

2025 / 2026 Annual Report

Catawba-Wataree Water Management Group

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MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIRMAN

The Catawba-Wateree River Basin is changing.

Communities are growing, major infrastructure projects are advancing, new industries are coming to the region, and recreational opportunities are expanding. With all of these changes, water demands continue to evolve, and the need for thoughtful, collaborative water planning has never been more important.

Against this backdrop, the completion of the Integrated Water Resources Plan (IWRP) marks the culmination of years of collaboration and one of the most comprehensive water resource planning efforts thus far in the Carolinas.

For more than five years, our member utilities, technical advisors, stakeholders, and partners have worked together to develop a shared vision for the future of our water resources. The result is a science-based, Basin-wide roadmap for managing both water supply reliability and water quality across an interconnected river system that supports more than two million people.

The IWRP is far more than a planning document. It represents thousands of hours of technical analysis, data collection, forecasting, stakeholder engagement, and collaboration. It reflects a willingness among our members to look beyond individual service areas and recognize that the long-term success of the Basin depends on working together.

Throughout the planning process, we examined future water demands, population growth, climate variability, watershed health, infrastructure needs, and opportunities to strengthen regional resilience. Just as importantly, we strengthened the partnerships that make coordinated water management possible.

The completion of the IWRP is not the end of our work, it is the beginning of the next chapter. The plan provides a framework for future investments, regional coordination, source water protection, drought preparedness, and adaptive management. It equips our members and partners with the information needed to make informed decisions in an increasingly dynamic environment.

While the IWRP remains the cornerstone of our work, it is only one example of the collaboration that defines the CWWMG. During the past year, we continued investing in public education through another successful Citizens' Water Academy, convened regional leaders at the Water for All Summit, advanced source water protection initiatives, and strengthened partnerships throughout North and South Carolina.



None of these accomplishments would have been possible without the dedication of our member utilities, Board of Directors, Advisory Committee, consultants, agency partners, and community stakeholders. Your willingness to share knowledge, challenge assumptions, and work toward common goals demonstrates the strength of regional collaboration.

As you read this report, I hope you see not only the accomplishments of the past year, but also the foundation that has been built for the future. Together, we have created a roadmap for the Basin's next generation of water management, and together, we will continue protecting this extraordinary, shared resource for the communities, economies, and ecosystems that depend on it.

Thank you for your continued partnership and commitment to the Catawba-Wateree River Basin.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jimmy Bagley". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jimmy Bagley, PE

Chair, Catawba-Wateree Water Management Group

OUR STORY

- Mission** To collectively identify, fund, and implement strategic initiatives that extend the capacity of the Catawba-Wateree River to effectively serve the community, while protecting and enhancing the ecological health of the Basin.
- Vision** The Catawba-Wateree Water Management Group envisions a future with a sustainable water source achieved through proactive planning, cutting edge research, water shortage preparedness and premier partnerships.

Founded in 2007, the Catawba-Wateree Water Management Group (CWWMG) was created on the principle that water challenges do not stop at jurisdictional boundaries. Today, CWWMG brings together public water utilities, Duke Energy, and regional partners across North and South Carolina to collaboratively manage an interconnected river system that serves more than two million people. Through regional planning, scientific research, technical studies, public education, and stakeholder engagement, CWWMG helps ensure the long-term sustainability of the Basin's water resources.

Over nearly two decades, the organization has advanced Basin-wide planning efforts, strengthened drought preparedness, improved regional coordination, supported water conservation and efficiency initiatives, and invested in source water protection. CWWMG continues to provide a forum where members work together to address growth, changing water demands, infrastructure needs, watershed health, and long-term resilience.



2025–2026 AT A GLANCE

During the past year, CWWMG reached a major milestone with the completion of the Integrated Water Resources Plan while continuing to advance programs that support water supply reliability, drought preparedness, source water protection, and public engagement throughout the Basin.

HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDE

- Completion of the **Integrated Water Resources Plan (IWRP)**, the third generation of Basin-wide water resources planning.
- Regional **drought coordination through the Drought Management Advisory Group (DMAG)**, supporting monitoring, communication, and preparedness efforts across the Basin.
- Funding of **source water protection and land conservation projects**, including conservation easements, stream restoration, and watershed protection initiatives.
- Successful completion of the **eighth Citizens' Water Academy**, developing future water leaders and informed stakeholders.
- Hosting the **2026 Water for All Summit**, which brought together more than 170 participants from utilities, agencies, industry, and nonprofit organizations across the region.
- Coordinated **treatment programs to manage Lyngbya (Microseira wollei)**, a type of invasive algae, in basin reservoirs. The north basin program includes **Lake Norman, Mountain Island Lake and Lake Wylie**, and the south basin program covers **Lake Wateree**.
- Continued collaboration among member utilities, state agencies, technical experts, and regional partners to support long-term water sustainability.

Together, these efforts reflect CWWMG's commitment to protecting the Catawba-Wateree River Basin through collaboration, science-based planning, and responsible stewardship of the region's shared water resources.

OUR MEMBERS

The CWWMG is comprised of 21 public water utilities from North and South Carolina, plus Duke Energy, representing communities throughout the Catawba-Wateree River Basin. While each utility serves its own customers and communities, together they share a common commitment to responsible water management and regional collaboration.

Through this partnership, members share knowledge, coordinate planning efforts, and develop innovative approaches to managing current and future water needs.

MEMBER UTILITIES

Catawba River Water Treatment
Plant (Lancaster County W&SD SC
& Union County NC)

City of Morganton (NC)

City of Mount Holly (NC)

York County (SC)

City of Rock Hill (SC)

Charlotte Water (NC)

City of Statesville (NC)

Chester Metropolitan District (SC)

City of Tega Cay (SC)

City of Belmont (NC)

Duke Energy Carolinas

City of Camden (SC)

Lincoln County (NC)

City of Concord (NC)

Lugoff-Elgin Water Authority (SC)

City of Gastonia |
Two Rivers Utilities (NC)

Town of Granite Falls (NC)

Town of Mooresville (NC)

City of Hickory (NC)

Town of Valdese (NC)

City of Lenoir (NC)



OUR BOARD

The Board of Directors provides strategic leadership and governance for the organization, guiding priorities and ensuring the continued success of the Group's mission.

Representing utilities across the Basin, board members bring decades of experience in utility operations, engineering, planning, finance, and public service.



Chair
Jimmy Bagley, PE
City of Rock Hill, SC



Vice-Chair
Jeff Lineberger, PE
Duke Energy Carolinas, LLC



Treasurer
Jeff Church, Ed. D
City of Lenoir Water



NC At-Large Director
David Cox
City of Hickory



SC At-Large Director
Brad Bucy, PE
Lancaster County Water
& Sewer District, SC

ADVISORY COMMITTEE

A panel of professionals with diverse interests related to the purpose of the CWWMG provide independent perspectives on our direction, governance, and strategy, ensuring every decision stays true to the Group's mission.



Vicki Taylor
Environment
(Chair)



Calvin Sawyer, PhD
Academic/Research



Connie Wade
Discretionary Seat



Eleanor Mixon
Local Government



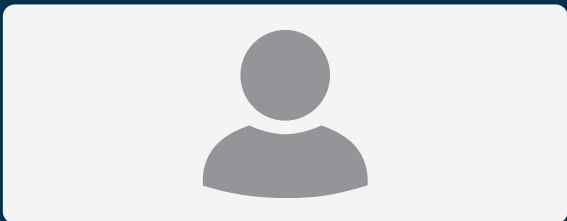
Robert Long, CEcD
Economic Development



Ryan Carter
Regulatory/State Government



Shirley Greene
Residential Landowner of Project or River Frontage



Vacant
Industrial/Business



Mitch Peele
Agricultural/Forestry



Greg Nance
Recreation

OUR BASIN

The Catawba-Wateree River Basin is one of the Southeast's most important natural resources, providing drinking water, supporting economic development, generating electricity, sustaining agriculture, and offering countless recreational opportunities.

As one of the fastest-growing regions in the country, careful planning is essential to supporting reliable water supply, while still protecting the ecological health of the river system.

Stretch & Shape		376 miles from the Blue Ridge to the Santee, with 11 interconnected reservoirs threading through a 5,680-sq-mi Basin only 30 miles wide.
Essential Supply		Drinking water for more than two million people and generating enough energy to power over four million homes.
Living Network		80,000 acres of open water, 1,800 miles of shoreline, and habitat for countless species, plus year-round boating, fishing, and hiking.
Power & Beyond		12 hydro stations, 4 nuclear/fossil stations, 23 public water systems, farms, industries, and recreation all draw from the same source.
Why Lakes Matter		Our reservoirs act like a regional "water savings account," shifting water availability through droughts and downpours, even as natural evaporation can exceed total human use.

Protecting this finite yet powerful system keeps our communities thriving today and tomorrow.



WATER DEMAND

UNDERSTANDING WATER DEMAND

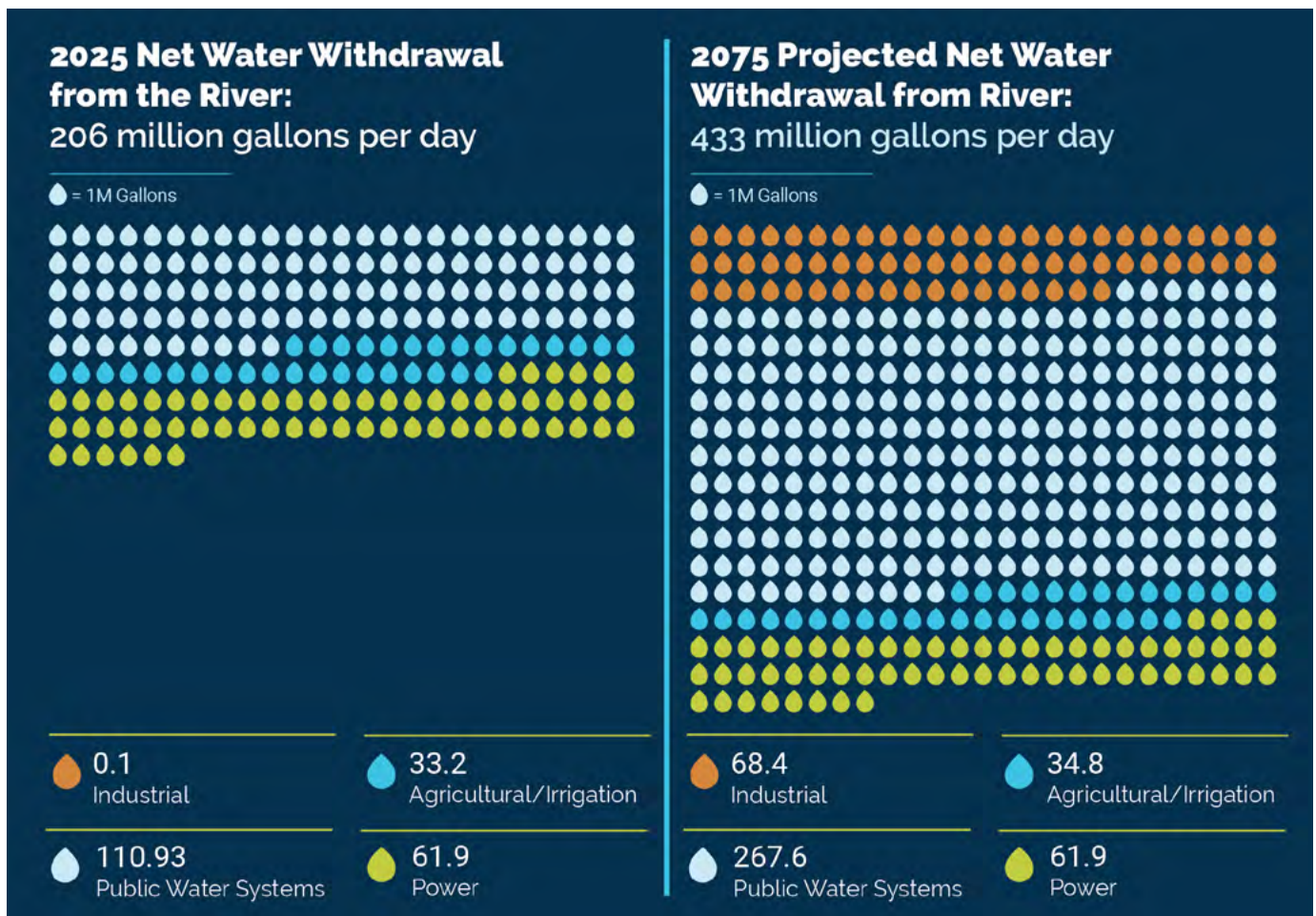
One of the most important responsibilities of the CWWMG is evaluating how water demand changes over time.

Regional planning relies on forecasting future demand while continually comparing those projections to actual water use. This ongoing evaluation allows utilities to make informed infrastructure investments, improve operational efficiency, and adjust planning strategies as conditions evolve.

Recent evaluations continue to demonstrate that actual water demand remains below earlier long-range projections, reflecting the success of conservation programs, infrastructure investments, improved water efficiency, and responsible resource management.

While current conditions remain favorable, continued population growth reinforces the importance of proactive planning and regional coordination.

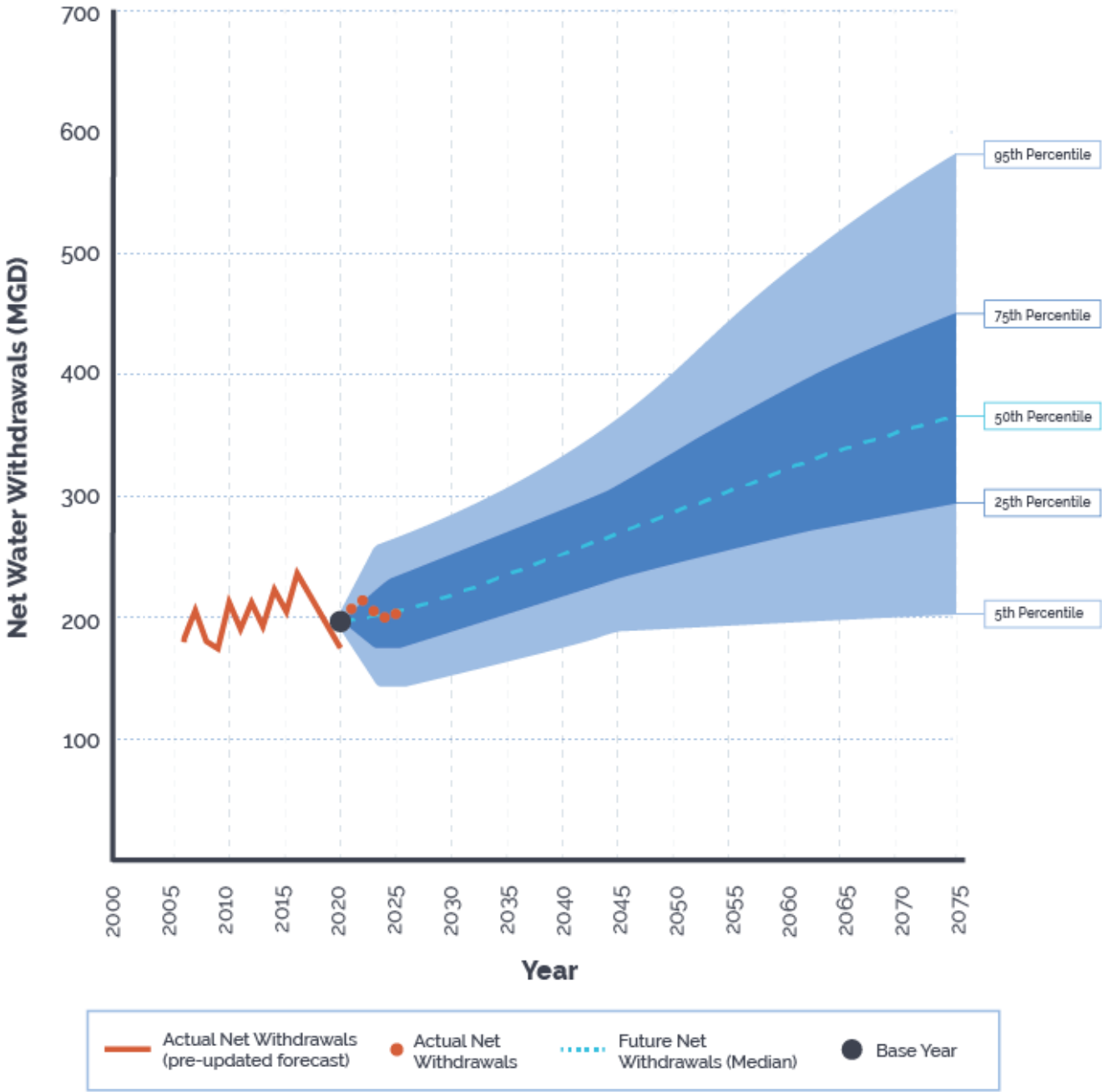
The population in the Catawba-Wataree River Basin is steadily growing and has increased by about 10% since the 2010 census. With this growth, the demand for water will continue to rise. By 2075, the overall water demand in the Catawba-Wataree River Basin is expected to increase by approximately 57%.



PROJECTED VS. ACTUAL NET WITHDRAWAL

As part of our new IWRP, we have updated water demand projections to provide reliable water withdrawal and return forecasts for the Catawba-Wateree River Basin. These new projections extend to the year 2075, expand the Basin boundary, and account for a range of potential variations such as droughts and heavy rain that can impact water usage.

The 50th percentile forecast represents the most likely future net withdrawals, with a 90% chance that the long-term flow withdrawal trend will be somewhere in between the two extremes. These ranges provide a valuable perspective on the potential impacts of reliably meeting future treatment capacity needs.





Wylie Hydroelectric Station (Wylie Dam), Fort Mill, South Carolina

OUR WORK

INTEGRATED WATER RESOURCES PLAN

The Integrated Water Resources Plan (IWRP) represents one of the most significant collaborative efforts undertaken by the CWWMG and serves as the third generation of Basin-wide planning for the Catawba-Wateree River Basin. Developed by 21 member utilities, Duke Energy, technical experts, and regional partners, the IWRP provides a science-based roadmap for managing both water supply reliability and water quality across an interconnected river system.

Built on nearly two decades of regional planning and collaboration, the IWRP was developed through extensive technical analysis, stakeholder engagement, data collection, and modeling. The planning process evaluated a wide range of factors that will influence the Basin's future, including:

- ◆ Current and future water demands
- ◆ Population and economic growth
- ◆ Climate variability and drought resilience
- ◆ Watershed health and source water protection
- ◆ Infrastructure needs and system reliability
- ◆ Water conservation and efficiency
- ◆ Regulatory and policy considerations
- ◆ Long-term regional resilience

Rather than focusing on the needs of individual utilities, the IWRP embraces a Basin-wide perspective that recognizes the interconnected nature of the Catawba-Wateree River system. The plan provides shared data, actionable recommendations, and a regional framework that aligns local actions with Basin-wide outcomes, ensuring communities across North and South Carolina can continue to rely on a safe, sustainable, and resilient water supply for generations to come.

Key Findings

The IWRP determined that the Basin's reservoir system contains sufficient overall water storage to meet projected demands beyond the year 2100. However, the plan identified two primary challenges that require ongoing attention: ensuring reliable access to water during drought conditions and protecting long-term water quality. The plan found that while water is available within the system, infrastructure limitations, water quality pressures, sedimentation, and increasing development can create challenges in delivering water where and when it is needed.

Collaboration in Action

The planning process brought together member utilities, state agencies, local governments, technical experts, consultants, and stakeholders from across the region. This collaborative approach ensures future decisions are informed by science, operational experience, shared data, and the unique needs of communities throughout the Basin. By working together, members developed a shared vision and a coordinated strategy to strengthen drought preparedness, improve system efficiency, protect source water, enhance monitoring and data sharing, and better align water resource planning with future growth and development.

The resulting plan provides a roadmap for future investments, regional coordination, and adaptive management, helping ensure the Catawba-Wateree River Basin remains reliable, resilient, and capable of supporting the communities, economies, and ecosystems that depend on it.



PROTECTING WATER BY PROTECTING LAND

The CWWMG Land Conservation Grant Program supports strategic land conservation and stream restoration projects that protect source water, improve water quality, enhance aquatic habitat, and preserve ecologically significant lands throughout the Catawba-Wateree River Basin. Through partnerships with local land trusts and conservation organizations, CWWMG investments help leverage substantial additional funding to permanently protect critical watersheds, riparian corridors, forests, and floodplains that contribute to the long-term sustainability of regional water resources. Since 2020, the program has helped conserve more than 1,700 acres and protect or restore miles of streams across North and South Carolina.

2025 GRANT INVESTMENTS

Waxhaw Creek–Davis Branch Conservation Easement

Grantee: Catawba Lands Conservancy

Project Size: 16 acres

Location: Union County, North Carolina

CWWMG Grant: \$15,000

This project will establish a donated conservation easement on a 16-acre forested property located at the confluence of Davis Branch and Waxhaw Creek. Situated within the Waxhaw Creek Significant Floodplain Natural Area, the property lies within a critical watershed that supports the federally endangered Carolina Heelsplitter mussel.

The easement will permanently protect the site from future development while creating a 100-foot riparian buffer along the stream corridors. In addition to preserving water quality and stream health, the project is located on a planned Carolina Thread Trail route, providing future opportunities for recreation and environmental education. By protecting this strategically located property, the project will help maintain floodplain functions, reduce stormwater impacts, and preserve important aquatic and terrestrial habitat within one of the Basin's most sensitive watersheds.

Canoe Creek Conservation and Stream Restoration

Grantee: Foothills Conservancy

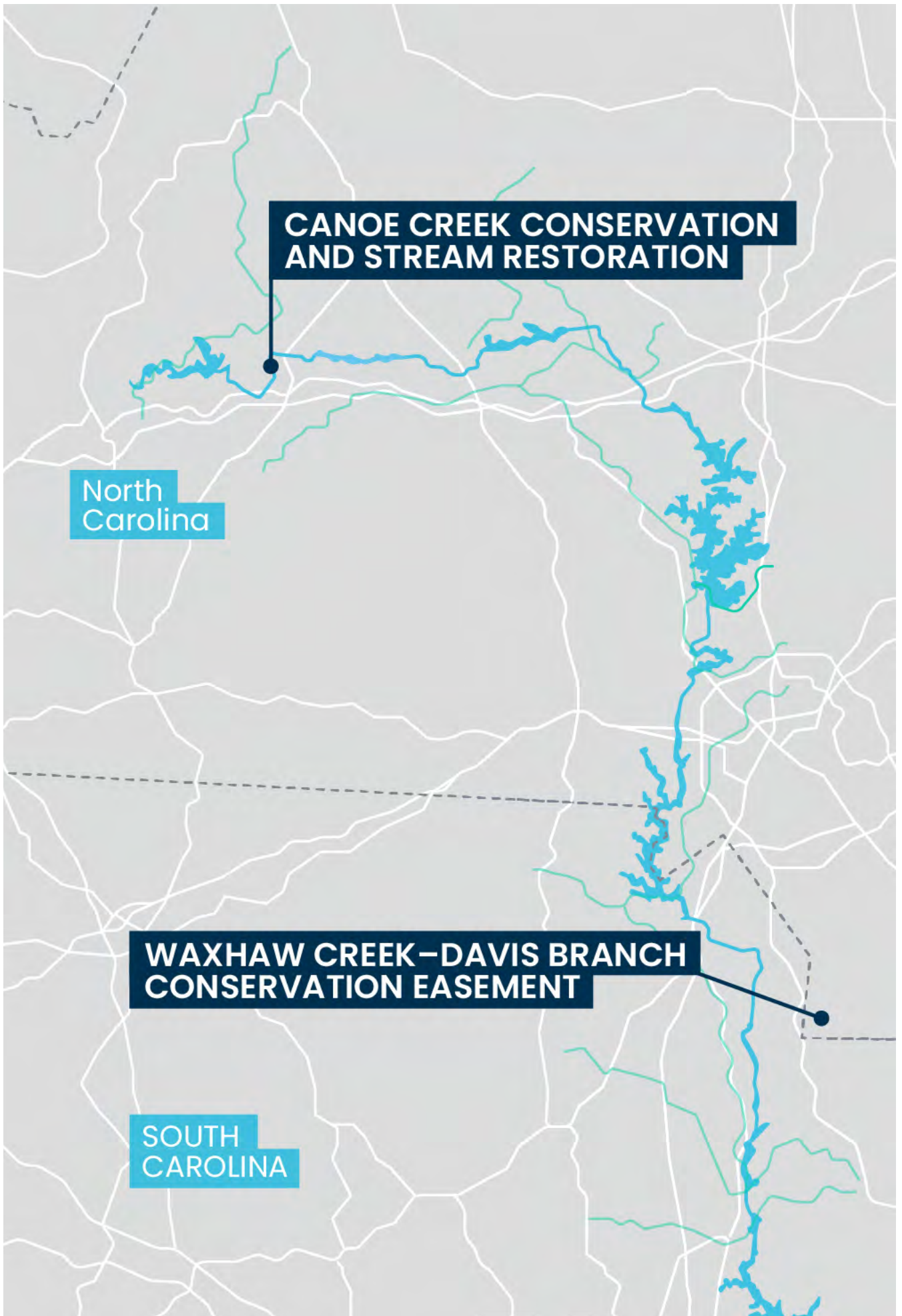
Project Size: 2,550 linear feet of stream restoration

Location: Burke County, North Carolina

CWWMG Grant: \$40,000

The Canoe Creek Conservation Project represents a significant investment in stream restoration and watershed protection within the Catawba River Basin. This phase builds upon earlier conservation work along Canoe Creek and focuses on restoring approximately 2,550 linear feet of stream channel through an innovative “offline” restoration approach that reconnects the creek to its natural alignment.

Restoring the stream to more natural conditions will reduce erosion, decrease sediment transport, improve water quality, and enhance aquatic habitat. The project will also strengthen the long-term resilience of the watershed and provide downstream water quality benefits throughout the Basin. With a total project value approaching \$766,000, the initiative demonstrates how CWWMG funding can help leverage substantial partner investment to achieve meaningful watershed-scale conservation outcomes.

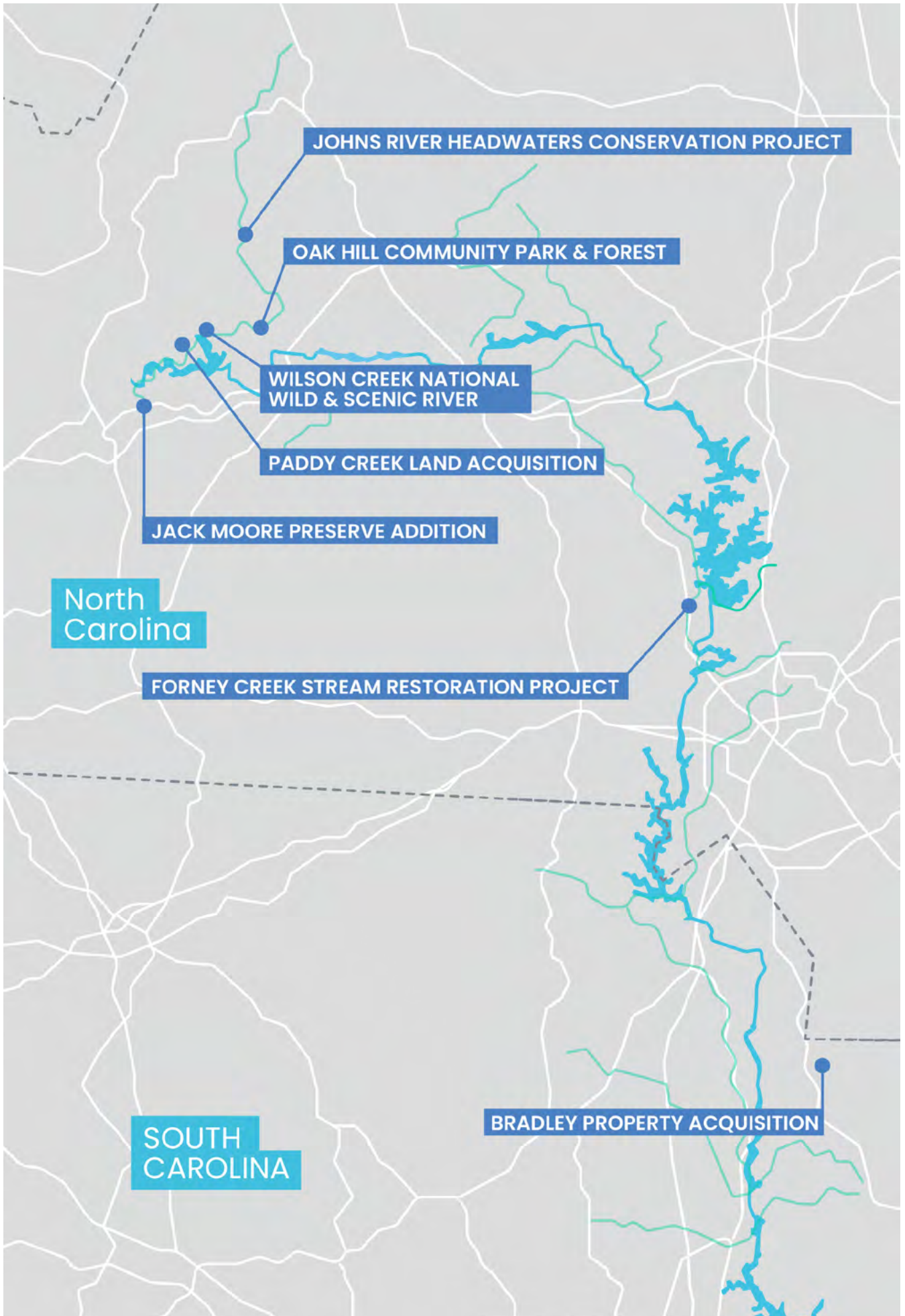


PREVIOUS CONSERVATION INVESTMENTS (2020–2024)

- 2020 | Foothills Conservancy: Oak Hill Community Park & Forest**
Burke County, NC | 651 acres
Conservation of forestland and Canoe Creek corridor supporting recreation, environmental education, agriculture, and habitat restoration.
- 2021 | Catawba Lands Conservancy: Forney Creek Stream Restoration Phase II Land Acquisition**
Lincoln County, NC | 476-acre conservation area
Land acquisition supporting completion of a larger stream restoration and conservation effort.
- 2021 | Foothills Conservancy: Paddy Creek Conservation Acquisition**
Burke County, NC | 27 acres
Protection of riparian habitat and water quality along a tributary to Lake James.
- 2022 | Foothills Conservancy: Wilson Creek National Wild and Scenic River Protection**
Caldwell County, NC | 93 acres
Permanent protection of river frontage, riparian buffers, and aquatic habitat along Wilson Creek.
- 2023 | Foothills Conservancy: Johns River Headwaters Conservation Project**
Caldwell County, NC | 332 acres
Conservation of a high-priority headwaters property protecting the source of the Johns River and important natural communities.
- 2023 | Catawba Lands Conservancy: Jack Moore Preserve Addition (Hoyle Creek)**
Gaston County, NC | 6.2 acres
Expansion of an existing preserve and completion of additional riparian protection along Hoyle Creek.
- 2024 | Katawba Valley Land Trust: Bradley Property Acquisition**
Lancaster County, SC | 25 acres
Conservation easement protecting forested lands and riparian habitat along Cane Creek.

Together, these projects reflect CWWMG's continued commitment to protecting source waters, conserving critical habitats, restoring stream function, and preserving the natural landscapes that support healthy watersheds across the Catawba-Wateree River Basin. Through targeted investments and strategic partnerships, the Land Conservation Grant Program continues to generate long-term environmental benefits that extend well beyond the individual properties conserved.

Learn about prioritized lands for source water protection with the Source Water Protection Tool: <https://catawbalands.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html>



COMMUNITY

2026 Academy Grads

Elijah Birch
Grant Buckner
Maya Clouse-Henry
Nicki Cutinello
Shea Davies
Kendra Dixon
Marcella Domka
Mo Drinkard
Kimberly Fortner
Jolene Gale
Alex Hayner
Walter Helmandollar
Breanna Ikard
Sarah Malone
Sophie McCarthy
Kelly Metz
Greg Nance
Matthew Peine
Maciel Perea
Catherine Robertson
Cindy Safrit
Bailey Scarlett
Ronnel Shank
Charlene Spence
Terriann Vogel
Roxanne Williams
Steve Wood
Brian Yarmon

2026 CITIZENS' WATER ACADEMY

The Citizens' Water Academy continues to strengthen connections between the public and the professionals responsible for managing regional water resources.

Throughout the program, participants gain firsthand insight into water treatment, watershed protection, infrastructure planning, regulatory requirements, conservation, and long-term resource management. Through classroom instruction, facility tours, and discussions with industry experts, participants develop a deeper understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing water utilities across the Basin.

Graduates leave the program equipped to serve as informed ambassadors for water stewardship within their own communities.

What participants learned

- How the river system works – from Blue Ridge headwaters to Lake Wateree
- Duke Energy's dams and the FERC licensing rules that guide flows
- Where our drinking water comes from and what happens after we flush
- Stormwater and land use impacts on water quality
- Recreation, conservation easements, and why healthy forests = clean water
- Tools in the new Integrated Water Resources Plan

2026 results

- 28 new graduates join our alumni network of community leaders, teachers, and utility staff.
- Alumni now help review local land use plans, speak at public meetings, and volunteer for shoreline clean-ups – expanding our reach across the Basin.

The academy keeps growing, and so does the collective voice for a secure, sustainable water future. Congratulations to the Class of 2026!

WATER FOR ALL SUMMIT 2026

The CWWMG's annual **Water for All Summit** serves as the organization's premier regional gathering, bringing together water utilities, government agencies, industry leaders, nonprofit organizations, consultants, academics, and other stakeholders to discuss emerging water resource challenges and collaborative solutions across the Catawba-Wateree River Basin. The 2026 Summit, held on March 12, 2026, at the Gateway Conference Center in Richburg, South Carolina, focused on the theme, **"From Plan to Action: Advancing the Integrated Water Resources Plan (IWRP)."** The event emphasized implementation strategies for the recently completed IWRP and fostered dialogue across jurisdictions, sectors, and disciplines.

The program featured opening remarks from local and regional leaders, a year-in-review presentation highlighting CWWMG accomplishments, a State of the Basin address, and recognition of graduates from the eighth Citizens' Water Academy. The agenda included a keynote presentation from South Carolina Department of Environmental Services (SCDES) Director Myra Reece, a panel discussion on governance and Basin alignment, and the Summit's first-ever series of breakout sessions exploring topics such as industrial water use, economic development, regional collaboration, and drought preparedness. These interactive sessions provided attendees with opportunities to engage directly with experts and discuss practical approaches to implementing IWRP recommendations.

More than **170 participants** representing utilities, municipalities, state agencies, environmental organizations, consulting firms, and private industry attended the Summit. Organizations represented included Charlotte Water, Duke Energy, Catawba Lands Conservancy, Catawba Riverkeeper, NCDEQ, SCDES, Union County Water, the US Water Alliance, and many others, demonstrating the broad regional commitment to collaborative water resource management.

Through educational programming, networking opportunities, and cross-sector collaboration, the Water for All Summit continues to advance CWWMG's mission of ensuring a sustainable and resilient water future for the communities, economies, and ecosystems of the Catawba-Wateree River Basin.

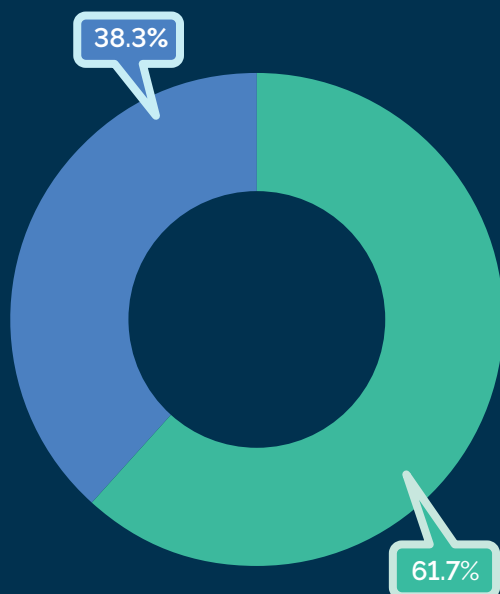


OUR FINANCIALS

January 1, 2025 - December 31, 2025

Income

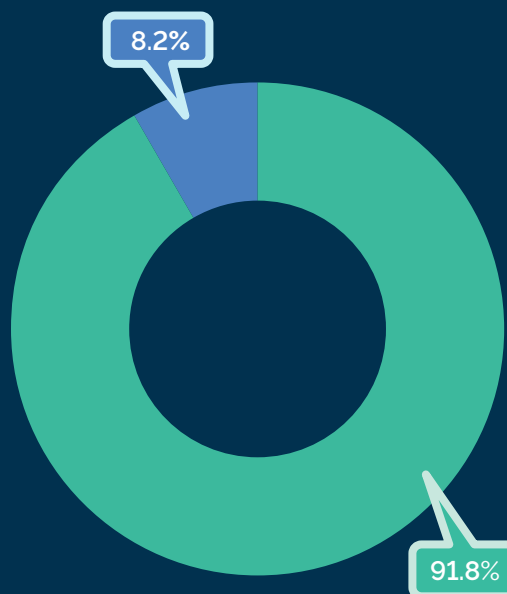
Member Dues: \$706,250
Other: \$437,477



TOTAL: \$1,143,727

Costs & Expenses

Projects: \$879,808
Other: \$78,567



TOTAL: \$958,375

Income

Interest Income \$21,288	Supplemental Member Funding \$53,999
Annual Summit Registrations (2025) \$8,880	Private Funding for Hickory Leak Detection Pilot \$86,650
Private Funding for Source Water Protection \$10,000	
NCDEQ Integrated Water Resources Planning (IWRP) Grant \$256,659	

Cost & Expenses

Strategic Communications Project \$255,474	Catawba Riverkeeper Grants \$27,500	Other Expenses
Integrated Water Resources Plan (IWRP) Year 4 \$256,659	Catawba Lands Conservancy (Waxhaw Creek Conservation Easement) \$15,000	CWWMG Administration \$63,707
USGS Groundwater Wells Operations & Maintenance \$111,250	Foothills Conservancy (Canoe Creek Restoration) \$40,000	IWRP Workshop Conference Center Expenses \$1,988
Water Loss Management Program \$1,000	Lake Norman Hydrilla MOU Amendment 1 \$3,275	Legal and Other Professional Services \$9,789
Hickory Leak Detection Pilot \$169,650		Insurance \$1,917
		CWWMG Padfolios \$1,166



Lake Norman, Davidson, North Carolina



CATAWBA
WATEREE
WATER MANAGEMENT GROUP

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