

CONSERVATION **MATTERS**

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NAVIGATING A NEW NORMAL

2020
2021
YEAR IN REVIEW

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT



Business as *Unusual.*

THE LAST YEAR HAS SHOWN US JUST HOW PRECARIOUS OUR NORMS ARE. The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted, derailed, and disoriented our lives. But it also unearthed racial injustices and systemic failures that have been hiding in plain sight for far too long.

Watching as we all shifted our priorities and re-imagined how we manage our lives both personally and professionally, I have been amazed at the ability of CLF's talented staff and volunteers to pivot, refocus, and reinvent how we move our work forward. And, we have been buoyed by the continued passion and dedication of our donors in continuing to show up, speak up, and step up to ensure that we had the resources to keep going through such uncertainty.

Now, as vaccination rates continue to rise, we appear poised to go back to life as usual. But should we merely pick up where so many of us left off almost 18 months ago?

I would argue that no, we should not – especially if “usual” means once again burying the reality of the injustices that have plagued our country for centuries and still overburden communities of color today.

Now is not the time to be complacent. Our responsibility – our obligation – is to create a new normal for and, most importantly, with the people we serve. We can overcome the challenges threatening our communities, from rooting out injustice, to exposing broken systems that leave so many of us vulnerable to harm, to ensuring a just transition to an equitable clean energy economy that lifts all New Englanders.

Fulfilling that commitment means that we must listen more than we talk, set more chairs around the table, and change the balance of power so that those with the most at risk have the loudest voice in shaping solutions.

The past year has already shown us what we can accomplish when faced with unprecedented upheaval – you'll read about just some of those successes in the pages of this annual report.

Now, as CLF helps to push forward a new normal – one that recognizes the right of everyone to live, work, and play in a healthy and thriving community – your continued engagement is critical. Together, we can and will confront broken and unjust systems. I am honored to have you by our side.

BRAD CAMPBELL
President



LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

FOR MORE THAN 50 YEARS, CLF HAS TACKLED THE ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGES THAT OTHERS HAD DECLARED too big, too tough, or simply impossible to solve. That tenacity, experience, and reach across New England has ensured that we made dramatic progress in solving those challenges where others could not.

Now we are focused on driving forward a future that is equitable and healthy for all – while also confronting the most urgent environmental threats in the here and now. The work we do together in the next five years will lay the foundation for the 50 years that follow.

That work is grounded in four core goals:

- Establishing New England as a national climate leader and accelerating a clean energy transition that is just.
- Reducing environmental risk and improving environmental health, accessibility, and resilience in vulnerable communities.
- Protecting and restoring New England's endangered landscapes, wildlife, and waters.
- Revolutionizing and reinventing the systems and laws that fail to protect New England's people, environment, and economy.

Inside, you'll read stories of how CLF is pushing to meet these goals across New England, from helping to shape Vermont's plan for how it will meet its ambitious climate goals to holding New Hampshire accountable for illegally approving landfill expansions for years; from forcing the EPA to hold the Charles River's biggest polluters responsible to creating a new model for financing health-promoting businesses.

It's only with your support – and your commitment to a healthier and more thriving New England for all – that we will reach these ambitious goals. We cannot achieve so much without you.

I hope you'll find as much inspiration as I do in these stories of the work that you helped make happen.



**You make the
impossible
possible.**

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sara Molyneaux".

SARA MOLYNEAUX
Chair, Board of Trustees





Charting Vermont's Future

BY BETHANY KWOKA

FOR 17-YEAR-OLD VERMONTIER IRIS HSIANG, CLIMATE CHANGE HAS ALWAYS BEEN A PART OF HER LIFE. “I don’t know if I can pinpoint a moment when I got involved in climate activism,” she says. The Essex Junction teen and her younger sister attended climate marches with their parents and have classmates and neighbors who immigrated as climate refugees. And last year, she joined Vermont Public Interest Research Group as a junior organizer.

She sees a clear connection between the changes in her local environment – a home that floods with increasing frequency, certain roads that always get washed out during storms, a pattern of eroding riverbanks – and the climate crisis.

Recently, Hsiang’s activism took a new turn when she became the youth representative on Vermont’s Climate Council – the group tasked with creating a plan to implement the recently passed Global Warming Solutions Act. The new law – a priority for CLF last year – calls for Vermont’s climate-damaging emissions to drop to zero by 2050. The council has until the end of 2021 to develop and collect feedback on its Climate Action Plan to reach that 2050 goal, as well as interim emissions targets set for 2025 and 2030.

The council process builds on the work of other New England states that have also passed ambitious climate laws, including Massachusetts and Maine (and, most recently, Rhode Island – see [HIGHLIGHTS](#) on the next page). And, as in those states, a critical concern for council members is how to reach Vermont’s ambitious emissions goal without leaving anyone behind.

“We need to make sure the Climate Action Plan is not just perpetuating the harms that are being done to people of color and other marginalized communities,” says Hsiang. Low-income and of-color communities are disproportionately affected by environmental burdens and climate impacts. They’re more likely to live near a power plant that spews pollution into their air, a major highway that belches exhaust fumes and noise, or a landfill that leaks dangerous substances into their soil and groundwater. And they have fewer resources to bounce back after disasters such as heat waves and severe storms.

“Centering racial justice in climate advocacy is really important and often gets overlooked,” continues Hsiang. She might be the

“We’re already seeing the impacts of climate change in Vermont. We are seeing changes in snowfall patterns. We are seeing warmer winters. We’re seeing more dramatic precipitation events, more tick-borne diseases, more hot days in the summer. And that is really just a glimpse of what is to come. And so I worry about not taking action, the kind of aggressive action that we need both to improve the health of our communities right now and to ensure that Vermont’s beautiful natural resources, this special place, is protected for my kids and future generations.”

– JEN DUGGAN, CLF VERMONT

youth representative on the Climate Council, but her focus is broader than an age demographic. “I think that another important force I bring is just a young Vermonter of color.”

Her goal for her work on the Climate Council is to bring her experiences – and those of her friends and community in Essex Junction – to push for an equitable transition away from fossil fuels. “That means listening to the people who are most affected and thinking about them when you are doing this work... [and] bringing those voices into this decision making at the very beginning.”

Jen Duggan, vice president of CLF’s Vermont office, describes a just transition as a power shift – moving away from an economy built around extracting resources and pushing the consequences onto others – to one that is sustainable and makes up for past harms.

“If we’re doing that in an authentic way, it will result in real benefits at the community level,” says Duggan, who worked tirelessly over the past two years to pass the Global Warming Solutions Act. “I’m thinking about providing good jobs, reducing pollution, and building infrastructure in communities that have been historically sidelined.”

For both Hsiang and Duggan, the council process provides a space for Vermonters to envision what they want for their communities – and the path to achieve that vision. “My hope is we can have a conversation about how we can rise to together to realize all the benefits from the kind of community-level investment the Climate Action Plan will create – not just around climate, but public health, well-being, water quality, and all of the good things that everyone wants for their families,” Duggan says.

The ultimate goal is to being everyone forward, together. “Equity is sometimes misconstrued as something that’s pushing some people down and others up in order to create a level playing field,” Hsiang says. “Really, equity means bringing everyone up. But some people have further to rise to get to the same level.”

Climate change, she continues is forcing us “to re-create how we’re functioning. And, if we’re not going to use [this process] to re-create how we are treating each other as well, we’re failing.”

► Learn more about how CLF is pushing every New England state to reach net-zero carbon emissions by 2050 – with a priority on a just and equitable transition. clf.org/netzero

HIGHLIGHTS

Over the past year, CLF celebrated major victories in its campaign to drastically cut New England’s climate-damaging emissions by 2050:

Vermont’s legislature overrode Gov. Phil Scott’s veto of the state’s Global Warming Solutions Act, which requires the state to lower its emissions while creating jobs, improving community resilience, and reducing energy burdens for rural and marginalized communities.

After several delays, Massachusetts Gov. Charlie Baker signed into law a climate bill that strengthens that state’s 13-year-old Global Warming Solutions Act. The bill includes a 2050 road map to reach net-zero climate-damaging emissions as well as new protections for environmental justice communities – provisions that CLF had fought for over several years.

Rhode Island’s Act on Climate 2021 proved another successful CLF priority. The bill will put the state on track

to lower climate pollution and help communities reap the rewards of an economy run on clean, renewable energy. Its focus on accountability, transparency, and equity also will give Rhode Islanders insight into how state leaders are confronting the climate crisis.

CLF’s work now moves on to enforcing each of these landmark bills to ensure the just transition to a clean energy economy New Englanders need and deserve.

RESILIENCE FROM THE GROUND UP

A community-led project in Lawrence, Massachusetts, will build on solutions from abroad.

Extended heat waves, stronger nor'easters, more intense and frequent rainstorms – these are some of the climate impacts expected to affect New England. But they will hit some communities harder than others. Those living in urban areas with little tree cover, for example, suffer more when heat waves strike. The acres of buildings and pavement create a deadly heat island effect, in which temperatures soar even higher and air quality worsens, affecting public health.

The same areas that will be hit hardest tend to be home to more families of color and low-income families than other parts of New England. To address these climate and health inequities – and with support from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation – CLF and Groundwork Lawrence have launched a 30-month project in Lawrence, Massachusetts. The project is part of an initiative funding six U.S. cities that aims to bring innovative approaches from abroad that mitigate the unequal health risks posed by climate change. The goal: to create “resilient corridors” that will allow residents to safely walk or bike to parks, health food stores, community centers, and schools. These corridors do double duty – addressing health disparities and building climate resilience.

It won't be CLF and Groundwork Lawrence determining what to prioritize for these corridors, however. It will be Lawrence residents themselves. A four-member resident task force is both conducting research – they recently placed air quality monitors throughout the city – and engaging neighbors to educate them and hear their ideas for how to address climate issues.

“The idea of re-imagining our city, what the city looks like – whether it's the streets or public spaces, or the creation of

green spaces – is very exciting,” says task force member Jorge Hernandez. An educator who has lived in Lawrence for 16 years, Jorge feels especially excited about the opportunity to work with the task force on this project. “Everyone is really dedicated, focused on how we can help residents understand what it is that we're trying to accomplish.”

Fellow task force member Destiny Gonzalez agrees. “The fact that I can be one of the voices at the forefront of that change makes me so excited,” the lifelong “Lawrencian” and college student says.



SHARING POWER TO INFORM POLICY

Those forced to live with environmental injustice are often ignored when it comes to issues that affect their daily lives. The Lawrence resiliency project seeks to put residents in the lead. PHOTO: DENNIS TANGNEY, JR., VIA ISTOCK

The task force members recognize that it could be a challenge for their climate message to break through the daily pressures facing people in this largely immigrant city. “You have people who moved their entire lives here for a better opportunity,” says Gonzalez. “They don't understand why plastic grocery bags are bad – they're just trying to get their groceries. There's so much pressure to succeed, to make ends meet. But if they understand that giving your kids a better life is also about bettering the climate in your city, then that's going to start

changing mindsets. Then people will start taking initiative.”

This resident-led project could become a model for how to create change both for and by the community. That is especially critical in cities like Lawrence, where people of color have too long borne the brunt of pollution, yet have had their voices ignored when it comes to decisions that affect their communities

Says Hernandez: “The more we're able to let the community know we're looking for their input – that is going to help drive what actually gets done.”

TRACK PROGRESS

CLF works with partners across New England to strengthen community resilience in the face of climate impacts. You can hear more from all four members of the Lawrence resident task force – Destiny Gonzalez, Eve Rodriguez, Martha Leavitt, and Jorge Hernandez – at clf.org/lawrence. And, keep up with the progress of the project by visiting groundworklawrence.org.

Turning a Spotlight on New Hampshire's Waste Crisis

CLF is taking aim at regulators who have failed to follow the law.

BY OLIVIA SYNORACKI

WHEN FIRST BUILT IN 1976, NEW HAMPSHIRE'S BETHLEHEM LANDFILL WAS JUST A LOCAL DUMP – 400 X 400 FEET IN TOTAL. But thanks to large corporate waste companies with aggressive growth plans, the landfill has swelled in size. Today, it covers 50 acres and buries 175,000 tons of trash each year.

The State of New Hampshire recently gave the landfill's current owner, a subsidiary of Casella Waste Systems, permission to expand the site again – over the objections of residents, as well as CLF, which has appealed the permit to the state's Waste Management Council.

For longtime resident Julie Seely, it's frustrating to see the landfill allowed to grow even more. Her town of Bethlehem has been a hub for outdoor enthusiasts who flock to the popular White Mountain National Forest (two-thirds of the town lie within the forest boundaries) and Ammonoosuc River. "Inviting a business, such as a landfill, [to town] is just completely incongruous with our history and future of being a great outdoor activity center," says Seely.

The landfill puts the river and forest at risk – from the waste trucks hauling trash through town to the toxic leachate spills that put groundwater and the river at risk. Just this past May, one of the landfill's leachate tanks overflowed, spilling more than 150,000 gallons of contaminated liquid into a nearby stormwater detention pond – just a short distance from the Ammonoosuc.

Unfortunately, Bethlehem's story is not unique. New Hampshire is home to six active landfills – some of which have bloated in size

over the years. The Turnkey Landfill, located in Rochester and already New England's largest, also has been approved for yet another expansion. What's more, state regulators are considering Casella's proposal for an entirely new landfill on an undeveloped site near Forest Lake State Park in Dalton. If approved, the landfill would sit on 137 acres – destroying over 17 acres of wetlands – and accept nearly 18 million tons of trash over its proposed 38-year lifespan.

Just how much trash is New Hampshire generating that it needs another landfill? In 2018, the last year for which data is available, the state's landfills buried nearly 2.4 million tons of trash. But that's not the full story, because almost half of that was shipped in from out of state.

In Seely's hometown of Bethlehem, more than 30% of the waste buried there in 2018 was imported. "New Hampshire seems to be the go-to place for waste companies to come and grow and build new sites – and that's a problem," she says.

While no law exists to prevent this vast importation of waste, New Hampshire's transformation into the region's dumping ground is also linked to another issue – the state's landfill permitting process.

Tom Irwin, director of CLF's New Hampshire Advocacy Center, has led the organization's fight against new and expanding landfills in the state. "We have good policies and laws on the books in New Hampshire," says Irwin. "Unfortunately, they just aren't being followed."



LANDFILLS THREATEN COMMUNITIES AND THE ENVIRONMENT

PREVIOUS PAGE Bethlehem, perched on the edge of the White Mountain National Forest, has seen its town dump grow into an enormous landfill. ABOVE A proposed new landfill in Dalton would abut Forest Lake State Park.

PHOTOS: PREVIOUS PAGE: DAVID STILLMAN CC BY-NC 2.0 | ABOVE: JC CC BY 2.0

One of those laws requires New Hampshire to develop a statewide plan for managing and reducing its solid waste. Under that same law, the plan is supposed to be updated every six years and used as a tool for deciding whether to grant permits for new and expanding landfills.

But New Hampshire has been ignoring the law. The last time it updated its waste management plan? 2003. While state regulators acknowledge the existence of that decades-old plan, they claim they haven't revised it due to a lack of resources. But the reality is, they're not even following the state's waste law and its guidelines, which put landfills as a last resort for handling waste. Instead, regulators continue to issue landfill permits to corporate waste giants – undermining trash reduction efforts and enabling the influx of waste these companies haul across the border every year.

Ultimately, by ignoring the law's requirements, New Hampshire is letting down residents, like Julie Seely and her neighbors, who are forced to live alongside polluting landfills. And, while state regulators have an obligation to protect human health, conserve the state's natural resources, and avoid the harm posed by landfills, they are failing to do so.

That's why CLF sued the state Department of Environmental Services – to force it to follow the law and prevent it from basing any more permitting decisions on a nearly 20-year-old waste management plan. The lawsuit also called on the court to stop engaging in new permitting activities – including for the proposed Dalton landfill – until the State releases a new waste plan as required by law.

Updating and following a new waste management plan, says Irwin, would mean the state “wouldn't continuously build disposal infrastructure that has adverse community impacts.” Instead, New Hampshire would generate less waste, recycle and compost more, and protect its community members, like Seely, who simply want a safe environment to call home.

As of this writing, a Merrimack Superior Court judge dismissed CLF's lawsuit in May, saying the matter should be addressed by the Waste Management Council, but Irwin and his New Hampshire team have filed a motion asking the judge to reconsider that decision.

► Learn more about CLF's work to stop toxic landfills and advocate for Zero Waste programs regionwide at clf.org/zerowaste

HIGHLIGHTS

CLF is pushing for regulation of toxic PFAS chemicals, which harm human health and have been found in water supplies in every New England state. Late last year, after a push by CLF and its partners, Massachusetts officials announced new regulations aimed at six of these dangerous chemicals in water. And, earlier this year, Vermont moved forward a nation-leading bill that will restrict the sale of consumer products that contain PFAS.

In a win for clean air, Transdev Services will end dangerous bus idling in Boston neighborhoods after settling CLF's lawsuit. The company's school buses were seen idling excessively in lots around the city. Idling vehicles spew pollution – mainly carbon dioxide and particulate matter – which causes climate change and harms public health. As a result of the settlement, Transdev has funded projects at three nonprofit organizations in the communities its pollution harmed.

CLF's Legal Food Hub passed a major milestone in 2020, passing the 750-case mark regionwide. The Hub now has 175 firms in its volunteer network and, since 2014, has leveraged \$3.8 million in pro bono assistance for farmers and food entrepreneurs. In 2020, the Hub expanded its offerings of legal guides that address topics its participants ask about most frequently. This fall, the Legal Food Hub will expand to New Hampshire, making its services available in every New England state.

NO MEANS NO

Tanisha Arena, executive director of Arise for Social Justice, talks about the decade-plus fight to stop a polluting biomass plant in Springfield, Massachusetts.

CLF: Now that a key permit the plant needed has been revoked, it seems this biomass plant project may finally be on its last legs. Why has this fight taken so many years?

Arena: [The siting of the Palmer Renewable Energy biomass plant] is what environmental racism looks like. Is it about money? Yes. Is it about this community that is primarily Black and Brown? Yes. And it's about how this country has historically treated Black and Brown people. So it's no big deal to put this plant here and violate your rights, which this country hasn't really felt that we [Black and Brown people] had legitimate rights, anyway.

Springfield is also a designated environmental justice community, which means that there have already been systemic and institutional harms. There are people here who can't go out of the house because the air is not good, so why were they [Palmer Biomass] going to intentionally make the air quality worse by putting a biomass plant here?

CLF: How did you talk about the plant to people outside of Springfield to mobilize opposition?

Arena: [We needed people] to connect the dots between colonial values, white supremacy, and abuse, because colonization is rooted in abusive values. At the last biomass rally, I said that someone not respecting your "no" is the first step in abuse. And this community had said "no" how many times? And yet, here we were, on and on and on.

[Palmer] tried to explain it away by saying that [biomass] is clean energy and it's renewable, but you can't burn anything and have it be clean. That's an elementary school science lesson.

We had to shift the narrative to get people to think about what this is actually doing to people and how we're all connected to it. We needed people to connect the dots and say, "Wait a minute, this is not going to be okay, and not just for the people here." Springfield is ground zero, but it's going to affect you, too. Because you're

not exempt. The smoke doesn't know to stay in the smoking section – that's not how this works. [The plant pollution] is coming to your town. What happens in Springfield affects what happens in Amherst and Leverett and even Boston and vice versa.

CLF: Springfield has one of the highest asthma rates in the country. But how do you want people to think about the community, outside of that dire moniker?

Arena: We're the asthma capital of the United States, but how have we managed to overcome

that? You're talking about people that run businesses, the kids are resilient, the arts are booming. There are colleges here, so young people are coming, and they're getting a world-class education. That is a testimony to the people that are here. It's more than just the asthma capital. There are people here who are building their lives and raising their kids and thriving in spite of it.



DIG DEEPER

Through **community lawyering**, CLF contributes its skills and strategy to support initiatives identified by and with community members. The long fight against the Palmer Renewable Energy biomass plant is one of several community lawyering projects CLF has undertaken. With Palmer appealing the State's revocation of its air permit and the City Council's revocation of its building permits, our legal advocates continue to work alongside residents and support the City Council to stop the polluting plant for good. Learn more at clf.org/communitylawyering

Closing the Clean Water Gap

Tackling the Biggest Threat to a Clean Charles River

TAKE A STROLL ALONG THE CHARLES RIVER ON A NICE WEEKEND, AND YOU'LL SEE WHY IT'S CONSIDERED ONE OF THE BUSIEST WATERSHEDS IN THE COUNTRY. Even at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, joggers and walkers still threaded its shoreline paths; canoes, kayaks, and sculls plied its waters; and sailboats drifted along its currents.

But this scene is not as idyllic as it seems. Far too often these days, beautiful afternoons by the water are marred by toxic blue-green algae outbreaks. Those outbreaks don't just smell and look bad – they can harm our health and that of our children, pets, and the fish, plants, and other aquatic life that call the Charles home.

It wasn't so long ago that the Charles was one of the dirtiest rivers in the country. Today, thanks to CLF, the Charles River Watershed Association (CRWA), and other advocates, the Bay State's iconic river is on the mend. But despite these decades-long clean-up efforts, we still have far to go before we can declare the Charles truly healthy.

The biggest issue facing the river today – and the underlying cause of those toxic algae outbreaks – is phosphorus pollution from stormwater runoff.

Along the river's 80-mile course from Hopkinton to Boston Harbor are thousands of acres of strip malls, office parks, and other commercial development, along with their flat roofs and huge parking lots. "We continue to develop along the Charles and not require these developments to manage their stormwater pollution on site," says Heather Miller, general counsel and policy director for CRWA. "As a result, blue-green algae, which occur naturally,

are growing into harmful blooms and, along with invasive species, have become unmanageable."

Back when the Charles flowed through a largely natural landscape, rainwater was absorbed by the ground. The ground acted as a natural filter for pollutants before the water eventually drained into the river. Today, stormwater gushes off those acres of roads, sidewalks, parking lots, and roofs, picking up trash, chemicals, gasoline, fertilizer, and other harmful pollutants along the way. The result: a contaminated soup of dirty water draining into the Charles, Boston Harbor, and other rivers, lakes, and streams across New England.

A major ingredient in that soup is phosphorus, which feeds blue-green algae and causes the harmful outbreaks. Excess phosphorus also fertilizes harmful invasive species such as water chestnut and milfoil, which crowd out native plants and damage the ecosystem. Last summer, says Miller, "we saw a bloom in the lower [Charles River] basin that lasted from June to the end of the year. If we don't get a handle on the stormwater pollution, these issues are only going to get worse."

Stormwater pollution is a preventable problem, however. With effective implementation of the Clean Water Act by the Environmental Protection Agency, this entire destructive cycle could have been halted years ago.

Properties such as commercial businesses, academic institutions, and high-density residential buildings contribute the greatest amount of phosphorus to the Charles River. But these property owners don't have to take steps to reduce the polluted water

STORMWATER POLLUTION THREATENS THE HEALTH OF THE CHARLES RIVER

PREVIOUS PAGE An evening along the Charles is not as idyllic as it seems. For decades, the river's biggest polluters haven't had to clean up their dirty runoff, putting the river at risk.

PHOTO: PAOLO BRAIUCA CC BY 2.0

RIGHT Stormwater pollution feeds toxic blue-green algae outbreaks that harm wildlife and degrade the health of the Charles.

PHOTO: CRWA



flowing from their properties. Instead, it all gets dumped into municipal stormwater systems – leaving local governments on the hook for its costs.

“For decades, cities and towns have been footing most of the bill for stormwater pollution prevention,” says Heather Govern, CLF’s vice president for Clean Water. “It’s time the large commercial property owners and institutions that benefit from their location along the beautiful Charles be held accountable for the pollution they produce.”

It’s no mystery to the EPA which private property owners pollute the most (Harvard University and MIT, among them). The EPA has had both the legal authority and obligation to hold them accountable for decades, but they’ve failed to require them to obtain a permit that would cap the amount of polluted stormwater they could discharge.

All of that, however, is about to change.

Two years ago, CLF and CRWA petitioned the EPA to live up to its legal responsibility. Together, they called on the federal agency to

control stormwater pollution from landowners with large amounts of paved surfaces and buildings.

As a result of that petition, the EPA is finally acting. The agency is now deciding the details of a permitting program that will reduce runoff from these polluters. CLF’s Govern is optimistic that by next spring, large property owners that have had a free pass to pollute for decades will be required to better control their dirty runoff – and with it, the phosphorus loads entering the river. “It is time they realize the true costs of combating stormwater pollution and share that burden with cities, towns, and taxpayers,” she says.

Govern believes this outcome won’t just be a success for the Charles. This stormwater permitting program for the Charles River watershed could set a trend for other watersheds in New England and nationwide, putting many more of our rivers, lakes, and streams on the path to being fishable and swimmable for all.

► Learn more about CLF’s work to stop toxic stormwater runoff and hold polluters accountable at clf.org/stormwater

HIGHLIGHTS

CLF and the three largest cities in New Hampshire’s Great Bay Estuary reached an agreement that will allow a critical water pollution permit issued by the EPA to move forward. Nitrogen pollution disrupts ecosystems and threatens the health of the estuary. The novel agreement will ensure communities reduce this pollution, give the towns flexibility in achieving their allocated reduction, and avert years of litigation.

A CLF poll released late last year shows that 80% of Cape Cod’s seasonal and year-round residents rate combating water pollution in the region a high priority. CLF is continuing to push cities and towns – as well as the Commonwealth – to act more urgently to address the area’s water pollution crisis, which threatens its freshwater bays. CLF is currently suing the Town

of Barnstable for failing to control nitrogen pollution through its sewage treatment plant. The organization is also holding state agencies accountable for failing to enforce the law by green lighting the ongoing use and installation of thousands of inadequate septic systems in the region.

Federal fishery managers have issued a new rule that will designate protected areas for fragile coral species on Georges Bank and in the Gulf of Maine. Coral provide essential habitat for many important commercial and recreational fish species and can take decades or centuries to recover when damaged. This rule is a good step in protecting some corals in select areas, but CLF will continue to push to expand these protections in the Gulf of Maine as part of its fight for a healthy New England ocean.

IN AWE OF RIGHT WHALES

CLF's Adilson González Morales shares his first sighting of a rare North Atlantic right whale – and how we can help make sure it's not his last.

GROWING UP IN THE ARID DESERT OF SOUTHWEST MEXICO, I DREAMED OF SEEING THE OCEAN. Yet I never thought that one day, I would sail the Atlantic and encounter one of the rarest whales on the planet – the critically endangered North Atlantic right whale.



A RARE SIGHT TODAY – BUT HOPE FOR TOMORROW

Millipede [PICTURED WITH HER CALF] was named for the long scar along her right side – a reminder of her collision with a ship propeller as a calf. CLF is working towards a time when spotting a right whale at sea will be a common – rather than rare – experience. PHOTO: BRIAN SKERRY [INSET] Adilson González Morales aboard ship.

For months, I had been reading about right whales and the lethal threats that they have faced for generations. I had grown increasingly passionate about the urgent need to save them, but, with fewer than 370 North Atlantic right whales left on the planet, seeing one in person seemed like a pipe dream. When a spot opened up on an expedition to Cape Cod Bay with scientists from Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution and the New England Aquarium, I jumped at the chance to tag along.

We set sail just after sunrise on a chilly April morning and soon received word of a mom and calf north of Provincetown. As we approached the area, we spotted the gentle whoosh of a whale's blowhole. Then, we saw a fluke. It was indeed a North Atlantic right whale, a 16-year-old female named Millipede. A long propeller scar marred her right side and gear entanglement marks dotted her fluke – tragic signs of the human-made dangers these whales face today.

Then, a smaller blow appeared close to Millipede. It was her newborn – a calf that had already defied the odds by surviving the harrowing migration to northern waters from right whales' winter feeding and calving grounds in Florida and Georgia.

Watching Millipede and her calf play together, I stood in awe, overwhelmed by their magnificence. Millipede's baby was a light of hope for the future of the species itself.

Not every calf has the same luck. Only 18 babies were born this season, and, sadly, one lived only for a few short weeks. He died when a recreational boat struck him off the Florida coast.

While 18 may seem like a high number, that birth rate is not enough to save right whales from extinction. That's why we need measures that make the ocean safer for calves to survive and for their mothers to be healthy enough to give birth and raise their babies.

I don't know if I will ever see Millipede, her calf, or any other North Atlantic right whale again. I hope so, and I wish that, somehow, they knew what was happening on our boat that day.

I wish they knew that we – and the many people who read about them, share their photos, and speak up on their behalf – care deeply about their future. And that, beyond surviving, we want North Atlantic right whales to thrive in an ocean free from deadly threats.

We have not given up on right whales, and I look forward to a day in the future when seeing one in the wild is not a rare sight but a reminder that we can make a difference.

STAY ACTIVE

Your support has already helped CLF hold federal regulators accountable for failing to protect North Atlantic right whales. But we have much more work to do to save this species from extinction. Learn more about the rarest whale on Earth and how your continued commitment can help make a difference. clf.org/rightwhales

SMALL BUSINESSES AND ENTREPRENEURS FORM THE BACKBONES OF THRIVING COMMUNITIES, AND RIGHT NOW THEY'RE STRUGGLING. This is especially true in the low-income neighborhoods and communities of color hit hardest by the coronavirus pandemic.

COVID-19 laid bare the profound impact that our neighborhoods have on our health. People in low-income communities of color living with higher levels of pollution, overcrowded housing, and other environmental harms were sickened and killed by the virus at much higher rates than people in wealthier, whiter communities.

The conditions that put these communities at such high risk during the pandemic are no accident. Decades of discriminatory lending practices, such as redlining, contributed to economic decline and disinvestment. Far too often, these communities lack access to healthy and affordable food, green space, and quality jobs. "Investing in small businesses that create good jobs and a welcoming environment – and that provide basic goods and services – can go a long way toward building healthier neighborhoods and undoing the suffering inflicted by decades of unjust policies," says Maggie Super Church, vice president for Healthy and Resilient Communities at CLF.

Shops that sell affordable and nutritious food, gyms, cafes, and cultural facilities all contribute to healthy, livable neighborhoods. "They also create jobs and keep money in the community, while building wealth and contributing to a sense of place and community pride," says Church.

Unfortunately, these types of small, local businesses are often the least able to secure necessary funding to start up. And even when they do get off the ground, their owners can struggle to grow sustainable brick-and-mortar enterprises. This lack of funding makes it challenging to find sustainable businesses that both meet community needs and can afford to lease the available spaces in a neighborhood.

Funding is only one of several barriers to success. But providing access to affordable capital is critical to fueling the sustainability of these foundational small businesses and nonprofits in the communities that need them most.

That's why Conservation Law Foundation and Massachusetts Housing Investment Corporation (MHIC) launched the Healthy Retail and Commerce Fund. The fund provides startup and operating capital to health-promoting enterprises serving low-income communities and communities of color. Providing loans with flexible terms and longer repayment plans breaks down barriers that these small-business owners have faced for far too long.

Boosting Local Businesses

A new social investment fund offers much-needed capital to small businesses and nonprofits in Black and Brown communities.



HELPING BUILD HEALTHY NEIGHBORHOODS

The Southside Land Trust is one of three organizations that the new Healthy Retail and Commerce Fund is currently supporting.

PHOTO: SOUTHSIDE LAND TRUST



The Kresge Foundation provided seed capital for the fund, which was matched by Boston Medical Center. In its efforts to find ways to address root causes of poor health, Boston Medical Center has already been funding affordable housing projects. The Healthy Retail and Commerce Fund provides another way to leverage this kind of mission-oriented capital.

The first set of enterprises is now beginning to receive capital from the Healthy Retail and Commerce Fund:

- **A new grocery store and café** will increase healthy food access when it opens at Bartlett Station in Roxbury's Nubian Square (a development supported by CLF's and MHIC's inaugural social investment fund, the Healthy Neighborhoods Equity Fund). Nubian Square residents have established local priorities for the food system, including job creation and access to affordable, healthy food for lower-income people. "For the team opening the market, ensuring that the space plays an integral role in meeting those community priorities has been at the core of their vision," says Church.
- **Community Servings** has served Jamaica Plain and surrounding communities for 30 years. Its mission: to provide home-delivered, medically tailored, nutritious meals to chronically ill patients and their families. Its programs also include food-service training for those facing barriers to employment. Now, with additional capital, it has expanded its operations to triple its production capacity to 1.5 million prepared meals annually serving 5,550 chronically ill clients – plus more than 9,000 clients through all of its programs.
- **Southside Community Land Trust** in South Providence makes it possible for low-income people, including many refugees, to grow food for their families and for sale to their neighbors.

CHANGE LEADERSHIP

CALLING BIG OIL TO ACCOUNT

Decades of climate neglect and denial have put New England communities at risk.

CLIMATE IMPACTS ARE HERE NOW, yet the very companies most responsible for our changing climate are doing little to prepare their coastal facilities for its impact.

Big Oil operates large oil and gas storage terminals across New England. Perched on the edges of rivers, bays, and sounds so tankers have easy access, these facilities often lie at sea level. That puts them directly in harms' way when the next Hurricane Sandy or Tropical Storm Irene barrels through New England.

What's more, climate change is causing regular extreme weather that risks toxin-laden waters pouring into nearby neighborhoods – most of which are home to people of color, limited-English speakers, and people with low incomes.

Despite knowing about these dangers – ExxonMobil and Shell predicted them decades ago through their own science divisions – none of these billion-dollar companies has taken measures to fortify their oil storage terminals. Instead, they have left the communities where they operate at risk.

These risks threaten us all, but it's no coincidence that many of these facilities are located in or near historically redlined communities. Redlining dates back to the 1930s, when banks denied mortgages to people based primarily on their race. While the practice was prohibited decades ago, its legacy can still be felt. Today, redlined communities are more likely to be heavily industrialized – and overburdened with air

HIGHLIGHTS

Capital from the Healthy Retail and Commerce Fund will help the organization open its Healthy Food Hub, a new facility that includes a Farm-to-Market Center, Youth Enterprise Center, commercial kitchen, and program space. The Hub will create 30 jobs and space for three healthy food businesses owned by people of color. It will also expand the organization's reach to low-income families in Providence, Pawtucket, and Central Falls who are in need of better access to fresh, healthy, and affordable food.

All three of these enterprises provide good jobs and wealth-building opportunities while also lifting up the health of the customers they serve and their neighborhoods as a whole.

As people begin rebuilding after the disruptions of the pandemic, "healthy retail and commerce has the potential to profoundly impact communities right now and over the long haul," says Church. Businesses that provide healthy food and health-promoting services should be a critical element of build-it-back-better pandemic and economic recovery solutions.

► Learn more about CLF's work to invest in healthy and resilient neighborhoods at clf.org/health

FOOD CREATES COMMUNITY CONNECTION

TOP LEFT Community Servings in Jamaica Plain believes that food is medicine.

BOTTOM LEFT A new market on the ground floor of the Bartlett Station development in Boston's Nubian Square will help meet community goals for fresh, healthy food businesses in the square.

pollution as a result. And, with less wealth comes less political power to create change.

In 2016, CLF launched its Climate Accountability project to hold Big Oil companies responsible for the harms and risks they are inflicting on New England communities. Starting with ExxonMobil's facility in Everett, Massachusetts, and followed by Shell Oil's facility in Providence, Rhode Island, CLF filed first-of-its-kind lawsuits against these corporate giants to force them to step up.

Those cases are advancing steadily through the court system despite Exxon's and Shell's attempts to stop them [SEE HIGHLIGHTS ABOVE FOR THE LATEST ON THEM]. CLF also is pursuing new cases in New Haven, Connecticut, and Quincy, Massachusetts.

Hurricanes Harvey and Katrina served as stark wake-up calls to the threats facing our communities from oil, gas, and chemical storage facilities. Harvey caused as many as 100 toxic chemical and oil spills, polluting air and water and imposing health risks on residents. We are already experiencing the effects of increased severe weather here in New England. Our actions to hold these oil giants accountable can help prevent a similar catastrophe from happening here.

RIGHT ExxonMobil's Everett facility sits on the Mystic River, putting its residential neighbors at risk from toxic flooding. PHOTO: ALEX MACLEAN

CLF scored major victories in its fight to hold ExxonMobil and Shell Oil accountable for their years of climate deceit and neglect [SEE STORY BELOW]. A judge rejected Shell's motion to dismiss CLF's case, meaning the lawsuit against the oil giant and its Providence, Rhode Island, terminal can move forward. CLF's case against ExxonMobil and its terminal in Everett, Massachusetts, will also go to trial, after the 1st Circuit Court of Appeals lifted a stay on the lawsuit.

CLF received the largest grant in its history – a three-year, \$5.4 million grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation – for continued work on its Healthy Neighborhoods Study and Healthy Neighborhoods Equity Fund. With this funding, CLF will continue to grow, expand, and promote its research, investment, and metrics work in collaboration with residents, researchers, investors, and practitioners, with the goal of advancing the development of healthy and equitable neighborhoods across the United States.

The Zero Waste team is pushing to hold plastic producers responsible for the flood of single-use packaging harming our communities and environment. This year, it helped to pass one of the nation's first producer responsibility bills in Maine. The bill requires manufacturers and packagers to reimburse cities and towns for the cost of managing their recycling. The idea is to motivate producers to reduce their packaging and increase its recyclability. (As of this writing, the bill awaits Gov. Mills' signature.) CLF is pushing Massachusetts to pass a similar bill.



FINANCIAL REPORT



When we started our 2020 fiscal year in August 2019, we couldn't have imagined that, just over halfway through it, we would be facing an unprecedented global pandemic. COVID-19 brought both uncertainty and focus to our work. It forced us to rethink how we support our staff, shift our attention to those communities hardest hit by the pandemic, adjust our approach to our long-term advocacy campaigns, and re-imagine how we engage with our dedicated donors and constituents.

It is the generosity of those dedicated donors – individuals, foundations, and corporations – that has allowed us to successfully weather the pandemic through the end of our 2020 fiscal year and beyond. Our revenue increased, with foundation support growing by 20% compared to fiscal year 2019. Individual giving also remained strong at \$4.3 million, despite the unease introduced by the coronavirus. And, once more, we ended the year with a balanced financial result.

Finishing the fiscal year with net assets of \$22 million provided a strong foundation to carry us forward, allowing us to manage not only for our immediate needs but also for the future.

Eileen Marks, our acting chief financial officer during fiscal year 2020, deserves significant credit for carefully stewarding your

financial support of CLF. I am happy to report that she has since accepted this role on a permanent basis.

Your continued support comes at a critical time. We have fewer than 10 years to make dramatic progress in both cutting our region's climate-damaging emissions and ensuring an equitable transition to a clean energy economy New England-wide. CLF brings a unique set of assets to achieve these ambitious goals – a regional reach, local knowledge, and a half-century of experience shifting the needle where others have not.

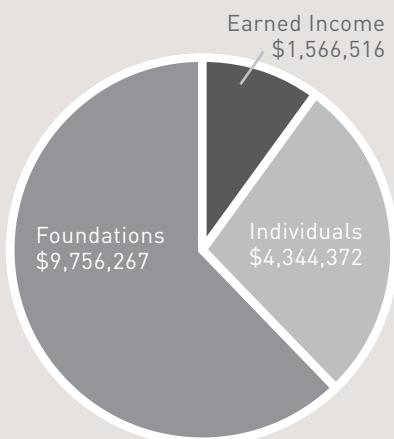
But just as important an asset is the dedication and support of all of you, our donors and constituents. Through your gifts, large and small; your collective voice pushing policymakers; and your commitment to standing with us no matter how long it takes to win, you give us the strength to shape a healthier, more equitable, and more resilient New England for all. Thank you for all that you do.

Gratefully,

Andrew J. Falender
Treasurer, Board of Trustees

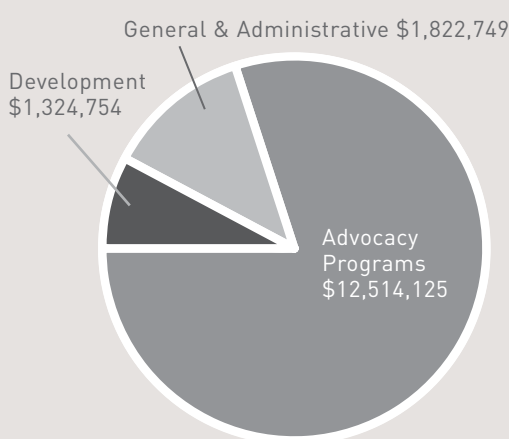
SOURCES OF OPERATING FUNDS

Total Funds: \$15,667,155



USES OF FUNDS

Total Expenses: \$15,661,628



NET RESULTS

\$5,527

NET ASSETS [as of July 31, 2020]

Unrestricted Net Assets:

\$6,126,919

Donor-Restricted Net Assets:

\$15,766,943

TOTAL NET ASSETS \$21,893,862

Complete audited financial statements presented in GAAP format are available at www.clf.org.

SUPPORTERS AND FRIENDS OF CLF



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The following individuals, foundations, and organizations supported CLF during the 2020 fiscal year (August 1, 2019, through July 31, 2020). Their generosity and shared vision – of a healthy, thriving New England for all – have made CLF's work possible. We thank our invaluable members, whose continuing support helps protect New England's environment for all. **THANK YOU.**

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Beth Arndtsen	Gay E. Ferguson	Conrad Liebenow	Alison Rieser
Jonathan Arone	Thomas H. Friedman and Rosemarie Mullin	Beverly Loomis	Alice Rocke
Susan P. Bachelder	Joel and Carole Furr	Paul Losordo	Dennis and Alison Rossiter
Daniel Baker	John Gioia	James D. Lowenthal and Mary B. Brooker	Elizabeth Schaeffer
Cynthia Baker Burns and Scott Burns	Susan Goldhor and Aron Bernstein	Elizabeth and Jon Lurie	Adam Schaffer
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