



ALLIANCE *for the*
GREAT LAKES

United by Water, Driven by Action

2024 Annual Report





Dear Friends of the Great Lakes,

This year marks the 55th anniversary of the Alliance for the Great Lakes. That's 55 years of advocacy, action, and commitment to clean water and the communities who depend on it. It's a legacy built by people like you—people who show up, speak out, and never stop fighting for what matters.

Your support in 2024 led to major wins that will protect our lakes.

You helped us ensure construction on the Brandon Road Lock & Dam started in 2025—an essential step in keeping invasive carp out of the lakes. And we celebrated a huge milestone: Adopt-a-Beach volunteers collected the 10 millionth piece of litter over the life of the program – 86% of which is plastic - backed by a powerful new report that's advancing national and state action on plastic pollution.

You helped push the EPA to finalize new lead standards that will require most Great Lakes water utilities to replace harmful lead service lines within the next decade—including tougher standards for cities like Cleveland and Chicago. We also built an innovative agricultural pollution monitoring network in Michigan's Lake Erie watershed, a critical step in fighting toxic algae blooms.

Beyond the policy wins, your impact was felt on the ground. From Duluth to Detroit, Chicago to Cleveland, thousands joined our efforts this year—cleaning shorelines, advocating for change, and ensuring that clean water infrastructure reaches the communities that need it most.

No matter who's in office, we've made one thing clear: the Great Lakes must remain a national priority. And we'll keep standing firm to make sure they do.

Whether you were one of the volunteers who helped remove more than 573,000 pieces of litter from Great Lakes beaches in 2024, one of the advocates who sent more than 16,000 messages to decision-makers, or one of the donors who fueled our work—this progress is yours.

So, let's celebrate where we've been—and keep building the future we all deserve.

For the lakes. For our communities. For generations to come.

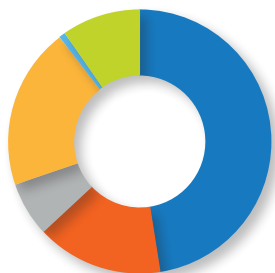
With deep appreciation,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Joel Brammeier". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending from the end.

Joel Brammeier
President & CEO
Alliance for the Great Lakes

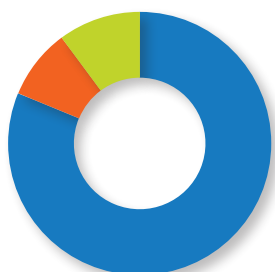
Treasurer's Report 2024

FUNDING SOURCES



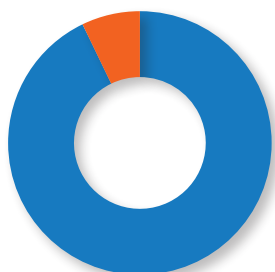
GRANTS	\$3,933,982	47%
INDIVIDUALS	\$1,290,271	15%
BUSINESSES/ORGANIZATIONS	\$554,487	7%
GOVERNMENT	\$1,637,608	20%
EVENTS	\$64,938	1%
INVESTMENT GAINS	\$800,630	10%

EXPENSES



PROGRAMS	\$5,147,311	81%
FUNDRAISING	\$547,640	9%
ADMINISTRATIVE	\$642,831	10%

ASSETS AND LIABILITIES



ASSETS	\$12,775,922	LIABILITIES	\$986,102
--------	--------------	-------------	-----------

Dear Friends,

In 2024, the Alliance for the Great Lakes continued to build on its strong financial foundation through generous donor support, efficient operations, and growth of the Lee Botts Strategic Fund.

Our 2024 revenue was more than \$7 million, with support from individuals, foundations, government, and corporate partners. This generous support includes annual giving and new multi-year commitments. The Lee Botts Strategic Fund assets grew to \$7 million, ensuring long-term capacity for bold program investments and legacy-building impact.

I'm grateful to the Finance Committee—Laura Payne, Bill Henry, and Nicole Chavas—and to Joel Brammeier and Kelly Farley for their leadership. Most of all, thank you to our supporters. Your trust enables us to protect and restore the Great Lakes today and in the future.

With gratitude,

Timothy Frick
Treasurer
Alliance for the Great Lakes

Our annual audit was in process at time of printing. Audited financials will be posted to our website in summer 2025.

2024 Accomplishments

United by Water. Driven by Action.

We believe fresh, healthy, and clean water is an essential resource and right for all life. This year, the Alliance for the Great Lakes continued its long-standing legacy of protecting the waters that define our region.

Thanks to supporters like you, we're proud to say we've made progress toward our enduring goal: a healthy Great Lakes for all.



Advocacy and Leadership

Invasive Species: We're blocking invasive species that threaten our lakes. As a result of our decades of advocacy, construction of the Brandon Road Lock & Dam in Illinois finally began in early 2025. This project will be the most effective deterrent to keep invasive carp from entering the Great Lakes.



Restoring Our Lakes: Thanks to our efforts, the federal government's most important program to fund Great Lakes restoration projects includes a stronger focus on climate change and environmental justice, which will guide its funding priorities in the future.

Agriculture: The Alliance launched a five-year, \$5 million+ project to conduct innovative water testing to better understand the effects of agricultural pollution on western Lake Erie. Our work will support improved targeting of conservation practices in Michigan to reduce polluted runoff. We hope this will become a model for other states.

Education and Action

Supporter Action: Our dedicated advocates have sent more than 16,000 messages to federal, state, and local

decision makers about protecting the Great Lakes and the people who rely on them.

Adopt-a-Beach: Our Adopt-a-Beach cleanup volunteers collected a milestone 10 millionth piece of litter since the program started collecting data 20 years ago. In 2024, nearly 10,000 volunteers removed litter from all five Great Lakes.

Safe and Clean Water: We're working to ensure state and federal infrastructure funding doesn't bypass low-income communities and communities of color who often bear an unfair burden of failing water systems. Our 200+ member forum provides information and training to bring funds to communities in critical need of safe drinking water and protection from flooding and sewage overflows.

Research and Analysis

Plastic Pollution: In April, the Alliance released a groundbreaking report, *20 Years of Great Lakes Litter Data*, which analyzes 20 years of volunteer generated data through the Alliance's Adopt-a-Beach program. [This report gained national media attention](#) and has strengthened our work to reduce the scourge of Great Lakes plastic pollution.

Green Solutions to Flooding and Sewer Overflows: In Chicago and surrounding communities, we are working with city departments and community organizations to create a roadmap for critically needed water infrastructure improvements. This program is designed to lead to improved public health and cleaner water.



Spotlighting New Threats to our Water Supply: We are diving in on an emerging issue: the risks of large-scale water users like data centers. Their rapid growth and overlap with other water demands could pose real risks to the water sources we and our region's ecosystems depend on. We're working to ensure these risks are part of transparent public conversations and decisions before any harm is done.



Our Policy and Action Agenda

This is a defining moment for the Great Lakes. The policies and protections we've fought hard to secure face growing threats. But we are not backing down.

We remain focused on:

- 🌊 Safeguarding hard fought policy protections and funding like the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative and the Great Lakes Compact
- 🌊 Ensuring clean, safe, and affordable water services, and protection from flooding, sewage and contaminated drinking water
- 🌊 Reducing agricultural pollution to prevent harmful algal blooms, polluted drinking water, and dead zones in the Great Lakes
- 🌊 Preventing aquatic invasive species from entering and proliferating in the Great Lakes
- 🌊 Stemming the tide of plastic pollution into our waters
- 🌊 Building local leadership and educating decision-makers around clean water in Great Lakes communities
- 🌊 Activating tens of thousands of volunteers and advocates to act to protect the Great Lakes
- 🌊 Promoting policies that protect our water resources as the region faces growing pressure from large water users such as data centers, mining, and agriculture.

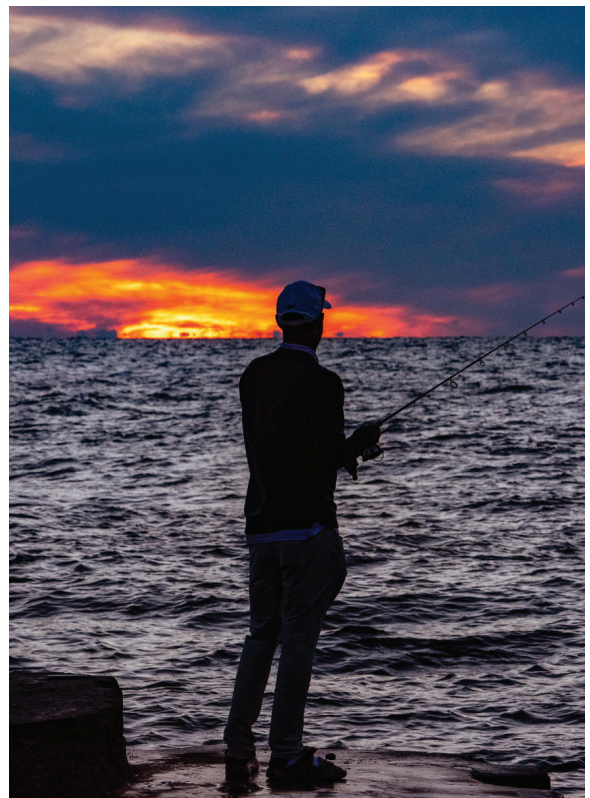


United by Water

These accomplishments aren't just milestones—they're proof that collaboration works. They are the result of decades of partnership, trust-building, and persistence across government, science, and community action. And they're powered by people like you.

We don't look away from the headlines—but we also don't give in to them. Because the real story is this: **Thousands of people across the region believe in a future where the Great Lakes are healthy, accessible, and protected for all—and they're putting in the work to make it happen.**

We are proud to stand with you.



Thank You from the Alliance Board and Staff

At the Alliance for the Great Lakes, we know that meaningful progress doesn't happen overnight—it's built through consistent leadership, steady hands, and shared purpose.

This year, we extend our deep appreciation to every member of our Board of Directors for their continued service and guidance. Your expertise, commitment, and belief in a thriving future for the Great Lakes help shape our vision and our impact every single day.



ALLIANCE for the
GREAT LAKES

150 N. Michigan Ave., Suite 750, Chicago, IL 60601

312-939-0838 alliance@greatlakes.org

www.greatlakes.org

ILLINOIS • MICHIGAN • MINNESOTA • OHIO • WASHINGTON D.C.

Photos: LLOYD DEGRANE www.lloyddegrane.com © 2025
All rights reserved.

ALLIANCE FOR THE GREAT LAKES BOARD OF DIRECTORS

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Laura Payne *Chair*

Dr. Alan Steinman *Vice Chair - Policy*

David Hackett *Vice Chair - Development*

Nicole Chavas *Chair - Nominations*

Tim Frick *Treasurer*

Bill Henry *Secretary*

Joel Brammeier *President & CEO*

DIRECTORS

Timothy Alston

Katherine Jones

Kimberly Hill Knott

Candace Jeffers LaRochelle

Susan McDermott

Dr. Wren Montgomery

Dr. Sri Vedachalam

Christopher Winters

Emeritus Paul Culhane

James Griffith

STAFF

Joel Brammeier *President & CEO*

Matt Altstiel *VP for Development*

Megan Cunningham *VP for Programs*

Kelly Farley *VP for Finance & Operations*

Angela Blatt Sr. *Agriculture Policy Manager*

Patricia Brown *Finance Manager*

Ashley Brummel *Grants Manager*

Don Carr *Media Director*

Michelle Farley *Staff Writer*

Tom Fazzini *Director of Communications*

Genevieve Fletcher *Individual Giving Manager*

Judy Freed Sr. *Marketing Manager*

Chrystopher Garzon Rivera *Water Policy Analyst*

Meleah Geertsma *Director of Clean Water & Equity*

Luz Gomez *Office Manager*

Jonathan Heuring Sr. *Foundation & Corporate Giving Manager*

Donald Jodrey *Director of Federal Relations*

Angela Larsen *Director of Planning*

Cristal Ramirez *Volunteer Engagement Coordinator*

Olivia Reda *Volunteer Engagement Manager*

Bre'Shaun Reddick *Local Partnership Manager*

Mason Stahl *Development Associate*

Darryn Suttles *Data Manager*

Helena Volzer Sr. *Source Water Policy Manager*

Jenna Voss *Program Manager, Clean Water & Equity*

Justine Weidel *Executive Assistant*