



# Catalyzing Global Action for Water Resilience



## ABOUT THE PACIFIC INSTITUTE

Founded in 1987, the Pacific Institute is a nonpartisan global water think tank whose mission is to create and advance solutions to the world's most pressing water challenges. Recognizing how climate change is intensifying these challenges, our ambitious goal is to catalyze the transformation to water resilience in the face of climate change by 2030.

Leveraging more than 35 years of thought leadership, our work influences policies, programs, practices, and investments both in the United States and globally by combining groundbreaking evidence-based research with powerful outreach and engagement. Collaboration is core to our approach. Our interdisciplinary team proactively informs, influences, and convenes NGOs, the United Nations, frontline communities, utilities, Fortune 500 companies, and government agencies.

The Pacific Institute's strategy focuses on four areas recognized for their outsized potential to catalyze water resilience: water efficiency and reuse, nature-based solutions, water equity, and corporate water stewardship. As part of this strategy, the Pacific Institute serves as the co-secretariat of the CEO Water Mandate and its Water Resilience Coalition, mobilizing some of the world's most influential companies to take leadership action on water and build water resilience in 100 water-stressed basins by 2030.

## OUR COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION

The Pacific Institute continues to work toward a future where diversity fuels our innovation, equity informs our research, and inclusion shapes our path forward. Building on our proud history of integrating social equity into our water and climate research, we continually strive to enhance our internal Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) approach, acknowledging that this is an ongoing journey towards progress. By doing so, we aim to foster an environment where every voice is empowered, contributing to a dynamic intersectional approach that spans disciplines and geographies and is integral to our mission of solving the world's most pressing water challenges.

# Table of Contents



Leadership Letter



Outcomes and Impacts



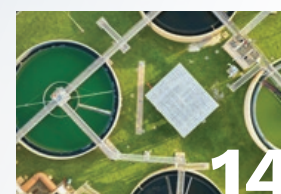
Thought Leadership Spans the Globe



Leading On Global Outcomes at the Historic UN Water Conference



Driving Corporate Action on Water



Elevating the Role of Water Efficiency and Reuse



Addressing Water and Climate Equity In Frontline Communities



Bolstering Global Water Security and Access



Water Resilience Through Nature-Based Solutions



Impacts in Colorado River Basin Negotiations and the Salton Sea



Scaling Impact of Corporate Water Stewardship



The People Behind Our Work



Financials



Thank You, Donors!



# Leading the Way During a Historic Year for Water

Dear Friends,

Never before have news headlines about water challenges been more prominent—or concerning. During 2023, climate change continued to intensify water-related disasters, impacting communities around the world.

In the United States, 2023 set a new record for weather and climate disasters, with 28 mega disasters leading to more than US\$92 billion in losses. The US West felt a water whiplash. The end of a megadrought, its driest 22-year period in 1,200 years, was abruptly met by historic 2023 flooding so significant it could be seen by NASA from space. California was deluged by nine atmospheric rivers during a single month, while New York City had its wettest September in over 100 years.

These phenomena played out across continents. In Africa, Libya experienced the deadliest storm in Africa's recorded history. In Europe, Turkey's capital city of Ankara saw "city streets turned into rivers." In Asia, relief camps were needed following historic flooding in northern India. And, in South America, several cities in Brazil saw water at levels higher than any point in recorded history over the past 150 years.

These realities made the connection between climate change and the water cycle—the very core of the Pacific Institute's work—hard to ignore.

Still, more than 2 billion people—about a quarter of the world's population—lack access to safely managed drinking water. As these realities and other pressures collide, water-related conflicts in many communities are also on the rise.

**The Pacific Institute's work has never been more critically needed.** Nor have we ever played such a pivotal role in forging solutions—to solve the water challenges at hand today and safeguard future generations.

## A Year of Action

During 2023, the Pacific Institute made powerful progress on our goal to catalyze the transformation to water resilience in the face of climate change by 2030. We advanced solutions informed by our own groundbreaking research and convened powerful levers of change across sectors to act. Globally, we identified 100 of the world's most critically water-stressed regions where we'll prioritize collective action, inspired hundreds of millions of dollars in water investments, and raised the profile of water as a key priority.

The Pacific Institute's work is increasingly headline news. During 2023 alone, our work was mentioned in media reports more than 13,000 times, including being prominently featured in Time, Forbes, The Guardian, National Public Radio, CNN, and The Washington Post.

## 2023—A Historic Year for Water Globally

This was a historic year for the visibility of water. Recognizing deep global concerns, the United Nations held its first Water Conference in nearly 50 years. Throughout this summit, world leaders turned to the Pacific Institute for trusted guidance. In fact, when the UN announced the conference's major outcomes, our initiatives were highlighted not once, but twice.

During the conference, the Pacific Institute launched the largest-known private sector water commitment now supported by more than 70 global companies operating in 140 countries. We also convened public and private sector actors to commit nearly US\$140 million to long-term water resilience investments. Our experts and research were front and center, leading global discussions on the troubling trends of global water-related conflict, as well as the role nature-based solutions and water efficiency and reuse strategies need to play in building long-term resilience.

Beyond the UN Water Conference, the Pacific Institute was featured as an authoritative voice on water resilience at more than 115 events, including the World Economic Forum's Annual Meeting, the UN Climate Summit (COP28), and the US Water Alliance's One Water Summit.

## Leading Solutions in the United States

In the United States, we advanced new groundbreaking research that is now informing and influencing policies and practices across the country. During 2023, conversation-shifting research included two first-ever national assessments. As you are reading this today, the recommendations in these reports are actively shifting stormwater management approaches and strategies to ensure frontline communities have access to water and sanitation.

In the Colorado River Basin, one of the most water-stressed basins on Earth, we provided expert testimony on drought contingency planning. The Pacific Institute catalyzed the launch of the California Water Resilience Initiative, a private sector-led initiative to accelerate multi-sector action to achieve a water-resilient future for California. We also advised governments and businesses on efficiency measures to reduce water use in Southern California, Phoenix, and Albuquerque.



Sally Liu  
Chair, Pacific Institute  
Board of Directors

## Looking Ahead

The year was also critical for building our future strategy. We charted our next steps on the path to achieve our ambitious 2030 goal by developing a new strategic plan through 2026. Leveraging our trusted research, our future strategy will also focus on accelerating the scaling of solutions by influencing public policies and multi-sector practices. We'll focus on specific areas poised to have the greatest impact on building long-term water resilience. We look forward to sharing more details on this plan during the coming months.

## The Need Has Never Been Greater

With just six years remaining until 2030, the moment is now—to ensure people, nature, and economies have the water resilience they need to thrive. Moving ahead, the Pacific Institute will continue to connect science, policy, and practice to drive solutions at global scale. We invite you to join us—for the benefit of our own and future generations.



Jason Morrison  
President, Pacific Institute



# Outcomes and Impacts



## Informing and influencing public discourse

- 2 key outcomes** of the historic UN Water Conference directly led by the Pacific Institute
- ~
- 1 key water outcome** of the UN Climate Summit included work led by the Pacific Institute
- ~
- 115+** speaking engagements across
- 30+** US and global locations

## Reaching key levers of change

- 13,000+** media mentions across 2,500+ media outlets spanning over 90 countries with
- 21 billion+** global potential reach through media
- ~
- 800+** social media posts with
- 440,000+** impressions across
- 20+** countries
- ~
- 1.1 million+** website pageviews

## Developing and sharing evidence-based research

- 12** publications launched
- ~
- 87,000+** downloads of Pacific Institute reports
- ~
- 350** new water-related conflicts globally identified by Water Conflict Chronology with
- 1,600+** total incidents in its database
- ~
- 870+** resources on public and environmental health added in the Salton Sea Library



## Influencing policy

1 US Environmental Protection Agency action has been informed by Pacific Institute research and policy recommendations

1 State Policy supported by Pacific Institute research recommendation on banning Non-Functional Turf (NFT) to enhance water resilience

1 San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC) Affordability Policy influenced by Pacific Institute research recommendations to formally consider affordability impacts when setting budgets, financial and capital plans, and retail rates.

“For over 30 years, the Pacific Institute has been providing hope by identifying and advancing water solutions — from championing access to water and sanitation as a human right, to the first published research on water and climate change, to leading global corporations to becoming better water stewards. I know of no other organization that has done more for water sustainability. With a new strategic plan, they are positioned to achieve their 2030 goal to catalyze the transformation to water resilience in the face of climate change.”



—Tony Stayner  
Pacific Institute Board Member



## Mobilizing global action

- 100** Priority Basins identified and announced for multi-sector collective action to build water resilience globally by 2030
- ~
- 21** collective action projects mobilized by the Pacific Institute-led Water Resilience Coalition
- ~
- 15** water-stressed river basins now have active projects spanning
- 4 continents** (Asia, Africa, South America, and North America)

## Mobilizing global commitments

- 35** global companies, with combined market cap of US\$4.8 trillion and operations in more than 140 countries, pledged their commitment to actively participate in multi-sector collective action to build water resilience in basins around the world
- ~
- 240+** companies, with headquarters across 50 countries and representing 30 different sectors, have pledged to take focused action on water through commitments to the Pacific Institute-led CEO Water Mandate



## Mobilizing global investments

**US\$140 million** in water investments mobilized to provide access to clean water, sanitation, and hygiene for 5 million people through the first fund in the Water Resilience Coalition Investment Portfolio

**US\$1 billion** water investment pipeline built through the Water Resilience Coalition Investment Portfolio's long-term strategy



# Thought Leadership Spans the Globe

In 2023, the Pacific Institute marked a year of unprecedented global outreach, participating in 115+ speaking engagements around the world, demonstrating our expansive influence in both local and international water resilience dialogues.





STORY OF IMPACT

# Leading Global Outcomes at the Historic UN Water Conference



UN  
2023 WATER  
CONFERENCE

NEW YORK  
22-24  
MARCH  
2023



The historic United Nations 2023 Water Conference, the first in nearly 50 years, created new momentum to elevate water as a global priority. The Pacific Institute’s thought leadership was front and center, catalyzing new commitments to build water resilience.

More than 700 voluntary (nonbinding) commitments were made to the Water Action Agenda.

At the Conference, the Pacific Institute led sessions addressing water efficiency, water conflict, nature-based solutions, radical collaboration, and an action plan to build water resilience in 100 Priority Basins by 2030. [Learn more.](#)

[Read our comprehensive report on our involvement at the UN Water Conference here.](#)

## CORPORATE ACTION AND POLICY ADVOCACY BUILDING MOMENTUM TOWARDS 2030 GOALS

At the Conference, leading corporations made unprecedented commitments to SDG 6 —to ensure access to water and sanitation for all. Much of this work was achieved through the CEO Water Mandate, a partnership between the Pacific Institute and the United Nations Global Compact, that unites 240 global companies to act on water.

We announced the [Water Resilience Coalition Investment Portfolio](#), a pipeline of more than US\$1 billion of water investment opportunities in water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH), nature-based solutions, and water and climate resilience. Five global companies — Starbucks, Ecolab, Gap Inc., Reckitt, and DuPont, along with the U.S. International Development Finance Corporation — announced initial collective investment of nearly \$140 million in the portfolio’s first fund that aims to improve WASH access for 5 million people across Asia, sub-Saharan Africa, and Latin America. As part of the portfolio, Microsoft also announced a commitment of \$50 million in investments to advance WASH access.

Led by the Pacific Institute, some of the world’s largest companies joined the [Business Leaders Open Call to Accelerate Action on Water](#), committing to build water resilience across their own global operations and supply chains, as well as to collaborate with others to achieve collective positive water impact in at least [100 prioritized water-stressed basins](#) by 2030. This swell of effort has grown to now include [more than 60 companies](#), many of them Fortune 500 companies, with collective market capitalization of nearly \$4 trillion, operations in more than 130 countries, and more than 2 million global employees.

As the Pacific Institute works to inform and recommend policies that will help accelerate public-private partnerships, we also joined a diverse range of stewardship organizations to issue a joint statement outlining six key areas where government policies could change to be more aligned with global water stewardship goals and the SDG 6. The key areas include increased public-private alignment and greater private sector investment for water action.

[Read the full statement here.](#)

“ We all need to prepare for a world of increasingly extreme and erratic weather that sometimes brings too little water, and sometimes too much. And we must do it now, because the accelerating water crisis is already affecting us all.”



—Sanda Ojiambo, Executive Director and CEO, United Nations Global Compact and



—Jason Morrison, President, Pacific Institute



STORY OF IMPACT

# Driving Corporate Action on Water



### CEO Water Mandate Growth in 2023

**25**  
New Company Endorsers

**242**  
Total Company Endorsers

**50**  
Countries

**30**  
Sectors

### Water Resilience Coalition Growth in 2023

**6**  
New Members

**35**  
Total Members

**17**  
Total Partners

“ At Heineken, we recognize that the climate crisis is also a water crisis — and corporate water stewardship is essential for water resilience. As members of the CEO Water Mandate and Water Resilience Coalition, we stand alongside other industry leaders to play our role in water conservation and restoration efforts. Together, we can learn and drive action to protect critical watersheds and meet the needs of people and the planet now and in the future.”



—Sonia Thimmiah  
Senior Director Of Global Sustainability, The Heineken Company

The world is not on track to meet SDG 6 by 2030, with one in four people lacking infrastructure to access safe, potable water and 80 percent of wastewater discharge remaining untreated. Additionally, global water use has been predicted to outstrip supply by up to 40 percent by 2030.

To address this crisis, we must radically scale up action where needed most.

Leveraging the historic UN Water Conference stage, the CEO Water Mandate, an initiative between the Pacific Institute and UN Global Compact, rallied the global business community around a shared vision: positive water impact in 100 Priority Basins by 2030.

Selected in collaboration with partners, including Alliance for Water Stewardship, Good Stuff International (GSI), The Nature Conservancy, WaterAid, World Resources Institute (WRI), and World Wildlife Fund (WWF), the 100 Priority Basins represent critical water-stressed areas home to over 3 billion people. Available on the Water Action Hub, these priority basins represent the geographic

scope of the Water Resilience Coalition’s (a CEO Water Mandate initiative) 2030 strategy.

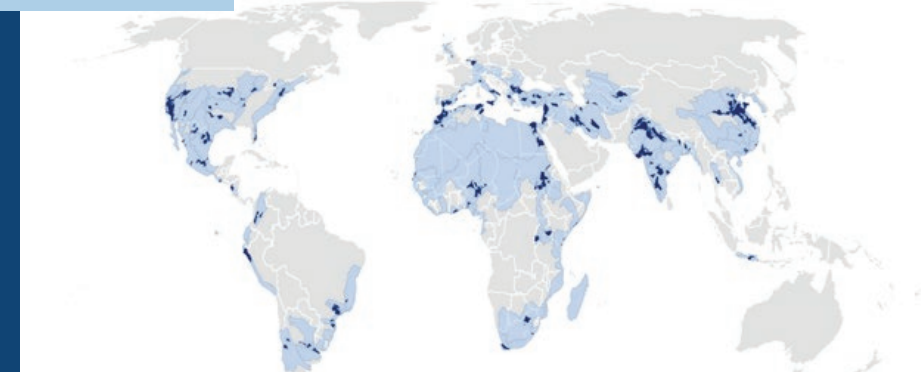
To mobilize the wider business community around this priority basin vision, the CEO Water Mandate partnered with the International Chamber of Commerce, Ceres, the Alliance for Water Stewardship, and AquaFed to launch the Business Leaders Open Call to Accelerate Water Action. Fifty of the world’s largest corporations, operating in over 130 countries and employing 2 million people worldwide, joined the Open Call at its launch in 2023.

The CEO Water Mandate continued building the movement during UN General Assembly week in New York in September. The UN Global

Compact launched the Forward Faster initiative to accelerate business action across five areas. Forward Faster adopted the 2030 ambition of the Water Resilience Coalition and Open Call as its water resilience target. By the end of 2023 over 100 additional companies across the three initiatives had joined the movement.

Momentum continued to build at COP28 in Dubai. Contributing to the agenda of the conference’s Water Pavilion and the programming of the COP28 Presidency, the growth of the 100 Priority Basins ambition was recognized as a high-level outcome of the conference. This kind of recognition gives the 100 Priority Basins critical global legitimacy as we continue to build and mobilize the program.

[Read the full story](#)



CALL TO ACTION

WATCH THE UNGA CORPORATE WATER STEWARDSHIP HALF-DAY RECORDING

EXPLORE THE 100 PRIORITY BASINS

JOIN FORWARD FASTER

SIGN THE OPEN CALL







STORY OF IMPACT

# Elevating the Role of Water Efficiency and Reuse to Improve Resilience

Throughout 2023, the Pacific Institute advanced research and engaged in policy discussions to highlight the more prominent role water efficiency and reuse strategies can play to build long-term water resilience in the United States. This began with our presence at the historic 2023 UN Water Conference, where the Pacific Institute’s research team led a session on “[Harnessing the Power of Water Efficiency and Reuse](#),” underscoring significant potential to expand water conservation and efficiency efforts. This moment also marked an important step in our concerted efforts to elevate the role of water efficiency and reuse as multi-benefit water supply strategies, drawing national and international attention to their possibilities.

## Looking Ahead: 2023 Research on Stormwater Goes on to Change National US Narratives

The Pacific Institute’s national stormwater assessment has been officially recognized by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA) as Action 5.5 in the National Water Reuse Action Plan (WRAP). Building on the groundwork laid in 2023, the Pacific Institute, in partnership with 2NDNATURE, launched a comprehensive national assessment early in 2024. This assessment quantifies the volumetric potential of urban stormwater runoff across the United States. It also provides recommendations for national guidance to streamline stormwater capture and use, encouraging collaboration, and expanding applications for stormwater use.

“ Many states and cities are increasingly interested in reusing stormwater to supplement water supplies and address water quality challenges. The work of the Pacific Institute is a great step in helping us, and other water practitioners, understand stormwater’s potential contribution to water reuse on a national scale.”



—Sharon Nappier  
US EPA



## USING RESEARCH TO ADVANCE EFFICIENCY AND REUSE

This year, our efforts included collaborating with a community of dedicated practitioners to scale the adoption of water reuse across various sectors. This collaboration led to significant contributions to the development of research, policy, and technical documents through the National Water Reuse Action Plan at national, state, and regional scales.

A key milestone was our coauthored report with the EPA, *Lessons for Optimizing the Adoption of Water Reuse in Underserved Communities*. The study describes effective technical assistance approaches to help small and underserved communities identify opportunities to improve their water infrastructure and augment their water supplies through the adoption and expansion of water reuse.

Due to robust partnerships fostered between technical assistance providers and two rural

towns in Idaho, the towns were able to position themselves to be funding ready and competitively seek funding for the purpose of adopting reuse as a means of meeting nutrient management and water quality requirements. Subsequently, they were awarded \$7.1M from Idaho Governor Brad Little's Leading Idaho initiative to purchase land for silviculture, an identified end use of recycled water.

This will enable these rural Idaho towns to eliminate nutrient discharges into the Saint Maries River, which feeds into Coeur d'Alene Lake, reducing the phosphorus loads by approximately 660 pounds annually. These towns will now be in position to comply with their nutrient discharge limits, which are anticipated to become more stringent in the future.

[Read more](#)

## POLICY IMPACT: SUPPORTING BANS ON NON-FUNCTIONAL TURF

The Pacific Institute's research played a critical role in shaping policies on nonfunctional turf (NFT) — turf that is solely ornamental and not regularly used for recreation — in California and across the Western United States. Our comprehensive water efficiency analysis, highlighted in "[Untapped Potential of California's Urban Water Supply](#)," identified significant opportunities to save water by replacing water-intensive grass with plants better suited for the western U.S. climate.

The study recommended banning NFT to enhance water resilience. Our research findings and recommendations informed and supported the efforts of advocacy groups, leading to significant policy changes. Following Nevada's lead, in October 2023, California Governor Gavin Newsom signed AB 1572, banning the use of drinking

water to irrigate NFT on commercial, industrial, and institutional properties, as well as for properties of homeowner's associations.

In addition to influencing state policy, the Pacific Institute is working to develop a scalable model for replacing NFT with drought- and climate-resilient landscaping. More than 30 communities around the Colorado River Basin have committed to reducing NFT by 30%. To support this commitment, the Pacific Institute is working directly with the City of Albuquerque to define NFT and develop programs to remove it using a model that can be applied in other communities.



“As we're facing climate change, as we're facing continued growth, we have to be smarter about how we use water. Taking out these grass areas that no one is using is really a smart move to prepare our communities for the more variable and uncertain climate that we are now facing.”



—Heather Cooley, Pacific Institute Director of Research  
As quoted in the *Los Angeles Times*

“Through this report, we present critical insights from our technical assistance engagement pilots aimed at bolstering water infrastructure in small, underserved U.S. communities. Our findings set the stage for developing future assistance that is more effectively tailored to these communities, fundamentally supporting their ability to achieve water sustainability.”



—Angela Davis  
US EPA



—Rabia Chaudhry  
US EPA

## A CREDIBLE VOICE IN THE MEDIA ON REUSE

In December 2023, the California State Water Board approved new regulations allowing for direct reuse, the process of treating wastewater to drinking water standards and then introducing it directly into the water supply system.

This announcement directly followed the Pacific Institute's influential 2022 *Untapped Potential* study, which found that municipal water reuse could be more than tripled in California, significantly adding to local water supplies. The study recommended several new actions and policies to expand the supply and use of recycled water, including adopting regulations that would allow for the direct reuse of purified wastewater.

Our Director of Research Heather Cooley explained on CNN how reusing water is key to advance water resilience. During one of many interviews, she stated, “What these regulations do is allow us to use highly sophisticated technology that we have available to purify that water and instead of putting it into groundwater or putting it into a reservoir, we are putting it directly into the drinking water system.”



[Watch the interview](#)

## 2023 PACIFIC INSTITUTE WATER EFFICIENCY & REUSE MEDIA COVERAGE



**Stateline:** Planning for Dry Times: The West Considers More Reservoirs and Aquifers



**San Francisco Chronicle:** Californians approved billions for new water storage. Why hasn't gotten built?



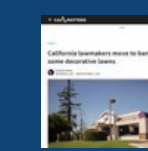
**WIRED:** Are You Ready for 'Extreme' Water Recycling?



**The Washington Post:** See where water is scarcest in the world — and why we need to conserve



**Los Angeles Times:** California conservation rules could mean new water cuts



**CalMatters:** California law would ban irrigation of some lawns



**Smart Water Magazine:** California prepares for new regulations on direct potable water reuse



STORY OF IMPACT

# Addressing Water and Climate Equity In Frontline Communities



Climate change is having dramatic impacts on water and sanitation systems, and these impacts will grow over time.

If unaddressed, they will lead to more water insecurity, degraded human and ecosystem health, and higher costs for water. This is especially true for frontline communities – communities that are overburdened and under resourced who face disproportionate “first and worst” impacts of climate change on their water and sanitation systems or access.

In 2023, the Pacific Institute deepened our engagement with partners DigDeep, the Center for Water Security and Cooperation (CWSC), Livelihoods Knowledge Exchange Network (LiKEN), and Rural Community Assistance Partnership (RCAP) to address issues of water and climate equity in a meaningful way. By uniting our organizations’ expertise we are, together, determined to contribute to the realization of equitable, sustainable, climate-resilient water and sanitation for all.

In early 2023, the Pacific Institute, alongside DigDeep and CWSC, led the drafting of the first project blog in a collaborative effort titled [The Climate Crisis is a WASH Crisis](#). This piece shared early key findings of water and climate inequity in the United States.

“Rural frontline communities in the U.S. face the brunt of climate change impacts on their water systems. Our work with the Pacific Institute and RCAP based on a community-first approach, strives to co-develop climate-resilient water solutions that address the unique challenges these communities face.”



—Dr. Betsy Taylor  
Executive Director,  
LiKEN

A subsequent publication from our collaboration with RCAP and LiKEN resulted in a joint blog [Moving Toward Equitable, Climate-Resilient Water Systems in Rural Communities in the United States](#) outlining our forthcoming work in 2024 that will include an integrated assessment report titled *Water and Climate Equity in Rural Water Systems in the United States* and a Water Resilience toolkit for communities, as well as other decision-support resources in development for technical assistance providers and frontline communities.

November 2023 saw the launch of an issue brief focused on the Central Appalachia region of the United States, [Climate Change and Flooding in Central Appalachia](#). Communities in rural Appalachia face multiple water challenges that climate change is already impacting. These include extreme flooding events, lack of household water access, poor water quality, and lack of wastewater services.

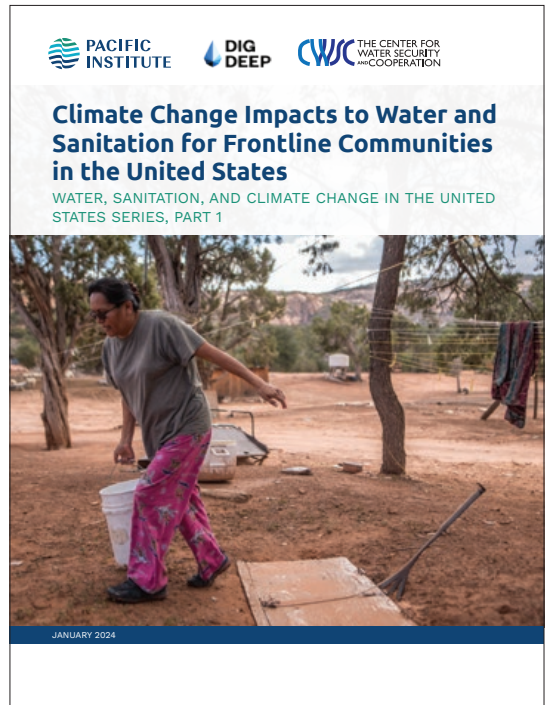
Appalachia has some of the highest rates in the United States of households with Safe Drinking Water Act violations and without complete plumbing. In this issue brief, the authors present the observed and projected impacts of climate change in Central Appalachia with a focus on increased extreme precipitation events and flooding on rural water systems and sanitation. Our partners at LiKEN continue to enhance our connection to and understanding of frontline communities in Central Appalachia.

Building on these foundational efforts, November also marked the release of the working document version of the first part of the Water, Sanitation, and Climate Change in the United States series entitled [Climate Change Impacts to Water and Sanitation for Frontline Communities in the United States](#). Soon thereafter, the final report was publicly announced, providing a baseline assessment of the state of knowledge on impacts of climate change on water and sanitation. Forthcoming reports in the series will focus on laws and policies that govern the delivery of water and sanitation in the face of climate change, as well as strategies and approaches for equitable, climate-resilient water and sanitation. **Stay tuned for a detailed update on this in the 2024 Impact Report.**

“The interconnected climate change and water crises in the U.S. are not only about water access but also about the resilience of communities in the face of climate change. In our partnership with the Pacific Institute, we aim to work towards solutions that are as dynamic and multifaceted as the problem itself.”



—George McGraw,  
Founder and CEO, DigDeep





STORY OF IMPACT

# Bolstering Global Water Security and Access

In 2023, the Pacific Institute supported initiatives designed to confront escalating water conflicts, expand essential water and sanitation access, and increase affordability, marking significant strides in global water security, accessibility, affordability and equity.

## WATER CONFLICT CHRONOLOGY

The [Water Conflict Chronology \(WCC\)](#), created by the Pacific Institute during the 1980s, is the world's most comprehensive open-source database on water-related violence. The database includes verified instances where water or water systems have been a trigger, weapon, or target or casualty of violence.

During 2023, the Pacific Institute released a major update to the WCC, adding over 350 new examples of conflicts associated with water resources and water systems identified from news reports, eyewitness accounts, and other conflict databases. With this update, the WCC now includes over 1,600 cases and shows a clear worsening trend of water-related violence during recent decades.

[Learn more](#)



“ We hope this work will contribute to an improved understanding of this issue and promote efforts to move toward more effective and peaceful cooperation over shared water resources.”



—Dr. Peter Gleick  
Senior Fellow & Co-Founder, Pacific Institute



## PACIFIC INSTITUTE'S WATER CONFLICT RESEARCH FEATURED BY GLOBAL MEDIA

In 2023, the WCC appeared in 415 individual media outlets across 23 countries, including being in *The Guardian*. The expanse of the coverage demonstrates how the WCC and our work more broadly is improving knowledge and awareness of water issues at a global scale.

[Read articles](#)



## POLICY IMPACT: ADVANCING WATER AFFORDABILITY PROGRAMS AND POLICIES

Sometimes transforming research into policy can take time. In 2021 and 2022, the Pacific Institute, in partnership with AECOM, worked closely with the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC) staff to examine their current offerings, customer water usage and utility bills, and service area demographics to help identify opportunities for improving affordability outcomes for households facing challenges with paying their utility bills. Our contribution to the research, analysis, and recommendations played a key role in supporting internal SFPUC champions in advancing a new Customer Assistance Program and Affordability Policy that passed in 2023.

In September 2023, the SFPUC launched an expanded Customer Assistance

Program to provide additional help to income-qualified customers and those struggling to pay their bills on time. Among the improvements, the SFPUC has increased the discount on water and sewer bills to up to 40% for customers making 0-30% of the area's median income, ended water shutoffs and liens for income-qualified customers in most situations, and eliminated late fees for residential customers.

Following this, an Affordability Policy was officially adopted by SFPUC. The policy established a process for the SFPUC to formally consider affordability impacts when setting budgets, financial and capital plans, and retail rates.

[Learn more](#)

“ It was wonderful to work with so many passionate, committed SFPUC staff to identify potential solutions to address water and wastewater affordability. I am so glad to see that our work has contributed to policy change that can have on-the-ground impact for people in San Francisco.”



—Morgan Shimabuku,  
Senior Researcher



# Building the Business Case for Water Resilience Through Nature-Based Solutions

Nature-Based Solutions (NBS) provide a powerful set of interventions and activities to build water resilience while benefiting ecosystems, economies, and communities. Examples of NBS include restoring riparian corridors, replanting forests, conserving peat bogs, or restoring coastal mangroves. By implementing solutions fitting the local context, companies and planners can provide diverse and substantive positive impacts.

Demonstrating corporate buy-in and return on investment (ROI) for NBS is critical for decision-makers when evaluating the potential and realized impacts of these solutions. Calculating a social and financial valuation for the vari-

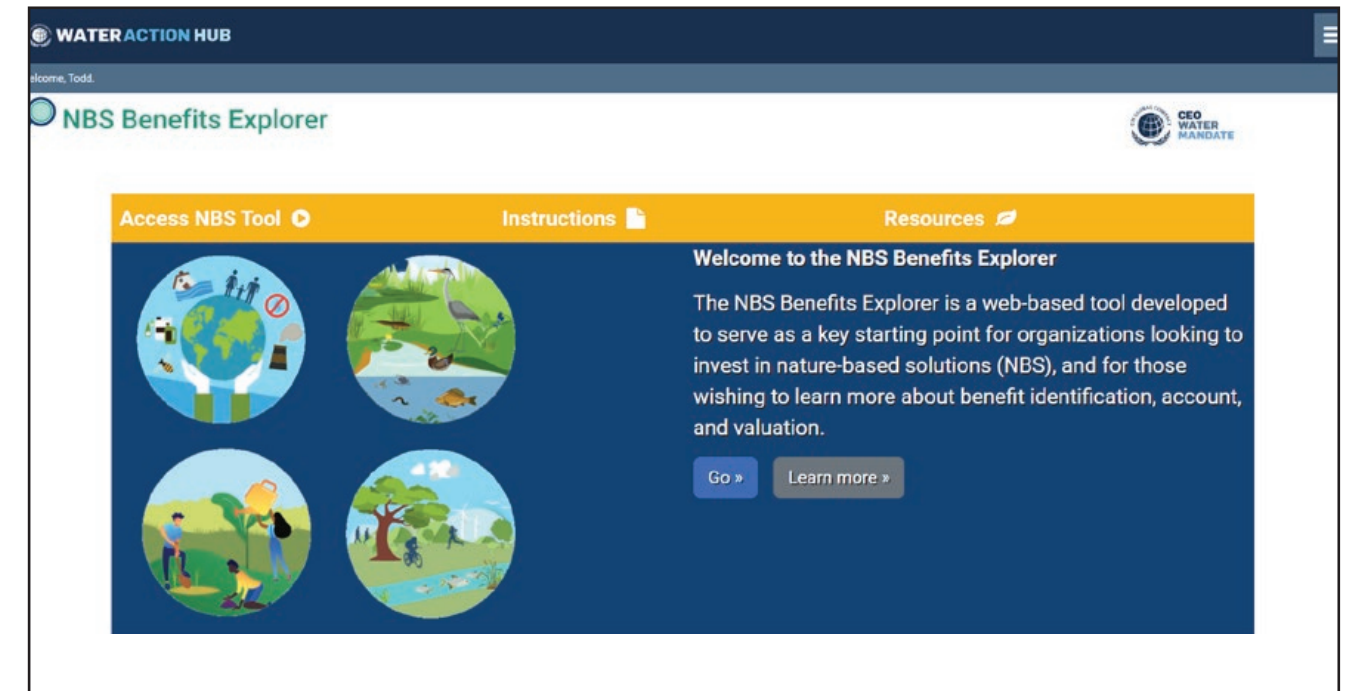
ous co-benefits of prospective NBS projects has, historically, proved challenging. Factoring in the local geographic context adds another dimension of difficulty. The Pacific Institute and project partners have developed ways to standardize the calculation of ROI of NBS across multiple habitats and interventions.

By developing a standardized methodology to measure benefit accrual and a means to value social return on investment the Pacific Institute plans to continue working with corporate partners to encourage additional private- and public-sector investment in NBS and help evaluate the true value of social, economic, and environmental benefits and trade-offs.

“ In order to achieve large-scale impact globally, we partner with governments, NGOs, communities and other companies. We share resources to amplify all our efforts and to generate a bigger impact. We encourage others to join us.”



—Madhu Rajesh  
Vice President, Water & Agriculture, Coca-Cola



## POWERFUL PARTNERSHIPS: COCA-COLA SUPPORTS NBS VALUATION AND THE NBS BENEFITS EXPLORER

To further build the business case for NBS, a strategic partnership was formed in 2022 between the Pacific Institute, the CEO Water Mandate, The Nature Conservancy, LimnoTech, Coca-Cola, and denkstatt. Taking things further in 2023, Coca-Cola, having seen the value in the natural capital accounting models they had co-created with denkstatt, wanted to explore the opportunity to embed this work within the broader NBS Benefit Accounting framework from other project partners. The partnership has been productive, yielding a practical tool that helps provide an ROI to those looking to better understand the values of the multiple benefits derived from NBS. These values ultimately build the business case for NBS scaling and mainstreaming.

The methodology for this work has been tested across several water replenishment projects in key geographies and this valuation methodology supports the broader Benefit Accounting of Nature-Based Solutions for Watersheds project. It also includes The NBS Benefits Explorer 2.0 tool, led by the Pacific Institute and the CEO Water Mandate, in partnership with The Nature Conservancy and LimnoTech.

Ultimately, our aim is to support public, private, and non-profit sectors in developing effective policies and programs to incentivize greater implementation of and investment in NBS. That is because water is at the nexus of many shared goals, including protecting habitats, increasing biodiversity, sequestering carbon and promoting community resilience in the face of changing weather patterns.



Learn about our NBS work



Use the NBS Benefits Explorer Tool



# Impacts in Colorado River Basin Negotiations and the Salton Sea

## ADVANCING RESEARCH AND DATA TO PROTECT PUBLIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH AT THE SALTON SEA

The Pacific Institute was involved with longstanding work with partners involved in and around the Salton Sea in 2023. We launched the “[Salton Sea Library](#),” the most comprehensive compilation of Salton Sea research, with 900 entries to date. The Salton Sea library includes journal articles, reports, conference proceedings, book chapters, dissertations and theses, and other publications, across a range of disciplines, related to the Sea.

[Access the library](#)

“What a resource! Thank you!!!”

“This is really great. I’m glad the Pacific Institute was able to put this together.”

“I think this will be a really useful resource that will benefit many of us.”

“As a policymaker, I have always been grateful to see the Pacific Institute step into the discourse on water, bringing fact-based reasoning to contribute to the policymaking process. The Pacific Institute contributes a wealth of substantive expertise, policy savvy, and astute insights to the array of water-related issues we must tackle to secure a water resilient future. They are the thinking person’s goldmine.”



— Felicia Marcus, Pacific Institute Board Member

## SUPPORTING THE COLORADO RIVER BASIN’S WATER USE REDUCTION GOALS TO PROTECT STABILITY AND SUSTAINABILITY

In 2022, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation called on Colorado River water users to [decrease their use by 15 to 30%](#). To



inform negotiations between the Colorado River Basin states on how to achieve these reductions in water use, the Pacific Institute’s blog [Managing the Unmeasured - Colorado River](#) calls for a detailed accounting of where and how we use Colorado River water.

Throughout 2023, the Pacific Institute was involved in these high stakes conversations, providing expertise in support of the negotiations and future planning for the basin.

- We participated and contributed to the Integrated Technical Education Workgroup (ITEW) through the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation. This group was created to ensure that Colorado River partners have a common and accurate understanding

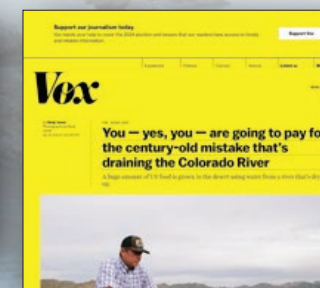
of the underlying tools and concepts needed to meaningfully participate in the development of post-2026 operating alternatives.

- We released a statement in May 2023 addressing the lower basin states’ agreement to conserve 3.0 million acre-feet (MAF). The statement read:

*“The joint agreement by Arizona, California, and Nevada to conserve an additional 3.0 million acre-feet through 2026 – with 1.5 MAF of that in the next nineteen months – is a welcome and much-needed step toward protecting the Colorado River system. However, this agreement offers just a small fraction of the reductions the Commissioner demanded last year and will not be sufficient to protect the system should we experience a return of the extremely low runoff seen in 2020, 2021, and 2022.”*

[Read the full statement here.](#)

## RELATED MEDIA COVERAGE





# Scaling Impact of Corporate Water Stewardship From California to Global Initiatives



## THE CALIFORNIA WATER RESILIENCE INITIATIVE

Recognizing the imperative to secure a water-resilient future for California, in 2022, Governor Newsom launched [California's Water Supply Strategy: Adapting to a Hotter, Drier Future](#). This approach focuses on combating the challenge of a projected 10% decrease in water supply due to climate change impacts by 2040 by establishing targets for increased water storage, reuse and recycling of water, efficiency and conservation, stormwater capture, and desalination.

In 2023, to build on this statewide water strategy a coalition of businesses, led by the Pacific Institute, and including state officials, and non-profit partners [launched](#) the California Water Resilience Initiative (CWRI) in Sacramento, Califor-

nia. The coalition announced alignment with the California Water Supply Strategy by committing private sector actions to reduce, reuse, and restore 1 million acre-feet of water per year by 2030, and 1.8 million acre-feet of water per year by 2040.

The CWRI is a private sector response to the Governor's call for action on water. This initiative is at the vanguard of a collaborative model approach led by the [CEO Water Mandate's Water Resilience Coalition \(WRC\)](#). It aims to mobilize corporate water stewardship for the scaling and financing of high-impact solutions and collective action in 100 Priority Basins around the world to address challenges of water scarcity, quality, and access.

## LAUNCHING THE WOMEN + WATER COLLABORATIVE IN INDIA

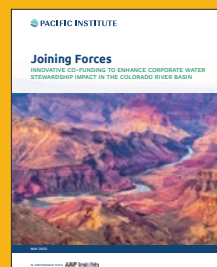
According to the Joint Monitoring Program of UNICEF and the World Health Organization, 1 in 3 Indians - over 400 million people - lack access to safely managed drinking water, and 600 million people lack access to safely managed sanitation. To help address such a critical challenge in India, the Water Resilience Coalition (WRC) has worked to 1) identify water stewardship projects with proven success and 2) convene its members and partners to expand programs as a collective action, working with local organizations who provide on the ground perspectives to ensure program success.

As a result, in October 2023, the WRC and WaterAid joined by Gap Inc., Cargill, and GSK launched the Women + Water Collaborative, a flagship corporate collective action program to improve access to clean water and sanitation in India. This is one of 21 collective action projects in 15 basins underway across Asia, Africa, South America, and North America as part of the Water Resilience Coalition's 2030 ambition to build water resilience across 100 Priority Basins.



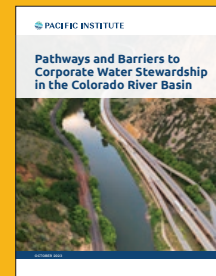
## LEVERAGING CORPORATE WATER FUNDING IN THE COLORADO RIVER BASIN

During 2023, the Pacific Institute released two new reports to address barriers and challenges in corporate water financing. The reports also provide specific ways companies can invest in protecting the water resources in the basin.



**Joining Forces: Innovative Co-Funding to Enhance Corporate Water Stewardship Impact in the Colorado River Basin**

**Pathways and Barriers to Corporate Water Stewardship in the Colorado River Basin**



“ This report is incredibly timely as it evaluates how corporate investments in shared water challenges can stimulate maximum impact.”



—Todd Reeve, **Bonneville Environmental Foundation**



# The People Behind Our Work

At the Pacific Institute, we thrive because of the immense talent and dedication of our staff. We are proud of the work we have accomplished in 2023, and none of this work would be possible without our staff.

Our team is located across the world, which brings a global perspective and insight to our work. In May 2023, our entire team gathered in the San Francisco Bay Area for an All-Staff Retreat to collaborate and plan our work for the future.

During this retreat, our expert staff laid the groundwork to develop a new 2024–2026 strategic plan. This plan recognizes there are just six years remaining before two key 2030 deadlines. The year 2030 marks the year both for the Pacific Institute’s organizational goal to “catalyze the

transformation to water resilience in the face of climate change” and for the end target to reach the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, including SDG6 for Water and Sanitation.

The new strategic plan developed in 2023 will continue the Pacific Institute’s role providing evidence-based research to inform decision-makers and key levers of change across the public, private, and nonprofit sectors. It will also call to increase our capabilities to lead the effort to scale solutions. We will do this both by working with key implementers and partners to directly scale solutions and through the promotion of systems-level changes.

**Stay tuned for information about the Pacific Institute’s new strategic plan.**

## Board of Directors



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Board Chair



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Jennifer Tisdell  
Schorsch



Tony Stayner



John P. Thacher



Paul Traina

[Learn more about our team members](#)

## 2023 Team Members



Jason Morrison



Heather Cooley



Dr. Amanda  
Bielawski



Pete Stanga



Dr. Peter Gleick



Dr. Sonali  
Abraham



Hannah Baleta



Dr. Bruk Berhanu



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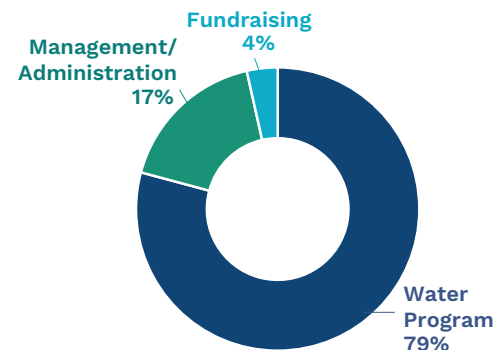
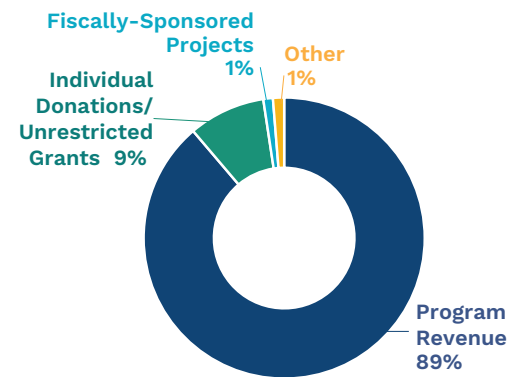
# Financials

## Revenue

Program	\$6,054,826
Individual Donations/ Unrestricted Grants	602,541
Fiscally-Sponsored Projects	75,030
Other	87,478
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$6,819,875</b>

## Expenses

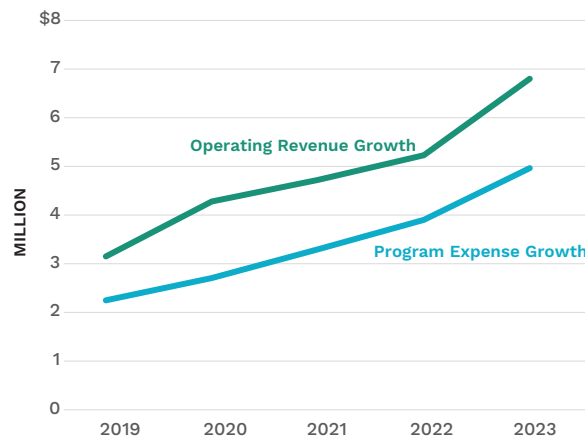
Water Program	\$4,997,056
Management/ Administration	1,092,790
Fundraising	221,695
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$6,311,540</b>



## FIVE-YEAR GROWTH IN REVENUE AND EXPENSES

### Operating Revenue Growth

Year	Operating Revenues (\$)
2019	3,178,790
2020	4,305,547
2021	4,739,645
2022	5,245,076
2023	6,819,875



### Program Expense Growth

Year	Program Expense (\$)
2019	2,278,299
2020	2,736,248
2021	3,314,414
2022	3,924,899
2023	4,997,056

## FIVE-YEAR GROWTH IN STAFF

Year	No. of FTEs (beginning of year)	No. of FTEs (end of year)
2019	20.5	21.5
2020	21.5	25
2021	25	28.5
2022	28	30
2023	30	38*

\*includes long-term contractors

# Thank You, Donors!

We are immensely grateful for you.

As the impacts of climate change have intensified, so has the global water crisis, putting people, nature, and economies at risk.

For more than 35 years, the Pacific Institute has been at the forefront of creating and advancing solutions to the world's most pressing water challenges.

Thanks to your support, we are safeguarding water resources and fostering sustainable solutions that ensure clean, safe, reliable, and affordable water for people and nature.

Your support is the cornerstone of making our communities more water secure. We are truly grateful for your partnership in this most vital mission.

With Gratitude,



—Nicole Wickenhauser  
Director of Development  
Pacific Institute



“Water is our most precious—and transformative—resource. To have a more equitable world, break the cycle of poverty, enable gender equality, and accelerate access to education, we must solve water and sanitation and create a water-resilient world. The Pacific Institute is playing a lead role in catalyzing the transformation to resilience, and I’m proud to be part of this most critical effort.”



—Jennifer Schorsch  
Pacific Institute Board Member





**PACIFIC INSTITUTE**

REIMAGINING WATER FOR A CHANGING WORLD

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