

2021-2023  
**STRATEGIC PLAN**



[ForeverOurRivers.org](http://ForeverOurRivers.org)

# VISION

Forever Our Rivers Foundation envisions a vibrant national movement led by the commitment of businesses, consumers and boots-on-the-ground nonprofits to ensure healthy rivers today and into the future.



# MISSION

To lead a unique business- and consumer-driven model to fund and support river health.

## ::: VALUES DRIVING OUR WORK

**Meaningful Impact** Funding those River Partners and projects that bring the greatest benefit to sustainable river health.

**Notable Return on Investment (ROI)** Delivering strong consumer engagement and brand loyalty to benefit Corporate Partners.

**Efficiency** Minimizing the gap between consumer interests, corporate social and environmental impact and river health.

**Inclusivity** Keeping diversity, equity and inclusion at the forefront of efforts to connect communities to their rivers.

**Collaboration** Working with our partners, other foundations and funders to promote collaboration and effective outcomes.





## THE PROBLEM

Rivers are essential to every person and community in the world, providing vital water supplies, food security, flood mitigation, wildlife habitat and recreational opportunities. As such a fundamental resource, rivers are easy to exploit.

**Rivers throughout the United States are at risk. Fortunately, there are people taking action, but they need help.**

Those on the frontlines of river conservation and restoration will tell you their work requires both people and dollars to be successful. Both of these resources result from a community's strong awareness of, connection to, and sense of stewardship for local rivers. Without a sustained relationship between people and the rivers they live beside, the ability to secure the money and public will needed to maintain river health is severely limited. The consequences - such as polluted waters, lack of protections from floods, and less flows for agriculture, wildlife and household use - are very real.

By championing corporate and community engagement in river health, Forever Our Rivers is building a self-sustaining solution to this problem. While we are initially focusing on an impact in the southwest U.S., building on existing relationships in our home state of Colorado, the goal is to scale to nationwide presence by 2023.

# THE MODEL

The people behind Forever Our Rivers are entrepreneurs and connectors, creatively working to impact river health through development of broad-based and sustainable revenue streams.

Forever Our Rivers is using cause marketing to build a network of private sector businesses, consumers who care and river-focused nonprofits. The model will generate the interest, people power and funding dollars needed for healthy riverways.



## PRIMARY PLAYERS

### Corporate Partners

Invest cause-related marketing dollars, both financially supporting and promoting healthy rivers while gaining a competitive advantage with new and loyal customers.

### River Partners

Do the 'heaving lifting' for us all, using solid science and proven techniques to keep rivers flowing and thriving and to help communities gain and maintain access to them.

### Consumers

Directly benefit river health by purchasing their favorite products and services while realizing their power to and the importance of protecting healthy rivers.

### Forever Our Rivers Foundation

Links cause committed corporations, river partners and communities working together to ensure healthy river into the future.

**Cause marketing models have a proven track record, known for:**

- ✓ Harnessing the purchase power of consumers.
- ✓ Strengthening product differentiation, consumer engagement and loyalty for corporate partners.

**Forever Our Rivers is the first to use this model to exclusively support river health. The concept will maximize impact by:**

- ✓ Championing the passion, innovation and imperative work of River Partners.
- ✓ Focusing funds on the highest priority actions to make real progress on the most pressing issues.
- ✓ Leveraging decades of river restoration and nonprofit experience represented in Forever Our Rivers' staff and Board of Directors to support River Partners.

# FOREVER OUR RIVERS' PROGRAMS

<p><b>Cause Marketing Membership</b></p>	<p>Forever Our Rivers trademarked the unique and dynamic graphic on the title page. It symbolizes building collective action and creating a movement for river health.</p> <p>Corporate Partners pay an annual royalty fee to use the trademarked graphic in promotional efforts, prominently declaring their commitment to the Forever Our Rivers movement.</p> <p>Forever Our Rivers vets a Partner's ethics statement and commitment to river health before entering into a formal agreement for use of the trademark. Diversity, equity and inclusion are expected to be a component of their policies and exemplified through actions.</p> <p>By joining the movement, Partners provide a way for their customers to take action for rivers.</p>
<p><b>On-River Engagement</b></p>	<p>Forever Our Rivers engages Corporate Partners' employees and customers as direct support to River Partners. Our engagement program facilitates volunteerism on and personal connections with local rivers, transforming participants into dedicated stewards and advocates for river health.</p>
<p><b>River Partnerships</b></p>	<p>Forever Our Rivers' grant making program invests revenues earned through cause-marketing agreements to support River Partners who work aligns with these beliefs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>To provide the highest benefit to humans and wildlife, rivers must be healthy, protected and resilient.</b> We commit to assess and address our operational impacts to rivers (e.g., water use) and to use science to prioritize our projects and initiatives to advance river health.</li> <li>• <b>Communities are the best stewards of their local river systems.</b> We must work to overcome barriers, including racism and socio-economic obstacles, that keep communities from accessing, enjoying, and protecting healthy rivers.</li> <li>• <b>To keep rivers healthy in the long term, we must monitor and maintain project sites and learn from our success and failures.</b> We will prioritize funding for monitoring and maintenance to ensure long-term project success.</li> </ul> <p>As river health experts, Forever Our Rivers is far more than a grant funder, partnering with those organizations and projects demonstrating proven ability to maximize river health through leveraged resources, robust evaluation and solid accountability.</p>

# GROWTH/IMPACT GOALS, METRICS & EVALUATION

Forever Our Rivers' impact goals are as follows:

## December 2021

- ✓ Launch the Southwest Rivers Stewardship Fund with \$1 million seed funding from the Walton Family Foundation.
- ✓ Have 40 Corporate Partners (three of which are companies with annual revenues more than \$100M) and 60 River Health Partners.
- ✓ Have the Forever Our Rivers logo featured on 25 products.
- ✓ Retain 75% of charter Partners.
- ✓ Provide \$300,000 in grant funding for river health.

## December 2023

- ✓ Expand its focus beyond the southwest United States.
- ✓ Have a total of 80 Corporate Partners (five of which are companies with annual revenues \$100M+) and 100 River Partners.
- ✓ Have the logo featured on 50 products.
- ✓ Retain 60% of charter Partners.
- ✓ Provide \$1 million in grant funding for river health.
- ✓ Grow the Southwest Rivers Stewardship Fund to more than \$2.5 million.

**To make possible the stated impact goals, the following additional metrics for success have been set:**

### **December 2021**

- ✓ Employ the equivalent of 3 full-time staff.
- ✓ Build and maintain an active and effective Stewardship Fund Committee to lend expertise to the proposal review, funding allocation and impact evaluative processes.
- ✓ Establish a six-month operating reserve, and endowment funds.
- ✓ Be recognizable to other funders as a reputable and impactful foundation.

### **December 2023**

- ✓ Employ the equivalent of 6 full-time staff.
- ✓ Establish a centralized office/headquarters in the most strategically-advantageous location to meet long-term goals.

The staff leadership and the Board of Directors commit to developing action plans to review and evaluate progress toward stated milestones on a semi-annual basis.

