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# SUMMARY

## River Network Strategic Plan 2005-08

### Our Mission

To help people understand, protect and restore rivers and their watersheds.

### Our Past

River Network was founded in 1988 to provide resources and support services to river protection groups. Since then we have helped hundreds of groups form, grow strong and become effective. We were early proponents of a “watershed approach” to protecting rivers and all other freshwater resources. We served as a catalyst for tremendous growth in the numbers of locally organized watershed protection groups in our first decade. In 1997 we launched a program to help groups make the Clean Water Act work properly at the state and local levels. In 1999 we merged with River Watch Network, which brought to our ranks extensive experience in water quality monitoring and watershed assessment. In 2000 we organized the first annual National River Rally for 100 participants. In 2002 we spun off our Riverlands Conservancy program into an independent, nonprofit organization, the Western Rivers Conservancy, which has protected critical lands along high-quality rivers in the west.

### Our Present

Today we serve more than 700 organizations of all sizes through our Partnership Program, which provides regular publications and other basic resource and support services to subscribing groups in all 50 states. We also provide targeted, in-depth training and assistance to more than 100 organizations per year through our Organizational Development, Clean Water Act and River Watch programs. The National River Rally is now the annual focal point for professional advancement, strategy development, networking and organizing for the watershed protection community. It now attracts more than 500 participants per year from across the U.S. and beyond.

### Our Beliefs and Our Vision

~ Clean water is a basic human right. *We envision a day when all fresh waters are safe for drinking and swimming, and when fish are naturally abundant and safe to eat.*

~ People deserve rivers that are rich with life. *We envision a day when healthy aquatic ecosystems support balanced, self-sustaining populations of native plants and animals, both in the water and on the land.*

~ Americans need effective groups working to protect and improve every watershed in our land. *We envision a sustained effort over generations of a national movement for watershed protection.*

<i>Our Long-term Goals</i>	<i>Our Priorities 2005-08</i>
<p><b>1</b> A strong statewide freshwater protection organization in every state, and an effective group of local advocates for every watershed</p>	<p><i>Strengthen hundreds of watershed protection groups by:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>~ Expanding our new collaborative support system through pilot projects in several new states and river basins; and</li> <li>~ Generating new resources and tools that will be useful to groups across the nation.</li> </ul>
<p><b>2</b> Annual assessment of at least eighty percent of the nation's waters within two decades (up from less than twenty percent today)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>~ Secure major increases in the number of watersheds regularly assessed in at least three states or regions; and</li> <li>~ Establish assessment models that can be replicated in most of the country within a decade.</li> </ul>
<p><b>3</b> Major improvements in state and local implementation of the Clean Water Act in every state</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>~ Secure significant improvements in specific Clean Water Act-related programs in at least five states; and</li> <li>~ Establish precedents and examples that will be important across the country.</li> </ul>
<p><b>4</b> Solutions to water-related human health problems in hundreds of communities across America</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>~ Develop practical methods people can use to understand the connection between public health and the condition of their waters; and</li> <li>~ Test and refine these methods in at least five communities.</li> </ul>
<p><b>5</b> Thousands of grassroots organizations representing millions of people working together consistently and effectively for freshwater protection</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>~ Enhance River Network's capacity to organize and support coalitions;</li> <li>~ Help at least two coalitions make major breakthroughs on regional or national issues; and</li> <li>~ Advance the first-ever grassroots-driven Citizens Agenda for Rivers.</li> </ul>

## *Our Strategies*

**1** Provide core program services through our Partnership, Organizational Development, River Watch and Clean Water Act programs, as well as the annual National River Rally.

**2** Work in partnership with other national organizations including American Rivers, the Center for Watershed Protection and the Waterkeeper Alliance.

**3** Begin in-depth issue-based work by launching a series of projects to secure demonstrable progress toward solutions to major watershed problems within a few years.

**4** Establish the River Legacy Fund to provide the financial stability River Network needs to be a reliable source of support, and to allow us to make more targeted grants to grassroots watershed protection groups each year.

**For more information:** Visit [www.rivernet.org](http://www.rivernet.org) or call 800-423-6747.

