



2025

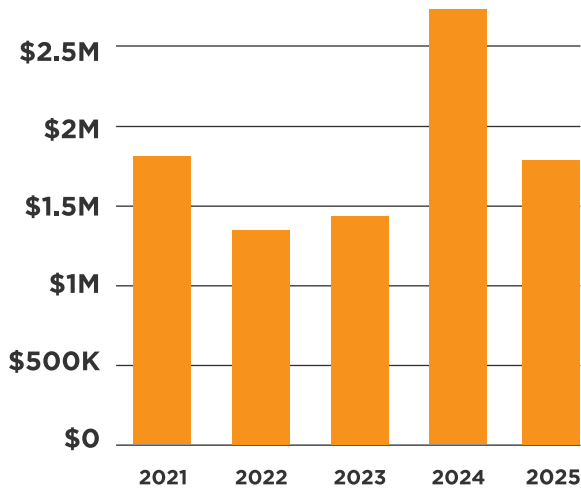
ANNUAL REPORT

Strengthening the Eno in a Year of Change

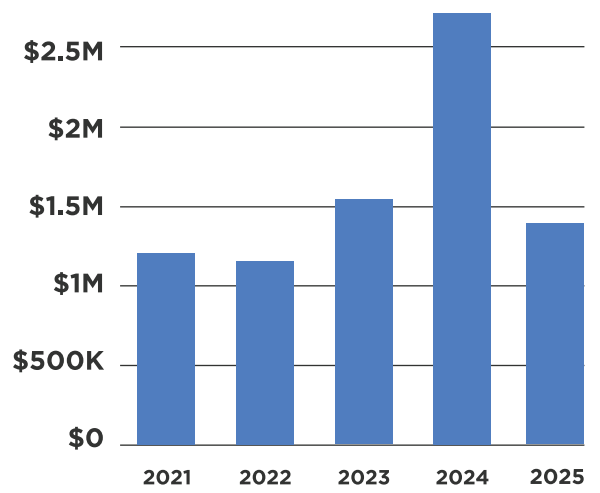
OUR NUMBERS: EBBS AND FLOWS



Revenue

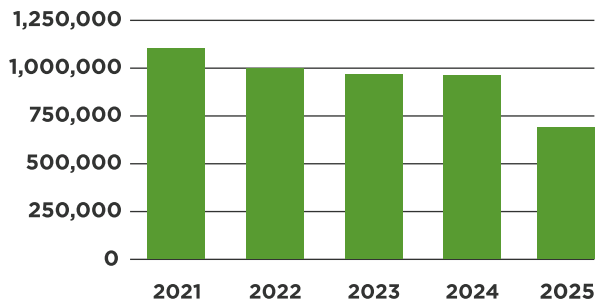


Expenses

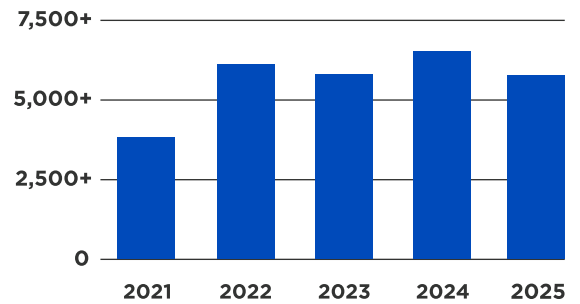


2025 revenues and expenses are unaudited; 2024 included the Historic Oconeechee Speedway land transfer.

Visitors



Volunteer Hours



2025 WAS A **BIG** YEAR FOR US



532,700+
VISITORS TO ENO RIVER STATE PARK

5,100+
PEOPLE REACHED THROUGH
OUR EDUCATION PROGRAMS

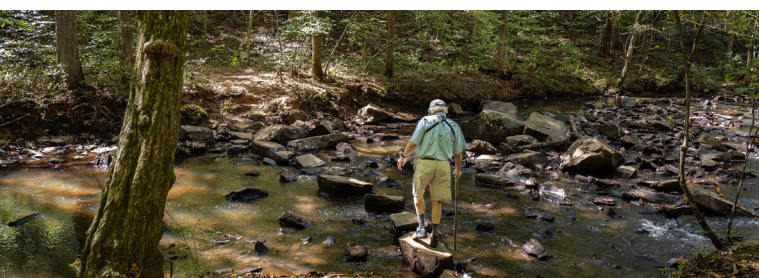


163,400+
VISITORS TO OCCONEECHEE MOUNTAIN
STATE NATURAL AREA

16,300+
VISITORS TO CONFLUENCE
NATURAL AREA

5,500+
VOLUNTEER HOURS COMMITTED,
ACROSS ALL PROGRAMS

5,700+
VISITORS TO PANTHER BRANCH
NATURAL AREA



8,300+
TOTAL ACRES PROTECTED BY
THE ENO RIVER ASSOCIATION

*Thank you to the photographers whose images appear throughout this report:
Tayton Alvis, Crystal Cockman, Evie Fitzpatrick, Hope Horton, Sarah Meyer, Brian Munger, Fred Myers, Susan Reeves,
Christina Schubert, Dan Smith, and Robert Zimmerman*

MAKING NEW FRIENDS FOR THE ENO

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION: Championing Climate Awareness and Learning

A few years ago, ERA launched Eno Climate Champions, a multi-session program designed to engage local teens in hands-on climate learning. In early 2025, participants concluded a series focused on prescribed fire as a tool for climate resilience. Students worked alongside staff and observed a prescribed burn at Blue Indigo Preserve, learning how fire supports ecosystem health by controlling invasive species, cycling nutrients, and promoting biodiversity.

In the latter half of the year, we shifted focus to a new program series on Piedmont prairies. Participants partnered with stewardship staff at Confluence Natural Area, assisting with tree planting and exploring the ecological importance of prairie ecosystems. The series on these vital habitats will continue into 2026.



28

SCHOOL PROGRAMS

44

PUBLIC PROGRAMS AND HIKES

3,366

YOUTH PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS

5,121

IN-PERSON PARTICIPANTS

30

EDUCATION PARTNERS



46th Festival for the Eno

The 2025 Festival for the Eno thoughtfully expanded its interpretation of traditional folk music to reflect a broader, more international stage. Artists sharing folk traditions from around the world helped create a Festival that more fully represented the rich cultural diversity of the community connected by the river. The Festival was once again recognized by **INDY Week** as Best Music Festival in the Triangle.

The Festival for the Eno generated \$74,946 in revenue from the sale of 3,446 merchandise items at the Big Top, setting a new record and highlighting the impact community celebration has for the Eno.

21,000+

ATTENDEES

70+

PERFORMANCES

100+

CRAFT ARTISTS

650+

VOLUNTEERS

2,900+

VOLUNTEER HOURS

3,400+

ENO RIVER MERCH ITEMS SOLD

PROTECTING THE RIVER YOU LOVE

Land Protection: A Steady Marathon

Land protection in the Eno River watershed is long-term work built on persistence and partnership. Projects often begin years before closing, requiring coordination among landowners, attorneys, surveyors, public agencies, and conservation partners to ultimately achieve permanent protection. Each project closing reflects the persistence and partnership required to ensure that these special natural areas remain safeguarded for the future.

In 2025, ERA protected nearly 335 new acres in the watershed and continued advancing five additional projects. One major milestone included facilitating the transfer of 228.5 acres of the historic Occoneechee Speedway to the Eno River State Park, Archaeological Conservancy, and City of Hillsborough, strengthening its long-term protection within the State Park system. We also partnered with Bluestem Community NC and their Conservation Cemetery to conserve 87 acres in the upper Little River watershed.

The expansion of the Sevenmile Creek Natural Area, in partnership with Orange County, marks another significant step forward. Over the past two years, the Association has supported the County's acquisition of this property and worked to secure an Association-held conservation easement that will protect it in perpetuity. Preserving this land—and the clean water, wildlife habitat, and natural spaces it provides—strengthens the health of the entire watershed.

As several more land projects are nearing their close, continued collaboration is ensuring steady progress. Together, our community is helping to protect more of the Eno River watershed for generations to come.



2025 Highlights Land Protection

334.9

NEW ACRES PROTECTED IN
THE ENO RIVER BASIN

8,345

TOTAL ACRES PROTECTED BY
THE ENO RIVER ASSOCIATION

Land Stewardship: Acts of Love for the Places We Love

Permanent protection is only the beginning. Stewardship is the long-term “forever” work of caring for conserved lands and restoring ecological health.

In February, staff and volunteers conducted a prescribed burn at Blue Indigo Preserve to restore its unique ecosystem. Trail expansion also continued throughout the year at the same preserve. In May, ERA completed a cooperative project with Urban Community AgriNomics, clearing 2.2 acres of land at Catawba Trail Farm for sustainable agriculture.

Following Tropical Storm Chantal in July, restoration became an immediate priority. Volunteers cleared debris, repaired damage, and helped reopen trails across the basin. In October, a prescribed burn at Confluence Natural Area helped to kick off habitat restoration efforts. Volunteers planted 774 native trees to begin reforesting an 8.6-acre field and seeded 19.5 acres for future Piedmont prairie habitat.

In November, ERA approved an updated management plan for Confluence, setting priorities for the next five years. Across the watershed, volunteers removed invasive species and an estimated 2,000 pounds of trash. We are so grateful for our dedicated community and looking forward to continuing these projects in 2026!

1,687 TRAIL AND SITE STEWARD VOLUNTEER HOURS

2,000 POUNDS OF TRASH REMOVED

774 NATIVE PLANTS PLANTED

658 STEWARDSHIP VOLUNTEERS

28.1 ACRES OF HABITAT RESTORATION STARTED

3,619 STEWARDSHIP VOLUNTEER HOURS

95 WORKDAYS

.5 NEW MILES OF TRAILS CONSTRUCTED

STRATEGIC PLAN 2023-2027: YEAR 4 GOALS



In 2025, ERA completed the third year of its five-year strategic plan. The agency has made great progress in targeting its conservation efforts by using our new Strategic Conservation Plan. We continue to strive to represent the diversity of our community in our membership, Board of Directors, staff, programming, and in our stewardship efforts. In 2026, the Association will update its strategic plan to recognize our progress, update action steps, and add a variety of new strategic activities based on the input of the staff and Board of Directors. We look forward to sharing our updated strategic plan in summer 2026.

Weathering the Storm: Recovery After Chantal

In early July, Tropical Storm Chantal brought record flooding to Durham and Orange Counties. The Eno River rose to 25.63 feet according to rain gauge data—surpassing the record high water levels during Hurricane Fran in 1996. Homes, businesses, and public lands in our community experienced significant damage.

In the weeks that followed, much of our work shifted focus toward recovery and restoration along the Eno. With the incredible support of our staff, volunteers, and partners, many beloved trail systems have been brought back to life. The work to repair trails, clear debris, and assess ecological impacts across preserves and parkland continues, guided by persistence and partnership.

Chantal served as a powerful reminder of why ERA's work matters. It underscored a growing reality: climate change is increasing the frequency and intensity of extreme weather events. Protecting ecologically significant lands from development, restoring vital habitats, and building resilience through local action and collective effort are long-term investments in the health of the watershed and the communities who depend on it. We are honored to help safeguard the natural beauty of the Eno River Basin, and we could not do it without you.



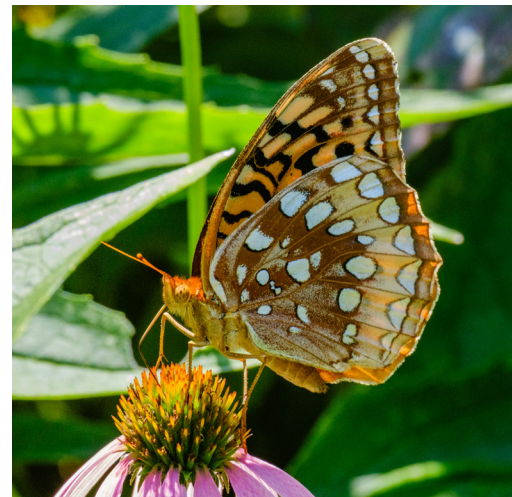
THRIVING, RESILIENT, INCLUSIVE



Looking Ahead: Restoration and Access

In 2025, ERA began restoring 8.6 acres of native forest and nearly 20 acres of Piedmont prairie habitat at Confluence Natural Area. Staff and volunteers shared in the exhilaration that comes with these acts of healing land and creating space for native animals. As they initiated reforestation, prairie seeding, and habitat preparation, a deep sense of responsibility and commitment began to settle in. It will take many years for this ecosystem to mature, but one day the tree roots will dig deep, and their leaves will be working full-time to clean our air, heal the soil, build habitat, and repair the natural water cycle.

In 2026, ERA staff and volunteers will be in gardening mode at the Confluence, watering on dry days, managing competing plant species, and replanting to establish strong native habitats. Restoration requires consistency, persistence, and patience—values the Eno River Association has practiced over the past six decades. Along with these restoration efforts, we will advance plans to build an accessible trail along the Rocky Water Path, expanding opportunities for safe and inclusive access to the preserve. All of this work is intended to nurture and benefit not only this generation but also those who will walk these trails decades from now.



THANK YOU TO THE MEMBERS AND

\$510,000+ from 800+

DONATED

INDIVIDUALS

Special thanks for the generous bequests from **Margaret W. Brown** and **Paul J. Feldblum**.

BLAZING STAR

\$10,000+

Anonymous
Ann Louise Barrick and Joyce Elaine McNeill
Tracey and Donald Dryden
Paul Feldblum and Tolly Boatwright

LADY'S SLIPPER

\$5,000+

Anonymous
Jay and Rachel Baker
Greg Beck
Brenda Brodie
Rick Burt
Carol and Bill Charping
Maria and Curtis Chi
Lisa Lorenzin and Michael Broome
John Manuel and Cathy Murphy
Mary Love May and Paul Gabrielson
Gary Pohl
Jenn Weaver and David Neal
Lucy Wilson

CRESTED IRIS

\$2,500+

Chips Chapman
Dr. Harold P. Erickson
Jennifer and Jason Franklin
Carol Gunther-Mohr
Pete Hall
Lonna and Richard Harkrader
Jane Hoppin
Deborah Ingram
Ronette Kolotkin
John and Margaret March
Terence McCarthy
Janis McFarland and Richard McLaughlin
George Parker
Karen and Tom Tierney

TRILLIUM

\$1,000+

Anthony and Paula Adams
P. Sue Alexander
Anonymous
Robert and Phyllis Andrews
Andrew Balber and Frances Kerr
Joel and Dawn Battiste
Steve Booth and Mary Lou Rollins
Lynn Bowlby and Neal Ready
Bill and B.J. Boyarsky
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Brett Walters
Kathleen and Warren Warren
Adam and Katie Wenzlik-Bailey
Merywen Wigley and Kevin Magill
Bob Wiley
Connie Winstead and Bo Glenn
David Wright
Bonnie Wright and Martin Eakes

AND OVER 700 FRIENDS OF THE ENO!

PARTNERS WHO GAVE GENEROUSLY

FOUNDATIONS, ORGANIZATIONS, AND CORPORATIONS \$2,500+

ADELE & WILLARD GIDWITZ FAMILY FOUNDATION
 BLUESTEM COMMUNITY NC
 BOXYARD RTP
 BURT'S BEES FOUNDATION
 BYDALE FOUNDATION
 C.T. WILSON CONSTRUCTION
 THE CANNON FOUNDATION
 CAROLINA ACADEMIC PRESS FOUNDATION
 CENTRAL PINES REGIONAL COUNCIL
 ANONYMOUS
 CITY OF DURHAM

DURHAM COUNTY
 DISCOVER DURHAM
 DOCTORS URGENT CARE
 DUKE UNIVERSITY
 DUKE ENERGY
 DURHAM MERCHANTS ASSOCIATION CHARITABLE FOUNDATION
 ENBRIDGE GAS
 F.M. KIRBY FOUNDATION
 FOX FAMILY FOUNDATION
 GSK
 GRACE JONES RICHARDSON TESTAMENTARY TRUST

HARRIS BEVERAGES
 HENDRICK SUBARU SOUTHPOINT
 JAMES & MILDRED WILKINSON CHARITABLE FOUNDATION
 LATTA PARK
 MURPHY'S NATURALS
 NC DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE
 NEW HOPE BIRD ALLIANCE
 ORANGE COUNTY
 PROTO LABS FOUNDATION
 SAUNA HOUSE
 TRIANGLE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION



OUR RENEWED MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

FRIENDS OF THE ENO

\$5+ MONTHLY | \$60+ ANNUALLY

Friends of the Eno are at the core of a vibrant community of people who love and protect this river. Friends receive:

- A special member newsletter with behind-the-scenes updates
- An invitation to our Annual Meeting each fall
- Exclusive discounts from our store

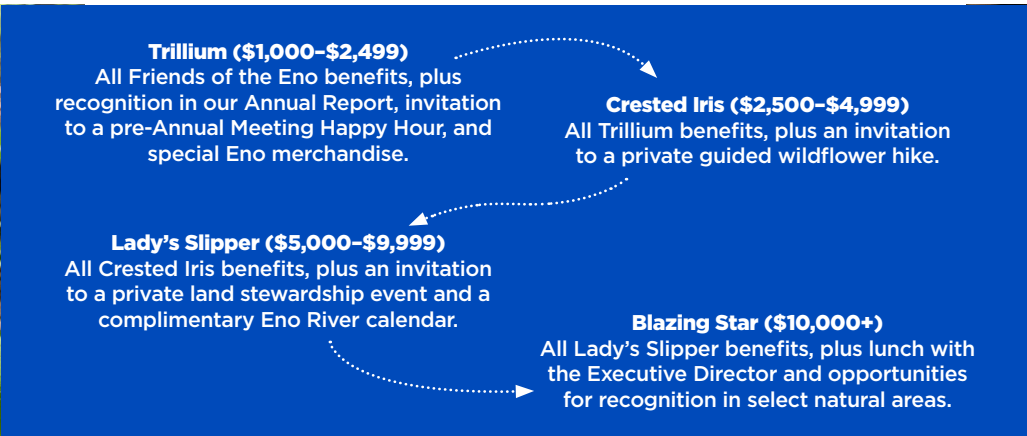
To keep membership accessible, we also offer a reduced rate of \$2.50/month or \$30/year by request for anyone for whom the standard rate may be a barrier.



WILDFLOWER SOCIETY

LEADERSHIP GIVING | \$1,000+ ANNUALLY

Named for the native blooms that brighten the Eno each spring, the Wildflower Society honors donors whose leadership giving helps the Eno River Association grow and thrive. Members receive all Friends of the Eno benefits, along with enhanced opportunities for connection and recognition.

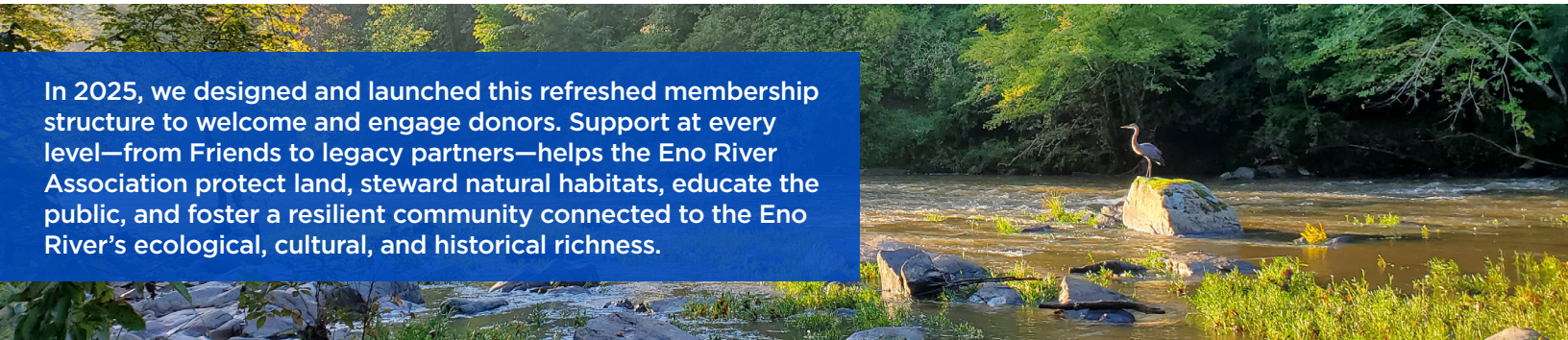


BLUE HERON SOCIETY

LEGACY GIVING | PLANNED GIFTS

Our renewed Blue Heron Society honors those who include the Eno River Association in their estate plans—ensuring their love for the river lives on beyond their lifetime. Members receive Wildflower Society benefits and the lasting satisfaction of knowing their legacy will help protect the Eno’s waters, parks, trails, wildlife, and people for generations to come.

If you have included the Eno River Association in your will or estate plans or would like more information about planned giving, please contact us at development@enoriver.org so we may thank you and honor your commitment during your lifetime.



In 2025, we designed and launched this refreshed membership structure to welcome and engage donors. Support at every level—from Friends to legacy partners—helps the Eno River Association protect land, steward natural habitats, educate the public, and foster a resilient community connected to the Eno River’s ecological, cultural, and historical richness.



NAVIGATING CHANGE AND MOVING FORWARD

Dear Friends,

Thank you for taking the time to learn more about the Eno River Association (ERA) and our accomplishments over the last year. 2025 was a year of significant change, both literally and figuratively, for ERA, the Eno River, and our community. The year started with a leadership transition with Interim Executive Director and former Director of Conservation & Stewardship Kim Livingston leaving ERA in late January for her “dream job” at The Nature Conservancy. We thank Kim for her long and distinguished service to the agency. I assumed the Executive Director role at ERA in early February and have loved getting to know the agency’s staff, board of directors, supporters, and the nuts and bolts of the Association’s work over the last year. It has been a joy to get acclimated to this amazing organization.

In January, the agency celebrated the transfer of the historic Occaneechee Speedway to our friends at Eno River State Park. The Speedway has significant cultural and historical significance and its inclusion in the State Park system is a win for ERA, the community, and the entire State of North Carolina. In the Spring, we led a successful campaign to raise the funds needed to purchase a Kubota tractor for activities planned for our Confluence Natural Area. The orange beauty, nicknamed “Clementine”, has quickly been put to good use implementing our plans for restoring a Piedmont Prairie habitat in part of the preserve.

The afterglow of a delightful Festival for the Eno quickly dissipated on the afternoon of July 6th when tropical depression Chantal visited the Triangle. Chantal caused record flooding throughout the Eno River Basin and the surrounding area, with significant damage to Eno River State Park, West Point on the Eno, and neighborhoods along the river. While life has largely returned to normal, the ongoing impacts of climate change are here to stay.

Through it all, ERA has continued to “bring the river into the classroom” with our in-school environmental education programming in Orange and Durham Counties, and closed a series of conservation projects that protect environmentally sensitive portions of the Eno River and major tributaries. Thank you for making our work a priority. I hope to see you by the river soon.

Sincerely,

Ryan J. Fehrman

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.

2025 Association Staff:

Ryan Fehrman
Executive Director

Hsi Chen
Director of Development & Communications

Chris Dreps
Director of Conservation & Stewardship

Hillary Harrison
Director of Education & Engagement

Nick Ferguson
Finance & Operations Manager

Reema Garabadu
Land Conservation Manager

Audrey Gentry
Education Manager

Eli Haines-Eitzen
AmeriCorps Education Coordinator
(until July 2025)

Bryan Iler
Event Manager
(until August 2025)

Heather McEntire
Store Manager

Indigo Roper-Edwards
Land Stewardship Manager

Tori Velasquez
Development & Communications Contractor
(until December 2025)

2025 Board of Directors:

Lindsay Duncan | President
Ellen Reckhow | Vice President
Emily Friedman | Treasurer
Wendy Kuhn | Secretary
Carol Charping
Tara Fikes
Mel Gilles
Kendall Glaze
Helen Kalevas
George Parker
Brian Powell
Delphine Sellars
David Singleton
Janet Steele
Xavier Vallejo
Jenn Weaver

SAVE the DATE

Eno River Association's
60TH

Anniversary
Celebration



SATURDAY
SEPT
12TH
2026

DOWNTOWN DURHAM
at CAROLINA THEATRE
and DPLEX PLAZA



We are a proud member of



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



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