



**GULF  
RESTORATION  
NETWORK**

[healthygulf.org](http://healthygulf.org)

# **ANNUAL REPORT**

## **2014**



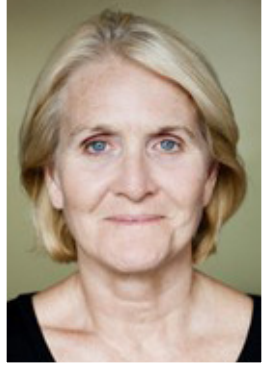
**“How do I sum up 20 years of incredible work? GRN, from beginning to end, has been able to accomplish unimaginable things in the Gulf. GRN responded excellently to the BP oil disaster, and through strategic collaboration along the Mississippi River, has truly impacted the Gulf’s Dead Zone. I am grateful too for Cyn – she has stuck around and I am proud that she is still with us.”**

**- Juan Parras,  
Founding Board Member**



# A LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

In 2014 GRN turned 20! I marvel at the ways GRN changed over that time and the number of victories we achieved in those years. Sadly, those two decades also saw destruction from several storms, including Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, and the largest oil disaster in U.S. history.



Far too many of the Gulf's coastal communities are still reeling from the effects of these disasters. Coastal fishing communities are struggling to survive, tar balls continue to wash up on our beaches, dolphins continue to die in record numbers, and our coastal wetlands remain oiled, threatened and degraded. What is very clear is that all of us must continue to work to ensure that the health of the Gulf and its coastal communities are restored and sustained.

I believe that GRN is uniquely positioned to tackle these ongoing threats for the same reasons we have succeeded in fighting for the Gulf these past 20 years. We (i) understand the importance of building coalitions; (ii) focus our work on significant long-term threats to the Gulf where GRN can make a difference; (iii) collaborate with individuals and communities to effectively address the environmental threats that they face; and (iv) engage our supporters, donors, foundation funders and coalition partners – we really couldn't do it without all of you.

The Gulf region is a national treasure that continues to inspire me with its multitude of cultures, natural beauty and biodiversity. 2015 will be another significant year full of challenges and victories, which I look forward to facing with our supporters and allies.

  
**Cyn Sarthou,**  
**Executive Director**



# ANNUAL HIGHLIGHTS

## Overview

Twenty years since our founding, GRN is still committed to uniting and empowering people to protect and restore the natural resources of the Gulf Region. In 2014, GRN collaboratively organized across the Gulf - we joined with thousands across the nation for Hands Across the Sand events in FL, MS & LA, we celebrated our 20th year with partner organizations at a Summer Solstice party in New Orleans' City Park, and partnered with the Gulf Future Coalition to host the sixth Gulf Gathering. We are grateful and excited to continue our important work organizing, advocating, monitoring, and collaborating in the interest of protecting and restoring the Gulf.



Rainbarrel auction at Solstice Party, June 2014.

## Coast Not Coal

In 2014, communities across Louisiana came together to fight against coal export terminals threatening Louisiana's coast and coastal communities. In December 2014, RAM Terminals, an out-of-state company, was dealt a major blow when a state judge responded to a lawsuit filed by GRN and our partners by revoking the RAM coal export terminal's coastal use permit.

This win came in the wake of several other victories for coast over coal, including resolutions from Gretna, Westwego and Jefferson Parish questioning the export terminal and its coal trains. Dirty coal export terminals pose a serious threat to coastal communities and the air, water and land that they need to survive. GRN continues our work alongside coastal communities fighting toxic coal export terminals.



## Switching Gears to Save Bluefin Tuna

The Gulf of Mexico is the only known breeding ground for western Atlantic bluefin tuna - a huge, fast and powerful fish internationally listed as a "protected" species. Bluefin tuna have long been threatened by surface longline fishing, which involves hundreds of baited hooks suspended from lines that stretch an average of 30 miles. And in 2010, the BP drilling disaster dealt another blow to bluefin - hundreds of millions of gallons of oil flooded into the Gulf of Mexico, polluting the western Atlantic bluefin tuna's breeding ground during the peak of spawning season.

After years of organizing, GRN and our partners achieved a major victory in December 2014 when the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Agency (NOAA) announced new protections for bluefin in the Gulf and beyond. These protections are a step in the right direction for the Gulf ecosystem, and we continue working to ensure that Gulf fishermen have the resources they need to transition to more sustainable fishing gear.

## No Drilling on Mississippi's Horizon

Mississippi's coast and wilderness barrier islands are an amazing natural and economic treasure, but in recent years, state leaders have revived efforts to open up Mississippi waters to oil and gas activities. If these plans are allowed to move forward, residents and tourists could see 4-6 story rigs and drilling platforms along the coast. In response to this threat, GRN has been working with partners in the 12 Miles South Coalition to protect Mississippi's coast and communities from drilling rigs on the horizon.

Throughout 2014, GRN and our partners advocated against a plan to offer gas leases in state waters. In June, after much public pressure, and a lawsuit filed by GRN and the Sierra Club, we scored a huge victory when a state judge blocked drilling plans because the state did not consider the effects drilling would have on the environment, economy and quality of life on the coast.



## Restoring the Gulf in the Wake of the BP Disaster

Four years after the BP drilling disaster, GRN continued efforts to achieve full restoration of Gulf Coast communities and the environment. In April 2014, GRN and partner organizations across the Gulf commemorated the beginning of the BP disaster by organizing press conferences and events in Florida, Louisiana and Mississippi where residents shared the ongoing impacts of the disaster and restoration needs.

Throughout the year, GRN pushed for transparency and public input in the restoration process - paying necessary attention to funding flows from the RESTORE Act and the Natural Resources Damage Assessment (NRDA), and monitoring ongoing impacts of the disaster. This included workshops and public visioning salons in all five Gulf States to engage residents in restoration decision making.

In October, GRN filed suit against NRDA Trustees challenging the wildly inappropriate use of BP's disaster restoration dollars for Alabama's beachfront convention center in Gulf State Park. GRN continues to push decision makers to be more transparent and effectively incorporate public input.

# FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

2014 was full of financial milestones and successes for GRN – much of which was due to 20 years of work building a dynamic funding stream of individual supporters, foundations and business donors.

Over the last year, GRN collaborated with many local businesses, artists and supporters to celebrate and grow our work. 2014's Easter Keg Hunt was a hit thanks to collaboration with NOLA Brewing, and we enjoyed another beautiful boat party off Mississippi's coast with Ship Island Excursions and our friend, Captain Louis Skrmetta. GRN also threw an amazingly successful and delicious party at Mondo, with support from longtime GRN supporter and former board member, Chef Susan Spicer.



Chef Susan Spicer and Cyn Sarthou.

For the 8th year, GRN collaborated with the Voodoo Music + Art Experience to elevate the restoration of the Gulf Coast through partnership with musicians and festival-goers. A great memory from Voodoo 2014 is our flyover of Louisiana's disappearing wetlands and restoration efforts with Rise Against and Southwings.

## Aveda Partnership

We were proud to continue our partnership with Aveda for Earth Month 2014. Throughout April, Aveda salons across the Gulf raised funds and awareness for our water work. We are extremely grateful to all of the hardworking Aveda staff and clients for their efforts to ensure a successful Earth Month. Thanks to Aveda, GRN has been able to protect 190,000 acres of wetland since 2011.



Aveda representatives for Aveda Earth Month.

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**Aaron Viles** New Orleans, LA

## 2015 STAFF



**Cyn Sarthou**, Executive Director

**Shona Clarkson**, Development and Communications Coordinator

**Irene Dowling**, Office Manager

**Scott Eustis**, Coastal Wetland Specialist

**Jonathan Henderson**, Coastal Resiliency Organizer

**Raleigh Hoke**, Campaign Director

**Michael Hurst**, Administrative Assistant and Graphic Designer

**Harry Lowenburg**, Campaign Organizer

**Jordan Macha**, Gulf Policy Analyst

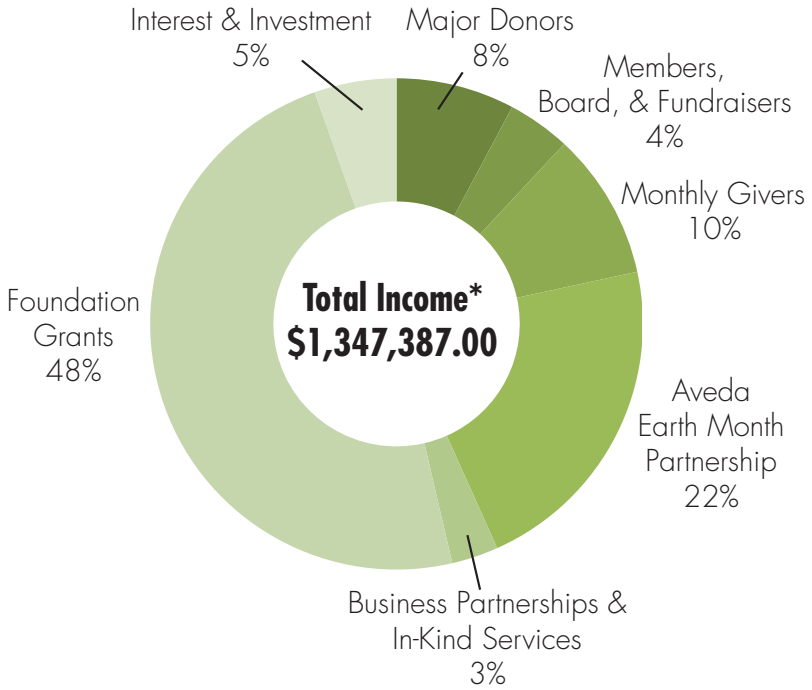
**Natasha Noordhoff**, Development Director

**Matt Rota**, Senior Policy Director

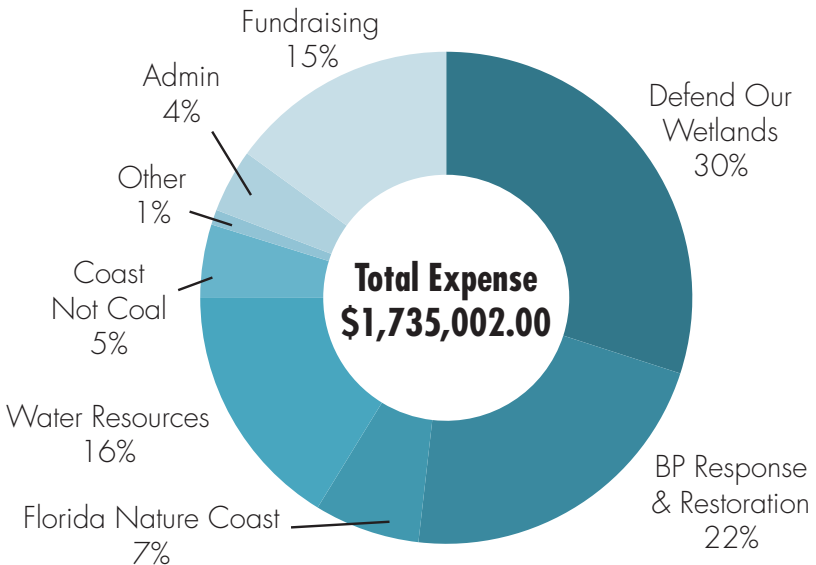
**Andrew Whitehurst**, Water Program Director



# Income



# Expenses



\*In 2014, GRN face an unexpected funding gap in foundation support. By dipping into our reserve, we were able to meet the budget and plan for more sustainable funding.

# MAJOR DONORS

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**"I sleep better at night knowing the outstanding team at GRN is working mightily to protect and restore our fragile coast!"**

**- Nancy & Don Adams  
Donors Since 2006**





## **GULF RESTORATION NETWORK**

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