

# 2021 ANNUAL REPORT



Institute for Conservation  
**LEADERSHIP**

Dear Friends of ICL –

**Many tools will help to create positive change for our world. We believe that collaboration is one of the foundational approaches needed for healthy communities and a healthy planet.**

The cascading headlines talk about our urgent need to mitigate climate change, protect clean water, develop healthy food systems, build racial equality, and find sustainable energy sources. A single person or organization cannot do it. We need each other. We need to work together.

In recently re-reading adrienne maree brown's book, *Emergent Strategy*, I found her optimistic approach rooted in nature inspiring. She underscores the beauty and power of collaboration:

“There is an art to flocking: staying separate enough not to crowd each other, aligned enough to maintain a shared direction, and cohesive enough to always move towards each other.”

The art form of collaborative leadership practices engagement, cooperation and creates forward momentum toward a shared

direction. The stories we share in this year's annual report demonstrate the ways ICL helps leaders actively address disengagement and competition. We've helped leaders re-energize their work. We've provided guidance and encouragement to help collaborative efforts get un-stuck by addressing conflict, discerning direction, and re-imagining themselves.

We are grateful for so many productive partnerships across the last year. Your support allows ICL to work with leaders who are finding creative collaborative approaches for urban wilderness, water quality, sustainable municipalities and communities, strategies for climate change resilience, and so much more.

Let's follow nature and continue to flock together!

**Dianne J. Russell**  
President

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# OUR MISSION

To support healthy communities and a healthy Earth, the Institute for Conservation Leadership strengthens leaders, organizations, coalitions, and networks.

# OUR VISION

We envision a diverse set of leaders equipped to solve the most pressing issues that affect the well-being of our communities and the Earth. These leaders effectively engage others, work across sectors and boundaries, and choose and implement strategies that create positive change.

## STRATEGIC ACHIEVEMENTS

*In 2021, ICL focused a majority of our work on strengthening leaders in collaborative environments. To supplement this trend, we launched our Collaboration Resource Hub – a one stop shop for current and relevant tools, articles, and resources to support collaborative work. This hub aids leaders in community engagement, the transition from remote to in-person work, network building, and justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion work.*

## HIGHLIGHTS



Supported growth and impact of  
**55 Collaborations & Networks**



Reached over  
**1,200 Leaders from 465 Organizations**



Over **400 resources** downloaded by leaders coast to coast and around the world

# URBAN WILDERNESS

In 2021, ICL supported the strategic development of two urban wilderness coalitions. These unique networks exist at the intersection of a variety of sectors with a shared goal of creating more resilient and healthy urban areas for everyone.

## Chicago Wilderness

*“Chicago Wilderness needed support to move forward with a Green Vision that unified our seven larger goals. ICL helped us keep focus and supported our team in strategy development for our planning efforts and communicating our deliverables to our funders. ICL is well known in the conservation community so they brought credibility to the process that would have taken much longer without them present.”*

–Elizabeth Kessler, Chair, Chicago Wilderness



## Greater Baltimore Wilderness Coalition

*“Our goal was to support our partners in tripling their rates of tree planting by 2023 and we knew such a lift would be challenging to plan with a large group. Working with ICL on strategic planning and meeting facilitation was incredibly helpful – they provided a nice balance of guidance and encouragement while also allowing us to step in and lead.”*

–Eliza Thomas, Coordinator, Greater Baltimore Wilderness Coalition



Baltimore Tree Trust



# TAKING ACTION FOR ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRESS

Environmental progress depends on creative innovation, smart green policies, and new ways of doing things in our communities. ICL was pleased to support a national discussion to reduce energy use in buildings, local policy initiatives in Cleveland, and collaborative water quality improvement efforts with Vermont farmers.



## Building Technology Innovations

Buildings consume 30% of the energy used in the United States, making building technology innovations critical for carbon reduction. MSI STEM Research and Development Consortium (MSRDC) led a research project for the Department of Energy's Building Technologies Office (BTO). The goal: develop practical grassroots-oriented strategies to accelerate the path to market for building technology innovations. Quality recommendations required input from national laboratories, state energy utilities, businesses, investors, academic institutions, accelerators, and nonprofits. MSRDC turned to ICL to help create a full-day virtual workshop where every participant could learn and provide their perspectives.

*"From the first conversation, ICL helped us develop and refine critical research questions. Their structured questions produced qualitative responses that we could easily convert to quantitative data. ICL assisted us in embedding these questions in a set of workshop activities that engaged every participant and provided high quality feedback. ICL's detailed workshop framework allowed us to move seamlessly from presentations to over 200 attendees to smaller breakout discussions. It was a risk asking stakeholders to participate in a full-day virtual workshop at a time when most were nearing peak 'Zoom fatigue.' Yet, participants told us to 'Hold more workshops like this!' We plan to partner with ICL in the future."*

-Alex Thomé, Director of Research Development, MSRDC





Sarah Clark in Vermont.

## Vermont Agricultural Water Quality Partnership

*“ICL’s meeting facilitation was wonderfully planned. We appreciated how much energy went into understanding us and developing training to meet our goals. They did an amazing job and were engaged, heard what participants were saying, and adapted to emerging needs. I’ve heard a lot of positive feedback, with a number of folks incorporating the skills we learned that day into their work. The tools they gave us for engagement and connection have helped us navigate working in a virtual space. These skills continue to be a tremendous resource for our partners.”*

–Alli Lewis, Coordinator, VAWQP

## Ohio Environmental Council

*“ICL’s facilitation helped us bring together a diverse group of environmental advocates to put together a policy platform to support a healthier and greener Cleveland. They helped us make sure we were communicating well with partner organizations, meeting the needs of the group, and forming good relationships along the way. After engaging with ICL, we were able to move into 2022 with momentum—conducting expert conversations with Cleveland’s new mayor and his administration about these important policy priorities.”*

–Emily Bacha, Vice President of Public Affairs, Ohio Environmental Council



Joy Jackson, second from left, with Ohio Environmental partners.

# STRATEGIC NETWORK LEADERSHIP TRAINING: GOVERNMENT, BUSINESS, AND NONPROFIT

In the fall, we partnered with three dynamic Pittsburgh-area networks to strengthen the collaborative leadership skills of government leaders, businesses, and nonprofits. These networks of leaders joined forces to make a bigger impact on community and environmental health issues.

## CONNECT

*“This is the kind of training leaders in our network crave. The way ICL delivered content was SO good. We learned so much from them with their digital tools...they really helped transform our meetings. Everyone in the training was so pleased and thought it was great. They couldn’t believe two hours could go by so quickly in a Zoom.*



- Lydia Morin,  
Executive Director,  
CONNECT

## Sustainable Pittsburgh

*“ICL did an incredible job of creating interactive, engaging sessions—something all the more impressive given the virtual context. I walked away with important insight on network development that has absolutely changed—for the better—the ways in which our programs operate. They gave all participants important tools to understand and better foster network*

*leadership, from supporting intersecting relationships among leaders, to education about the ‘network mindset,’ and helping us learn how to better foster engagement with network members.”*

-Joylette Portlock, Ph.D., Executive Director,  
Sustainable Pittsburgh



## New Sun Rising

*“The network leadership training provided by ICL in the Pittsburgh region introduced us to a whole new shared vocabulary and practical tools for building collective movements. The experience was highly interactive and fun, strengthening strategic relationships that will bear fruit for years to come.”*

- Scott Wolovich,  
Executive Director, New Sun Rising



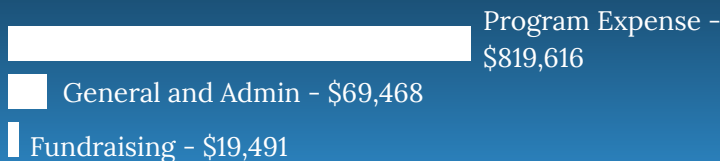


# FINANCIAL SNAPSHOT

**Total Revenue: \$947,237**



**Total Expenses: \$908,575**



## SUPPORTERS

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## FOUNDATION SUPPORT

American Endowment Foundation	Cleveland Foundation	George Gund Foundation	San Diego Foundation
Charles Stewart Mott Foundation	Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo	Highstead Foundation	William Penn Foundation



*Institute for Conservation*  
**LEADERSHIP**

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