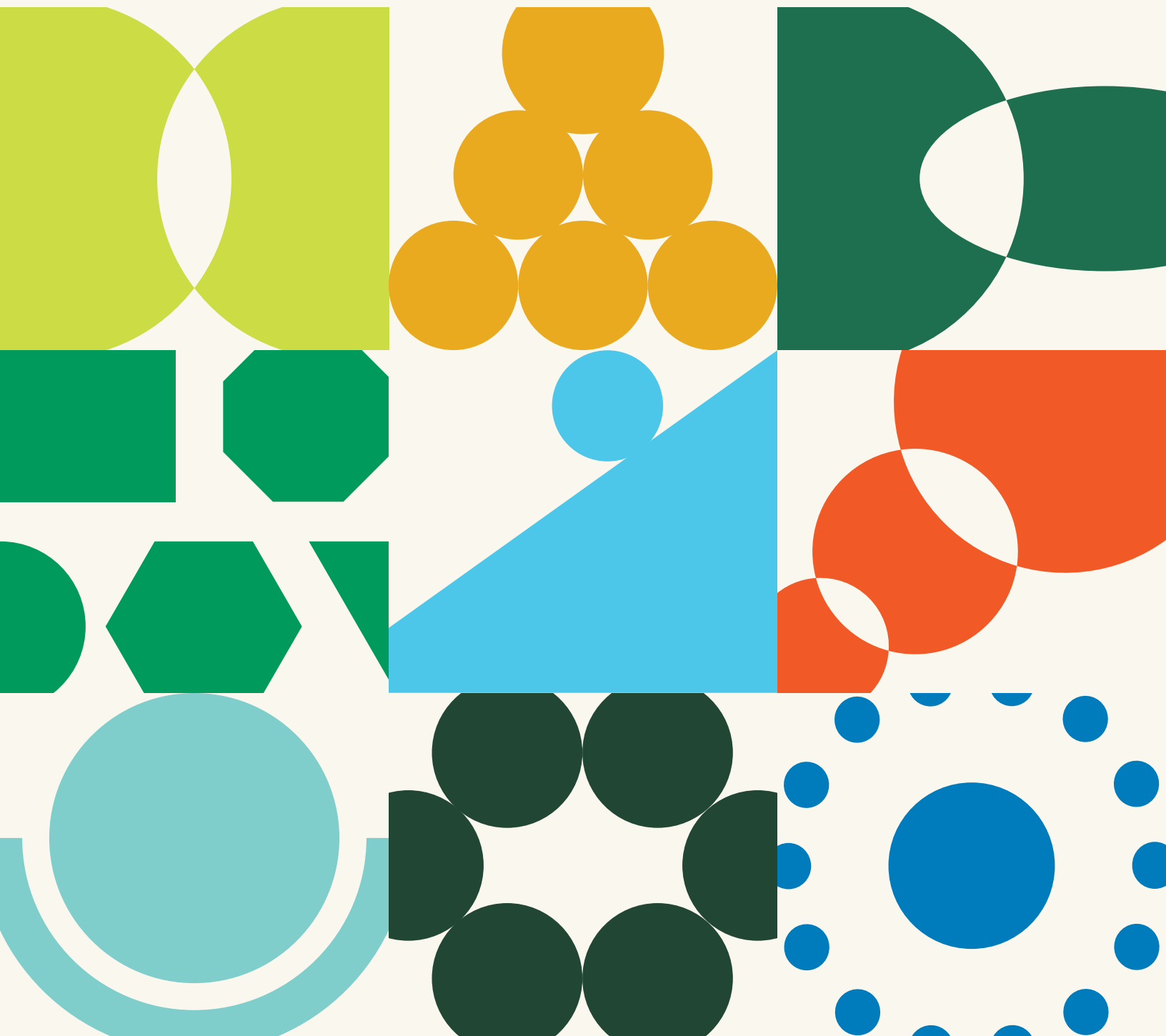


# Seizing Our Moment



2022 ANNUAL REPORT







COLLABORATION

# Seizing Our Moment

In January 2023, environmental advocates across the state cheered a renewed focus by elected leaders to protect and preserve Michigan. Legislative champions for our movement were appointed to all of our key committees. The governor, Senate majority leader, and the speaker of the House all announced initiatives that reflect our communities' long-sought priorities. Lansing is primed to move important and widely supported environmental and conservation policy.



**Conan Smith** is the President & CEO of the Michigan Environmental Council



**Jennifer McKay** is the chair of the Environmental Council's Board of Directors

Simultaneously, we at the Environmental Council were in the middle of a transformational strategic planning process in partnership with our member organizations, board members, and movement allies. Our goal was to develop a framework for the next several years that would position us as the nucleus of Michigan's environmental movement, driving a powerful policy agenda that restores Michigan's position as an environmental and conservation leader.

Building off a year of historic policy wins for our air, water, and land, including significant investments in projects promoting clean water, greener transportation, and energy-efficient homes, we see the new Legislature poised to enact even bigger, even bolder, change. And we see the Environmental Council poised to lead a unified environmental movement that can ensure that agenda is enacted.

But as we exhale from the excitement of January, we are faced with a sobering reality. The opportunities for big victories are tenuous. We are still a diffuse movement—holding tight to our specific priorities and interests, we don't yet function as one, connected ecosystem. And most daunting, we have a very tall order of things to do in this potentially short window of time when environmental values hold such sway.

**These challenges have not deterred us—the stakes are too high.**



In 2023, we have great opportunities to advance a forward-thinking agenda, increase access for environmental and conservation organizations (ECOs), and improve convening power for friendly lawmakers. So how do we do that?

### **Enact a policy strategy that is set up for success.**

First, we must change the rules of the game. For over a decade, Michigan has suffered the consequences of administrative rules and procedures that have systematically eroded environmental protections to the benefit of polluting industries. To heal these wounds, we need to reverse these policies, cut red tape, and restore transparency and citizen engagement in decision-making processes.

Second, we should put combating climate change and protecting our environment front and center in the state budget. Currently, Michigan is sitting on billions in surplus revenue. We need to spend this money on policies that combat climate change, address Michigan's housing crisis, increase and enhance public and non-motorized transportation infrastructure, and conserve our natural spaces.

Third, let's clear the decks and take up the many great policies with bipartisan support that are teed up for immediate action. This includes passing legislation to prevent and test for lead exposure in our children and adopting a building code focused on energy efficiency.

Fourth, let's get bold. We must pass historic, equitable policies that combat climate change. Utilities need to commit to cleaner energy. We need to drive cleaner cars and reform the way we fund our roads. We need to put our critical dunes and wetlands ahead of developers' interests.

### **Catalyze the ECOsystem**

In our strategic planning process, nothing was more evident than the potential strength our movement can wield when standing united. As we look forward to a bold vision for environmental policy with this new administration, stewarding our ECOsystem and reimagining the ways we support our members, connect them, and amplify their work is critical. Over the last year, our engagement team has built powerful relationships with more than 85 members. but we must make an organizational effort to grow in the coming year.

As we reflect on many wins in 2022, we have a unique opportunity over the next few years to build on them and put environmental protections front and center for policymakers and for Michiganders. Let's seize this moment for our people and the places we love.



Conan Smith  
President & CEO



Jennifer McKay  
Board Chair





TEAMWORK

# Meet the Team

Over the last year, the Environmental Council has invested significantly in building our human capacity. We have welcomed several highly talented individuals to our team, each who bring a unique skillset and a unified passion for protecting Michigan's environment and communities.

Together, we are even better positioned to shape the way policy develops in Lansing, through outreach and engagement, through communications, through fundraising, and through advocacy.

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POLICY

# The Year of Climate and Water

**Last year, the Environmental Council and our allies secured historic investments for Michigan's climate and water. These policy wins have laid the groundwork for years to come, especially as we usher in a new, friendly legislature.**

In March of 2022, Gov. Gretchen Whitmer signed into law \$2.5 billion in funding to better Michigan's water infrastructure, parks, and communities. Then in April, the Whitmer administration released the MI Healthy Climate Plan to chart the course for the state to achieve our greenhouse gas emissions reduction goals, including Gov. Whitmer's target of carbon neutrality by 2050.

Our policy team was integral in the development of this plan, leading critical member engagement and co-chairing the section on buildings and housing. We also partnered with allies at Natural Resource Defense Council (NRDC), RMI, 5 Lakes Energy, and Energy Innovation to conduct an analysis that builds off the MI Healthy Climate Plan and models what policies are necessary for us to meet our state emissions goals. Now we will turn our attention to achieving these policy goals.

To that end the Environmental Council will be advocating for policies that require our utilities to build out renewable energy on a pace and scale that reflects the urgency of combating the climate crisis and rapping up energy efficiency to cut emissions and help Michiganders save money. These policies include: a 60% renewable energy standard by 2030, a 100% carbon-free energy standard by 2040, and increased energy waste reduction standards.

Leaning into 2023, we'll also be advocating for the legislature to allocate funding to put the MI Healthy Climate Plan into action, making electric vehicles, renewable energy, and affordable, emissions-free housing more accessible for more Michiganders. And given significant proposed investments in the Governor's latest budget recommendations for groundwater resource management, water affordability, and drinking water quality, we will be focused on improving Michigan's water infrastructure holistically, from source to tap.

As we look forward to huge opportunities to enact lasting protections for Michiganders and our communities, it is not Democratic trifecta control that will propel our bold agenda—it is the tireless work of our talented policy team and their unique ability to get things done in Lansing.

## IMPACT REPORT

- **'Filter First' legislation** - The Environmental Council led a coalition of 40 organizations to develop "Filter First" legislation, which would ensure all Michigan schools and childcare centers install filtered drinking water devices and better educate families on the threats of lead poisoning. The bills are expected to move quickly in 2023.
- **Integrated Resource Plan intervention** - Thanks to our intervention in the integrated resource plan (IRP) process with the Michigan Public Service Commission (MPSC), Consumers Energy will close all coal plants by 2025, 15 years earlier than previously proposed. DTE Energy's proposed IRP includes significant investments in renewable energy and accelerated retirement of coal, but it doesn't go far enough. We will need continued intervention by the Environmental Council and allies in the coming year to increase DTE's commitment to renewable energy and ensure all coal plants are closed no later than 2032.
- **Affordable Healthy homes legislation** - The Environmental Council led a coordinated effort, with support from over 30 cross-industry groups, to drive the \$1.5B "Affordable, Healthy Homes" proposal, a historic opportunity to tackle Michigan's housing crisis, lower utility costs, decarbonize housing, and cover the cost of basic home repairs for low-income Michiganders. The proposal was introduced in December 2022, and we will continue to push for it in 2023.





ENGAGEMENT

# A Foundation For Success

Over the last year, we spent lots of time listening with intention to our members. We met with them one-on-one, included them in our strategic planning process, and sought out their priorities as we worked to develop our own.

We've long considered our responsibilities to members to be rooted in representation. We, as policy leaders in Lansing, represent our members' best interests and advocate for policies that help them grow the impact of their work.

But what we heard was that our members—this movement of environmental and conservation organizations—needs more from us. They need the Environmental Council to serve as the nucleus of a vast, diverse movement of environmental advocates. They need us to lead by continuing to listen, offering guidance on their work, elevating their stories of impact, and facilitating connection—both with us and with each other.



## IMPACT REPORT

- **Elevating member voices and stories** - Through a collaborative grant with Freshwater Future, we told the stories of three Environmental Council members (Friends of the Rouge, The Ecology Center, and the Environmentally Concerned Citizens of South Central Michigan) and their impact on Michigan's water resources. We also launched a monthly member newsletter, a private communication where we feature member groups, share key policy updates, and connect members with events and opportunities across the movement.
- **Thirty percent increase in MEC membership** - From 2021 to 2022, we grew our Environmental Council membership 30%, from 65 members to 85 members, largely due to the individualized outreach by the Environmental Council engagement team.
- **Thirty-four member meetings during priority setting** - As we worked to develop our 2023-24 policy priorities, we met with 34 members to help shape our legislative agenda for the next two years.

THIS PAGE:

TIP OF THE MITT WATERSHED COUNCIL VOLUNTEERS MONITOR CREEKS IN THE PETOSKEY AREA TO CHECK THEIR HEALTH.

RIGHT PAGE:

FRIENDS OF THE DETROIT RIVER VOLUNTEERS WELCOME GUESTS TO THE ANNUAL DETROIT RIVER WATER FESTIVAL.





In 2022, we invested significantly in our movement building work, bringing on a research fellow from the University of Michigan to help us better understand the social science behind successful movements and what we need to offer to our members here in Michigan. We also grew our engagement capacity with the addition of Abby Wallace as engagement coordinator and Galen Hardy as Detroit program director, greatly increasing our capacity to cultivate member relationships and grow our movement, both statewide and in the Motor City.

This work has laid a foundation for the goals we seek to achieve in 2023. In continuing this critical habit of “listening,” we will be better positioned to respond to the needs of our movement and supercharge our policy agenda through a coordinated member network.

## 2022 MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS

A Few Friends of the Environment of the World	Friends of the Jordan River Watershed	Michigan Organic Food & Farm Alliance
ACCES	Friends of the Rouge	Michigan Recycling Coalition
Adrian Dominican Sisters	Great Lakes Council of Fly Fishers International	Michigan Resource Stewards
Alliance for the Great Lakes	Great Lakes Mediation	Michigan State Conference NAACP
Alliance to Halt Fermi 3	Groundwork Center for Resilient Communities	Michigan Trails and Greenways Alliance
Anglers of the Au Sable	Healthy Pine River	Michigan Trout Unlimited
Bees in the D	Huron River Watershed Council	Michigan Waterfront Alliance
Citizens for a Clean and Safe Lake Superior	Izaak Walton League - Dwight Lydell Chapter	Mid-Michigan Environmental Action Council
Citizens for Alternatives to Chemical Contamination	Kalamazoo Climate Crisis Coalition	Midwest Energy Efficiency Alliance
Citizens' Climate Lobby	Kalamazoo Environmental Council	Mighty Earth
Clean Water Fund	Kalamazoo River Watershed Council	National Parks Conservation Association
ClearCorps Detroit	League of Michigan Bicyclists	Northern Michigan Environmental Action Council
Clinton River Watershed Council	League of Women Voters of Michigan	PFAS Alliance
Coalition to Save the Menominee River	Legacy Land Conservancy	Rouge River Watershed Partners
Detroit Audubon	Liaison for Inter-Neighborhood Cooperation	Scenic Michigan
Detroit Greenways Coalition	Lone Tree Council	Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary
Detroit Riverfront Conservancy	Make Food Not Waste	Southeast Michigan Land Conservancy
Detroiters Working for Environmental Justice	MI Assoc Railroad Passengers	Southwest Detroit Environmental Vision
East Michigan Environmental Action Council	Michigan Audubon	SWIM Climate Subgroup
Ecology Center	Michigan Botanical Club	Take Action Global
Environment Michigan	Michigan Citizens Against Toxic Substances	The Conservancy Initiative
Environmental Transformation Movement of Flint	Michigan Clinicians for Climate Action	The Stewardship Network
Environmentally Concerned Citizens of South Central MI	Michigan Electric Vehicle Alliance	Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council
Evergreen Action	Michigan Energy Options	Transportation Riders United (TRU)
Evergreen Collaborative	Michigan Interfaith Power & Light	Treeline Conservancy
FLOW	Michigan Lakes & Streams Association	Upper Peninsula Environmental Coalition
Friends of the Detroit River	Michigan Land Trustees	Voices for Carbon Neutrality
	Michigan League of Conservation Voters	Voices for Earth Justice
	Michigan Nurses Association	









## COMMUNICATIONS

# Cutting Through the Noise

Today, it's near impossible to escape the steady onslaught of information. Whether it's on your local TV station or Facebook, in your email inbox or through TikTok—you're never more than a moment away from the next "breaking" story or persistent advertisement. It can feel deafening and make it hard to distinguish what deserves your attention and what does not.

Strategic communications work cuts through that noise. That's why we focus on developing a strategy that elevates peoples' voices, showcases the urgency of our issues, and uplifts compelling message, including stories like these:

**2022 Petoskey Prize Winner: Diane Cheklich** - In the wildflower meadow of Callahan Park, you might see the royal gold and purple strut of a pheasant or the iridescence of an indigo bunting or hear a pee-a-wee of, fittingly, the eastern wood pewee. You also might see Diane Cheklich. Located in the heart of Detroit, this two-acre oasis is the home or resting place for 93 bird species and counting—and Cheklich was instrumental in transforming it into the bird haven it is today.

**2022 Milliken Prize Winners: Anne & Tom Woiwode** - In 2007, Midland and Rogers City were two of eight sites where coal-fired electrical plants were scheduled for construction. Fifteen years later, not a single facility has come to be. Southwest Michigan's Grand Mere State Park could have been sand mines, but instead, its dunes ecosystem is a beloved tourist attraction. Anne Woiwode, then Sierra Club Michigan's director, and Tom Woiwode, then leader of the Nature Conservancy of Michigan and EarthShare of Michigan, are each respectively to thank for these wonderful outcomes and so much more. Anne and Tom spent their careers in service of Michigan's communities and environment, building coalitions of passionate citizens, forging relationships with decision makers, and changing the ways that Michiganders think about the environment to stop pollution and preserve wilderness.

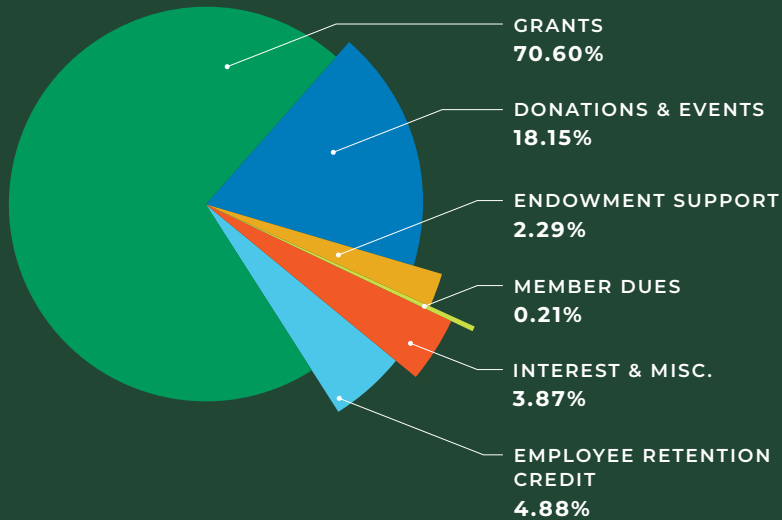
## IMPACT REPORT

- **More than 30,000 social media engagements** - In 2022, 31,055 people interacted with us across Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. These platforms have the potential to reach new and diverse audiences. And they are critical to amplifying our work.
- **One hundred and fifty-four media engagements** - Demonstrating our relevance as environmental experts on emerging news, Environmental Council staff and actions were highlighted in more than 150 stories produced by media outlets like The Detroit News, Michigan Radio, and Michigan Information and Research Service, among others.
- **Nearly 100,000 website visits** - In 2022, 91,204 visitors discovered [environmentalcouncil.org](https://environmentalcouncil.org) in search of breaking news, to learn about our policy priorities, to meet our staff, and to better understand the issues facing the environment.
- **Over 2,000 webinar watchers** - In 2022, we hosted 22 Capitol Connection webinars, where we connected our engaged advocates to our leading experts, lawmakers, members and researchers who are tackling environmental threats and policy every day. The inspiring conversations we facilitated and stories we told brought 2,291 registrants in.

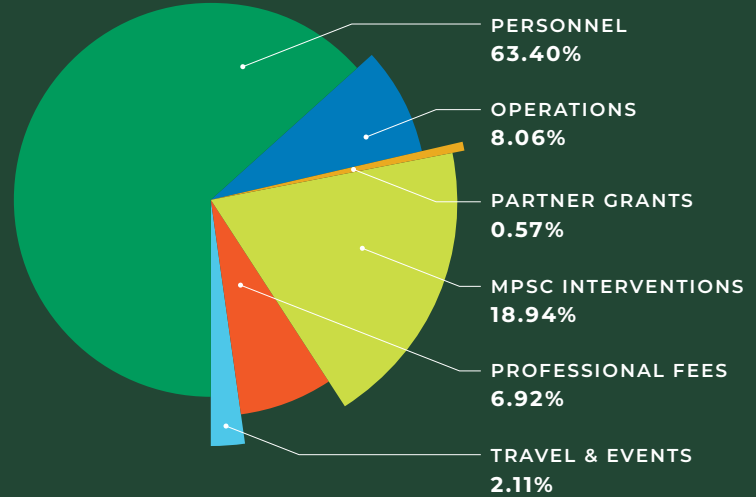


# Financials Summary

## 2022 REVENUE



## 2022 EXPENSES



## 2022 STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

### REVENUE

GRANTS	\$1,609,592
DONATIONS & EVENTS	\$413,712
ENDOWMENT SUPPORT	\$52,230
MEMBER DUES	\$4,700
INTEREST & MISC.	\$88,227
EMPLOYEE RETENTION CREDIT	\$111,259
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$2,279,720</b>

### EXPENSES

PERSONNEL	\$1,472,437
OPERATIONS	\$187,235
PARTNER GRANTS	\$13,295
MPSC INTERVENTIONS	\$439,770
PROFESSIONAL FEES	\$160,590
TRAVEL & EVENTS	\$49,008
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$2,322,335</b>

## 2022 STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

### ASSETS

UNRESTRICTED CASH	\$875,529
GRANT RESTRICTED NET ASSETS	\$827,261
ACCOUNTS RECEIVABLE	\$166,438
OTHER CURRENT ASSETS	\$5,000
BUILDING & EQUIP. NET-UNRESTRICTED	\$491,801
ENDOWMENT ASSETS AT FAIR MARKET	\$2,173,679
ACTION FUND ASSETS AT FAIR MARKET	\$95,996
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>\$4,635,704</b>

### LIABILITIES

ACCOUNTS PAYABLE	\$19,100
ACCRUED LIABILITIES	\$36,546
CUSTODIAL LIABILITIES	\$634,600
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>	<b>\$690,246</b>
GRANT RESTRICTED NET ASSETS	\$827,261
ENDOWMENT NET ASSETS	\$2,191,465
ACTION FUND NET ASSETS	\$123,458
TOTAL UNRESTRICTED NET ASSETS	\$845,889
NET SURPLUS	(\$42,615)
<b>TOTAL NET ASSETS</b>	<b>\$3,945,458</b>
<b>TOTAL NET ASSETS AND LIABILITIES</b>	<b>\$4,635,704</b>

## 2022 ENDOWMENT REPORT

### ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION FUND

BEGINNING BALANCE	\$144,857
NET CONTRIBUTIONS	\$0
EARNINGS & CAPITAL APPRECIATION	(\$21,399)
MANAGEMENT FEES	\$0

### PERE MARQUETTE FUND

BEGINNING BALANCE	\$2,721,465
NET CONTRIBUTIONS	(\$67,680)
EARNINGS & CAPITAL APPRECIATION	(\$451,046)
MANAGEMENT FEES	(\$11,274)



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We appreciate the generous donors that supported us in 2022.  
Your partnership makes our work possible!

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