



American Rivers
RIVERS CONNECT US®

2021 BLUEPRINT FOR ACTION

Clean, free-flowing rivers nourish our bodies, spirits and communities. Their lush habitats safeguard birds, fish and wildlife. They connect us to our history, to our future and to each other.

But our rivers and clean water face serious threats, following four years of attacks by the Trump administration, the relentless impacts of climate change and deeply ingrained environmental injustice.

- Millions of people in the U.S. lack access to clean, safe, affordable water.
- Forty-four percent of assessed waterways in the U.S. are too polluted for fishing and swimming, and 40 percent of North America's freshwater species are at risk of extinction.
- Climate change is bringing more severe droughts and floods, putting intense pressure on water resources across the country and disproportionately impacting Black, Latino and Indigenous communities.

With the advent of a new administration and Congress, we have a historic opportunity to restore our rivers and clean water as we rebuild our nation and economy from the ravages of COVID-19, while also repairing the damage done to rivers and clean water during the past four years.

OUR MOMENT IS NOW

American Rivers pledges to work with the Biden-Harris administration and Congress to enact and implement five ambitious policy initiatives, outlined below. Details are available in the full 2021 Blueprint for Action at AmericanRivers.org/2021Action.

1. Invest in rivers and clean water to recover from COVID-19.

Any infrastructure, economic stimulus, or jobs bill crafted to address the COVID-19 economic crisis must include major investments in water infrastructure, flood management, and watershed restoration. American Rivers recommends Congress invest \$500 billion for rivers and clean water over the next 10 years.

2. Reverse regulatory rollbacks and restore strong, effective federal protection for rivers and clean water.

The last four years have seen unprecedented rollbacks of regulations that protect rivers and clean water. The Biden administration must reverse those rollbacks and restore bedrock environmental laws such as the Clean Water Act and the National Environmental Policy Act.

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3. Improve protection and management of the nation's floodplains.

Poorly planned development in floodplains across the country has led to massive losses of wetlands, immeasurable pollution and habitat destruction, and billions of dollars lost to flood damage. The Biden administration and Congress should promote equitable, integrated flood management and prioritize nature-based approaches to manage floods.

4. Launch a national initiative to prioritize and fund dam removals.

Dam removal is the single most effective way to rehabilitate a damaged river system. The Biden administration should prioritize and fund dam removal

and river restoration; review the impacts and true costs of maintaining and operating federal water infrastructure; and, facilitate dam removal and river restoration through the hydropower relicensing process.

5. Increase protection of Wild and Scenic Rivers.

The Wild and Scenic Rivers Act has protected over 13,000 miles of pristine rivers and millions of acres of riverside habitat from dam construction, mining and other threats. But many of the last wild rivers in America remain vulnerable to destruction. The Biden administration should support Congressional designation of 5,000 miles of new Wild and Scenic Rivers and support the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System with increased funding and research.



MERCED RIVER, CALIFORNIA. PHOTO: BOB WICK

JOIN US

Now more than ever, life needs rivers — and rivers need you. Visit AmericanRivers.org/2021Action to join us in achieving a vision of clean water and healthy rivers everywhere, for everyone.



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American Rivers believes a future of clean water and healthy rivers for everyone, everywhere is essential. Since 1973, we have protected wild rivers, restored damaged rivers and conserved clean water for people and nature. With headquarters in Washington, D.C., and 300,000 supporters, members and volunteers across the country, we are the most trusted and influential river conservation organization in the United States, delivering solutions for a better future. Because life needs rivers.