

2008-2010 TRIENNIAL REPORT

BUFFALO NIAGARA RIVERKEEPER®

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Buffalo Niagara RIVERKEEPER®
is an advocacy and action
organization that protects our
invaluable water by using technical
expertise, community engagement,
and collaborative relationships.

VISION

*Buffalo Niagara RIVERKEEPER® leads
Buffalo Niagara's efforts to safeguard our
water for present and future generations.*

MISSION

*Our mission is to protect and restore the
quality and quantity of our water while
connecting people to water.*

Buffalo Niagara RIVERKEEPER
1250 Niagara Street
Buffalo, NY 14213
716.852.RIVER
www.bnriverkeeper.org



From the President of the Board of Directors

It has been my honor to serve on the board of Buffalo Niagara RIVERKEEPER for the past three years. This organization was formed 21 years ago with the single passion and purpose of protecting and restoring Buffalo Niagara waters to overcome the legacy of abuse they suffered in the past 200 years. The tenacious success of RIVERKEEPER is due to the commitment and intellect of our founders amongst whom I have been privileged to work including: Lynda Schneekloth, Barry Boyer, Mike Hamilton, Margaret Wooster, Paul Dyster, and our talented and dedicated staff under the leadership of our gifted Executive Director, Julie O'Neill. But this is a story that has just begun and is still being written.

In the past three years RIVERKEEPER has evolved from an environmental watchdog, with hundreds of grass roots volunteers who have gotten their feet wet and hands dirty. This hearty band of river hippies has shown the community that the water is important and many people care about protecting it. They have launched canoes, collected polluted water samples, led river tours, and fought for public access, fish habitat and riparian greenspace. They have inspired and educated many, and perhaps angered a few.

Over the past three years, BNR has become the reliable voice of the river; not just for environmentalists, but also for the community at large. With growing staff capacity, and public and private funding, we are able to conduct diligent research, develop science-based positions, and build public consensus, so that we are on path to become a respected and valued collaborator with developers and fishermen, government and private citizens, business and the community.

Today, thanks to the good work of many, our Buffalo Niagara region stands poised to reclaim its waterfront as our crown jewel, and to leave our children a legacy of fishable, swimmable, drinkable water. I moved home to WNY to make a difference in the environment and RIVERKEEPER is where it is happening. Come join us. Our water needs and deserves your help.

Our Water, Our Future,

Greg Stevens



From the Executive Director

The last three years have been a surge of activity for our local waterways!

Since the adoption of our last strategic plan, Buffalo Niagara RIVERKEEPER has successfully transitioned from a policy change agent to Buffalo Niagara's leader in on-the-ground water protection and restoration efforts. At the time of this report, Buffalo Niagara RIVERKEEPER is on track to dramatically improve the quality of our local waterways and their function for local neighborhoods – in our lifetimes. We are proud that over the last three years RIVERKEEPER:

- Helped develop a preferred remedial alternative for Buffalo River cleanup; the Feasibility Study is now publicly available for review and input. Beginning in 2011, one million cubic yards of contaminated sediment will be removed from the river, to be followed by habitat restoration.
- Distributed over 1200 rain barrels to local residents and community organizations and implemented several rain garden projects – taking direct action towards preventing sewer overflow pollution.
- Partnered with the Buffalo Sewer Authority to implement three green sewer solution pilots including rain barrel/downspout disconnections, vacant lot water management and green streets. Once complete, these pilots will determine the extent to which Buffalo implements a “green” sewer solution.
- Initiated three major habitat restoration projects on the Buffalo River – at the West Seneca Oxbow, Seneca Bluffs and the RiverBend Brownfield Redevelopment Area.
- Instituted a shoreline landowner riverbank restoration program – with 25 projects scheduled for completion by the end of 2011.
- Redesigned fish consumption advisories and is partnering with the Buffalo Sewer Authority on sewer overflow signs to better communicate with non-English speaking and limited literacy audiences.
- Enrolled and trained over 100 citizen Riverwatch Captains, dedicated to monitoring the health of our local waterways.
- Created the River Academy college-level water education program in partnership with Erie Community College.
- Created the Buffalo Niagara River Land Trust to hold waterfront lands for recreational and ecological purposes and secured funding for land acquisition feasibility studies along Scajaquada Creek and the Niagara River.
- Launched the Our Water Future multi-media campaign to engage the broader community in the protection of our Great Lakes water for generations to come.

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This work was made possible through the sweat equity and passion of our many volunteers and the support of local foundations, businesses and individuals. These investments have inspired matching commitments from Great Lakes government funders contributing to the critical mass of energy and effort necessary to restore the Great Lakes' most recognized river. As many of you have observed – “it’s going to take an army” to get it all done. We are grateful to those of you who have enlisted – your contributions and our collective impact are celebrated here.

Despite this progress, huge amounts of work remain if we are to meet our goal of healthy, fishable, swimmable, abundant water for our children and grandchildren. We have barely begun to tackle the water quality problems within the City of Buffalo and inner ring suburbs or address complicated issues like protecting water quantities. Continued state and federal environmental staff reductions mean that water protection will continue to fall upon the shoulders of local citizens and organizations like RIVERKEEPER.

Our water is our future. Together, we can ensure every drop is clean, vibrant and magical.

Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

Julie Barrett O'Neill

Executive Director and RIVERKEEPER

Board of Directors Members

2008

Anthony Armstrong
Richard Butz
Max Coykendall
Thomas DeSantis
Timothy Fulton
Richard Roach
Lynda Schneekloth
Greg Stevens
Jim Tompkins
Megan Toohey
Anne Wadsworth
Barry Boyer
Paul Dyster
Michael Hamilton

2009

Anthony Armstrong
Richard Berger
Thomas DeSantis
Scott Kitchen
Jock Mitchell
Randal Snyder
Greg Stevens
Megan Toohey
Anne Wadsworth
Barry Boyer
Richard Butz
Paul Dyster
Michael Hamilton
Lynda Schneekloth

**Emeritus Board Members*

2010

Richard Berger
Thomas DeSantis
John Farmelo
Gina Fedele
Scott Kitchen
Peter Loomis
Jock Mitchell
Sean Ryan
Randal Snyder
Greg Stevens
Rich Tobe
Megan Toohey
Anne Wadsworth
Barry Boyer
Richard Butz
Paul Dyster
Michael Hamilton
Lynda Schneekloth

1966

Stan Spisiak alerts President Lyndon B. Johnson to the perils of the Buffalo River and Lake Erie. An executive order prohibiting the dumping of polluted harbor sludge is issued.

1987

- Buffalo River is identified as one of 43 Great Lakes Areas of Concern (AOC).
- The Buffalo River Citizen's Committee is formed.

1990s

- Iron Mountain Inc. buys a parcel of land on the Buffalo River, and FBR takes the company to trial. FBR is able to negotiate an agreement that makes it possible for the company to expand, but also preserves the remaining section of the lowland forest as a new city park called "Old Bailey Woods".
- A project site is designated for the demonstration of sediment cleanup techniques in the Great Lakes Critical Program Acts.
- A 25-foot setback ordinance is enacted for new development along the river banks, and later expanded to 100 feet through much of the area.
- FBR collaborates on three habitat restoration sites along the Buffalo River.

2000

Friends of the Buffalo River include the Niagara River and become Friends of the Buffalo and Niagara River (FBNR).

2001

Julie O'Neill becomes the first paid staff employee of the organization.

1966**1968**

The Buffalo River catches on fire.

1989

- The first Buffalo River Remedial Action Plan (RAP) is completed by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC).
- The Friends of The Buffalo River (FBR) is formed.

1995

The nation's first urban canoe trail is developed in collaboration with the NYSDEC.

1993

The "Watershed Learning Project" is launched by Margaret Wooster, Brian Shero, and Betsy Trometer. Included in a National Geographic made-for-television documentary, "The Power of Water".

2003

FBNR becomes the first non-profit organization in the Great Lakes Basin to receive funding and the authority from USEPA to coordinate a Remedial Action Plan (RAP) and manage RAP implementation.

BUFFALO NIAGARA RIVERKEEPER HISTORY

2005

- The Friends' Board of Directors vote to become a member of the Waterkeeper Alliance and change the organization's name to Buffalo Niagara RIVERKEEPER (BNR).
- BNR becomes the first non-profit in the Great Lakes Basin to sign a Feasibility Cost Share Agreement with the USACE for Buffalo River Environmental Dredging.
- BNR issues a "Buffalo River Report Card", and officially launches the Riverwatch program.

2008

- Buffalo Niagara RIVERKEEPER, Honeywell and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Great Lakes National Program Office sign a \$3 million Great Lakes Legacy Act project agreement. Invites Honeywell as a second non-Federal sponsor to the agreement and expands scope to include the entire Buffalo River and City Ship Canal.
- Litigation begins to convince the state Department of Transportation to move to an at-grade boulevard reconstruction of Route 5 in Buffalo that would provide 77 more acres of developable land for the Outer Harbor.
- Chair of the Niagara Relicensing Environmental Coalition (through 2010)
- RIVERKEEPER moves to 1250 Niagara Street.
- Rain barrel sales program begins.
- Completes the Habitat Conservation Framework for the Buffalo and Niagara Rivers as the first comprehensive guide to future restoration efforts.

2010

2007

- BNR becomes the first non-profit organization to sign a Great Lakes Legacy Act Project Agreement with the USEPA-GLNPO for sediment assessment and remedial alternatives analysis for the upper Buffalo River.
- BNR completes first strategic plan.
- Niagara River Greenway Campaign is completed with plan adoption.
- BNR begins River Tours program.

2009

- BNR secures first motorized patrol vessel.
- Chairs Greenway Ecological Standing Committee (through 2010).
- Secures wetland protection status for West Seneca Oxbow, and coordinates on-the-ground restoration efforts through 2010.
- BNR installs Crane Library rain garden.
- Begins waterfront landowner stewardship program.
- BNR begins Ambassador program.
- BNR Board authorizes creation of Buffalo Niagara River Land Trust.
- Hosts Scajaquada Summit.

2010

- BNR awarded \$1.9 million of Great Lakes Restoration Initiative grants.
- Modified GLLA agreement again and commenced Remedial Design for Buffalo River.
- Released Buffalo River sediment clean up Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study.
- Signed cost-share agreement with the Army Corps to provide assistance on Remedial Strategies for both the Buffalo River and Niagara River AOC's.
- Collaborated with the City of Buffalo on South Buffalo BOA-RiverBend Master Plan, Buffalo River BOA, Outer Harbor BOA, Buffalo River Greenway, Broderick Park.
- Began Green Infrastructure partnership with Buffalo Sewer Authority.
- Launched "Our Water Future" media campaign.
- Began angler environmental justice program.
- Began Healthy Niagara Watershed Planning project.
- Launched Buffalo Sewer Authority Green Solutions effort.

Katie Schneider

Donor and Professional Volunteer

What can I do to keep my promise of a better world for my children? That sacred promise that we make when we first care for our helpless, perfect, wonderful little babies is a serious covenant that we live our lives trying to keep.

So when I first met Julie Barrett O'Neill, I thought, I can help provide my children a future where clean water is a given. Water is after all the center of our health and recreational lives.

How then to accomplish this? I am a photographer. So, photos of the staff for the website was a natural place to begin. A few meetings sharing my passion for water was easy. A gift from our family foundation helped made the rain garden at the Crane Library a reality, and then a yoga class overlooking the lake. A portion of the photo sales at my recent photo show, and some small personal gifts from Jake and me are just small things I can do and I hope that my promise to my children will be kept because others who have made similar promises will join in the fight for our water.

"I can help provide my children a future where clean water is a given."



George Johnson

Angler and Project Partner

Buffalo United Front, Inc. (BUF), a collaboration of community & faith-based organizations and individuals working to reduce youth violence has partnered with Buffalo Niagara RIVERKEEPER to foster an affinity for the sport of fishing.

In support of this mission, BUF is committed to the clean-up and restoration of historic Broderick Park (a site of the Underground Railroad) for youth and their families. In addition, BUF provides safety education for those who use the waterways along Lake Erie and Lake Ontario.

Through sponsored events such as "Family Fishing Day" held in June of each year, this organization with the use of experienced anglers mentor to a new generation of potential users of the waterways. By instilling positive values of community and respect for the environment, BUF President, George Johnson believes that this collaboration will only benefit a new generation of youth looking for direction, hope and fun.



Challenge: Awareness

According to a 2006 survey conducted by Canisius College, poll respondents strongly agreed or agreed 17-to-1 that the region needs a strong watchdog organization to take care of our waterways. Among poll respondents, an almost equal number of people say 'no' to the statement "The Great Lakes are an internationally significant resource" as say 'yes.' An almost equal number of people say 'no' to the statement "Niagara is a unique natural place" as say 'yes.' And an almost equal number of people say 'no' to the statement "I am a caretaker of the environment" as say 'yes'.

RIVERKEEPER Response:

- **River Tours:** Despite living on the shores of 20% of the world's fresh water, many people have not ever been "on" or "in" our water. Beginning in 2007, RIVERKEEPER has offered a series of River bike, hike and paddling tours. Participants experience firsthand the magnificence of the Great Lakes, meet the birds and wildlife that share our local waterways and find out how they can be part of our water future.
- **Boom Days:** Beginning in 2008, RIVERKEEPER became the official host organization for "Boom Days" – the spring lifting of the Lake Erie-Niagara River ice boom. "Boom Days" highlights our bi-national water connections, the region's rich maritime heritage, the passing of winter and the opportunity to once again get out and enjoy our beautiful waterways.
- **"Our Water Future" Campaign:** In 2010, the Our Water Future media campaign was launched to raise awareness of the Great Lakes and the need for water conservation. The campaign was a partnership between Buffalo Niagara RIVERKEEPER, Buffalo Audubon Society and the WNY Stormwater Coalition with funding support from the Margaret L. Wendt Foundation, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation Environmental Protection Fund and Entercom Communications. The effort included billboards, a website, online ads with Artvoice, Buffalo News,

Buffalo Rising, Niagara Gazette, WGRZ, WIVB, The Lake, WGR550, and Kiss 98.5. To date, the ourwaterfuture.org website has had 969 hits from 813 unique visitors.

- **Stormdrain Stenciling:** In cooperation with organizations such as Niagara University's Niagara 350, RIVERKEEPER volunteers paint labels on local storm drains that identify where the water will go. This program helps every day citizens understand their local water cycle and prevent pollution – even when a creek or stream may not be visible.
- **"If Our Water Could Talk Tours":** These free one-hour informational tours are held three times per month and give attendees the opportunity to learn about Buffalo Niagara RIVERKEEPER's programs and the impact of our work in the community.



Challenge: Swimmable

Every year, over 4 billion gallons of sewage-laden rainwater flows into the Buffalo and Niagara Rivers from the Buffalo Sewer Authority. In addition, several suburban communities directly pump sewage through a system of sanitary sewer overflows. According to the EPA, untreated sewage can contain as many as 120 bacteria and viruses. Within 48 hours of a rain event, the E. Coli bacteria counts can be as high as ten times the safe swimming limit.

RIVERKEEPER Response:

- **Riverwatch Program:** The Riverwatch Team engages an army of 100+ citizens to monitor the water quality in our local waterways. The program has tested approximately 40 sites within the Niagara River watershed, once a month for over three years now. The idea is that monitoring the waterways over a year period will give a clear picture of where problem areas are located and which time of year is the most problematic. We perform 8 tests at each site, as well as periodic testing for E. Coli contamination. The tests include pH, Nitrate, Phosphate, Turbidity, Dissolved Oxygen, temperature and Biological Oxygen Demand.
- **Rivercare rain barrel and rain gardens:** Rain Barrels are a quick, inexpensive, easy and important way for everyone to conserve water and reduce the amount of pollution being carried into our waterways. Buffalo Niagara RIVERKEEPER began our rain barrel program in 2008. Since that time we have sold 1048 to individuals and have distributed another 167 barrels at no cost to community organizations and schools with underwriting from HSBC and the US EPA. Combined, these barrels have the capacity to keep a total of 72,000 gallons of pollution out of rivers with every rain event. A Rain Garden is a planted depression that allows rainwater runoff from impervious areas like roofs and driveways to return to our groundwater reserves. Rain gardens can cut down on the amount of pollution reaching creeks and streams by up to 30%. Since 2008, RIVERKEEPER has planted several rain gardens such as the one at the Crane Branch Library, 633 Elmwood Avenue, Buffalo.
- **Buffalo Sewer Authority Downspout Disconnection Pilot Program:** Many gutters in Buffalo convey rainwater directly into the sewer system. During heavy rain or snow melt events, this extra water overwhelms our sewers causing polluted overflows into

Buffalo River, Niagara River, Scajaquada Creek, and many other waterways. RIVERKEEPER and the Buffalo Sewer Authority have partnered to disconnect gutters from the sewer system and study the impact on water pollution. If successful, the project will be expanded to other areas of the City.





Paul Leuchner

Volunteer

Spend some time on the waters of the Niagara River and you will be captivated by its awesome charm. For decades, I have probed the marshes and shallows of the upper river cataloging the native flora and fauna and formulating habitat restoration plans. I watched with great satisfaction as the river ecology slowly progressed along the road to recovery. During those years I often thought that the public, enamored with the breathtaking landscape of Niagara Falls, needed a way to directly experience the river. That goal seemed unattainable until the Buffalo Niagara RIVERKEEPER inaugurated its eco-tourism program a few years ago. Now, I have the opportunity to lead groups onto the river where I can share my knowledge and experiences in a way that will foster a better understanding of the ecological importance of this vital water resource.



Bill Rupp

Donor

I first became aware of RIVERKEEPER through the rain barrel initiative, was drawn to the organization by the tours, and became engaged through the educational programming. I spent a magical full moon with my ten year old, paddling up Tonawanda Creek, while other tours encouraged us to hike the Niagara Gorge. But it was the RIVERKEEPER-sponsored lecture by Peter Annin ("Great Lakes Water Wars") that made me stop and think. These lakes, rivers and falls that surround us, that we regard as recreational, are the world's most precious resource. 20% of the earth's entire surface fresh water rolls by our front door everyday! At a time when we struggle through national economic hard times, while we search for our local identity - our fresh water is vital, never-ending resource that should never be taken from us. The time for vigilance is now!

Challenge: Fishable

Once blessed with a vibrant, abundant fishery, our local fishery is seriously deteriorated. Not only are fish populations dramatically down forcing restrictions on both sport and commercial fisheries, but the New York State Department of Health recommends that women under 50 years old and children under 15 years old eat no fish from the Buffalo and Niagara Rivers due to contamination. Despite these warnings many people rely upon local fish as a primary protein source.

RIVERKEEPER Response:

- **Riverjustice:** RIVERKEEPER has partnered with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation to study subsistence fishing on the Niagara River and improve the understanding of fish consumption warnings among high-risk communities. Local community and refugee outreach groups will collaborate in translating and distributing non-traditional outreach materials to minimize risk.
- **Buffalo River Sediment Project:** Because historic contamination still enters the food chain, RIVERKEEPER has aggressively worked to address contaminated Buffalo River sediments since 2005. In 2011, over 500,000 cubic yards of contaminated sediment will be removed from the river bottom through funding from the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative to dredge the Buffalo River navigation channel and with funding from the Great Lakes Legacy Act to dredge the river bottom on either side of the navigation channel.
- **Buffalo River Habitat Projects:** Buffalo River tributaries and their associated floodplains and wetlands are unique in Erie County because of their relative connectivity and the diversity of habitats and native species they support. Protection and restoration of these creek corridors are key to conserving an irreplaceable natural and cultural heritage. In addition to providing important contiguous habitat for fish and wildlife, these undeveloped floodplains and wetlands play an increasingly critical role in absorbing and storing stormwater, filtering nutrients and pollutants, moderating stream temperatures, and generally improving stream water quality. West Seneca's Oxbow wetland is approximately two miles upstream from the industrialized Buffalo River Area of Concern (AOC). As one of only three major wetlands in the lower Buffalo River watershed, it is considered a source area for future habitat and species restoration in the AOC. Planning studies over the past 40 years have recommended this place be protected. Additional projects are at Seneca Bluffs and the new RiverBend Commerce Park where a Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) grant will fund the restoration of a natural shoreline along more than one-half mile of riverbank.
- **Shoreline Owner Habitat Restoration:** Urban and suburban landowners play an important role in Niagara River riparian restoration and protection. These residents who live along the Niagara and tributaries have the opportunity to serve as stewards of the local environment, providing ecological restoration of their riparian lands and serving as models to others in the community. While many riparian landowners appreciate their access to water and are interested in restoring the environment, they generally lack the technical assistance required to increase the ecological integrity of their property. To address this gap between willing landowners and the required resources for on-the-ground restoration, the Habitat Restoration Program provides coordination with urban and suburban landowners, to develop forest buffers or other habitat features such as rain gardens, small-scale soft shoreline stabilization, meadows, and wetlands on their property. In conjunction with an agreement between the property owner, Buffalo Niagara RIVERKEEPER provides the technical knowledge and on-the-ground installation of the project.
- **Niagara River Habitat Projects:** In the mid-1980s the International Joint Commission listed 42 "Areas of Concern," severely degraded rivers and harbors across the U.S.-Canada Great lakes basin. These included the lower 6.2 miles of the

Buffalo River and the entire Niagara River. The International Joint Commission (IJC) identified 14 possible “beneficial use impairments,” to be confirmed and then addressed by remedial action plans. Loss of fish and wildlife habitat was one of the confirmed impairments on both the Buffalo and the Niagara

ivers. On the basis of habitat research to date, and with the help of a GIS mapping consultant and a technical advisory group of expert stakeholders, RIVERKEEPER has developed habitat inventories and restoration goals for our two rivers.



Adam Hovey

Buffalo Public Schoolteacher and Project Partner

Adam has won numerous awards as science teacher at South Park High School, presented at national conferences, received grants for his work with students, and collaborated with many non-profits in their work on the Buffalo River. He partners with RIVERKEEPER on restoring Old Bailey Woods and the park on Bailey Peninsula at the confluence of the Buffalo River and Cazenovia Creek, work that has involved more than 25 teachers and 1000 students over the years. About his relationship with RIVERKEEPER Adam says, "If I have learned

anything since I was 20 (when all I had was heart) is the heart drives the individual or social fabric but the brain is the important part to get things done the 'smart' way. RIVERKEEPER's (myself included now) collective brain has the ability to influence the heart in the 'right or smart' direction. Every time I have asked for something from RIVERKEEPER to make my classroom better, someone has stepped up....I have said it before, RIVERKEEPER changed the way I teach. RIVERKEEPER brought reality into my classroom and students were engaged by it....A senior student told me my teaching changed her life; that student interned with RIVERKEEPER last summer. She was a freshman when my involvement with RIVERKEEPER started....Fieldtrips to the Bailey Peninsula would not have turned into the South Park Green Team which now works through the summer and after school [without RIVERKEEPER].

I know I owe a considerable amount of my teaching 'successes' to RIVERKEEPER as they changed the way I taught, providing me expert knowledge and material support for activities involving my students. Every RIVERKEEPER employee has embraced my classroom/teaching/school/students and it is appreciated."



Challenge: Safe and Accessible

Trash covers our existing waterfront parks; hardened shoreline fortifications and bulkheads limit access to the Buffalo River and Black Rock Canal.

RIVERKEEPER Response:

- **Shoreline Sweeps:** For the past 15-20 years, RIVERKEEPER has organized biannual (spring and fall) cleanups along various local waterways to remove litter and other accumulated debris. Scajaquada Creek has always been one of Buffalo Niagara RIVERKEEPER's largest cleanup sites. Continued attention to litter removal at the trash racks and along the banks of Scajaquada Creek from the trash rack in Delaware Park to the mouth is part of ongoing efforts by volunteer groups. Local citizens monitor the trash rack at Delaware Park and hold the City of Buffalo Department of Public Works accountable when need be. Over 500 volunteers joined RIVERKEEPER for the Fall 2010 Shoreline Cleanup at 34 sites around the Buffalo Niagara region. This past spring, over 1500 volunteers participated. Data for the Fall: 245 bags of trash collected, 5242 lbs of trash collected, Most Picked Up: cigarette butts, plastic bags, bottles and lids & food wrappers, Linear Feet Cleaned Up: 79910+ feet.
- **Buffalo River Greenway:** Operating under the guidance of the Buffalo River Greenway Plan, the Greenway Team has been lending its planning and design expertise to major roadway projects in the Greenway, including the on-going Ohio Street and Bailey Avenue Bridge Projects, and recently became actively involved in conversations regarding the newly proposed Inner/Outer Harbor Bridge. Additionally, the newly formed Greenway Team has begun to integrate themselves into the Buffalo River and South Buffalo Brownfield Opportunity Area projects and looks forward to making a major contribution to these projects going forward. In 2006, RIVERKEEPER applied for and was awarded a grant through the Department of State to update the Buffalo River Greenway Plan, hire a Buffalo River Greenway Coordinator, and provide funds towards the Buffalo RiverFest Park and Foot of Hamburg Street projects. The Greenway Team is very close to moving the City and State forward on executing this contract and is hopeful that it will be in place by the end of the year, allowing us to make important



- progress on these items in 2011. Finally, we have made great strides toward a key goal of the Greenway Plan: bringing the Great Lakes Paper Fibres site into public usage. When this site became available with a very short window in which to act, RIVERKEEPER Executive Director Julie O'Neill put in place a partnership with commercial real estate developer, William Breeser, to purchase the property and work with RIVERKEEPER to make this key building and site accessible to the public for the first time in over a century.
- **Niagara River Greenway:** Our region scored a major victory in February 2007 when all 13 Niagara greenway municipalities endorsed the Niagara River Greenway Plan. For the first time ever we have both a regional vision and seed funding from the Niagara Power Plant relicensing settlements to help transform the Niagara River corridor into "a necklace of open space and conservation areas spread along the river" as expressed in the New York State greenway legislation. Now, as the various committees and the Greenway Commission figure out how to award greenway grant funds, it is up

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to all of us to create and forward projects that will restore the rich natural and cultural heritage of our lake and river fronts.

- **Niagara Street Greenway:** The Greenway Team has been working hard to influence several major projects along the Niagara Street Greenway, including the possible downgrade of the 198 expressway, the Olmsted Conservancy's Scajaquada Trail project, the Black Rock Canal Park and LaSalle Park planning and improvement plans, and the Tonawanda Street Brownfield Opportunity Area. We are working closely with City of Buffalo Department of Public Works and Buffalo Sewer Authority to ensure that Green Infrastructure is included as part of the new Niagara Street Gateway project. Finally, RIVERKEEPER was awarded \$100,000 through the Erie County Standing Committee of the Greenway Commission to begin looking at possible land acquisition in the Niagara River and Scajaquada Creek areas. We have begun Phase 1 Environmental Site Assessments as well as appraisals of each of the nearly 20 parcels. These will be complete by the end of the year. Early next year we will begin site and feasibility plans. This project represents an important first step toward meeting our goals of making more waterfront space available for public access and enjoyment as well as habitat restoration.

- **Broderick Park:** Broderick Park continues to be the focal point of much RIVERKEEPER and community attention. An important site recreationally and culturally, Broderick Park has attracted a diverse group of users and stakeholders who have shown unparalleled willingness to work together to bring attention to this somewhat neglected but very important City of Buffalo park. In addition to the successful fall clean-up as part of the shoreline sweeps, RIVERKEEPER has advocated for increased resources for this park, and this year the City of Buffalo capital budget includes an additional \$750,000 for improvements. This is in addition to \$250,000 for improvements RIVERKEEPER obtained through Senator Thompson's office, and planning money that we have earmarked for long-term visioning and planning work for the park through our Riverwalk Revitalization grant from the State of New York. Finally, Greenway Staff has been working closely with the stakeholders group, including Buffalo United Front, the Underground Railroad Heritage Group, MicroParks, Councilman David Rivera's office, Assemblyman Sam Hoyt's office, Senator Antoine Thompson's office, and Erie County Legislator Sam Hoyt's office, to formalize itself into Friends of Broderick Park and promote long-term stability and higher visibility for this important waterfront access point.

Challenge: Drinkable

There is currently no long-term, regional strategy for protecting our water quality or quantity.

RIVERKEEPER Response:

- **Peter Annin lectures:** In March 2009, RIVERKEEPER co-sponsored a visit by nationally-renowned journalist Peter Annin (author of *The Great Lakes Water Wars*) to help raise awareness of water quantity issues. Several hundred people heard him speak.
- **Healthy Niagara:** Buffalo Niagara RIVERKEEPER is working on the development of a Niagara River Watershed Management Plan to determine what needs to be done to protect and restore water resources in our communities and the Niagara River watershed. RIVERKEEPER's partners are the Town of Tonawanda and

the Erie County Department of Environment and Planning. Financial support of \$321,875 comes from the New York State Department of State's Environmental Protection Fund. A number of project tasks are underway or have been completed: a project scoping meetings was held, a project advisory committee has been formed and a first meeting was held in October 2010; community outreach plan has been prepared, development of a watershed info/data atlas has begun. The project is expected to be completed by June 2012.



Nancy Brock

Foundation Donor and Professional Volunteer

“Our Water, Our Future” says it all. If I had to choose one key to our region’s resurgence, it is our proximity to the world’s largest bodies of fresh water. We think oil is important now? Economies come and go, but LIFE can’t happen without clean, fresh water. We often take it for granted, but the future of this precious resource on our doorstep is not assured unless we act now to reclaim, protect and preserve it. Buffalo Niagara RIVERKEEPER has the leadership, commitment and competency to create the community-wide stewardship of water that is essential to our, and to the world’s, future. I am honored to be a small part of their effort.

“If I had to choose one key to our region’s resurgence, it is our proximity to the world’s largest bodies of fresh water.”



Lynda Schneekloth

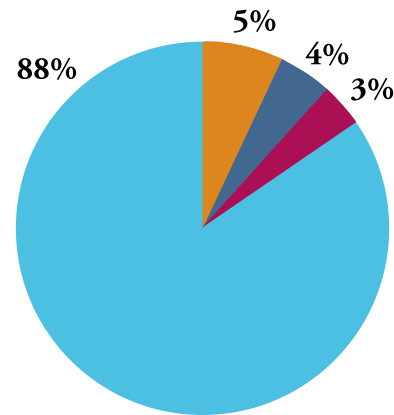
Founder and Board Member

At the acceptance of the Remedial Action Plan for the Buffalo River (BR) in 1989, a group of ‘polluted river fans’ met at the Harbor Inn on the Buffalo River to talk about what needed to happen to ensure that the Buffalo River would be cleaned up. This small group, of which Lynda Schneekloth was one, began the Friends of the Buffalo River that continued as a board led organization until 1991. During the first 12 years, Schneekloth served as President many times, spoke on behalf of the River at many meetings, accessed grants to conduct research on BR Greenways, and secured funds to assist the organization. In 2001, this board decided to expand the mission to include the Niagara River and hired the first Executive Director. Schneekloth has served continuously on the Board, currently as an “emeritus” board member of the Buffalo Niagara RIVERKEEPER.

Multi Year Financial Review as per audited financial statements

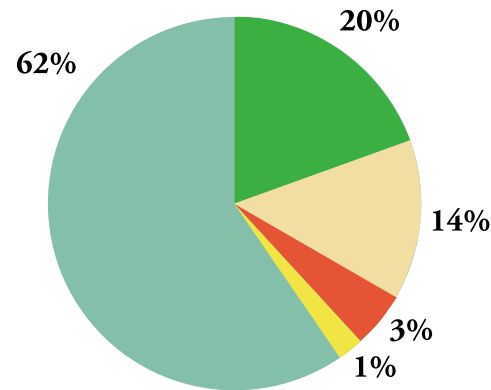
2010

Income



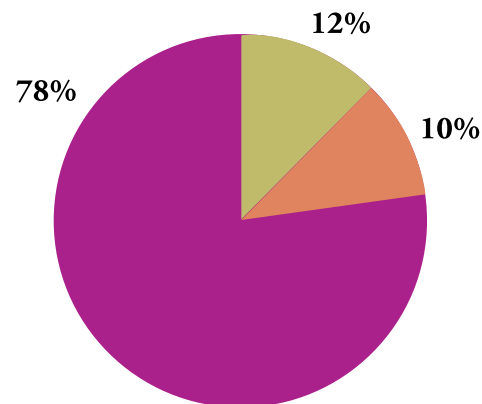
Operational Income	\$49,283
Grant Income	\$945,198
Events	\$32,721
Contributions	\$51,688
Total Income	\$1,078,890

Expenses



Personnel	\$645,850
Contractual	\$211,811
Program Expenses	\$145,569
Occupancy	\$14,500
Office Expenses	\$33,148
Total Expenses	\$1,050,878

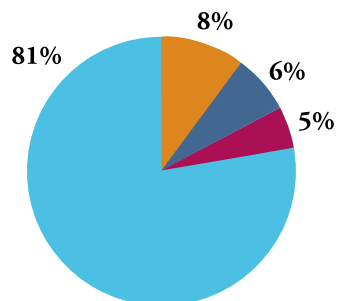
\$0.78 on every dollar funds a Buffalo Niagara RIVERKEEPER program.



Admin	\$130,382
Program	\$814,719
Development	\$105,777
Expenses	\$1,050,878

2009

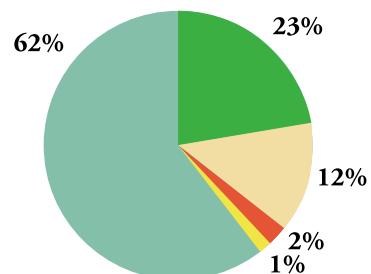
Income



Operational Income	\$34,774
Grant Income	\$525,985
Events	\$34,381
Contributions	\$53,535

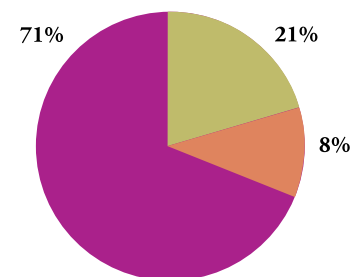
Total Income \$648,675

Expenses



Personnel	\$465,877
Contractual	\$169,680
Program Expenses	\$90,532
Occupancy	\$9,227
Office Expenses	\$16,763

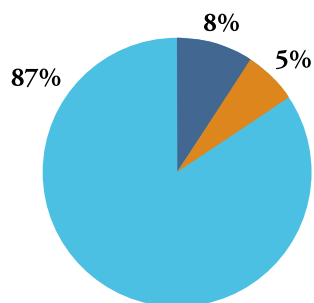
Total Expenses \$752,079



Admin	\$157,075
Program	\$534,773
Development	\$60,231

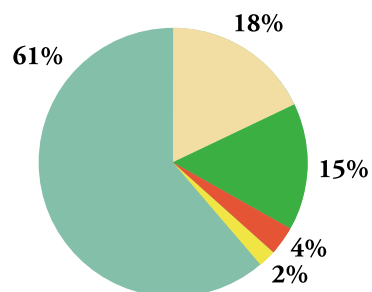
Expenses \$752,079

2008



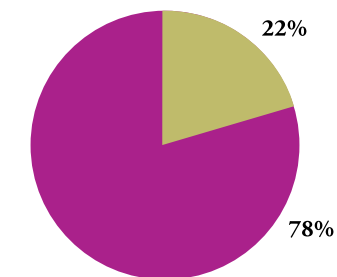
Operational Income	\$45,328
Grant Income	\$510,491
Contributions	\$27,012

Total Income \$582,831



Personnel	\$320,305
Contractual	\$79,574
Program Expenses	\$94,046
Occupancy	\$8,197
Office Expenses	\$18,977

Total Expenses \$521,099



Admin	\$114,734
Program	\$406,365

Expenses \$521,099

2010 Donors

LAKE SUPPORTERS

\$10,000 +

Community Foundation for
Greater Buffalo
East Hill Foundation
Ecology & Environment, Inc
HSBC Bank USA, N.A.
M & T Bank
National Fish and Wildlife
Foundation
New York Power Authority
The John R. Oshei Foundation
The M&T Charitable Foundation
Tulip Corporation
The Margaret L. Wendt Foundation

RIVER SUPPORTERS \$5,000+

Buffalo Sewer Authority
Rigidized Metals Corporation
Richard W. Rupp Foundation
State Employees Federated Appeal
State of New York

TRIBUTARY SUPPORTERS

\$1,000+

Air and Waste Management
Association Niagara Frontier
The Cameron and Jane
Baird Foundation
Jane S. Banta
Buffalo Audobon Society
Louis Ciminelli
Crossroads Lutheran Church
John Farmelo
Grassroots Gardens
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WATERFALL SUPPORTERS

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Grand Lady Cruises, Inc.
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and Monica Angle
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Robert and Loren Shibley
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Urban Roots Gardening Center

WAVE SUPPORTERS

\$250-499

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Laurie Dann and Thomas C. Hunt
Thomas DeSantis
Elbers Landscape Service
Fox Tire
Harter, Secrest & Emery; LLP
Indra Kalinovich
Scott Kitchen
Robert Kresse
Kerry Mitchell
John Montague

National Wildlife Federation
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NY State Outdoor
Education Association
O'Neill Chiropractic
Marilyn L. Reeves
Sean Ryan
Ken Sherman
South Buffalo Development
Sherry Sutton
Richard and Susan Tobe
Try-It Distributing Co.; Inc.
United Way of Niagara
Raymond Volpe
Anne and William Wadsworth
Scott Witter and Patricia
Cummings-Witter

SPLASH SUPPORTERS

\$100-249

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Kerri Bentkowski Li and Ray Li
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Mary A. Bisson
Theodore Bistany
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Thomas Brodfuehrer
Katy Brown
Buffalo Harbor Cruises
Buffalo Museum of Science
and Tiff Nature Preserve
Edmund and Kathaleen Burke
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Jane Cameron
Bob Ciesielski
Michael J. Collins and
Dr. Kathleen O'Leary
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Eugene Cunningham
Taddy Dann
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and Dianne Bennett
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Scott and Meaghan Green
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Mary Hughes
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and Mr. Lawrence Gottesman
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Ransom Road Greenhouse
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Alvin G. Reiser, Jr.
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Fat Rules, LTD
Gary Schaut
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Barbara Scholey
Mr. & Mrs. Gary Schwartz
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Elizabeth Taylor
Tell Design
Richard Tindell
Marty Totin
James and Patricia Upson
John and Linda Wadsworth
Michelle Walter
Chandler Webb
Dr. Allison S. Weber
Mike Weber's Greenhouses, Inc.
Elizabeth and Rolf Weberg
Jeff Witka
Brenda L. Young
and Robert Johnson
Zoar Valley Padding Club

RIPPLE SUPPORTERS

\$50-99

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 Meaghan Boice-Green
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 Dorothea Braemer
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 Christine Bridenbaker
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 Kathleen Burns
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 College Club of Buffalo
 Combined Federal Campaign
 Jessica Coram
 Steve Corbett
 Jane Cushman
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 Gojmerac
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 Anne Grupp
 Joyce Gugino
 Krista Hanypsiak
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 Hyde Hitchcock
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Veronica Serwacki
 Kathy Shoemaker
 Lynne Smith
 Edward Spangenthal
 Alma and Malcolm Strachan
 Zeb Strickland
 Holly Szafranski
 Dorothy Tao
 Maria Testa and Mr. Tom Petrocelli
 Margaret Toohey
 Regina Toomey
 Town of West Seneca
 Patricia and Bill Townsend
 Kathleen M. Vinovski
 Margaret Wooster and Neil Schmitz
 Mayor Richard Yeager
 Robert Ziehm
 Richard C. Zobel

RAINDROP SUPPORTERS UNDER \$50

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 Robert and Agnes Annis
 Joseph and Janet Antfowiak
 Anthony Astran
 Bill Ayler
 Calbin Babcock
 Maxine Barber
 Sheila Barrett
 Anne Beiter
 Margot Bennett
 Lisa Berglund
 Deborah Billoni
 William and Linda Boehm
 Linda and Paul Boglioli
 Barbara and James Bono
 Maryann Borowski
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 William Breaser
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 Dorothy Dann
 Martin Doster

Roger Drollinger
 Glenn Dumais
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 David Gerber
 Mitchell Gerber
 Marjorie Gillies
 John and Carol Goodman
 Sarah Goodman
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 Kathleen Zoladz
 JoAnn R. Zurek

Wish List

Boat Equipment

- Type II PFD's
- Flare Kit – Day/Night
- Signal Device – Hand Held Air Horn
- Type IV PFD – Throwable Device
- Radio for communication when out on the water
- B – I Fire Extinguisher
- Set of charts
- Boat hook
- Canoes, kayaks, and paddles
- Dry bags

General Office Needs

- Pull-down Projection Screen
- Office Chairs
- Outdoor Awnings and Signage
- Landscaping
- Office furniture
- Conference table and chairs
- Organization Van
- Food & beverages for committee meetings and volunteers
- Auction donations
- Printing

Technical Equipment

- Computer Server
- GIS Workstation (computer, software, and large format printer)
- Color Laser Workgroup Printer, tabloid size
- Computing entry station



If you are able to donate any of these items, we will provide you with a receipt to use toward a tax write off. Please call Kelly Mayer at (716) 852-7483 x18 or email kmayer@bnriverkeeper.org.

We are also always looking for volunteers! Your involvement makes a difference, whether a little or a lot. You can spend two Saturdays a year helping at our cleanups, take on an internship, or you can give your time and energy to habitat restoration efforts on a regular basis or make a year-round commitment to Riverwatch –it's up to you. To learn more about ways to volunteer, please contact Kerri Bentkowski Li at (716) 852-7483 x11 or kbentkowski@bnriverkeeper.org.

BUFFALO NIAGARA RIVERKEEPER STAFF



Taken at staff retreat, summer of 2010, on the shore of Lake Erie: Left to right: Front (kneeling): Robbyn Drake, Tricia Furnari, Kate Scott, Katy Brown, Kelly Mayer, Julie O'Neill. Middle: Margaret Wooster, Brooke Rickettson, Jesse Fisher, Kerri Li, Jill Jedlicka. Back: Bryan LoVullo, Zeb Strickland, Renata Kraft, Katherine Winkler, Larry Brooks, Richard Tindell.



DEDICATION

STANLEY P. SPISIAK

The fellow in the upper left corner of the picture at left is Stanley P. Spisiak, shown here with President Lyndon Johnson, Mrs. Lady Bird Johnson, and Governor Nelson Rockefeller among others. In 1966, when this photo was taken, the Buffalo River had reached its worst condition, occasionally catching fire. A generation before the RIVERKEEPER movement began, Stanley, a jeweler by profession, began a one-man campaign to turn things around. The Fall after this meeting took place, the President issued an Executive Order banning open-lake disposal of dredge materials.

Stanley's passion for the river that defined his neighborhood carried him to speaking at public meetings, confronting government officials, and enduring all sorts of challenges such as a beating by two thugs one night after a public speech. Stanley exemplifies the citizen advocate and steward that we here at RIVERKEEPER strive to be.

Stanley's legacy lives on. Twenty years after this picture, five like-minded citizens founded the Friends of the Buffalo River, precursor to today's RIVERKEEPER. Stan's great-niece, Jill Spisiak Jedlicka, is RIVERKEEPER's Director of Ecological Programs and the Buffalo River Remedial Action Plan Coordinator. Carrying the family torch, Jill will lead the effort, beginning in 2011, to remove about one million cubic yards of contaminated sediment from the river's bottom, realizing Stanley's dream.

Thank you Stanley.