



2024

ANNUAL REPORT

Protecting the Eno, Shaping its Future



Established in 1966, the Eno River Association is an accredited land trust and conservation nonprofit driven by a mission to conserve and protect the natural, historical, and cultural resources of the Eno River Basin.

2024 Association Staff:

Jessica Sheffield

Executive Director
(until September 2024)

Darlene Fiscus

Director of External Engagement
(until September 2024)

Hillary Harrison

Director of Education

Kim Livingston

Director of Conservation & Stewardship

Hsi Chen

Development & Communications Manager

Nick Ferguson

Finance & Operations Manager

Reema Garabadu

Land Conservation Manager

Audrey Gentry

Education Manager

Bryan Iler

Event Manager

Heather McEntire

Store Manager

Indigo Roper-Edwards

Land Stewardship Manager

Natalie Wallace

Community Engagement Manager
(until July 2024)

Eli Haines-Eitzen

AmeriCorps Education Coordinator

2024 Board of Directors:

Peter Raabe | President (until Sep. 2024)

Ellen Reckhow | Vice President

Emily Friedman | Treasurer

Christy Gudaitis | Secretary (until Aug. 2024)

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Janet Steele

Lindsay White

Mars Wood

Sarah Woodard



REFLECTING ON OUR PROGRESS AND LOOKING AHEAD

Dear Friends,

I want to take a moment to reflect on what we've accomplished together in 2024 and share our vision for the year ahead. It has been a time of growth, transition, and deepened commitment to protecting and celebrating the Eno River and its surrounding lands.

One of the most significant milestones of the year was the **completion of our Strategic Conservation Plan**. This guiding document will ensure that our work remains focused, impactful, and responsive to the evolving needs of the Eno River watershed. This accomplishment reflects months of thoughtful collaboration among staff, board members, volunteers, community members, and partners, all of whom share a deep passion for our mission.

We've also seen incredible progress in our **educational and stewardship programs**. This year, we expanded our outreach to engage more schools, families, and community members in learning about the Eno's ecology and history. Our stewardship teams worked tirelessly to protect and restore critical habitats, ensuring the long-term health of the river and its surrounding lands.

In addition, **we are deepening our commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, justice, and accessibility (DEIJA)** through our partnership with Equity Paradigm. Recognizing that the Eno belongs to all, we are working to make our programs, partnerships, and organization more inclusive and welcoming. This work is ongoing, and we are committed to taking the necessary steps to ensure that everyone has access to the Eno and a voice in its future.

As we look ahead, we do so with excitement and optimism. A key transition is on the horizon, as we prepare for a **change in leadership**. It has been my honor to serve as the Interim Executive Director, and I look forward to supporting a smooth transition as we welcome new leadership to carry our mission forward. With a solid foundation, a clear vision, and a dedicated community, I am confident that the Eno River Association will continue to thrive.

Thank you for being an essential part of our work. Whether you volunteer, donate, advocate, or simply spend time enjoying the Eno, you are helping to protect this special place for generations to come. Together, we will build on the successes of 2024 and ensure a bright future for the river we all love.

Warmly,

Kim Livingston, Interim Executive Director

2024 WAS A **BIG** YEAR FOR US



941,000+
VISITORS TO ENO RIVER STATE PARK

6,200+
PEOPLE REACHED THROUGH
OUR EDUCATION PROGRAMS



1,000+
MEMBERS JOINED

11,700+
VISITORS TO CONFLUENCE
NATURAL AREA

6,900+
VOLUNTEER HOURS COMMITTED,
ACROSS ALL PROGRAMS

7,100+
VISITORS TO PANTHER BRANCH
NATURAL AREA



7,800+
TOTAL ACRES PROTECTED BY
THE ENO RIVER ASSOCIATION

*Thank you to the photographers whose images appear throughout this report:
Dave Burbank, Audrey Gentry, Fred Myers, Tonya Peele, Susan Reeves, Paul Travis, Tony Warren, and Jay Williams*

MAKING NEW FRIENDS FOR THE ENO

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION: Campers Brave the Elements

Since its inception in 2018, Eno River Field Station has allowed Triangle-area teenagers to get their feet wet and hands dirty alongside experts in fields ranging from geology to herpetology. Over two weeks last July, campers surveyed reptile and amphibian diversity, banded hummingbirds, and took a field trip to Triangle Land Conservancy's Bailey and Sarah Williamson Preserve, to name a few highlights. The arrival of stormy weather intervened with scheduled programming but created ideal conditions for mushroom surveys. For the first time, we were joined by mycologists from North Carolina State University, who led the campers through the rain to identify dozens of species of fungi, including indigo milk caps (*Latarius indigo*) and white coral fungus (*Claviluna coralloides*). We eagerly anticipate the surprises that await at Field Station 2025.



113

PROGRAM
EVENTS

41

SCHOOL
PROGRAMS

42

PUBLIC
PROGRAMS
AND HIKES

3,992

YOUTH
PROGRAM
PARTICIPANTS

6,249

IN-PERSON
PARTICIPANTS

31

EDUCATION
PARTNERS



45th Festival for the Eno

Over 18,000 attendees enjoyed the Eno River Association's 45th Festival for the Eno, welcomed by our 2024 mascot, the North American river otter (*Lontra canadensis*). Save the date for our 46th Festival for the Eno, July 4th & 5th, 2025 at Durham's West Point on the Eno Park. We look forward to celebrating with our community again this year!

18,000+

ATTENDEES

70+

PERFORMANCES

100+

CRAFT ARTISTS

650+

VOLUNTEERS

2,900+

VOLUNTEER
HOURS

700+

ORDERS OF
ENO RIVER
MERCH

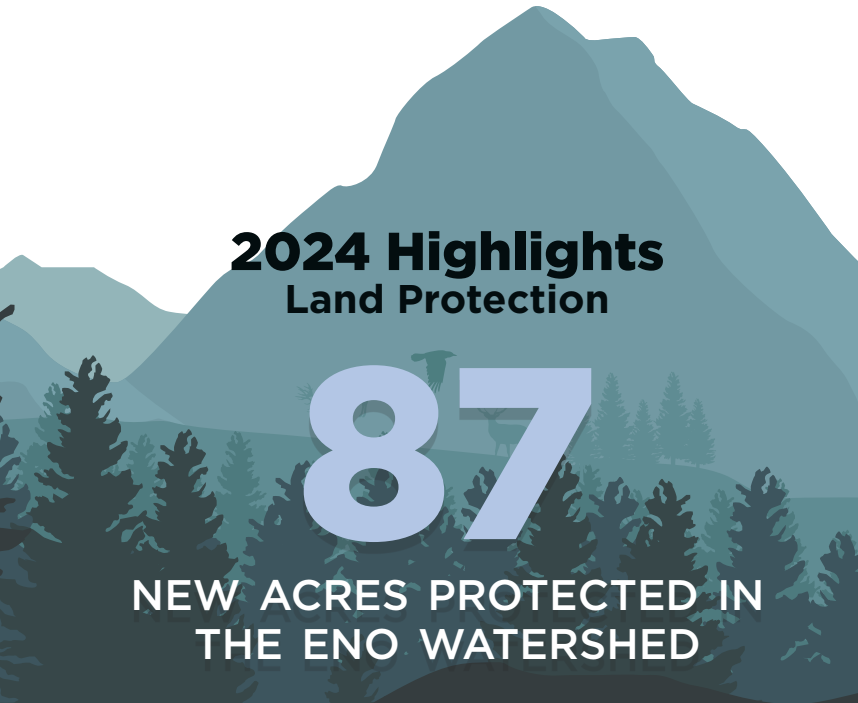
PROTECTING THE RIVER YOU LOVE

Land Protection: It Takes a Village

Over the course of 2024, we successfully closed on three land projects. Our most recent expands Blue Indigo Preserve, which will allow us to extend the trail system, offering two miles of hiking and beautiful river access to neighbors. In addition to serving our human community, expansion of this urban preserve supports the protection of several unique and threatened species native to this land, including the wild blue indigo (*Baptisia australis*) and the smooth purple coneflower (*Echinacea laevigata*).

We look forward to tying a bow on the many projects we have been working on this past year. Following our Strategic Conservation Plan, we will focus efforts on the priorities determined by both the community and our team. Through extensive partner and community meetings we identified more than 15,000 acres of land within our watershed worth protecting.

As a land trust, we understand the importance of following through on project closings with thoughtful management and stewardship practices. At the core of these are the intentional partnerships we build with our community of partners and landowners. We are deeply grateful to the partners and landowners collaborating with our team to protect land, as well as the many volunteers who help us steward the land. We could not have done this alone.



2024 Highlights Land Protection

87

NEW ACRES PROTECTED IN
THE ENO WATERSHED

7,800+

TOTAL ACRES PROTECTED BY
THE ENO RIVER ASSOCIATION



Stewardship’s Mission: Caring for the Land We Love

The focus of land stewardship at a nature preserve is dictated by recreation and conservation goals. In 2024, this included completing the new Poplar Bend Loop and Cut-Through trails at the Confluence, as well as removing thousands of pounds of trash from old dump sites on the expanded portion of the preserve. We completed this project with assistance from neighbors, as well as enormous creativity and diligence from the volunteer crews to break down and remove various kinds of man-made waste.

At Blue Indigo Preserve, stewardship focused on restoring the diabase savannah ecosystem found there, which is home to a variety of plant species not usually found in the Piedmont. Volunteers planted nearly 1,000 plants from the NC Botanical Garden and helped prepare the site for a prescribed burn.

Over 500 volunteers contributed nearly 4,000 hours of labor for a variety of land stewardship projects this year. With their help we were able to restore natural ecosystems and provide recreational opportunities for people along the Eno River. We look forward to completing more impactful work with our volunteers.

1,793 TRAIL AND SITE STEWARD VOLUNTEER HOURS

6,254 POUNDS OF TRASH REMOVED

1,265 NATIVE PLANTS PLANTED

655 STEWARDSHIP VOLUNTEERS

2,028 STEWARDSHIP VOLUNTEER HOURS

58 WORKDAYS

2.5 NEW MILES OF TRAILS CONSTRUCTED

STRATEGIC PLAN 2023-2027: YEAR 3 GOALS



As we enter the third year of our five-year strategic plan, we have an opportunity to reflect on our progress and assess whether our goals remain relevant and achievable. This year will begin with a thoughtful review and revision of the plan, incorporating what we've learned and how we have grown along the way. A key focus for year three will be deepening our learning around diversity, equity, and inclusion, integrating those insights into our daily work, and ensuring our policies and practices align with our ongoing commitment.

Growing Learning Opportunities Through Biannual Nature Fun Days

In 2024, our Education Team worked with local schools, community groups, summer campers, hikers, and festival-goers to continue highlighting one of our favorite things about the Eno: its treasure trove of opportunities for learning. Whether you're meandering through a mountain laurel tunnel, watching fish dart around your feet as you wade through the water, or inspecting a manmade pile of rocks in the forest, there are countless questions to ponder and truths to uncover when out on the Eno. It is our great honor to be a part of nurturing this curiosity by facilitating learning among community members of all ages, backgrounds, and walks of life.

We believe that concerted efforts to sustain and bolster connectedness to nature will become only more important in the coming years. Therefore, we are thrilled to announce that, starting in 2025, we are endeavoring to expand our public education opportunities with biannual Nature Fun Days at our Confluence Natural Area. Taking place each spring and fall, these free programs will feature activities like, catching critters in the creek, investigating insects in the meadow, and playing games in the pavilion. We will even ask participants to help us acquire data for a citizen science project to assess the health of the Eno River by cataloging macroinvertebrate levels from year to year. These kinds of surveys are important to better understand how people are impacting the river, both positively and negatively, and to inform decision-making processes in the future.

If you're interested in having hands-on, feet-wet fun while learning about the Eno alongside fellow community members, please join us this year. To learn more, visit the Events on the Eno Calendar, which can be accessed on our website, enoriver.org. We are excited to have even more opportunities to spend time with you in our happy place throughout 2025.



THRIVING, RESILIENT, INCLUSIVE



Building a Stronger Eno River Together

In 2025, the Eno River Association will build on the strong foundation of our land conservation and stewardship efforts to further protect and restore the lands and waters of the Eno River watershed. Guided by our newly completed Strategic Conservation Plan, we will prioritize the preservation of high-value conservation areas that safeguard water quality, protect wildlife habitats, and provide essential connections between conserved lands. By focusing on expanding protected corridors along the river and its tributaries, we aim to ensure a resilient and interconnected landscape for future generations.

Our stewardship goals for the year include scaling up efforts to restore native ecosystems and mitigate the impacts of invasive species, erosion, and climate change across key natural areas. Through volunteer-powered projects, partnerships with local organizations, and targeted restoration initiatives, we will enhance forest health, improve water quality, and support biodiversity across the watershed.

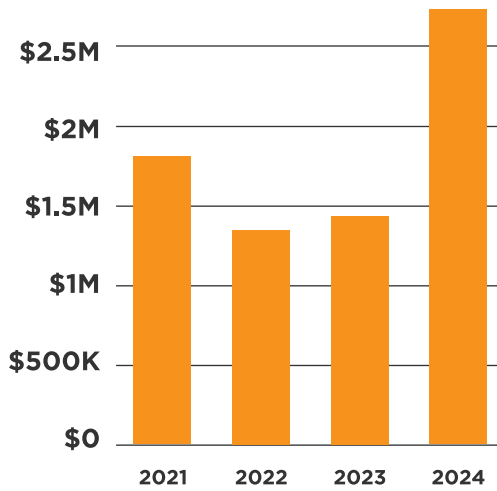
We are also committed to expanding opportunities for community engagement in this critical work. By growing our network of volunteers and creating new opportunities for public participation in land management—such as trail maintenance days, citizen science programs, and habitat restoration workshops—we will foster a deeper connection between people and the natural spaces we protect. As we look ahead, these stewardship efforts will not only ensure the long-term health of the Eno River but will also build a community of caretakers who share in the responsibility and joy of protecting this cherished landscape.



OUR NUMBERS: EBBS AND FLOWS

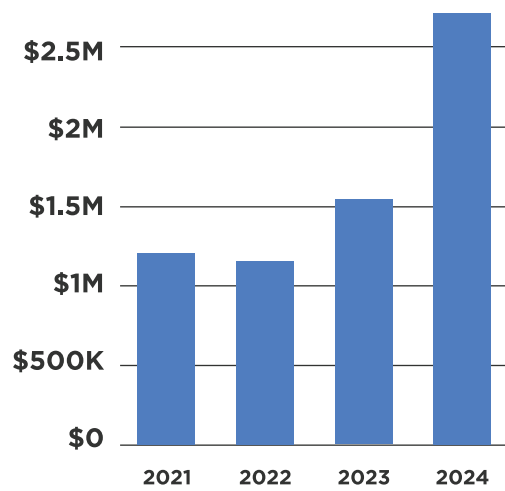


Revenue



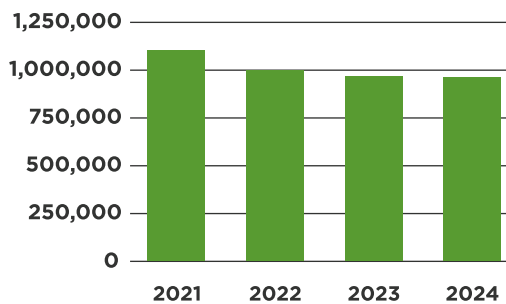
2024 revenues are unaudited.

Expenses

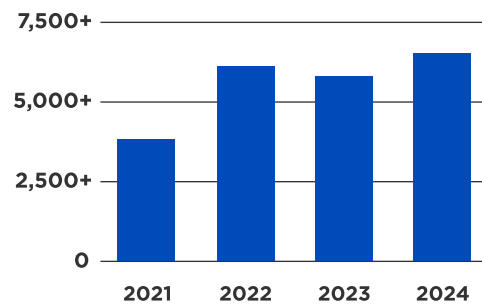


2024 expenses are unaudited.

Visitors



Volunteer Hours



THANK YOU TO OUR GENEROUS SUPPORTERS AND PARTNERS

Adele and Willard Gidwitz Family Foundation

AmeriCorps

Burroughs Wellcome Fund

Burt's Bees Foundation

Bydale Foundation

Central Pines Regional Council

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NC Department of Revenue

NC DOJ Environmental Enhancement Grant

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North Carolina Native Plant Society

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The Wilson Family: Chuck, Jean, and

Charlie Wilson

Triangle Community Foundation



Harris and Frances Block Foundation



NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE



THANK YOU TO THE INDIVIDUALS

\$585,000+

DONATED BY INDIVIDUALS

300+

MONTHLY SUSTAINERS

1,000+

MEMBERS IN TOTAL

Special thanks for Mike and Anita McLeod's generous bequest to land conservation and stewardship.

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\$10,000+

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Ann Louise Barrick and Joyce Elaine McNeill
Laura Drey

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\$5,000+

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\$1,000+

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MONTHLY SUSTAINERS

\$100+ (in annual giving)

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Dr. Suma and Jason Hallman
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Uli Hartmond and Sara Stratton
Tony Harvey

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 Karen Hogan
 Joyce Hopkins
 Elizabeth and Martin Hubbe
 Elizabeth Hull
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 Ralph and Karen Wilson
 Robert Wright and Kathleen Geidel Wright
 James Wudel
 Susan E. Zarutskie

FUNDS & ENDOWMENTS

The Confluence Fund
 Conservation Land Stewardship Endowment Fund
 Festival for the Eno
 Margaret C. Nygard Land Acquisition Fund
 Roberta & Herman Brown Land Preservation Trust

Listings reflect commitments made in 2024. We make every attempt to ensure accuracy when acknowledging donors. Please notify us of any errors at development@enoriver.org.

We are a proud member of



Eno River Association is proud to be an accredited land trust.



This Newsletter is printed on SFI certified and FSC certified paper, sourced in an environmentally friendly, socially responsible manner.

ENO RIVER ASSOCIATION PRESENTS

FESTIVAL

THE
46TH
ANNUAL

FOR THE

ENO

FRIDAY

JULY 4TH

SATURDAY

JULY 5TH

WEST POINT on the ENO PARK • DURHAM, NC

Over
60 ARTISTS
on
4 STAGES
FOOD & DRINK
CRAFT SHOW

THE FESTIVAL FOR THE ENO IS PRODUCED BY
THE ENO RIVER ASSOCIATION with SUPPORT FROM



PROCEEDS PROTECT
CLEAN WATER AND
OPEN SPACES ALONG
THE ENO RIVER.

VISIT ENOFEST.ORG FOR TICKETS AND MORE INFORMATION

