

COASTAL
CONSERVATION
LEAGUE

Impact Report

FY 2020-2021



September 15, 2021

Dear Fellow Advocates,

The impacts of climate change and the growth along our coast means our mission is more urgent than ever. We work to protect the health of the natural resources of the South Carolina coastal plain and ensure a high quality of life for all of the people who live in and love this special place. Supporters of the Coastal Conservation League like you make this mission possible.

Through the challenges of the last year, with the ebbs and flows of the pandemic, we remain focused on finding effective solutions to the challenges that our region faces. Your support enables our team to bring the best science and policy to guide public decisions, just as we have been doing since 1989. We continue to engage city and county government to improve the places where we live and work, collaborate with state and federal agencies to reach better outcomes for our coast, and build the resilience of our food systems with GrowFood Carolina.

Over the last year we have sharpened our focus on how the burdens of our changing climate fall disproportionately on communities of color. Some neighborhoods are more vulnerable to flooding and deal with dirtier air from burning coal and gas. We are committed to addressing environmental problems in a way that recognizes these realities. We continue to listen to the communities up and down the coast, and we are building a broader league, an organization that listens and brings new coalitions together.

I'm happy to share some highlights from the last fiscal year. I am so glad that supporters like you are with us in these and other efforts. We could not do this work without you.

Onward,

Laura Cantral



Left: Aerial view of Page Island. **Right:** Laura Cantral at the signing of Bill 259 instating the South Carolina Office of Resilience.

Conservation Highlights

Building Resilience in South Carolina

Last year, Governor Henry McMaster signed Act 163, the Disaster Relief and Resilience Act, to create a state Office of Resilience to oversee statewide coordination of resilience and disaster recovery efforts, creating a revolving fund for resilience projects (such as buyouts of flood-prone homes), overseeing federal disaster aid allocated to the state, and compiling a statewide resilience plan to help guide future policy. Our staff and leadership were integral in achieving this outcome, and we are optimistic will help make our natural resources, cities, towns, and rural landscapes healthier, stronger, and better able to cope with growing threats.



Sunset at Deveau Bank

Enabling a Clean Energy Future

Burning fossil fuels to generate electricity dumps pollution into our air and water, so we have been dedicated to significantly shifting South Carolina energy policy over the past decade toward renewable energy and reduced waste. During the past year, working with the Southern Environmental Law Center at the state Public Service Commission, we achieved the first-ever state regulatory decisions rejecting long-range utility plans to continue running coal-fired power plants into the 2040s. Now, we are following up through expert testimony in numerous cases to maximize renewable energy expansion and customer energy efficiency to replace those polluting coal plants.

At the state legislature, we won new policy reforms that will extend similar Public Service Commission review of long-range planning to formerly self-governing Santee Cooper. One provision of this law negotiated by the Conservation League requires Santee Cooper to develop a plan for net-zero carbon emissions by 2050. We are working with Santee Cooper on its plans to retire the Winyah coal-fired power plant in Georgetown. Taken together, the private-utility coal plants and the Santee Cooper coal plants emit about two-thirds of the carbon pollution in South Carolina's electric sector—so if we succeed, we are making real progress on combating climate change.

This year, we also won state regulatory decisions that will allow customer-owned solar to grow over the next decade, including a settlement that promises to develop solar programs for low-income customers. Already, customer-owned solar in South Carolina's private utility territories grew in only four years to exceed the amount in North Carolina under our previously-negotiated 2014 reforms. We also reached a settlement that will dedicate \$15 million to weatherize low-income homes in Dominion Energy South Carolina territory and establish a process to develop rate reforms to benefit low-income customers. These initiatives are part of a vision of transitioning energy systems to zero-emissions while guaranteeing benefits for all customers.

3,473
People Signed Petitions

488
People Attended
Webinars

Protecting Captain Sams Spit

This June, the South Carolina Supreme Court ruled, for the third time, to protect Captain Sams, a fragile teardrop of sand at the end of Kiawah Island. This is a battle we've been fighting for more than 10 years, alongside our partners at the South Carolina Environmental Law Project. We are hopeful that this decision struck the final blow on plans to build a steel wall, roadway, stormwater system, and utility lines to support a 50-unit housing development. Captain Sams is simply not the place for this type of infrastructure and is best left to its remarkable natural inhabitants—the strand-feeding dolphins, bobcats, and other plants and wildlife that call this place home.

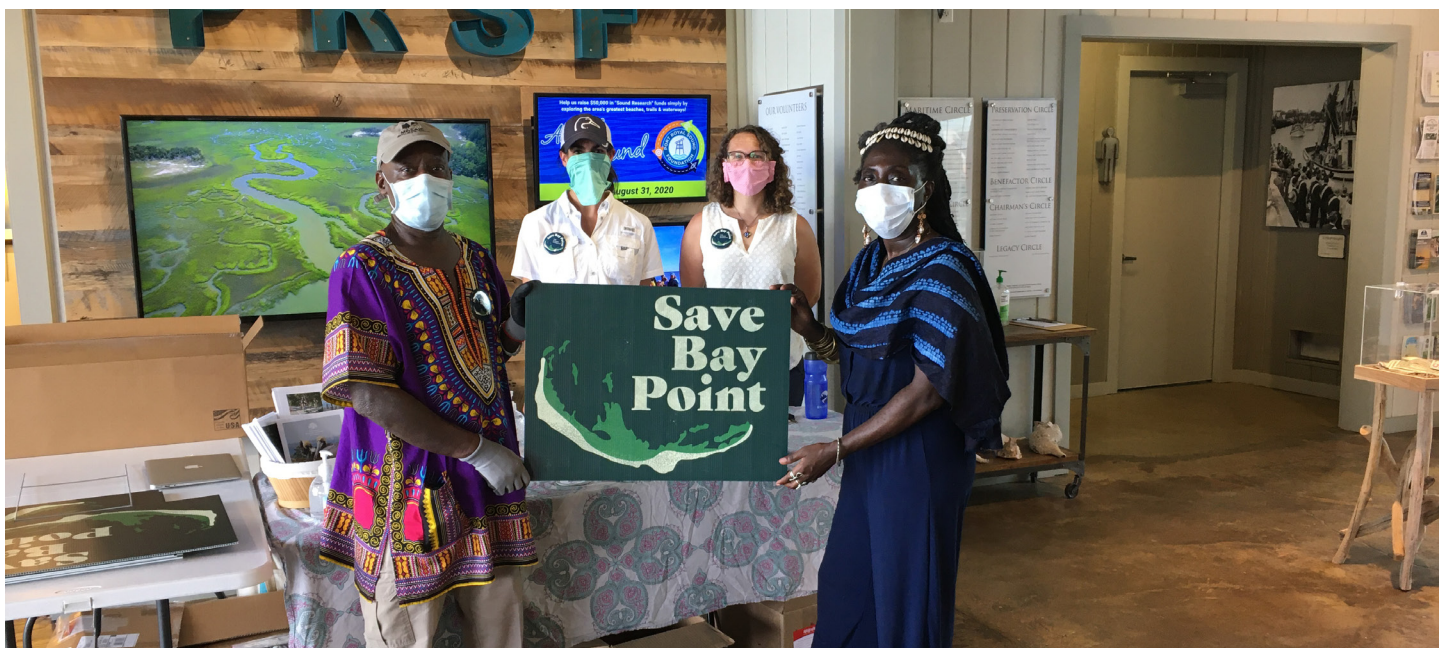
Saving Bay Point Island

Last fall, the Beaufort County Zoning Board of Appeals rejected a proposed “ecotourism resort” on Bay Point Island, an undeveloped island in Port Royal Sound. It is highly erosional and its shoreline changes from hour to hour. It lacks services—no roads, sewer lines, or power—and it still takes emergency medical services more than an hour just to get to the island’s sandy shores. Fortunately, the Zoning Board, after hearing significant opposition from Governor Henry McMaster, the Gullah/Geechee Sea Island Coalition, and conservation supporters like you, unanimously denied the developer’s request. The developers have appealed to state court, and we have moved to intervene to help the County defend their denial decision. In the meantime, we’ll continue working toward permanent protections for Bay Point and other barrier islands that are prone to this type of interest.

2,138
People
Contributed

463

People Attended
Our Events



Protecting Charleston Harbor from Plastic Pollution

This spring we reached a settlement agreement in our case against Frontier Logistics over a 2019 plastic nurdles spill in Charleston area waterways. The settlement will prevent the future release of these tiny plastic pellets from Frontier, with scheduled site audits and accountability should another spill occur. In addition, Frontier will pay \$1 million into a “Healthy Harbor Fund” at the Coastal Community Foundation for projects that benefit the Charleston Harbor watershed. We expect the foundation to distribute the first grants by spring 2022. This is a big step toward a cleaner, plastic-free harbor, and one we are optimistic will set a positive precedent going forward.

Kwame Sha, of All Mobile Productions, Jessie White, Juliana Smith, and Gullah/Geechee Chieftess Queen Quet at the Port Royal Sound Foundation, August 2020

Supporting Farmers through the Pandemic

This past year has been one of the most significant on the books for our work at GrowFood Carolina. As the pandemic took hold last spring and revenue to our farmers plummeted due to closed restaurants, schools, and institutions, we adjusted course in order to replace income for our farmer partners. We started a weekly, direct to consumer produce box program, allowing us to keep purchasing produce from farmers across the state and make it available for safe pickup to the public. The boxes—loaded with favorites like strawberries, asparagus, peaches, tomatoes, and more—have been a hit, and we hope to expand our reach. If you live in the Charleston area and want to receive emails to purchase food boxes, please reach out to Anthony Mirisciotta, GrowFood Carolina General Manager, at anthonym@growfoodcarolina.com.



SC Farmer | Mary Bull

Starting Soil to Sustenance

We also responded to the dramatic increase in hungry families in our area. Soil to Sustenance, our produce box donation program, launched in April 2020 and has since delivered over 12,000 boxes—that's 120,000 pounds of fresh fruits and vegetables—to community members who may otherwise lack this fresh food access. These food boxes provide produce for a family of four for a week, through generous contributions from individuals, foundations, and federal programs. Only local produce goes into each box, helping to keep farmers on local farms. The need continues, and we're growing our partnerships with local organizations like Head Start Charleston, One80 Place, Humanities Foundation, and Lowcountry Food Bank to serve as many residents as possible.

Building a New Home for GrowFood Carolina

With all of this growth and change comes the need for more room to innovate, build, and deliver. We have been dreaming of a GrowFood warehouse space that is large enough to accommodate our growth. After much planning and work, that dream is now a step closer to reality, with the completed sale of our much-loved original space at 990 Morrison Drive. We're moving quickly to find our next home, and we can't wait to share updates on this journey with you in the months ahead.

412
First Time
Donors

15,318
People Opened Our Emails

Standing with the Phillips Community on Highway 41

Since 2005, we have been working alongside residents in Phillips, a historic African American settlement community in the East Cooper area founded in 1875, to improve mobility along Highway 41 in the wake of massive sprawling development that now encircles the once rural community. In 2016, Highway 41 was included as a priority project on Charleston County's half-cent sales tax.

Last year, Charleston County announced its intent to move forward with a plan to widen the road to five lanes through Phillips, displacing dozens of mostly heirs' property families along the corridor. This proposal continued a pattern of other past, poorly-planned transportation projects in our region that have an outsized impact on communities of color with little benefit for safer, multi-modal transportation. In response, we helped the Phillips community establish a broad coalition of local and national organizations that mobilized the broader community to respond to the public comment period in fall 2020, resulting in more than 3,000 people engaging in the process. Charleston County staff said that this is the largest public engagement response that their staff had ever experienced for a single road project.

In August 2021, Charleston County Council unanimously voted to pursue a compromise plan that would widen Highway 41 to four lanes on either side of the Phillips community and only add a single center turn lane through Phillips. The county will also construct a new road that goes around Phillips to provide more direct access to the large suburban communities that surround Phillips residents.



*Phillips Community Meeting
on the widening of Hwy 41*

Improving the Charleston Sea Wall Plan

Last year, we asked for your support to raise the funds needed to hire an engineering firm, Sherwood Design Engineers, to create an alternative, nature-based plan for the proposed Army Corps of Engineers eight-mile seawall project on the Charleston Peninsula. The wall, while it should help address flooding and sea level rise issues, should not do so at the expense of the cultural, natural, and recreational resources of the peninsula. Thanks to your support, Sherwood completed the study and presented their recommendations to the City of Charleston. Along with our partners at the Southern Environmental Law Center, we are using this report to bring science-based feedback to the Environmental Impact Statement process for the wall. This structure will drastically alter the peninsula's landscape for years to come, so it's important that we get it right.

Our Team

This list includes all staff who were employed as of June 30, 2021. Staff who have three or more years of tenure are marked with an asterisk.

Laura Cantral,* Executive Director

Reed Rayborn* Special Projects Manager
& Board Liaison

Land, Water & Wildlife

Emily Cedzo,* Senior Program Director

Riley Egger Project Manager

Rachel Hawes Project Manager

Communities & Transportation

Jason Crowley* Senior Program Director

Betsy La Force* Senior Project Manager

Robby Maynor Berkeley County Project Manager

Energy

Eddy Moore* Senior Program Director

Government Relations

Merrill McGregor* Director of Government Relations

Rikki Parker* Senior Program Director,
Legal & Program Support

North Coast

Becky Ryon Office Director

South Coast

Jessie White Office Director

Juliana Smith Project Manager

GrowFood Carolina

Anthony Mirisciotta General Manager

Shaunda Fifer* Director of Sales & Marketing

Richard Finne Driver/Warehouse Assistant

Kevin Gilly* Warehouse Operations
& Distribution Associate

Paul Haire Inventory Control/
Quality Assurance Specialist

Austin Lucas* Warehouse Operations
& Distribution Associate

Dave McAhron Driver/Warehouse Assistant

Benton Montgomery* Operations Manager

Deirdre Tanner* Supply Chain Wizard

Brita Van Fossen Sales & Marketing Manager

Anna Ware Sales & Marketing Assistant

Becca Watson* Farm Coordinator

Development

Nancy Appel* Director of Development

Taryn Mason Annual Fund Manager

Kati McArdle* Grants & Donor Communications Manager

Communications

Alan Hancock* Communications Director

Diane Knich* Communications Manager

Catie Lucey Creative Services Associate

Administration

Deb Davidson Human Resources Officer

Andy Hollis* Director of Technology & Operations

Kim Larson Accountant

Stacie Loeffler* Database Administrator

Mike Mistler Controller

DeAnna Ridley Bookkeeper

Jamie Roschal Office Coordinator

Board of Directors

as of June 30, 2021

Ceara Donnelley Chair

John E. Thompson Vice Chair

Margot T. Rose Secretary

Robert “Kent” Griffin Treasurer

Johnston C. Adams

Daniel W. Boone, III

William S. Brenizer

Lee Edwards

George W. Gephart, Jr.

Cynthia Kellogg

Pierre Manigault

Jeremiah Milbank III

David Westerlund

Steve Zoukis

Thank you for your generous support of our coastal communities & critters!



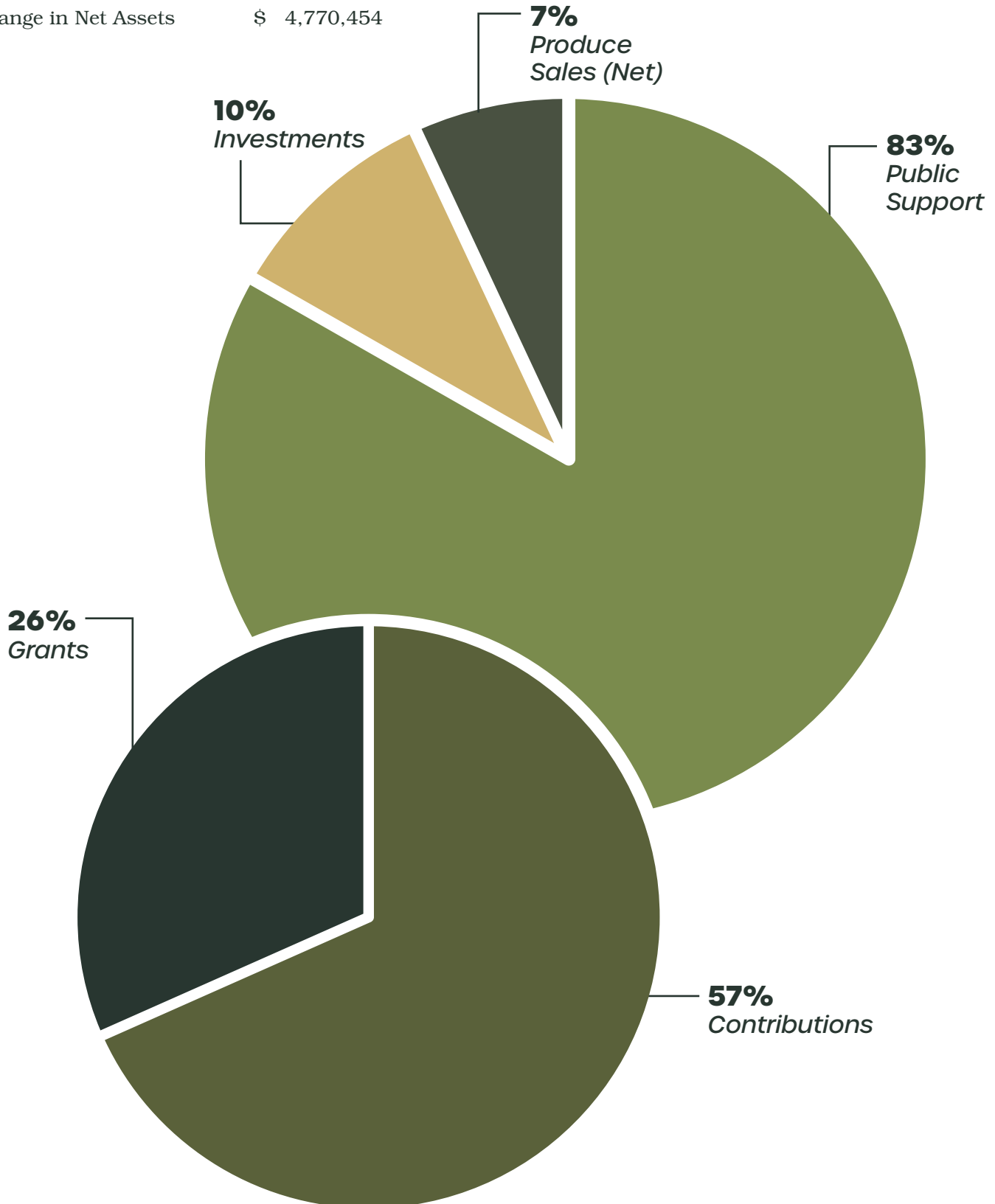
Top to bottom, left to right: Conservation League staff visiting the ACE Basin; Conservation League staff and volunteers on a clean up, in partnership with Surfrider; Conservation League staff at an oyster build on Shutes Folly.

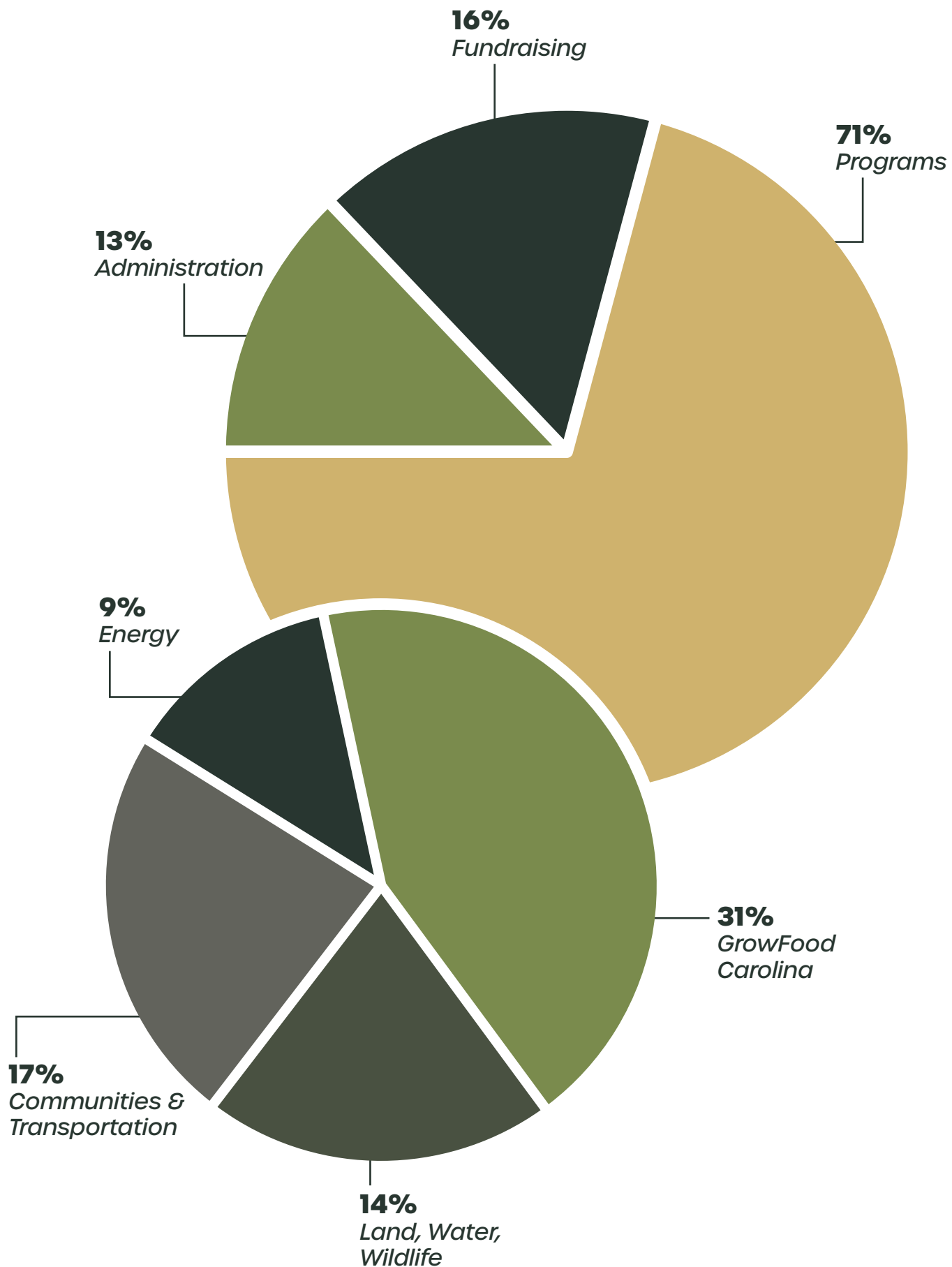
Financial Report

July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021

As of June 30, 2021

Total Assets	\$ 21,814,838
Total Liabilities	\$ 607,528
Net Assets	\$ 21,207,310
Change in Net Assets	\$ 4,770,454





Contact Us

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