



# 2024 IMPACT REPORT



# Letter from Leadership

Dear Supporters,

As we reflect on 2024, Clean Lakes Alliance is proud to open this year's Impact Report with a shared message of stewardship, gratitude, and impact. Together, and with your unwavering support, we continued our work to grow stewardship throughout the watershed, safeguard our lakes, and inspire community action.

We celebrated our fourteenth year of releasing a *State of the Lakes*, now featured in the Greater Madison Lake Guide, an annual report card of lake-by-lake conditions, trends, and our community's progress toward achieving water quality goals. This year also marked a deepening of our collaborative efforts: from Volunteer Day projects improving watershed health, to the expansion of our Clean Boats-Clean Waters and LakeForecast.org programs, raising awareness about aquatic invasive species threats and the latest lake conditions.

None of these accomplishments would be possible without our dedicated volunteers, partners, and generous donors. Your trust and engagement empower us to pilot innovative solutions, advocate for smart policies, and expand stewardship across Greater Madison.

As you read through this Impact Report, may our progress inspire continued connection—to our lakes, to each other, and to the collective promise of cleaner water for future generations.

In Partnership,



Sopen Shah  
Board Chair



James Tye  
Founder & Executive Director



View of downtown Madison with Lake Monona (foreground) and Lake Mendota (background). Photo courtesy Robert Bertera.



Members of the Clean Lakes Alliance Community Board at a February 2025 board meeting at The Edgewater on Lake Mendota

# Current Board Members & Staff

*The Clean Lakes Alliance board represents many government, business, nonprofit, and community members working to make healthy lakes a reality.*

## EXECUTIVE BOARD

**Sopen Shah, Chair**  
Perkins Coie LLP

**James St. Vincent, Vice Chair**  
Yahara Lakes Association

**Scott Ducke, Treasurer**  
Lake Ridge Bank

**Laura Skilton Verhoff, Secretary**  
Associated Bank

**James Tye, Executive Director**  
Clean Lakes Alliance

**Pam Christenson**  
Madison Gas and Electric

**Zach Osman**  
Johnson Financial Group

**Courtney Searles**  
Private Banking Leader

**Trey Sprinkman**  
Sprinkman Real Estate

**Linda Nedelcoff, Director Emerita**  
TruStage

## COMMUNITY BOARD

**Bruce Briney**  
WKOW 27

**Daniel Chovanec**  
CG Schmidt

**Susan Dibbell**  
Wisconsin Union

**Bryan Dow**  
Understory

**Hilary Dugan**  
University of Wisconsin-Madison Center for Limnology

**Kyle George**  
Lake Ridge Bank

**Brenda González**  
University of Wisconsin - Madison

**Steven Greb**  
Dane County Towns Association

**Jeffrey Hanson**  
Alliant Energy

**Chris Henderson**  
M3 Insurance

**Cody Jaworski**  
Mad-City Ski Team

**Tamara Knickmeier**  
Lake Waubesa Conservation Association

**Dan Lee**  
First Weber Inc.

**Aaracgej Sarah Lemieux-White Eagle**  
Ho-Chunk Nation District 3 Legislator

**Kyle Lyne**  
Weed Man Lawn Care

**Rod Martin**  
Yahara Pride Farms

**Jessica Niekrazs**  
BIOFerm

**Darren Port**  
Tota Vita Financial Associates

**Brian Potts**  
Husch Blackwell

**Rory Rhinesmith**  
Community Advocate

**Sam Robertson**  
Foley & Lardner LLP

**Senator Kelda Roys**  
Wisconsin State Senator, 26th District & OpenHomes Realty

**Robert Rozmiarek**  
Community Advocate

**Gerald Schmidt**  
Dream House Dream Kitchens

**Kimberly Shaul**  
National Guardian Life Insurance Company

**Susan Thomson**  
ActionCOACH Business & Executive Coaching

**Claire Varrelmann**  
The Edgewater

**Brian Vigue**  
Audubon Great Lakes

**Kim Walz**  
Friends of Lake Kegonsa Society (FOLKS)

**Tom Wilson**  
Yahara Watershed Improvement Network (WINS)

**Dr. Jana Gyurina, Director Emerita**  
Oak Park Dental

**Courtney Kruger, Director Emerita**  
Fiore Companies

**Christie Baumel, Ex Officio**  
City of Madison, Office of the Mayor

**Martin Griffin, Ex Officio**  
Madison Metropolitan Sewerage District

**Laura Hicklin, Ex Officio**  
Dane County Land & Water Resources

**Patrick Miles, Ex Officio**  
Dane County Board of Supervisors

**Mark Riedel, Ex Officio**  
Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

**Jason Valerius, Ex Officio**  
Capital Area Regional Planning Commission (CARPC)

## STAFF

**James Tye**  
Founder & Executive Director

**Michelle Boeder**  
Advancement Director

**Paul Dearlove**  
Deputy Director & Chief Science Officer

**Olivia Haseley**  
Donor Engagement & Events Specialist

**Tiffany Hoffman**  
Administrative Specialist

**Caitlin McAleavey**  
Watershed Programs Manager

**Brian Shorey**  
Finance & Business Senior Manager

**Mike Smale**  
Watershed Programs Specialist

**Karin Swanson**  
Marketing & Communications Manager

## VISION

A community renowned for its healthy lakes, lands, and waters.

## MISSION

To champion our lakes and watershed stewardship for the benefit of all.

## STRATEGIES

The strategies below are organized into four pillars. Each delineates a pathway to producing the needed outcomes central to achieving Clean Lakes Alliance's vision and mission.

PEOPLE	LANDS	SHORELINES & LAKE PARKS	ORGANIZATION
Cultivate a love of the lakes	Lead and inspire care of the land impacting our waters	Support the creation of vibrant lakeshores	Continue building an effective and enduring organization
Offer fun, educational, and enriching experiences that connect people, businesses, and organizations to the lakes	Provide stakeholders with the motivation, guidance, and support to act	Celebrate, showcase, and nurture stewardship and legacy placemaking where land meets water	Sustain a thriving workplace and high-impact organization by living our values as team members and partners
Invite the community to celebrate, connect with, and care for our lakes, lands, and waters	Champion recommendations in <i>RENEW THE BLUE: A Community Guide for Cleaner Lakes &amp; Beaches in the Yahara Watershed</i>	Focus public attention on reimagining and investing in our lakeshore spaces	Continue to grow and diversify a sustained base of support while fostering a rewarding, values-based culture

Clean Lakes Alliance utilizes the following three objectives for driving progress around each strategy pillar.

## ENGAGE

Events and multi-media outreach invite people into the alliance, connect them to the watershed, and mobilize a base of support. **Our events** serve as fun entry points for stakeholders to join the cause. They generate community interest, energy, and support that sustain our momentum. **Our communications** keep our supporters informed about the watershed, our work, and the opportunities to get more involved in making a difference.

## EMPOWER

Unique programs and learning experiences expand volunteerism and foster a culture of watershed stewardship. **Our programs** provide education and avenues for meaningful participation. They channel heightened awareness into effective advocacy, volunteerism, and project action.

## ACTIVATE

A strong, informed alliance can effectively advocate for needed action and accountability. **Our advocacy** pushes for action toward shared goals. Targeted grants, strategic partnerships, selective lobbying, and improved transparency keep vital initiatives moving forward.



Volunteer from UW Credit Union collects native seeds at Marsh Woods Conservancy with Clean Lakes Alliance



Clean Lakes Alliance Volunteer Day with Lake Ridge Bank at UW-Madison Arboretum to remove invasive buckthorn



Volunteers from Associated Bank removing invasive plants from Marshall Park with Clean Lakes Alliance



Affiliated Engineers, Exact Sciences, and WKOW 27 volunteers remove buckthorn from Prairie Ridge Conservation Area



Volunteers from Sprinkman Real Estate collect native seeds at Holy Wisdom Monastery as part of a Clean Lakes Alliance Volunteer Day

# Historical Milestones

## BEFORE Clean Lakes Alliance

**1. No nonprofit connecting people to the lakes**

A growing alliance of nearly 2,000 donating individuals and groups, guided by a 48-member Community Board, with lake-centered festivals and events drawing thousands of participants each year



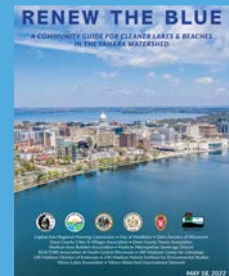
**2. No nearshore water quality monitoring**

Real-time water quality reports are shared through LakeForecast.org and the free app, with more than 80 monitoring stations across the five Yahara lakes



**3. No community lake cleanup plan**

*RENEW THE BLUE: A Community Guide for Cleaner Lakes & Beaches in the Yahara Watershed* (2022) was drafted and formally adopted by the 19 cross-sector organizations of the Yahara CLEAN Compact



**4. No lake health progress reporting to the public**

Release of the annual *State of the Lakes* provides transparency around watershed health, lake conditions, and community progress toward water quality goals



**5. No farmer-led conservation group**

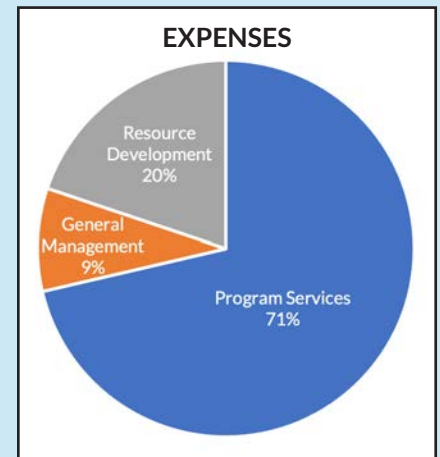
Clean Lakes Alliance helped create and continues to financially support the farmer-led Yahara Pride Farms, a nonprofit encouraging the adoption of land conservation practices to protect water quality



<b>BEFORE</b> <b>Clean Lakes Alliance</b>	<b>BECAUSE OF</b> <b>Clean Lakes Alliance</b>
<b>6. No Yahara lakes-focused grant program to leverage partner action</b>	<p>Since 2010, more than \$1.4 million in Clean Lakes Grants have been awarded to help fund programs, buy equipment, perform land restorations, and move projects forward</p> 
<b>7. No organized business involvement</b>	<p>Involved businesses and organizations have grown to nearly 300 donating Lake Partners, with many employees regularly participating in Clean Lakes Alliance-hosted Volunteer Days and Lunch &amp; Learns</p> 
<b>8. No Clean Lakes Alliance program &amp; event impacts</b>	<p>In 2024, Clean Lakes Alliance made 163,791 direct connections through our various programs, events, and communications</p> 
<b>9. No lake-science presenter series open to the public</b>	<p>Clean Lakes 101 Science Cafés and field trips draw an average of 90 virtual and in-person attendees each month</p> 
<b>10. No organized advocacy specifically focused on improving our lakes</b>	<p>Lake protective policies and budgets are promoted and adopted through targeted advocacy campaigns</p> 

# 2024 Financials

NET ASSETS WITHOUT DONOR RESTRICTIONS	2024	2023
<b>Support and Revenue</b>		
Events, programs & sponsorships	\$ 204,156	\$ 319,279
Individual (Friends)	489,269	433,811
Business/organization (Lake Partners)	128,005	128,214
Grants	109,326	126,086
In-Kind		
Occupancy	192,378	175,305
Legal	0	0
Professional Services	126,872	50,322
Program supplies and services	40,706	66,638
Investment return - net	12,954	6,883
Change in beneficial interest in assets at Madison Community Foundation	2,861	2,675
Sale of Advertising Space	29,500	36,958
Interest	6,594	5,232
<b>Total support and revenue without restrictions</b>	<b>\$ 1,342,621</b>	<b>\$ 1,351,403</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>		
Program services		
Education and outreach	\$ 712,540	\$ 645,126
Watershed programming	662,090	605,347
<b>Total program services</b>	<b>1,374,630</b>	<b>1,250,473</b>
Supporting activities		
Management and general	169,637	148,528
Resource development	382,149	480,548
<b>Total expenses</b>	<b>1,926,416</b>	<b>1,879,549</b>
Net assets released from restrictions	484,957	364,684
<b>Change in net assets without donor restriction</b>	<b>\$ (98,838)</b>	<b>\$ (163,462)</b>
<b>NET ASSETS WITH DONOR RESTRICTIONS</b>		
Contributions	\$ 235,916	\$ 448,698
Net assets released from restrictions	(484,957)	(364,684)
Change in net assets with donor restriction	(249,041)	84,014
<b>Change in net assets</b>	<b>(347,879)</b>	<b>(79,448)</b>
<b>Net assets at beginning of year</b>	<b>925,691</b>	<b>1,005,139</b>
<b>Net assets at end of year</b>	<b>\$ 577,812</b>	<b>\$ 925,691</b>
<b>STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION - December 31st</b>		
<b>ASSETS</b>		
Cash	\$ 186,541	\$ 407,772
Unconditional promises to give	403,673	514,372
Prepaid expenses	22,931	22,238
Frozen Assets Fund, held by MCF	34,522	31,661
Investments	128,127	71,621
Financing lease right-of-use asset	42,347	10,847
<b>Total assets</b>	<b>\$ 818,141</b>	<b>\$ 1,058,511</b>
<b>LIABILITIES</b>		
Accounts payable	\$ 41,121	\$ 16,779
Accrued payroll	30,820	12,278
Deferred compensation	123,316	72,021
Grants payable	0	0
Deferred revenue	2,000	21,000
Financing lease liability	43,072	10,742
<b>Total liabilities</b>	<b>\$ 240,329</b>	<b>\$ 132,820</b>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>		
Undesignated	\$ 167,374	\$ 269,073
Designated for agency endowment held at MCF	34,522	31,661
<b>Total net assets without donor restrictions</b>	<b>201,896</b>	<b>300,734</b>
Net assets with donor restrictions	375,916	624,957
<b>Total net assets</b>	<b>577,812</b>	<b>925,691</b>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES &amp; NET ASSETS</b>	<b>\$ 818,141</b>	<b>\$ 1,058,511</b>



Statement of activities for the years ended December 31st, 2024 and 2023.

The 2024 and 2023 Statements of Activities and Statements of Financial Position have been audited by Wegner CPAs. Copies of the complete Annual/Impact Report are available at Clean Lakes Alliance's offices or online at [cleanlakesalliance.org](http://cleanlakesalliance.org).

# Donor Dollars at Work

Clean Lakes Alliance's efforts are made possible thanks to the generosity of our nearly 2,000 individual and organizational donors. Whether you are a resident who values healthy lakes or a business that appreciates the economic value of our waters, there are opportunities for you to financially contribute to our cause.

## WATERSHED ACTION & PROGRAMS

Clean Lakes Alliance's work is geared toward catalyzing project action while spearheading new initiatives that generate real results. We also regularly advocate for policies and investments to improve watershed health, summarize progress through the annual *State of the Lakes*, and lead coalitions that drive action around science-based solutions.

## EDUCATION

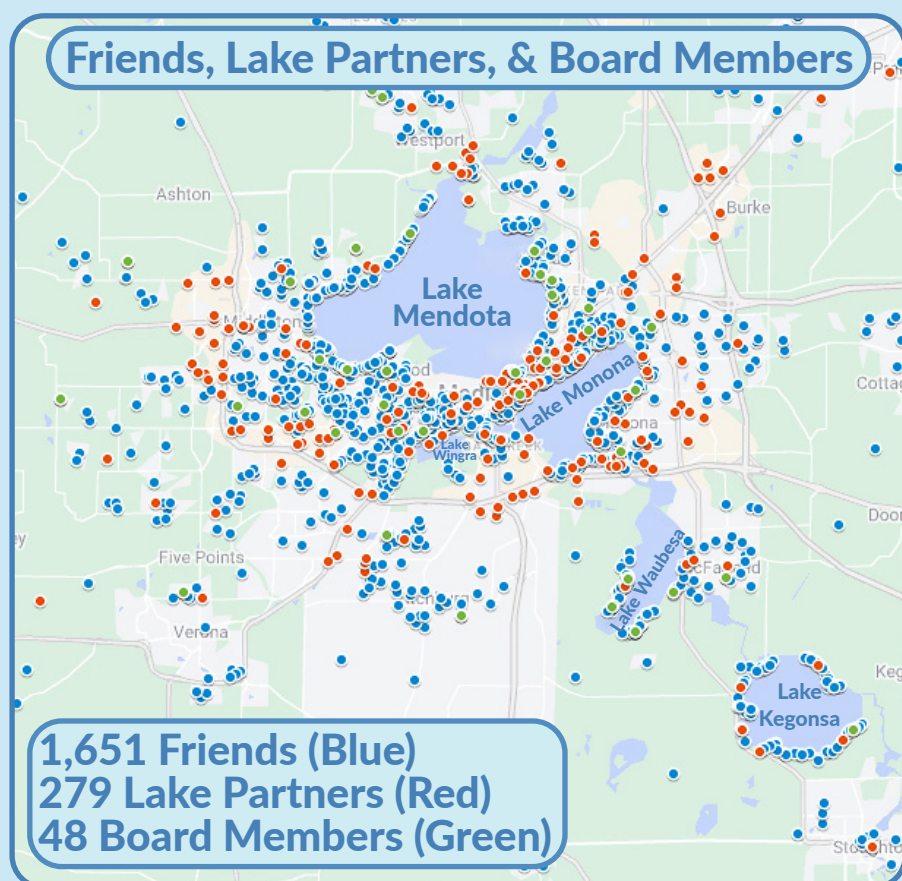
One of the most important aspects of building watershed stewardship is helping people understand what is needed to achieve cleaner waters. By raising awareness of the issues and guiding action, we believe we are laying the necessary groundwork for positive and enduring change.

## OUTREACH & RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

Growing an alliance of individuals, local businesses, nonprofit organizations, and governmental entities helps propel us toward our vision of "a community renowned for its healthy lakes, lands, and waters." Clean Lakes Alliance uses many tools to connect with friends, raise funds, and build a larger network of supporters. We also work to influence decision-makers about the challenges we face and the opportunities for improvement.

## ADMINISTRATION

To ensure donation dollars are effectively invested and tracked, Clean Lakes Alliance retains qualified experts to manage our incoming funds, external audits, insurance coverages, and operating policies. We also regularly report on key performance metrics, consistently earning us the GuideStar/Candid Platinum Seal of Transparency. This exceptional designation sets us apart from other nonprofits, demonstrating our trustworthiness to the public and how our work exceeds national nonprofit standards. It also shows we provide donors with the information necessary to make smart giving decisions.



# 2024 Clean Lakes Alliance Highlights

## Celebrating & Growing the Alliance

Because of our beautiful lakes, Greater Madison is routinely ranked among the most desirable places in the nation to live and visit. We also know how to have fun while working to protect these amenities. Popular events like Frozen Assets, the Community Breakfast, Loop the Lake, and our Fore! Lakes Golf Outing draw thousands of participants while helping to raise awareness and money for the lakes in every season.

Loop the Lake in 2024 saw a record 1,856 people biking, walking, running, or kayaking in support of our lakes. We also reached a near-record 279 donating businesses, organizations, and government partners (called “Lake Partners”). Other records were set on the digital media front, with 162,278 website page views and 14,123 social media followers.

7,964  
Program/Event  
Participants & Volunteers



Loop the Lake  
Bike Ride



Frozen  
Assets



Educational  
Boat Tours



Partnered  
Events

Panelists at Clean Lakes 101 Science Café in May 2024

## Advocacy

Clean Lakes Alliance is advised by an Advocacy Committee and a 48-member Community Board on matters related to policy positions and occasional lobbying. Whenever appropriate, we encourage action on specific issues, policies, or budget items that could materially impact lake and watershed health.

In 2024, we continued to advocate for progress around *Renew the Blue* recommendations. This included supporting partner-led projects like the Madison LakeWay redesign, creation of a Lake Waubesa Management Plan, and Dane County's efforts to bring additional manure-processing capacity to the watershed.

1,821  
Community Talk  
Attendees





Volunteers, including Clean Lakes Alliance staff, plant native plants along Lake Mendota's shoreline at the Executive Residence, photo courtesy Garrett Hopkins and Rock River Coalition

## Clean Lakes Grants

The more than \$1.4 million in Clean Lakes Grants awarded since 2010 catalyzed partner action and provided seed money to advance innovative projects. In 2024 alone, the program distributed \$68,289 in grant support. Examples of funding and other assistance include:

- Completion of a 160-acre "platinum prairie" at Pheasant Branch Conservancy on Lake Mendota's west shore
- Phase 2 completion of native plantings along 300 feet of lakeshore at the Governor's Executive Residence
- Indigenous effigy mound education at Hudson Park on Lake Monona
- Ongoing support for a Precision Agriculture Specialist to help farmers convert unproductive cropland into perennial cover, improving water quality and wildlife habitat
- Assessment of the Yahara lakes' economic impact to Greater Madison

## Education

Raising awareness about our lakes, lands, and waters helps transform stakeholders into inspired watershed stewards. We host recurring Clean Lakes 101 Science Cafés, Lunch & Learns, field trips, and other fun events to connect as many people to the lakes and our work as possible. We also engage our partners and supporters through Lake-O-Gram newsletters and the Greater Madison Lake Guide, featuring our annual *State of the Lakes*.

In addition to providing our own educational programming, Clean Lakes Alliance regularly partners with other groups to combine resources and maximize impacts. Our “Clean Boats, Clean Waters” partnership with Dane County and the Wisconsin DNR is one example, resulting in 2,457 boater interactions during the 2024 season alone. Through courtesy inspections and cleanings, an important line of defense is established to prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species.



**2,457  
Boater Interactions**

Clean Lakes Alliance Watercraft Educator interacts with a boater through the Clean Boats, Clean Waters Program



**3,721  
Education Hours**

Teaching children about the science of our lakes at the Loop the Lake Bike Ride in June 2024

## Volunteerism

Passionate volunteers drive many of our initiatives, magnifying our capacity to affect positive change. It is through their time, talent, and expertise that we can closely track water quality conditions, host large community events, and perform watershed-improvement work all year round.

Thanks to volunteerism, 352 individuals representing 24 different businesses and organizations rolled up their sleeves each week to help make a difference. Volunteers also served on our boards and committees, powered our LakeForecast monitoring app, and supported events like the Frozen Assets Festival and Loop the Lake.



**615 Total Volunteers  
1,859 Volunteer Hours**

Clean Lakes Alliance partners with Perkins Coie and Village of McFarland to clean up McDaniel Park Beach on Lake Waubesa in July 2024



**1,876**  
**Condition Reports**

**81**  
**Monitoring Stations**

**6,001**  
**LakeForecast App Users**

LakeForecast water quality monitoring training with Clean Lakes Alliance in May 2024, photo courtesy Robert Bertera

## Monitoring

In 2024, more than 100 trained “citizen scientists” reported real-time conditions across all five of the Yahara lakes. Through interactive maps on the LakeForecast app and website, the public was given free access to the latest changes in water clarity, temperature, algal bloom presence, and beach closures from Memorial Day to Labor Day.

Thanks to our network of LakeForecast monitors, lake users were able to quickly identify the best spots to enjoy the water on any given day. It was also used as an early warning system for when and where potentially toxic cyanobacteria (blue-green algae) blooms were forming. Every year, the resulting data are used for research purposes and contribute to the development of Clean Lakes Alliance’s *State of the Lakes*.

## Honors & Recognitions

The North American Lake Management Society (NALMS) honored Clean Lakes Alliance with an international recognition for its exceptional commitment to community education and outreach. The award — our second recognition from NALMS — was presented at the group's annual conference in Tahoe, CA, in acknowledgment of the organization's "inspiring and effective approach to lake stewardship."

Additional 2024 distinctions included five national Telly Awards honoring the educational and production value of a short video created in partnership with the Ho-Chunk Nation. Called "Our Past Can Shape Our Future" and available on Clean Lakes Alliance's YouTube channel, the video speaks to the thousands of years of Indigenous history and culture that have left an enduring legacy on Greater Madison's Teejop (Ho-Chunk name for the Four Lakes area).

We were also honored with two local recognitions. In honor of Clean Lakes Alliance's leadership, we celebrated Executive Director James Tye's listing in *In Business* magazine's "Power 100," a recognition for his outstanding dedication to nonprofit excellence and significant community contributions. In addition, the organization received a commendation from Dane County for its invaluable contributions to the creation of a 160-acre "platinum prairie" at Pheasant Branch Conservancy.

Today, Clean Lakes Alliance is counted among the most influential lake organizations in the nation, earning Candid's Platinum Seal of Transparency and Charity Navigator's highest, four-star nonprofit ranking.



### 1 International Award

Volunteer Day at Holy Wisdom Monastery with community and board members in September 2024



### 5 National Awards

Clean Lakes Alliance, Ho-Chunk Nation, and Studio 88 celebrate the collaboration of five Telly Award honors



### 2 Local Recognitions

Clean Lakes Alliance Executive Director James Tye honored for being one of In Business magazine's "Power 100"



### 2 Third-Party Review Accolades

View of Lake Monona, photo courtesy Robert Bertera

#### LEARN MORE

To learn more about these programs and the other good work of Clean Lakes Alliance, visit [cleanlakesalliance.org](https://cleanlakesalliance.org).