

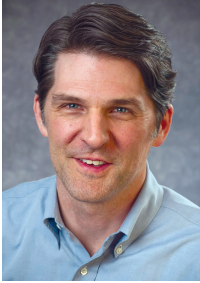


ALLIANCE *for the*
GREAT LAKES

2025 Annual Report

Holding the Line for the Great Lakes





Dear Friends of the Great Lakes,

One of my favorite parts of this work is declaring what we are for. The fights we face are real, but at the Alliance, I spent much of 2025 energized by knowing you and your fellow supporters and partners understand that our lakes should be safe, clean, and shared by all who live here. And I'm proud to say we put action behind that ideal.

After years of leadership by the Alliance, construction officially began on the Brandon Road Lock and Dam project southwest of Chicago. This means earth is moving, critical partnerships are holding, and we are closer than ever to stopping invasive carp before they can reach the Great Lakes.

We helped protect and shape the future of the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative and water infrastructure renewal. In response to coordinated advocacy, Congress rejected steep budget cuts, ensuring that federal programs in the Great Lakes will continue to address the realities communities and families face today — including inequitable gaps in investment, unsafe drinking water, sewage overflows, and unprecedented disruptions like flooding and storms linked to climate change.

The Alliance was one of the first to recognize the risk that new large-scale water users, such as data centers, posed to our region's precious water supply. We changed the national conversation with the release of our Finite Resource report in August. Thanks to our leadership, state decision-makers are revisiting the water-use policies that should protect our lakes.

Our efforts to reduce plastic pollution gained ground. New research and reporting amplified attention to the growing risk of nitrate contamination in drinking water. We are bringing transparency to the sources of algae blooms in Lake Erie.

This is who we are. We identify the issue, activate scientific and policy expertise, make the case to our Great Lakes leaders, and, most importantly, follow through for the long haul. These are issues that define Great Lakes protection.

But the most powerful force behind this leadership is the people.

More than 10,000 Adopt-a-Beach volunteers showed up in 2025. They cleaned shorelines and collected data on plastic pollution across all five lakes. Thousands of advocates raised their voices and sent more than 13,000 messages to decision-makers. Hundreds of community partners gained new tools, stronger networks, and better access to funding for safe and affordable water. Individual and family donors contributed more than \$1.7 million to the Alliance.

This is what progress looks like — a growing movement of people who understand that the Great Lakes are essential to our lives and drive tangible wins for our water.

Make no mistake: The Great Lakes are facing serious challenges to basic scientific integrity and constant pressure to cut funding and roll back programs and rules. But I'm confident that's not what our region wants. Instead, we are making sure our leaders back up kind words about the Great Lakes with the actions it takes to keep them protected.

Thank you for showing up and believing in a future in which all communities have access to safe, clean, and abundant Great Lakes.

We are holding the line and always will.

With gratitude,

Joel Brammeier, President & CEO
Alliance for the Great Lakes

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2025 Treasurer's Report

Dear Friends and Supporters,

I am pleased to share that the Alliance for the Great Lakes continued to build on a strong financial foundation in 2025. Our revenue exceeded \$7.5 million, reflecting the generosity of individuals, foundations, government agencies, and corporate partners who share our commitment to the Great Lakes. This support encompasses annual giving as well as meaningful new multi-year commitments that provide stability and confidence for our work ahead.

The Lee Botts Strategic Fund reached over \$8 million in assets, a milestone that strengthens our long-term capacity for bold program investments and legacy-building impact. This fund is a testament to the long-term commitment of our donors and ensures that the Alliance can respond to opportunities and challenges with the resources needed to make a lasting difference.

I am deeply grateful to our Finance Committee — Laura Payne, Bill Henry, Kevin Jordan, Nick Longo, and Susan McDermott — for their careful stewardship and thoughtful guidance throughout the year. I also extend my sincere thanks to Joel Brammeier and Kelly Farley for their exceptional leadership of the organization.

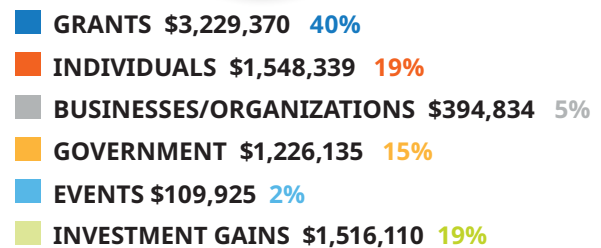
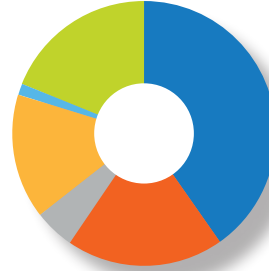
Most of all, thank you. Your trust and generosity make everything we do possible. Because of you, the Alliance for the Great Lakes is protecting and restoring the world's largest freshwater system — today and for generations to come.

With gratitude,

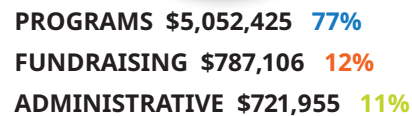
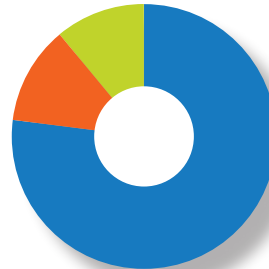
Timothy Frick
Treasurer
Alliance for the Great Lakes

Our annual audit was in process at time of printing. Audited financials will be posted to our website in summer 2026.

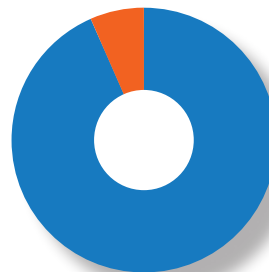
FUNDING SOURCES



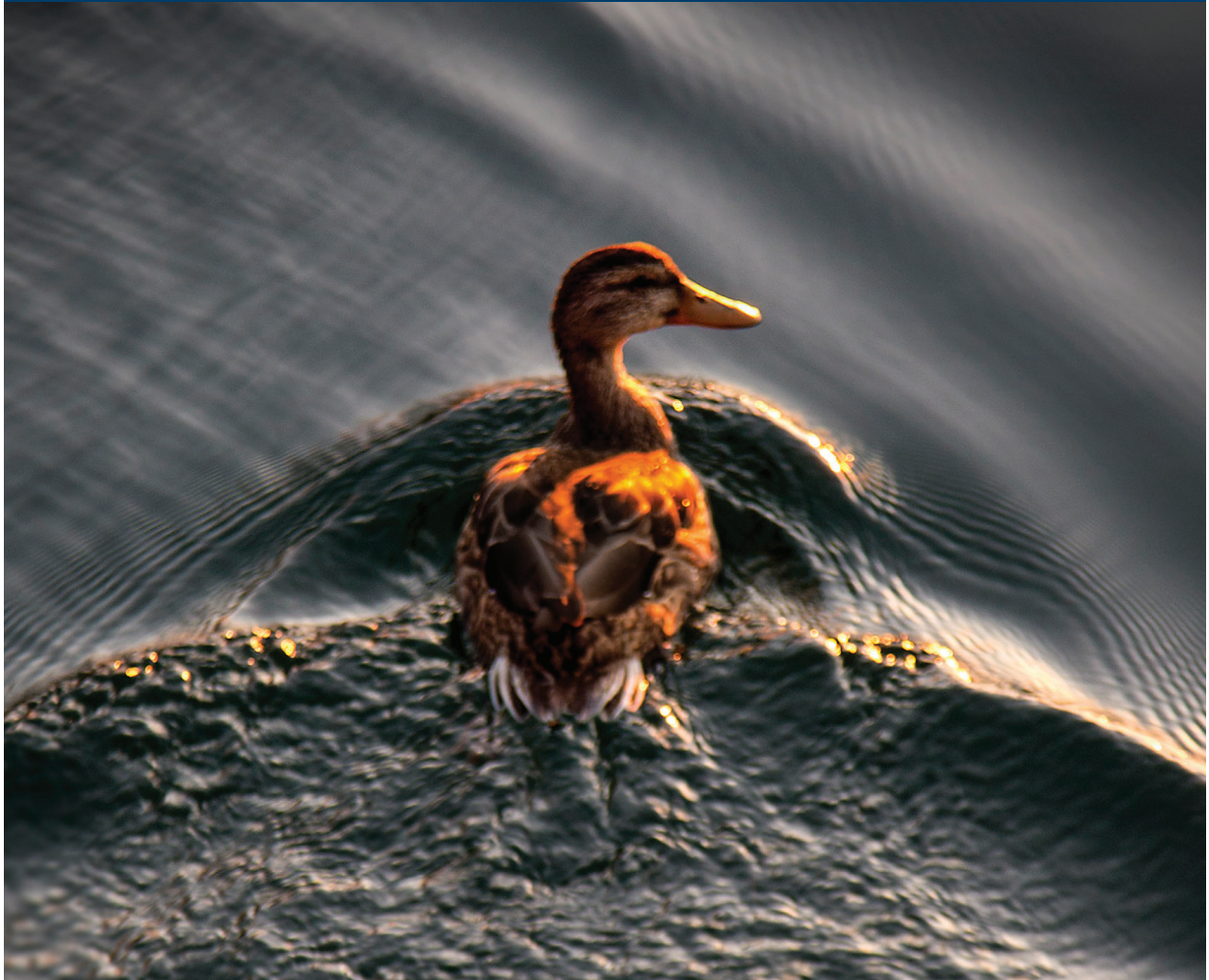
EXPENSES



ASSETS AND LIABILITIES



2025 Annual Report



Holding the Line for the Great Lakes

Progress on the Great Lakes takes time. The challenges facing our waters have built up over the years, shaped by changing landscapes, growing demands, and decisions that impact entire communities.

But there are moments when that steady work starts to shift something.

2025 was one of those years.

Advocacy & Leadership

Building a Defense for Invasive Species:

After years of pushing, planning, and waiting, construction began at Brandon Road Lock and Dam. This is one of the most important defenses we have against invasive carp entering the Great Lakes.

Protecting Critical Water Infrastructure:

When federal funding for water systems came under threat, we brought clear, grounded analysis to decision-makers. That work helped protect investments communities rely on to prevent sewage overflows and flooding, replace lead lines, and keep water safe.

Moving Policy Forward on Plastic Pollution:

Illinois lawmakers advanced efforts to phase out single-use foam further than ever before. It did not cross the finish line, but the momentum is real and continues to build.

Investing in the Future of the Lakes:

We ensured stable funding and helped shape the next phase of the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, so the program continues to support the cleanup of toxic hotspots while meeting more restoration needs of communities that have waited too long for support.

Education & Action

People Showing Up Across the Lakes:

More than 10,000 Adopt-a-Beach volunteers showed up on shorelines this year, collecting data, clearing debris, and staying connected to the lakes they care about.

Advocacy That Gets Heard:

More than 13,000 messages reached decision-makers, turning concern into pressure that could not be ignored.

Opening Doors to Safe, Affordable Water:

Our State Revolving Fund Advocates Forum grew to more than 230 members, helping communities access funding to strengthen drinking water and wastewater systems.



Research & Analysis

Guarding Against Unsustainable Water Use:

In 2025, our report on water use, *A Finite Resource*, revealed a growing challenge. The Great Lakes region is not prepared for rising water demand from data centers, agriculture, mining, and other major water users. We identified gaps in transparency around water withdrawal decisions and called for stronger policies that protect the health of our water while allowing sustainable economic growth. The report sparked local and national attention — earning coverage in every major outlet in the Great Lakes region from the Chicago Tribune to the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel and in national publications like USA Today.

Tackling Flooding and Sewage Challenges:

We brought partners together to form a coalition, dig into data, and begin to identify policy solutions for long-standing flooding and sewage issues in Southern Lake Michigan communities — because the problems are too big for any one group to solve alone.

Better Data for Algal Blooms:

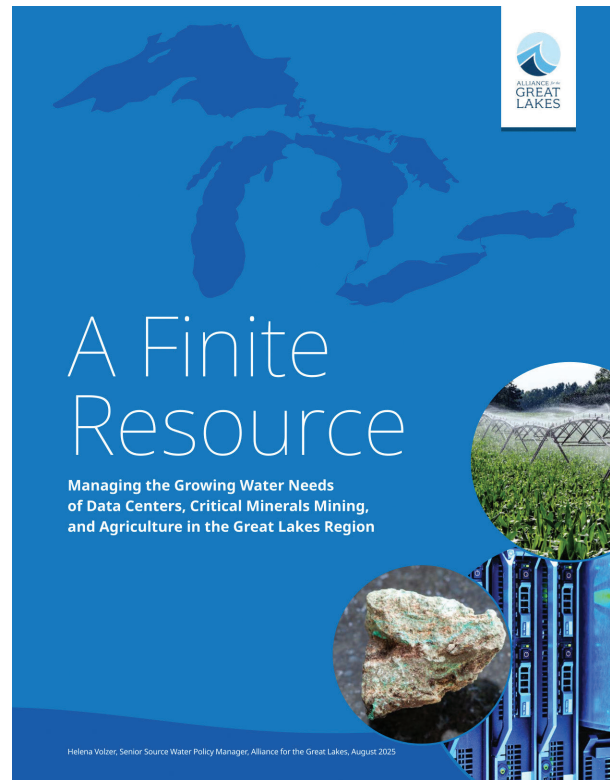
A new monitoring system in Michigan's Western Lake Erie Basin is helping agencies, farmers, and communities determine where pollution is coming from and how to better target conservation efforts to prevent harmful algal blooms.

Shining a Light on Nitrate Pollution:

Our research in Wisconsin revealed the cost and health risks of nitrate contamination in drinking water, offering a path forward to better protect public health and reduce agricultural pollution.

The Great Lakes do not protect themselves. Policies have to be fought for. Data has to be gathered. Communities have to be heard.

In 2025, that work moved forward — on construction sites, in statehouses, on shorelines, and in the research that puts facts behind the fight. The challenges ahead are real, and so is our progress.



Thank You from the Alliance Board and Staff

The Great Lakes don't protect themselves, and neither does the work we do on their behalf. It takes people who show up, stay the course, and hold the line when it matters most.

To every member of our Board of Directors, thank you. Your leadership this year wasn't just welcomed; it was essential. You brought wisdom, accountability, and an unwavering belief that these lakes are worth fighting for. That commitment ripples through everything we accomplish together.

ALLIANCE FOR THE GREAT LAKES BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Jenna Voss *Sr. Clean Water & Equity Program Manager*

Justine Weidel *Executive Operations Manager*



ALLIANCE *for the*
GREAT LAKES

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

312-939-0838 alliance@greatlakes.org

www.greatlakes.org

The Alliance for the Great Lakes is a nonpartisan nonprofit working across the region to protect our most precious resource: the fresh, clean, and natural waters of the Great Lakes.