




Preservation

BLUE HERON HEADWATERS CONSERVANCY
2022 ANNUAL REPORT



The background of the entire page is a close-up photograph of milkweed seed pods. One large, dried, brownish seed pod is at the top, and several other pods are below it, some of which are still attached to their stems and have their white, feathery seeds blowing away. The lighting is soft, highlighting the textures of the pods and the delicate nature of the seeds.

Blue Heron Headwaters Conservancy
7150 Dixie Highway, Suite 2
Clarkston, MI 48346

Blueheronheadwaters.org
248-795-2808

STAFF

Executive Director: Susan Julian
Communications & Outreach: Chris Hardman
Web Site & Office Manager: Dana Campbell
Database Coordinator: Mary Herzenstiel
Event Coordinator: Anastasia Alexandrova
Bookkeeper: Janet Porter

BOARD

President: Emily Duthinh
Vice President: Mike Metz
Secretary: Bette Moen
Treasurer: Mike Dougherty
Past President: Christopher Benedict
Performance Auditor: Marilyn Zigarac

DIRECTORS

Nicole Breadon
Jean Gramlich
Susan Julian
Lora Perkins
Todd Roeser
Jesse Torres
Carolynn Krause

Blue Heron Headwaters is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization whose mission is to protect the land, water, and wildlife in the headwaters region of the Clinton, Shiawassee, Huron, and Flint rivers through preservation, stewardship, and education.



2022 was a great year for our conservancy. We celebrated 50 years of preservation & planned for 50 more.

In 1972, our trailblazing members concentrated on land in Independence Township, and so we were called Independence Land Conservancy (still our legal name). As our vision grew, we became North Oakland Headwaters Land Conservancy with 60 protected parcels. In 2022, we expanded our service area to encompass all the major tributaries within the four major watersheds in the headwaters region of southeast Michigan: Clinton, Flint, Huron and Shiawassee. Because we now serve other counties, we changed our name to Blue Heron Headwaters Conservancy. The Great Blue Heron has always symbolized the interaction between land and water.

The Blue Heron became our new symbol as we reached out to municipalities from Waterford to Fenton, from Brighton to Grand Blanc and from Commerce to Holly Townships. The logo was created by College for Creative Studies student Kyle Hardman, who understood the importance of conveying our mission with an image that will last for the next 50 years of preservation efforts.

The National Land Trust Alliance supported our expansion with a grant. We are using that funding to develop relationships with planners and governmental officials. Also in 2022, we increased contacts with the public, quintupling the number of citizens we previously served.

As we move into the future, we stand on the past efforts of organizations such as the Michigan Natural Features Inventory, the Shiawassee and Huron Headwaters Resource Preservation Report and the Oakland County Planning and Economic Development Services department.

Blue Heron Headwaters Conservancy is well placed to make a difference for people and nature for at least the next 50 years.

Events

We worked hard to introduce ourselves to our new service area while maintaining a presence in our established communities. We were on the ground staffing table events, giving talks to local groups and marching in parades.

38 public events

13 communities visited

11 presentations



Board member Todd Roeser and daughter Kate join friends and family in the Clarkston July 4th parade

Education

We believe that education leads to conservation. To reach a wider audience, we offered more kids programs, spoke to more local groups and gave more tours of our properties.

5 public property tours
10 kids activities
14 educational talks



Board President Emily Duthink leads kids and moms on an educational hike in our Kinball Preserve

Volunteers

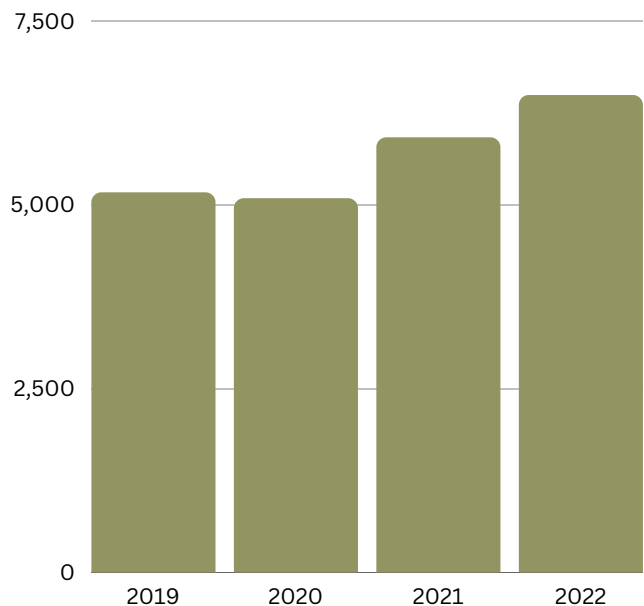
Volunteers are the heart of our organization. We see this every day of the week. They help us in the office, in the field and at public events. They are our best advocates and promoters in the community.

80 active volunteers
6,487 hours donated



Volunteer Krista Bentley helps with an office mailing

Volunteer hours continue to rise post Covid



Preservation

We are nearing the end of our Big Help for a Little Butterfly Campaign to purchase habitat that is ideal for the endangered Poweshiek Skipperling. We purchased 4.69 acres in Davisburg that is adjacent to our Butterfly Preserve.

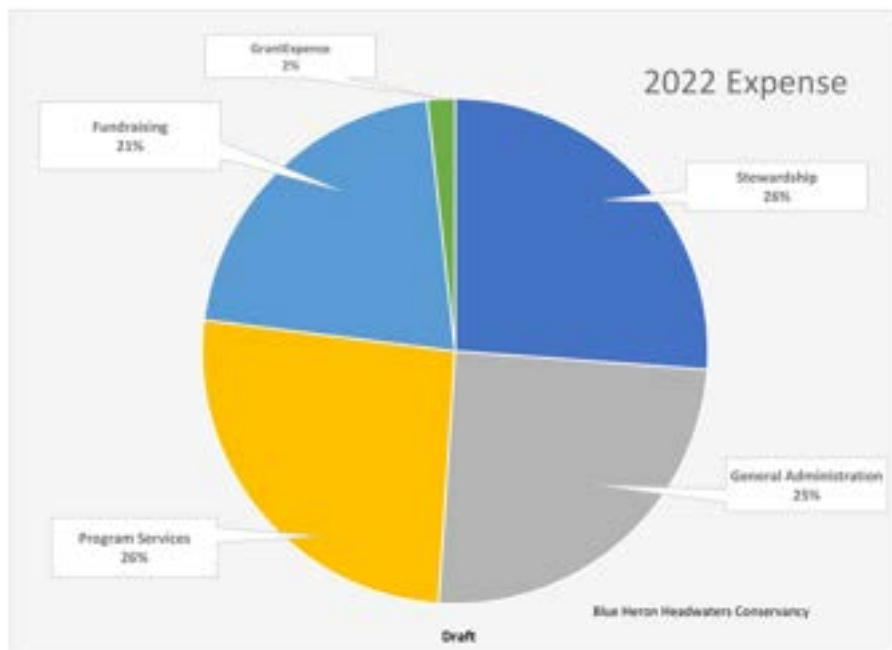
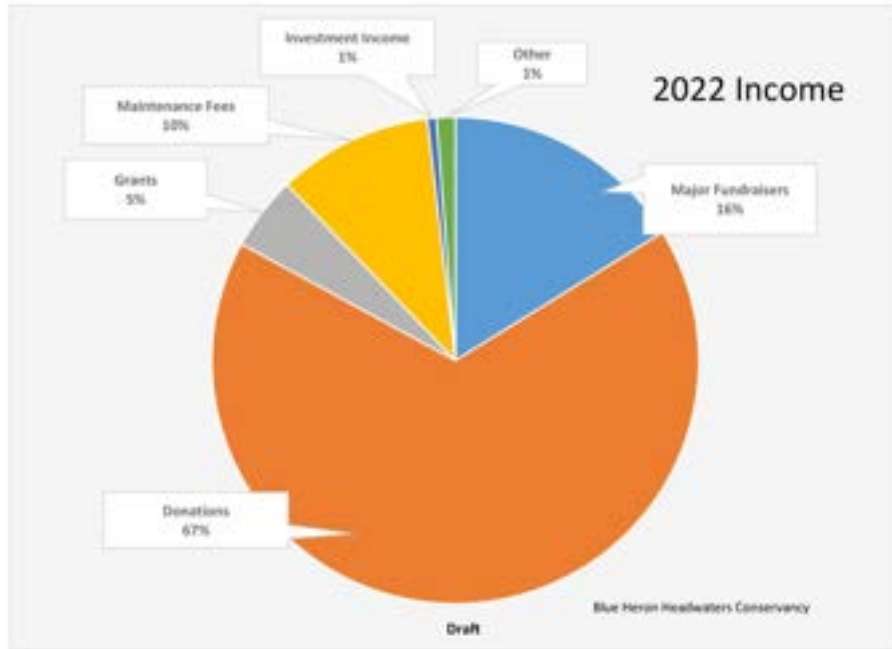
\$275,00 fundraising goal

\$246,657 raised

\$30,000 matching funds



Finances



Collaboration

Since 2009, we have worked with Headwaters Trails on their acre of land along the Shiawassee River at Fish Lake Rd. Their goal was to build a canoe/kayak launch without degrading the river and floodplain. We created a conservation easement that included recreational development and natural resource protection forever.

In 2022, they completed the launch, with our conservancy acting as fiduciary. We have begun bank stabilization and revegetation with native plants. In June 2023, the land and launch will become the property of Holly Township.

We also worked with the Road Commission of Oakland County, who replaced the culvert immediately downstream. RCOC included a pedestrian pathway across the river using federal funds. This spurred the township to draw up plans for restrooms, additional parking and a riverside trail on 38 acres of unused township land. This is now designated as a passive recreational park and will be protected with a conservation easement.

BHHC intends to conserve more riparian land, working collaboratively with the 23 communities of the Shiawassee River Water Trail Coalition.



Communication

Educating the public and spreading our conservation message is the goal of our communication efforts. We have engaged subscribers and followers who read our bi-weekly news, comment on and share our Facebook posts and enjoy our Instagram Nature News.

100% Educational Instagram posts

46% eNews open rate

2,533 Facebook followers



This Blanding's turtle Facebook post attracted 11,310 viewers

Strategic Plan

Last year we developed a strategic plan to support growth & expansion into a new service area.

The plan includes vision and mission statements, core values, goals & yearly objectives and a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities & threats (SWOT Analysis).

The strategic plan defines long term goals, yearly objectives that support those goals and action plans that detail how the objectives will be achieved. We focused on four key areas:

Organizational Continuity
Land Preservation
Stewardship
Community Outreach




A muskrat swims in the Clinton River at our Kimball Preserve



Volunteer extraordinaire: Lynn Simmons

In 2022 we gave the Tom Bullen Award for outstanding volunteer contributions to Lynn Simmons. Thanks, Lynn for all you do in the name of conservation.

Map of our new service area

 = Office

