program to offer additional assistance to low-income customers.

### Restoring the Mississippi River Basin

In 2021 Clean Wisconsin joined the Mississippi River Restoration and Resilience Initiative (MRRRI), a coalition of national, regional, and state groups seeking to create a program by building support for and passing the MRRRI Act in congress. This act will seek the restoration and protection of the natural resources and communities throughout the Mississippi River Basin.



### Throwing out the "Dirty Water Rule"

Along with other conservation groups, Clean Wisconsin took the Trump Administration to court in 2020 to challenge a controversial rule that withdrew protections for vital streams and wetlands in Wisconsin and across the country. In August of 2021, the rule, known as the "Dirty Water Rule," was tossed out by an Arizona judge in a parallel case brought forward by Earthjustice and six federally recognized tribes. The Biden Administration is working to replace the Trump-era policy with a broader definition of protected waters of the United States.



# Looking Ahead



The year to come is sure to bring many challenges. With an election nearing, environmental issues will certainly be topics of conversation, debate, and disagreement. While there is great uncertainty in the upcoming year, Clean Wisconsin will continue to be a trusted voice working toward common-sense solutions. In 2022, we have several priorities including:

## **Keeping a careful eye on groundwater and drinking water protections**

Across Wisconsin communities are grappling with varying degrees of lead, nitrate, and PFAS contamination, diminishing their confidence in the potability of their tapwater. Clean Wisconsin will continue to push state and federal agencies to allocate state and federal funds in an equitable manner to ensure that everyone, especially those most disproportionately impacted by environmental issues, has access to clean and abundant water.



## **Advocating for Clean Energy**

With our stakeholder partners, we will continue to encourage utilities to invest in an energy portfolio powered by the wind and the sun, as well as continue to engage in projects from the Clean Power Plan to Focus on Energy to move Wisconsin into a clean energy future.

## **Advancing Community Resilience**

Since 2021, Clean Wisconsin has engaged thousands of residents and helped install more than 650 rain barrels, 63 rain gardens, and porous pavement (green infrastructure) in the 30th Street Industrial Corridor in Milwaukee. This infrastructure captures and slowly releases over two million gallons of stormwater per year, helping to reduce flooding in homes and keep excess nutrients like phosphorus, nitrates, and other pollutants from immediately entering Lake Michigan during large rain events. Due to the success of this program and to improve the health of Lake Michigan, we're expanding this program to Green Bay and Racine.



## Clean Wisconsin Staff

### **President & CEO**

Mark Redsten

### **Vice President,**

### **Programs & Government Relations**

David Tipson

### **Grants & Foundations Manager**

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### **Climate, Energy & Air Program Director**

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### **Chief Financial Officer**

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Dayona Rimmer

### **Milwaukee Program Director & Staff Attorney**

Pam Ritger

### **Green Infrastructure Program Associate**

Ethan Taxman

### **Membership & Outreach Manager**

Luke Voegeli

## Clean Wisconsin Board

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