Massachusetts Rivers Alliance

# ANNUAL REPORT

2024

Barred Owl
Winchester, MA

# Charting a Stronger Future for Massachusetts Rivers

# 2024 in Review

We are pleased to report that 2024 was a very strong year for Mass Rivers and river protection and restoration across the state.

- We benefited from generous support from new and returning donors, allowing us to expand our reach and capacity - thank you!
- We continued to advocate for our rivers on several fronts - with the legislature, with state and federal agencies, through the legal system, and by speaking up for rivers in decision-making spaces across the state. We were delighted to see our drought bill pass the Senate last year, along with increased state investments in river protection and restoration. We also saw both EPA's Region 1 and the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection take steps to protect streamflow, at our urging.
- We created and launched a new, ambitious strategic plan to guide our work over the next five years. Please take a look (it's on the website); we look forward to working with you to achieve an even bigger impact towards a sustainable water future.
- Our education programs continue to grow, and we are especially proud of Dam Busters 101, a year-long weekly series that attracted over 500 participants from around the state—and beyond—to learn about all aspects of dam removal.

As we look ahead to 2025, we believe our work at the state level is more important than ever. With federal leaders choosing to step back from safeguarding our environment, the state's role in ensuring healthy rivers, clean water, environmental justice, and climate resilience will be critical to our future. While we recognize that challenges lie ahead, we note that rivers persist and adapt, and so do we. Mass Rivers is uniquely positioned to address these challenges. We will continue to let our long-term strategic priorities guide our work, while remaining nimble and flexible as we adapt to the changing federal landscape. Thank you for your generous support in making this work possible.

**Julia Blatt**
Executive Director

**Emily Scerbo**
Board President

Emily (left) and Julia (right)

Dam Busters 101 Tour at the Monatiquot River Restoration Project, September 2024 — Ray Macdonald

## Our board and staff

**2024 Staff:** Julia Blatt (Executive Director), Monica Driggers (Deputy Director), Lydia Olson (Technical Specialist), Anna Renkert (Development & Engagement Coordinator), Victoria Kiaer (Bookkeeper/Office Manager), Katharine Lange (Policy Director), Sarah Bower (Technical Program Director), Mikayla Hopkins (Bookkeeper/Office Manager)

**2024 Interns:** Amanda Siow (Communications Intern), Owen Castle (Policy Research Intern)
Worcester Polytechnic Institute Interns: Quan Dinh, Connor White, Randy Zhang, and Joshua Lee

**2024 Board:** Emily Scerbo (President), Mary Griffin (Vice President), Andrea Franz (Treasurer), Paul Beaulieu (Clerk), Wayne Castonguay, Ian Cooke, Christine Doyle, Nancy Hammett, Kwabena Kyei-Aboagye Jr., Graham Lubie, Nagesh Mahanthappa, Deirdre Menoyo, Heidi Ricci, Ellen Smith, Mark P. Smith, Jacqueline Stone, Eve Vogel

# Our Achievements

**Our new 2025-2030 Strategic Plan provides a path to water sustainability in Massachusetts, with a focus on climate resilience.**

> We are proud to have achieved most of what we set out to do in our 2019 Plan and we have set more ambitious goals for the next five years.

**Called upon the EPA to use its legal authority under the Clean Water Act to require stronger state protection for streamflows.**

> As a result of our Notice of Intent to sue the EPA, filed jointly with partners, the EPA formally requested that MassDEP improve its streamflow protections.

**Despite a tough budget year, we helped secure over $14 million in increased investment in state agency programs that protect our rivers**

> and do critical work to improve climate resilience, environmental quality, and public health and safety.

Blue spotted salamander*

**Sustaining rivers and water supplies during drought.**

> Together we moved our top legislative priority, “The Drought Bill” (H.861/S.475) one important step closer to becoming law - it passed the Senate! We will continue to advocate for this bill in 2025 to strengthen drought management across the state and better prepare us to weather future droughts.

**Last session, our timely intervention stopped several harmful legislative initiatives that would have harmed water quality and sustainability.**

> We strongly opposed one end-of-session amendment that would have weakened the Interbasin Transfer Act, one of the state’s foundational water management laws, that enables housing and growth by ensuring that local water management is sustainable. We successfully advocated for its deletion from the final version of a bill that eventually passed.

Left: FY25 Green Budget Briefing, March 2024 — Katharine Lange



# And we’re not stopping anytime soon!

**Continued to connect and strengthen our 80+ member groups**

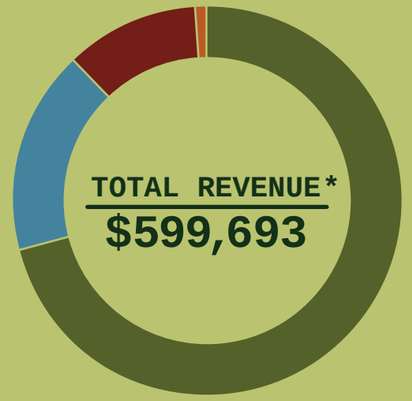
> with monthly and bimonthly peer-to-peer “Mass Rivers Connects” virtual meetings with topics including water quality monitoring, water policy strategizing, running a small organization, and environmental justice.

**We represented water interests on 30+ committees, commissions, task forces, and advisory groups.**

> We used these opportunities to improve river protection in Massachusetts, and to make sure rivers were considered in drought management, stormwater control, climate resilience, biodiversity, water infrastructure funding, and water allocation.

# Our Financials

*These financial figures are unaudited.*




**REVENUE BREAKDOWN**

- 71% Contributions & Grants
- 17% Net Assets Released from Restrictions
- 11% Fundraising & Event Income
- 1% Interest Income

** Mass Rivers also received $50,000 in 2024 as the fourth installment of a five-year Transformational Grant of $550,000. The full grant amount was recognized in 2021 revenues.*

**EXPENSES BREAKDOWN**

- 55% Program
- 24% Fundraising**
- 21% Admin

*Mass Rivers has historically spent very little on fundraising, but in 2024 we invested in that area for the first time in order to increase our growth. Expenditures reflect the cost of a new foundation fundraising program, and dedicated staff support for our development, engagement, and public outreach.*

# Dam Busters

**We taught over 500 people about dam removal to accelerate the pace of dam removals in Massachusetts.**

Our year-long monthly webinar series, Dam Busters 101, connected 500+ participants representing 155 towns across MA with dam removal experts across multiple disciplines.

of participants have a dam removal project underway or are trying to start one!

say the information in Dam Busters addressed their needs.

**Mass Rivers Information + Member Organization Action = Dam Busting for Free Flowing Rivers**

**Join us in 2025 for our Dam Busters 201 series!**

Since the 19th century, the beautiful Housatonic River in western Massachusetts and its plethora of tributaries have hosted many industrial mills on their banks, including grist mills that turned grain into flour. The grist is gone, but the dams remain, and many are in poor condition, blocking fish passage, affecting water quality, and posing public safety problems.

One of these dams, conveniently named the Grist Mill Dam, has recently undergone a reckoning. Located near Pittsfield, MA the dam prevents fish from traveling upstream for spawning, could be contributing to river health issues, and no longer serves a utilitarian purpose. **Traditionally, the Berkshire Environmental Action Team (BEAT), a Mass Rivers member organization, has limited their work on dam removal to the arduous task of gathering support from the community. But, for the first time, they have jumped in to take on a full dam removal project to dismantle the Grist Mill Dam, and the Dam Busters webinar series has been right there to help.**

BEAT's Executive Director, Jane Winn, got the project started after the dam's owner approached her for help, demonstrating the importance of local NGOs in leveraging community relationships to raze dams while building climate resilience. When it was determined that the dam should come down, BEAT began designing the dam removal project, working with the Town of Pittsfield to apply for grant funds. **According to Jane, her staff repeatedly used the Dam Busters recorded webinars as reference tools that were "extraordinarily helpful" in getting this project set up.** Their plan became the basis of a successful grant application. Funds were awarded by the Massachusetts Division of Ecological Restoration in January of 2025. Thanks to BEAT's initiative and resourcefulness, and the support of the Dam Busters webinars, one more defunct dam will disappear from the Housatonic.

Upstream view of the Grist Mill Dam

Downstream view of the Grist Mill Dam



# Our River Protection Partners

New Members

### River Champions $5,000+

Mass Audubon
The Nature Conservancy
Ipswich River Watershed Association

### River Guardians $2,000–$4,999

Neponset River Watershed Association
Charles River Watershed Association

### River Stewards $1,000–$1,999

Mass Organization of State Engineers and Scientists
Mystic River Watershed Association
Trout Unlimited, Nor'East Chapter

### River Sustainers $500–$999

Connecticut River Conservancy
Conservation Law Foundation
North and South Rivers Watershed Association
Trout Unlimited, Greater Boston Chapter
Trout Unlimited, MA Council

### River Advocates $250–$499

Association to Preserve Cape Cod
Berkshire Natural Resources Council
The Charles River Conservancy
Environmental League of Massachusetts
Farmington River Watershed Association
Friends of the Middlesex Fells Reservation
Groundwork Lawrence
Interchapter Paddling Committee- AMC
Nantucket Land & Water Council
Nashua River Watershed Association
OARS
Shawsheen River Watershed Association
Sierra Club Massachusetts Chapter
Sudbury, Assabet and Concord Wild and Scenic River Stewardship Council
Taunton River Watershed Alliance
Trout Unlimited, Cape Cod Chapter
Trust for Public Land
The Trustees

### Members Up to $249

Barnstable Cleanwater Coalition
Belmont Citizens Forum
Berkshire Environmental Action Team
Better Futures Project- Communities Responding to Extreme Weather
Blackstone River Coalition
Blackstone River Watershed Association
Buzzards Bay Coalition
Charlesgate Alliance
Clean Water Action Fund
Community Rowing, Inc.
Deerfield River Watershed Association
Environment Massachusetts
The Esplanade Association
Fort River Watershed Alliance
Franklin Land Trust, Inc.
Friends of the Bass River
Friends of Belle Isle Marsh
Friends of the Blue Hills
Friends of Jerry's Pond
Friends of the Malden River
Friends of the Palmer River
Friends of the Ten Mile River Watershed
Friends of Woodlands and Waters
Green Newton
Greenbelt
Hoosic River Revival
Hoosic River Watershed Association
Hop Brook Protection Association
Housatonic Valley Association
Jones River Watershed Association
League of Women Voters of Massachusetts
Lowell Parks & Conservation Trust
Massachusetts Association of Conservation Comissions
Massachusetts Land Trust Coalition
Massachusetts Watershed Coalition
Merrimack River Watershed Council
Millers River Watershed Council
Muddy Water Initiative
New England Section- American Water Works Association
Ocean River Institute
Old Ladies Against Underwater Garbage
Parker River Clean Water Association
Save the Bay – Narragansett Bay Riverkeepers
Sudbury Valley Trustees
Taunton River Wild & Scenic Stewardship Council
Trout Unlimited, Deerfield River Chapter
Trout Unlimited, Pioneer Valley Chapter #276
Wareham Land Trust
Wastewater Advisory Committee to the MWRA
Water Supply Citizens Advisory Committee
Weir River Watershed Association
Western MA Rights of Nature
Westfield River Watershed Association
Westfield River Wild & Scenic River Advisory Committee
Westport River Watershed Alliance

**"Mass Rivers is a crucial partner and resource for Mass Audubon as we remove dams, create free-flowing rivers, protect water quality, and focus on climate resiliency and green infrastructure. With rivers on so many of our wildlife sanctuaries and climate change causing extreme droughts and flooding, we partner with and rely on Mass Rivers and its network of watershed organizations to advance climate-smart policies that protect our treasured rivers and best promote clean water and healthy habitats."**
David O'Neill, President, Mass Audubon

North American river otter

# Our Members

**CONSECUTIVE CONTRIBUTIONS**

New Members 10-14 years

5-9 years 15+ years

## River Visionaries
### $20,000+

Christine Doyle and David Brams
Nagesh Mahanthappa and Valentine Tolland
Mark P. Smith and Elizabeth W. Brown
Jacqueline and Thomas Stone
*Chrysanta Foundation*
*Stearns Charitable Trust*

## River Champions
### $10,000–$19,999

Anonymous
Sue Bass
Andrea Franz
Sarah Hancock
*The Echo Charitable Foundation*

## River Heros
### $5,000–$9,999

Anonymous
Susan Beede and Jay Copeland
Lalor Burdick
Bonnie Cockman and Chris Foote
David Comb and Coleen Fitzgibbon
Mary Griffin
The Hammett Family
Nancy and Ted Hammett
Meryl Loonin and Neil Fisher
Jessie and Jonathan Panek
Ken Siskind and Julia Blatt

## River Guardians
### $2,500–$4,999

Howard and Judy Blatt
Edward and Monica Driggers
Joan Greene
Deirdre Menoyo
Eve Vogel
Candace Young and Glenn Batchelder
Bill Pastuszek and Ellen Smith
*New England Biolabs Inc.*

## River Stewards
### $1,000–$2,499

Anonymous (4)
Ralph and Ellen Abele
Paul Beaulieu and Karen Hollis
*Gift in honor of Coach Ken O'Brien, Umass Amherst Head Track & Field coach*
Emily Blatt
Katrine Bosley
Clarissa and Rod Bronson
Betsy Cabot
David Carlisle and Morene Bodner
Abbie Celnicker
Roger Colton and Anne Lougee
Ian Cooke and Jill Foster
Christina Dugan
Thomas Dunlap
John Goodman
Jennie Goosen
Paul Haaga, Jr.
*Gift in honor of Nancy Hammett*
Terese Hammerle and Ed Kelly
Jonathan Hecht and Lora Sabin
Kathleen Heyer and Dave Moon
Justin Jackson
Pam and Peter Kane
Ken Karnofsky and Sabine Clark
Jim Lafley and Patti Steinman
Jane Levin and Bob Rifkin
Andrew Magee
Michael O'Hara
Richard Perkins Jr.
Pam and Griff Resor
Jennifer and Jason Ryan
Nathan Sanders and Shannon Morey
Sara and Michael Schnitzer
Elyse Shuster
Susan and Eric Smith
Robert Sproull
Campbell Steward
Pauliina Swartz
Margaret Van Deusen and James Doyle
Martha Wallace and Edward Kane
James Whitters and Susan Moore
*Deloitte*
*Kate and Hermann Field Legacy Fund*
*Ovenbird Cafe*
*Raftelis*
*Ress Family Foundation*

## River Defenders
### $500–$999

Colin and Melody Anderson
Stuart Armstrong
John and Molly Beard
Susan and Ralph Brown
Brian and Alison Clew
Rui and Julia Coelho
Melville P. Cote, Jr. and Edith Rodrigues
Maia Driggers
Irene Freidel and Dan Gaposchkin
Erika Geeter and David Siegel
Kristy Gish
Elissa Grad and Narayan Kaimal
Andrew Grad and Janet Singer
Nicholas and Marjorie Greville
Eva Herndon
Ilisa Hurowitz
Juliet and Bruce Jenkins
Samuel Joffe and Mary McCabe
Liza Ketchum
Beth Lambert
Lori Lander
Isabel Lyndon
William and Leslie Mayo-Smith
Robert and Elisabeth McGregor
Greg Menounos
Rachel Meyers and David Berstein
Jeanne and Joel Mooney
Kathleen O'Hara
Sally Owen
Sandra Postel
Emily and Alex Scerbo
Derek and Karen Smith
Mark Smith
Heidi and Eric Steinert
John and Louisa Troubh
Katy and Tom Walker
Karen Ziffer and Jack Sobol
*BlueSnap*
*Coalition for Safe Drinking Water*
*Horsley Witten Group*
*Leading Edge Real Estate*
*PampaninFoster, LLC*
*Paddle Boston*
*ReVision Energy*
*T Ford Company*

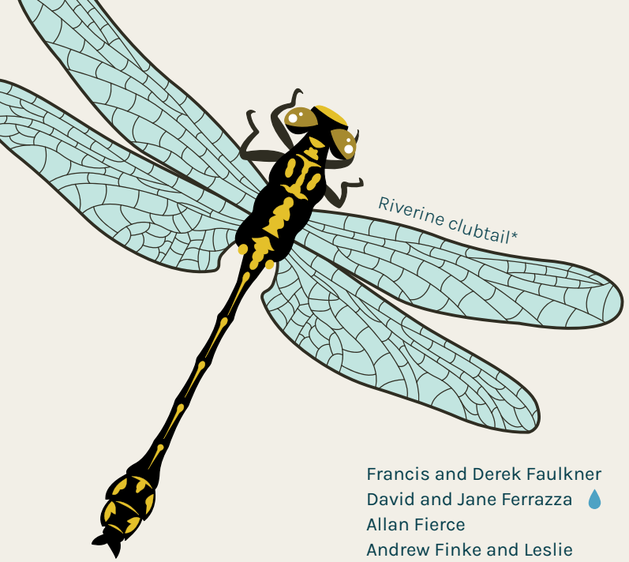
## River Advocates
### $250–$499

Anonymous (3)
Cynthia Barakatt and Rich Bizzozero
Reinier and Nancy Beeuwkes
Carl Brauer and Nancy Schieffelin
Bruce Buckland
Jeff and Lynda Bussgang
Julie Bussgang and Rich Bernius
Katie and Paul Buttenwieser
Katherine Button
Lisa Camesano and John Byers
Wayne Castonguay and Cynthia Richmond
David and Susan Clark
Marty and Karen Clements
Russ Cohen
Jacqueline Denmon and Jack Kahn
Linda Dolmatch
Susan Edwards
Creighton and Andrea Eldridge
Kristin Finn
Kelsey and Joe Fiori
Elizabeth Freeman and Robert Bechek
Marjorie Glick
Eric Grunebaum and Miriam Tendler
Michelle Hewitt and André Weinstock
*Gift in memory of Dr. Mariano Ledesma Ezpeleta, Jr*
Bruce Petschek and Fariba Houman
Tim Ingraham
Jan Jeffers Lo and Cliff Lo
Taber and Mary Keally
Pat King and Tom Powers
Rebecca Kinraide
Dan Krocker
Steven and Jennifer Kundrot
Anthony Kuralowicz
Kwabena Kyei-Aboagye
Deanne Loonin and Elizabeth Renuart
Nathalie Potter Maio
*Gift in memory of Lucy Potter*
Robert Mashal and Shawna Giggey-Mashal
*Gift in honor of Andrea Franz*
Stephen McCarthy
Gretchen McClain and Todd Schatzki
Nicole Mushero
Cheri Opperman and Maure Aronson
Elizabeth and Samuel Otis
Jane and Eric Philippi
Nigel Pickering and Roberta O'Connor
Karen Pelto and Gene Berkowitz
John Reinhardt
E. Heidi Ricci
Stephen Roger
Mark Rossi and Sabrina Kurtz-Rossi
Thomas and Jane Sciacca
Randy Smith and Elizabeth Hilder
*Gift in honor of Mark P. Smith*
Niraj Srivastava
Virginia Steel
Marion Stoddart
Linda Sultan
Sigmar and Linda Tullman
Julie and Ernie Vargas
Amy Vickers
Steven and Giena Vogel
Miriam and David Weil
Mary Alice Wistman
Henry Woolsey
Michael and Rhonda Yeomans
*Patagonia*

## River Friends
### $100–$249

Anonymous (2)
Andre Alguero
Jennifer Allport-Anderson
Bruce Amazeen and Sandra Webster
Chuck Anastas
Mary Antes
*Gift in honor of Deirdre Menoyo*
Katharine and Rodney Armstrong
Heather Audet and Derek Mason
Susan and Bob Barron
Julie Barton and Peter Emerson
Kathleen Baskin and Leonard Albano
Ed and Mary Bauchiero
Carmen and James Beaton
Eugene Benson
Kate Bentsen
Eugene Beresin and Michaela Moran
David Biggers and Kathleen O'Connell

Left: Topsfield River Restoration Tour, June 2024
Right: River trivia event at Portico Brewing, June 2024




Joanne Bissetta and Steve Long
Amy Blake and Garry Crago
Cameron Block
Alison Bowden
Katharine Bowditch
Stephen and Lisa Brayton
Douglas and Aviva Brooks
Christopher Brown
Lee Simonds Brown
Will Brownsberger
Peter Bryant
Ailie Byers
Barbara Bund
Jane Calvin
Maureen and David Christmas
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Inez Hedges
Larry Herlacher
Libby Herland
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David and Dianne Hoaglin
Tony and Kerstin Howarth
Stephen Howe
Charlotte Ikels
Joan and Joe Iovino
Radha Iyengar
Caroline Jones and Peter Galison
Nancy Kail
Anne Kelly
Julia Khorana and Michael Duclos

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Shemaya Laurel
Paul Lauenstein and Lonnie Friedman
Richard Lawrence
Hal Levine and Lindi Higgins
Matthew Liebman and Amy Michelson
Michelle Limaj
Margaret Leidler and Jeff Lucas
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Laura Matson
Anna McCurn
William Shaw McDermott
Mary and Brendan McLaughlin
Molly and Harry Mink
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Alice Poltorick
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Elizabeth Pratt
Amy Pullen and Nathaniel McIntosh
Tim and Julia Purinton
Patricia Ramsey and Fred Moseley
Karen Rednor and Joseph Reardon

Marla Rhodes and Rick Olick
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Larni and Rich Rosenlev
Jaqueline Royce
Wendy Rundle
Gwen Ruta
Rachel Sagan and Steve Gutherz
Thea Sahr and Patrick Field
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Gideon Schreiber and Lisa Capoccia
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Michael Searles
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Tom Vise and John Petrowsky
Lucy Wallace
David Webster and Lynn Dyer
Sarah Weinstein and Kenneth Blumberg
John and Abby Weiss
Jean Winkler and Richard Hillel
Samantha Woods and Frederic L. Day III
Robert and Kathy Zimmerman
Anne and Steve Ziobrowski
*Flatbread Boston Landing, LLC*
*Heyes Forest Products, Inc.*
*Portico Brewing*
*Tighe & Bond*

## Members Up to $99

Anonymous (8)
David and Stephanie Adey
Anna Aguilera and Jesse Schreier
Barbara Aguilera
Douglas Albertson
Shannon Ames
Anthony P. Antico
David Azinheira
Susan Bailey
Ted and Iris Barten
Donald Becker
Rachel Berger
Helen Bethell
Carolyn and Woody Bishop
Kathryn Bonfiglio and Barry Kaye
Erin Bonney Casey
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Evan Johnson and Kathryn Ewald
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Kathy Korte and Gary Quadrozzi
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Martin LaMonica
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Martha and Cedwyn Morgan
Kathryn Mostow
Christopher Myhrum and Stephanie Moye
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Josh and Jeanne Ostroff
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Michelle Rogers
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Linda Schuller
Frank Scott and Marian Orfeo
Linda and Harvey Segal
Lynne Smith
Robert Spillman and Lana Seguin-Spillman
Nina Silber and Louis Hutchins
Sally Spooner
Judith Summers and W. Bart Saxbe
Kathy Swain
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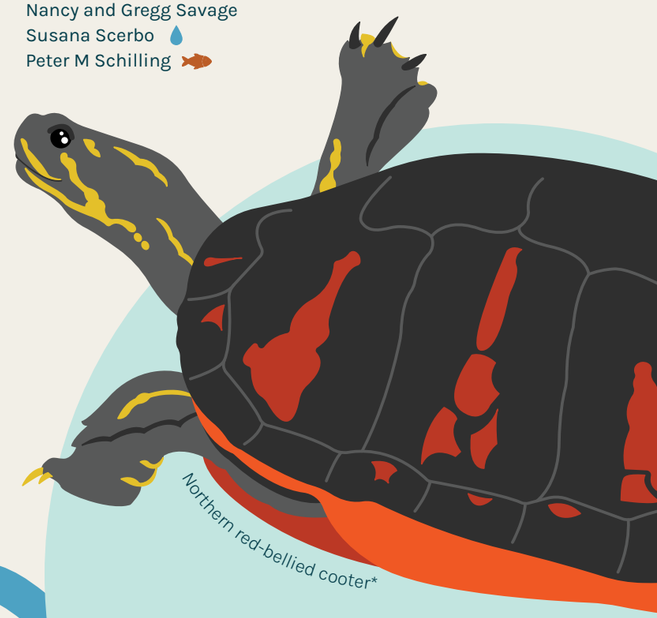
Thomas Tonelli
Karin Turer
Madeleine Snow Typadis and Archie Typadis
Ivan Ussach
Ms. Maria Van Dusen
David and Sherri Wilson
Jodi Wolin
Emily Woolfrey
*Gift in honor of Margaret Elizabeth Wylde and Lance Drane*
Laura Zoll




*These species thrive in riverine habitats and are on the Massachusetts Endangered, Threatened, or of Special Concern list.

**Every effort has been made to accurately record each listing, and we apologize for any errors. If you notice a mistake, please contact us at annarenkert@massriversalliance.org.**

American Bullfrog
Fresh Pond in Cambridge, MA

**11 Curtis Avenue**
**Somerville, MA 02144**

**(617) 714-4272**
**massriversalliance.org**

Cover photos by Rick Olick
Layout design and illustrations by Claire Fischer