



2023

*Back Bay National Wildlife Refuge Society
Annual Report*



“Our purpose is to promote and support the Back Bay National Wildlife Refuge in its mission to conserve, protect, and enhance natural resources through projects, advocacy, outreach, education, fundraising, diverse membership and volunteerism for the betterment of the Refuge.”





Letter From The President

On behalf of the Board of Directors for Back Bay National Wildlife Refuge Society, I would like to convey our sincere appreciation to all the members, partners and donors who supported us this past year. Without your help we couldn't have accomplished our goals or initiatives!

From projects to community events the Society has been able to bring awareness, involvement and support for Back Bay National Wildlife Refuge.

With heartfelt gratitude,

Thank You!

This annual report celebrates what was made possible in the year 2023 and the following are a few of the highlights accomplished through membership involvement and contributions.

- Designing the plans for an outdoor educational classroom for Back Bay National Wildlife Refuge. Looking forward to supporting the construction of these facilities in the coming year.
- Created an educational outreach program with Virginia Beach City Public Schools title I elementary schools and the VBCPS Environmental Studies Program, bringing over 400 4th graders to the refuge for outdoor hands-on educational experiences.
- Created the first ever Back Bay Ambassador program for high school seniors.

- Repaired the Back Bay National Wildlife Refuge shed.
- Maintained the pollinator gardens for local pollinators that “buzz” around the Refuge and monarch butterflies.
- Hosted the first Halloween group refuge bike trail ride.
- Supported Osprey nest habitats and banding of fledgling chicks.
- Partnered with local businesses that helped support and bring awareness to the Society and its endeavors.
- Increased revenue 30% through individual donors, business contributions, donor advised funds, grants & in kind donations.

We have a lot of work ahead this year and are confident it will be accomplished, both within the community and the Refuge, with your support and dedication.

Thank you for being part of this journey and inspiring us to continue in our works for the Refuge.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Chris Freeman". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Chris Freeman
President, Back Bay NWR Society



Projects

- Pollinator and monarch gardens maintained
- Garden interpretive signage added
- Osprey nesting platforms maintained
- Assisted refuge with trail maintenance

- Tool shed repair completed
- Collaborative outdoor classroom project





Outdoor Classroom

- Design completed
- \$50,000 construction cost fundraising started



**RBA
Architects**

RBA Architect primary
partner

- Student interns, Environmental Studies Program of VBCPS, presented designs to refuge staff and Back Bay NWR Society





Outdoor Classroom

- Topographic survey completed
- Soil boring and analysis completed
- Chris Elam - RBA Architect, Interns - VBCPS Environmental Studies Program, refuge staff, Charles Hall and Taylor Pomposini - MSA engineering consultant



MSA Charles Hall and Taylor Pomposini - MSA engineering consultant

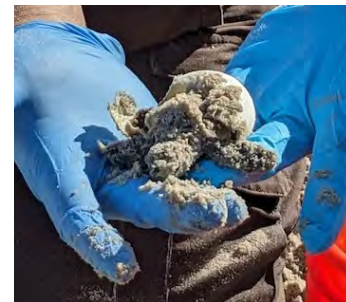
- Wetlands analysis conducted
- Native American impact determined





Programs

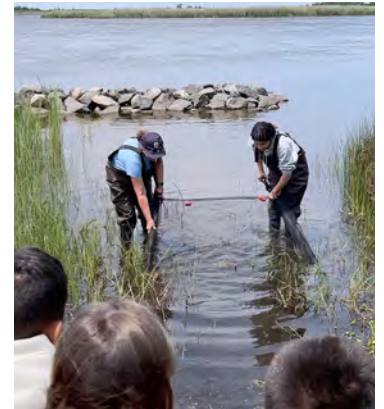
- Osprey nestlings monitored
- Members assisted with Refuge sea turtle conservation
- Members assisted with Refuge environmental education
 - School visits to the refuge
 - On-site school visits
- Assisted Refuge staff in recruitment of volunteers





Urban Wildlife Refuge Program

- Back Bay Ambassador program for high school seniors created
- Educational outreach program with Virginia Beach City Public Schools title I elementary schools and the VBCPS Environmental Studies Program created and implemented
- Over 400 fourth graders visited the refuge for outdoor hands-on educational experiences.
- Back Bay high school Ambassadors and society volunteers partnered to teach environmental lessons





Event Participation

- Virginia Beach Winter Wildlife Festival 2023



- Connect with a community for all things winter wildlife



Bloomstock 2023
Earth Day fundraiser





Society Sponsored Events

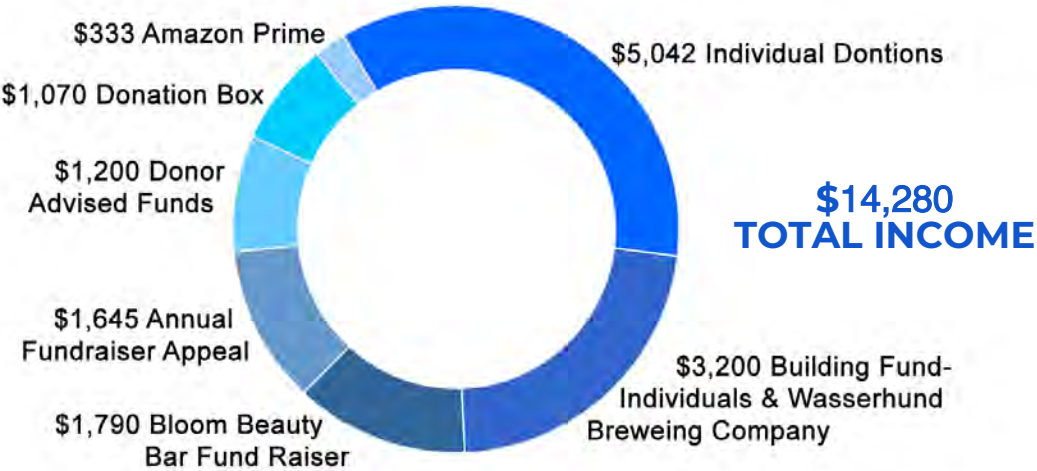
- Bicycle trail ride in the refuge
 - Free bicycle rentals by Surf and Adventure Company



Member socials and raffles at Wasserhund Brewing Company

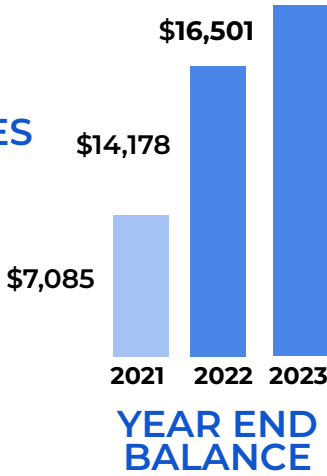
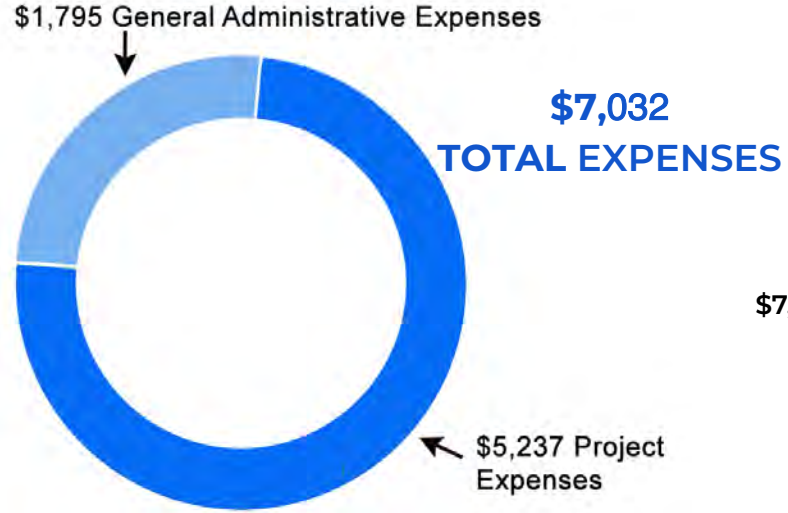


2023 Financials



INCOME

- 35.3% Individual Donations
- 22.4% Building Fund - Individuals & Wasserhund Breweing Company
- 12.5% Bloom Beauty Bar Fundraiser
- 11.5% Annual Donor Appeal
- 8.4% Donor Advised Funds
- 7.5% Donation Box



EXPENSES

- 74.5% Direct project expenses
- 25.5% Administrative expenses



2023 Donors

**A special thank you to the following
individuals and organizations**

Don Adams

Lee and Laura Beller

Blackbaud Giving Fund

Grace Cope

Richard and Coleen Doering

Chris Elam

Charlie Ellin

Barry Erdeljon

Chris Freeman

Gehrig Family Trust

Carol Gentry

Joy Giavittorio

Kathleen Kreutzer

Barry Kurzer

Andrew Lacher

Reese Lukei

Ellis Malabad

Richard Margerum

James and Sybil Mays

Eddi McKay and Patrick Johnson

Catherine Miller

Michael Montgomery

Lauren Mowbray

Cheryl Petticrew

Erica Ryder

Carol Silvia

Shawna Stanton

Shannon Titus

Bernice Willams

Mr and Mrs Stephen Witkowski

Bloom Beauty Bar

Pender Coward Law Firm

Wasserhund Brewing Company

Virginia Beach Audubon Society



2023 *Board Members*

- Richard Dyer
- Chris Elam
- Charlie Ellin
- Barry Erdeljon
- Chris Freeman
- Barry Kurzer
- Reese Lukei
- Laura McMahan
- Catherine Miller

Joined the board during 2023

- Dianna McDowell
- Michael T. Moore
- Logan Stanton – *Youth Advisory Committee Chair*

Officers *2023 Term*

- Chris Freeman – *President*
- Barry Erdeljon – *Vice President*
- Barry Kurzer – *Treasurer*
- Chris Elam – *Secretary*

If you are interested in serving on the Board of Directors please email us at

[*backbaynwrsociety@gmail.com*](mailto:backbaynwrsociety@gmail.com)

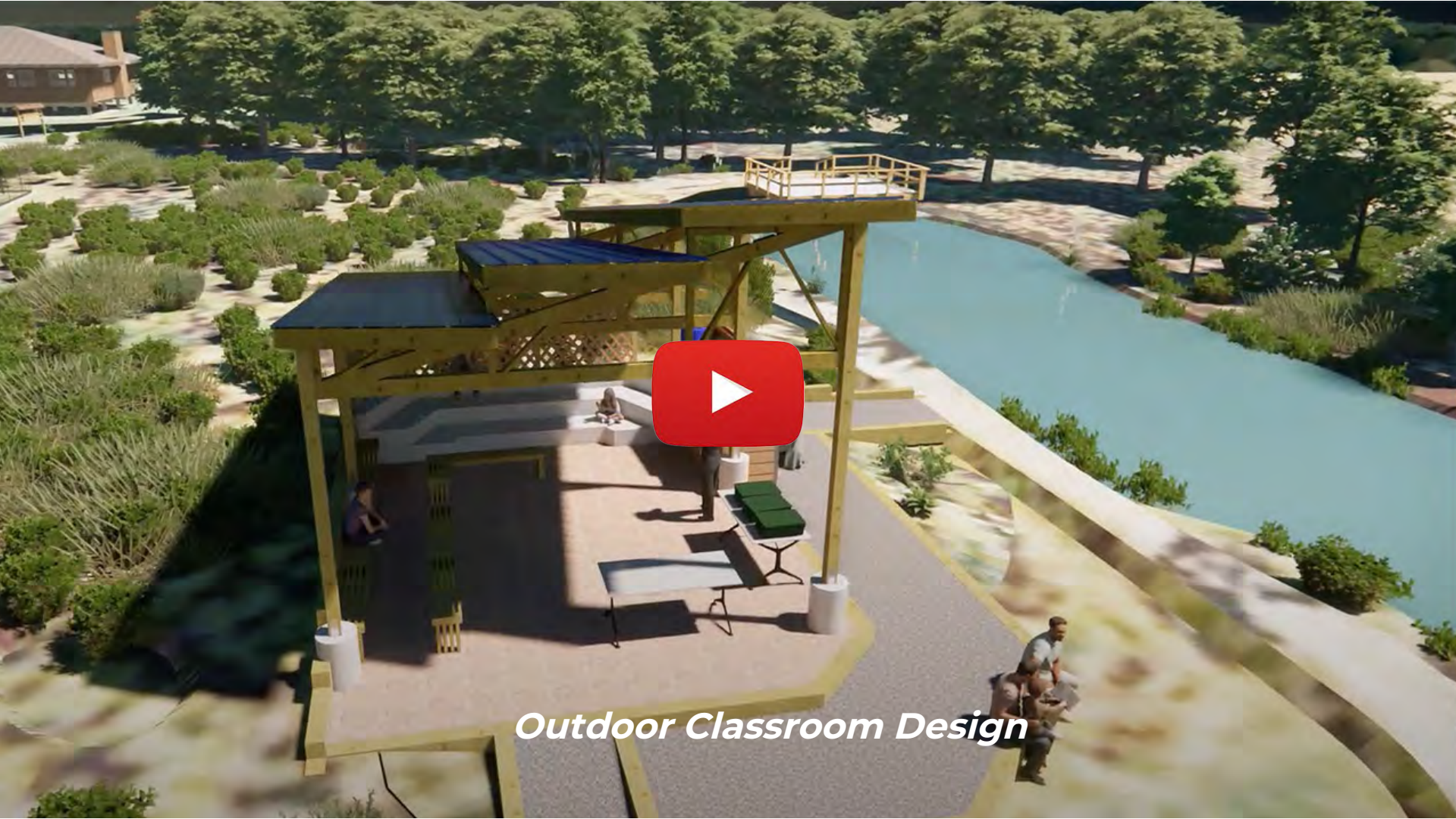


Community Partnerships





“Volunteers do not necessarily have the time; they
have the heart.” – *Elizabeth Jarrett Andrew*



Outdoor Classroom Design