

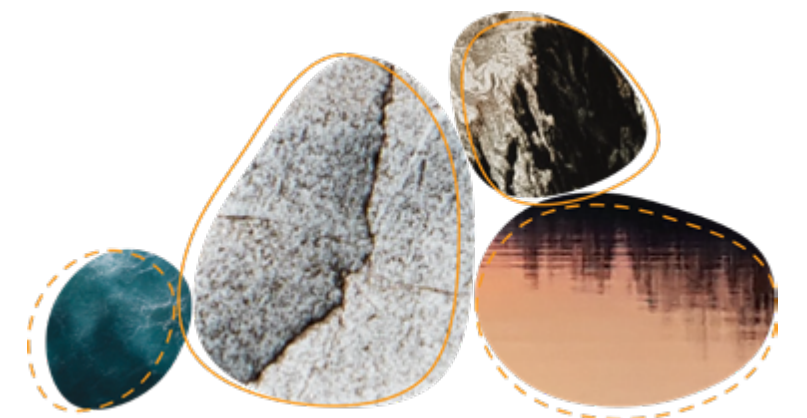
2023

Roots & Rivers Annual Report



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Message from Roots & Rivers



Looking back on our 2023 journey at Roots & Rivers, it's with excitement and pride that we share this annual report full of the moments that defined our year.

Our founder, Annelies began the year on maternity leave to focus on her new journey as a mom. In her absence, Hayley and Janani showcased effective leadership that not only sustained but propelled us forward. We matured through dedicated monthly process reflections, quarterly reviews, and an inspiring annual ecosystem retreat.

We deepened our commitment to equitable engagement, investing in building trust with the people at the heart of the work. It is a deep honour and privilege to bear witness to the on-the-ground experiences of the staff and community members involved in each of our projects.

We navigated the delicate balance between providing value to our clients and fair team compensation. This commitment led to us proudly becoming a certified Living Wage employer, reinforcing our dedication to the financial well-being and sustainability of our incredible team.

As we turn the page to 2024, we do so with hope and renewed energy. The lessons learned and connections deepened in 2023 set the stage for an even more remarkable journey ahead.

Thank you for joining us on this journey,

The Roots & Rivers Team

2023 Highlights

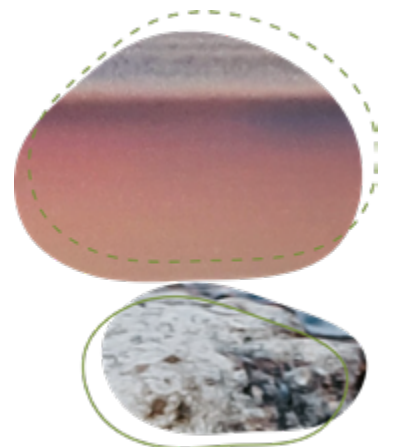
Annual Ecosystem Retreat

We gathered on Salt Spring Island for our second annual ecosystem retreat. We delved into power dynamics in facilitation, set collaborative intentions for our work and, most importantly, laughed a lot.



New Roles Defined

Annelies resumed her role as Executive Director while Hayley and Janani took on new roles as Senior Consultant & Operations Director and Consultant, respectively, setting up a collaborative leadership structure.



Reflective Processes

We introduced a comprehensive annual 360 review process for staff, this along with our monthly process reflections and quarterly intention-setting sessions promote individual and team reflection, accountability and growth.

Deepening Skills

Through AORTA's Facilitate for Freedom and Skill Up! intensives, Janani enriched her anti-oppression facilitation practice and supported our ecosystem by implementing new methodologies.

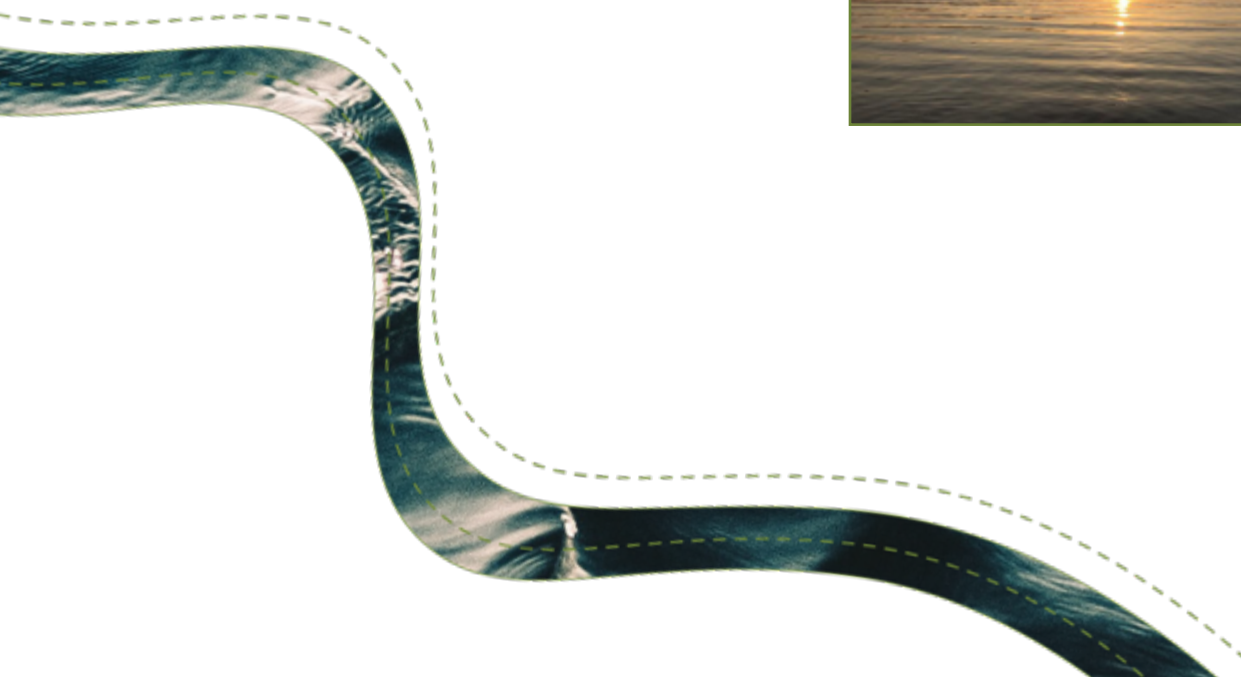
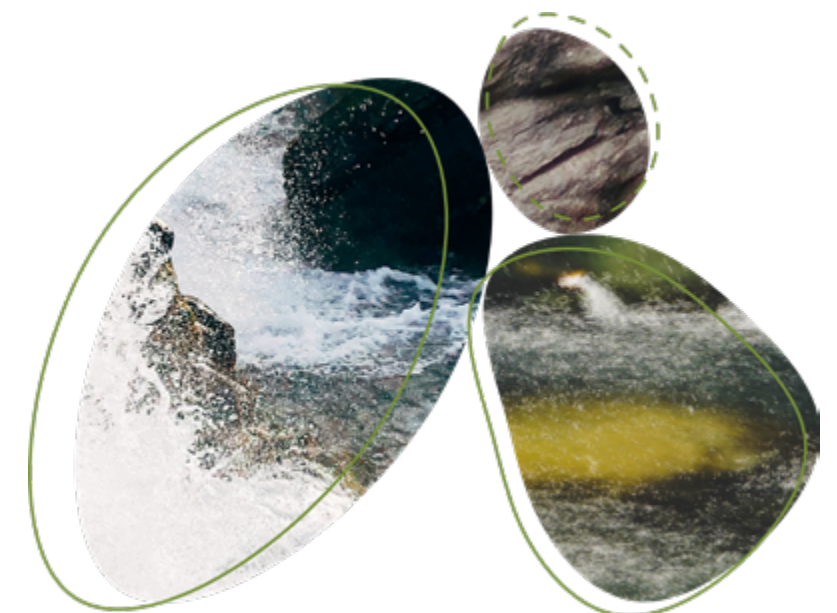


New Certifications

We proudly became a certified Living Wage employer through Living Wage for Families BC and a certified Women-Owned Business through the Women Business Enterprises Canada Council.

Client Milestone

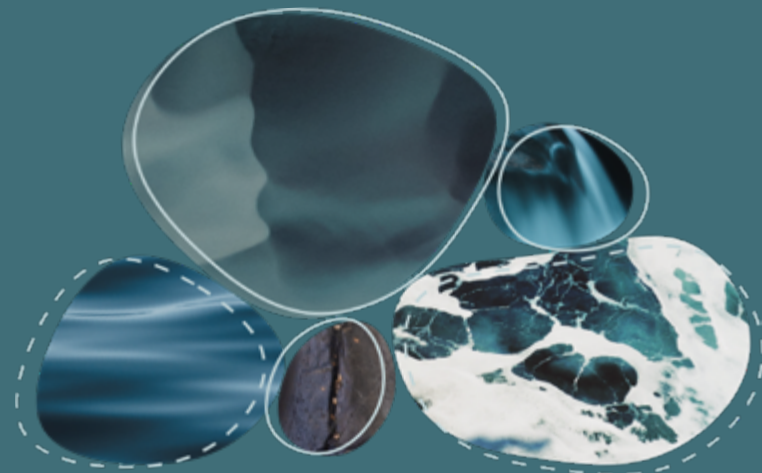
As of December 2023, we've worked directly with over 70 social purpose clients, making a positive impact across Canada.



Our Team

“Roots & Rivers is an innovative change making organization. They adopt a strategic purpose that incorporates care, reflection and relationality. In 2023 I was so happy to be part of their ecosystem. I have learnt so much by being in relation with them!”

- Soni Dasmohapatra



Staff

Our staff team works in a deeply collaborative manner to ensure all of our projects, and the foundation of the organization are well supported, aligned, and connected. In 2023, we defined new roles and titles to reflect our recent growth.

“Right now we’re in an exciting phase of dynamic growth. It’s an opportunity for each of us to pursue our personal and professional interests, leveraging our strengths to build something special together.”

- Hayley Rutherford



Annelies Tjebbes
Founder & Executive Director



Janani Ravikularam
Consultant



Hayley Rutherford
Senior Consultant & Operations Director

Ecosystem

The skillsets and networks of our ecosystem members contribute to our ability to work deeply with a large variety of communities, expanding our reach and our subject matter expertise. In 2023, we worked with:



Shawna Zegarra
Founder, Zeda Virtual Assistants



Shiva Mazrouei
Facilitator and Research Consultant



Karen Wong
Coach and Facilitator, Karen Wong Consulting



Victor Adeoye
MA Student, Public Policy at Concordia University



Carrie Emblem
Project Manager and Design Researcher



Soni Dasmohapatra
Director, Dasmohapatra Consulting



Lewis Muirhead
Owner, Alternate Future Design Group



Andrea Oakynsheyld
Principal & Founder, Oakynsheyld Consulting



Marialejandra Reyes Valerio
Consultant Founder & Director, Expansion Works



Eliane Bowden
Graphic Designer



Preet Kang
Engagement Consultant



Lana Klok
Graphic Facilitator



Marleen Roozen
Consultant



Joy Lopes
Graphic Designer



Arianne Melara
Co-Creator, O Strategies

Our Work

In 2023, we completed 21 projects with 20 clients. We appreciated renewing our connection with seven returning clients, getting a chance to dive deeper into their work. Through the lens of our values, join us in reflecting on some projects that made an impact on us this year.



Respect the Foundations

We deeply value the existing work and relationships of our clients. To co-create solutions that fit, we have to deeply understand their context to build on the solid ground of what is already working.

Gord Downie and Chanie Wenjack Fund Impact Measurement Coaching

The Gord Downie & Chanie Wenjack Fund aims to build cultural understanding and create a path toward reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada. Through Innoweave, Roots & Rivers coached the team to build their understanding of impact measurement, create a framework for measuring social change and support data-driven decision-making.

To build on what was working, we invited a range of team members into the process of developing a theory of change. Through this, we created a comprehensive plan to measure the impact of programs and initiatives to efficiently and effectively reach their vision.

Greenpeace Canada Education Fund Strategic Plan

Launched in 2020, the Greenpeace Canada Education Fund (GCEF) is a registered charity seeking to deepen collective understanding of the environmental, climate, and energy issues affecting people living in Canada and around the world.

Roots & Rivers supported GCEF in the creation of its first strategic plan, a plan that is situated in the unique context of GCEF's close partnership with Greenpeace Canada. GCEF's new strategic plan articulates the organization's vision and values, differentiating it from the work of Greenpeace Canada all while capturing how GCEF can support the work of Greenpeace Canada and other environmental organizations.



Equitable Engagement

Keen readers of our past annual reports will notice that this value has evolved from “Solidarity and Listening.” Through team discussions, we have landed on this new wording that focuses on our dedication to addressing barriers to participation to ensure voices are heard and respected.

Kettle Society

Member Engagement in Decision-Making

The Kettle Society empowers people living with mental illness, substance use, poverty, and/or homelessness by providing housing, employment, community services and enrichment programs in Vancouver, BC. The Kettle has a long history of putting members at the centre of its decision-making. As the organization has grown, member engagement has become more complex.

Roots & Rivers supported the Kettle to uncover insights from the board, staff, peer organizations and crucially its members through accessible engagement methods to inform the future of member engagement in decision-making within the organization.

Hollyburn Community Services Society

Gender-Based Violence Research Project

Hollyburn Community Services Society and Roots & Rivers collaborated on a year-long community-engaged research project. We identified gaps in services that address gender-based violence, explored the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, and identified how BC’s North Shore service providers can better support BIPOC women+ who are at risk of or experiencing gender-based violence.

This project was designed and carried out with the engagement of the BIPOC women+ communities on the North Shore, including 11 Community Research Assistants identifying as BIPOC women+ and allies whose lived experience, community relationships and multi-language support created safer spaces for contributors to share their experiences and insights. [Read the full report and summary resources here.](#)



Courageous Reflection

We believe that reflection is essential for the growth and evolution of individuals, teams and systems. We work to model this value in ourselves and are grateful to learn alongside clients who are engaged in deep reflection on their work.

Out On Screen

Strategic Planning

Out On Screen curates films that illuminate transformative moments in the lives of queer, trans, and Two-Spirit people and convenes meaningful dialogue around issues relevant to 2SLGBTQIA+ communities.

Through the strategic planning process, the Roots & Rivers team celebrated the ability of Out On Screen’s board and staff to hold space for each other and to engage in principled disagreement. The deep work their team has done in anti-oppression and decolonization was evident in the approach they brought to collaboratively developing a vision for the future of the organization.

Midwives Association of British Columbia

Board Retreat

The Midwives Association of British Columbia (MABC) is the professional association for midwives in BC. They promote the profession of midwifery within the province, advocate for the ongoing development and enhancement of midwifery services and provide continuing education opportunities for its members.

In a recent retreat facilitated by our team, MABC’s board chose to reject the binary of “working” versus “governance boards” and to pursue and develop a new style of relational governance in alignment with their efforts towards decolonizing their practices.



Patient Urgency

We understand that our work with clients has to happen alongside their day-to-day pressures and activities. We find a balanced pace to comprehensively resolve challenges for lasting impact.

SeedChange Strategic Plan

SeedChange supports small-scale farmers around the world in their fight for justice, health and sustainability. They partner with like-minded local partners to help keep seeds in farmers' hands, protect farmers' rights, and build stronger, more resilient food systems.

Roots & Rivers collaborated with SeedChange on a strategic planning process that happened concurrently with other critical internal work at the organization. Pacing the strategic planning process was necessary to ensure that these important changes were meaningfully represented.

Future Arts Network Strategic Plan

The Future Arts Network Society was formed in 2022 as an incorporated non-profit society to provide a platform for early-career arts & cultural workers and emerging leaders to collaborate and connect.

Roots & Rivers co-designed a strategic planning process framed in critical feminist, decolonization and anti-oppression theories. The leaders and members of Future Arts Network brought aspirational energy to the process and sought to model through strategic planning how the network could move forward together. Our process included an intentional summer pause to respect the schedules, energy levels and focus of participants.



Focus on Impact

We work alongside our clients, supporting their ability to achieve their stated and desired social and community impact.

Digital Health Canada Strategic Plan

Digital Health Canada is a professional association that connects, inspires, and empowers those enabling digital healthcare in Canada.

Roots & Rivers worked with the Digital Health Canada team to co-create a strategic plan to set an ambitious direction for their next three years. The Digital Health Canada team is bringing the plan to life by using the goals to inform governance, member engagement and programming.

Lumara Grief & Bereavement Care Society Evaluation

Lumara supports life after loss by bringing light to grief and sorrow. They walk alongside children and families in unspeakable moments of trauma and loss – offering evidence-based bereavement care that nurtures healing and changes lives.

Roots & Rivers worked with the Lumara team to design an evaluation plan and data collection tools for children, youth and adults. An interactive dashboard fed by online survey responses allows the Lumara team to assess and communicate the impact of their work to key audiences.

Our Impact



“Working with Roots & Rivers is always a positive experience. This is my second time working with the group and overall the outcomes and deliverables always exceed expectations. Roots & Rivers shares similar values with our organization and the impact of our strategic plan is very positive. It will provide a strong roadmap for the work ahead for the next few years. Our work has immediately shifted in a positive way through this Strategic Plan.”

Kristin Cheung, Project Co-Lead, Future Arts Network

“The Roots & Rivers Team is strategic, hard-working, and to the point. It was such a pleasure working with them over an 18-month-long series of projects. They helped us find strategic clarity and align our organizational activities with long-term desired impact.”

Scott Stirrett, CEO & Founder, Venture for Canada

“Working with Roots & Rivers was an important step in our organization’s journey towards creating a data-centric culture. By establishing a common understanding around impact measurement and inviting team members into the process of developing our theory of change, we were able to create a comprehensive plan for our organization to measure the impact of our programs and initiatives to efficiently and effectively reach our vision.”

Reilly Goldsmith, Director of Development and Programs, Gord Downie and Chanie Wenjack Fund



Our Strategic Plan

2023 marked the second year of our current strategic plan, here are our reflections on our progress to date.

After a year of intense internal focus, we are proud to be firmly grounded in process and systems informed by meaningful contributions from our staff team and ecosystem members.

01

Deliver Excellent Services

Deepen our expertise and refine our values-aligned methodologies for serving clients and community.

- Janani participated in AORTA's Facilitate for Freedom and Skill Up! Intensive trainings which supported Roots & Rivers' ability to provide facilitation rooted in anti-oppression.
- Instituted dedicated monthly process reflections and quarterly reviews to deepen our team's expertise and refining our offerings.
- Evolved processes for project planning and scope management to ensure we are effectively using resources to achieve great outcomes for our clients.

02

Deepen Our Principles

Take on internal work and support action across the social purpose field to challenge white supremacy and decolonize practices.

- Screened potential clients using our values to ensure we are only saying yes to work where we feel true alignment.
- Established internally focused work blocks and a two-week winter break to ensure our team had the time and space needed for rest and recovery.
- Included pauses in work plans to accommodate our clients' competing priorities and our ability to work effectively together.

03

Act as a Field Catalyst

Contribute towards thematic discussions and action on focus areas that will meaningfully address society's most pressing issues.

- Actively connected our clients with others in our network experiencing similar circumstances to facilitate the sharing of best practices.
- Attended local and national events to understand best practices and trends in knowledge mobilization with a view to offering our own contributions in the years to come.
- Communicated interesting and transferable client work to support field building as part of our new marketing and communications efforts.

04

Solidify Our Foundation

Expand the infrastructure and operational processes that will help us best serve our clients, our team, and our impact.

- Established three full-time staff positions with defined roles and distributed decision-making authority.
- Created an Executive Director Handbook which codifies operational, administrative, human resources and finances processes.
- Engaged a new full-service accounting firm to support financial management and planning.
- Refined ecosystem support systems including new onboarding materials for collaborators/subcontractors.
- Hosted our second annual retreat to support strong team connections and engage in collaborative planning.

05

Scale Our Efforts

Broaden our reach to support clients globally in their quest for transformative change.

- Explored provincial regulations governing the engagement of sub-contractors to support our ability to work across Canada.
- Engaged with subcontractors in two new countries and tested models of remote collaboration.
- Connected with national and global networks of practitioners and leaders through organizations like Coralus and Innoweave.
- Delivered multi-lingual projects including providing translation and engagement in French, Punjabi, Farsi, Chinese and Korean.



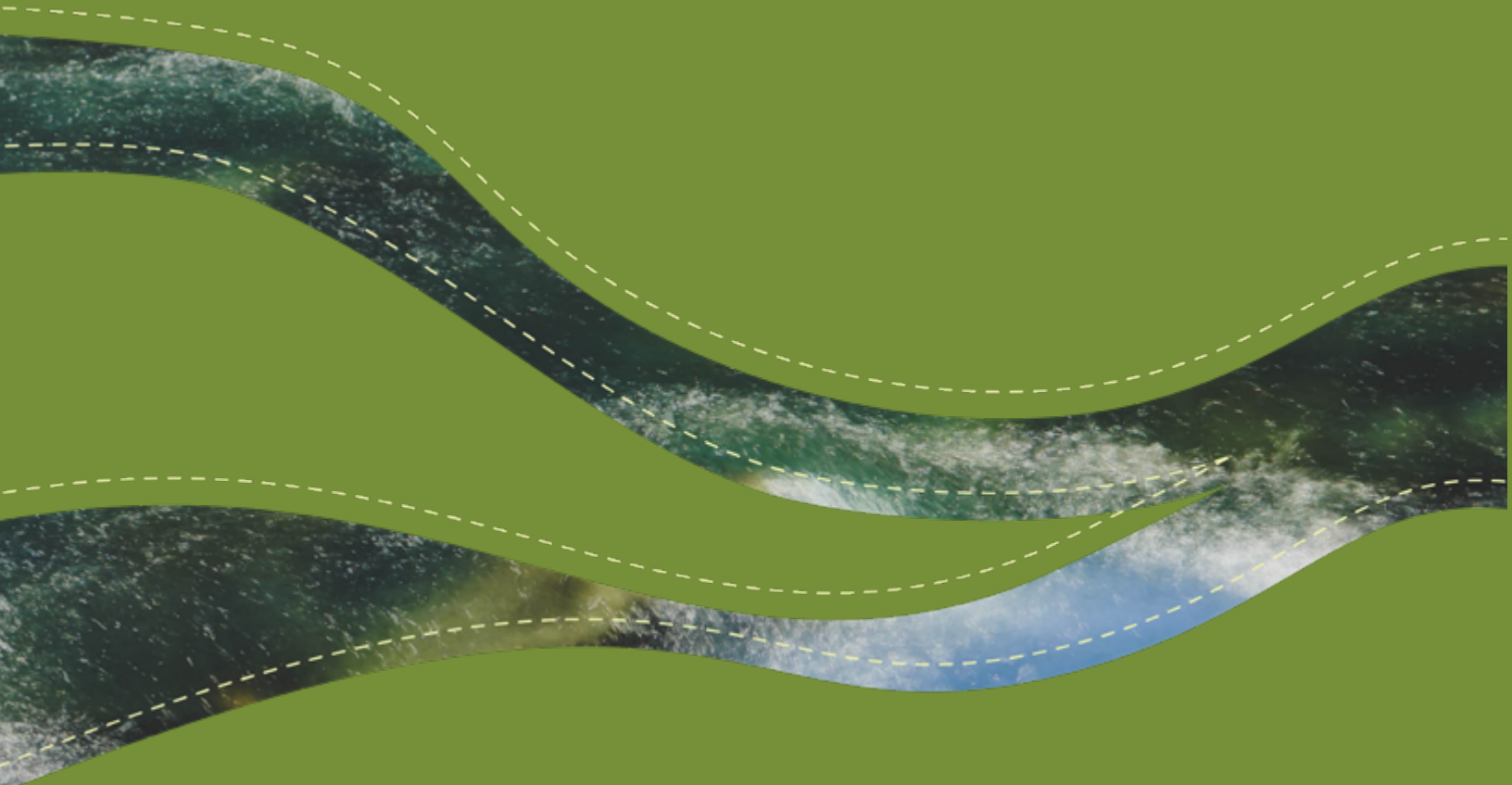
What's Next?



Looking Ahead

Roots & Rivers is poised for exciting adventures in 2024. We're committed to deepening our connection to the field, amplifying our role and contribution, and fostering meaningful collaborations. We'll be codifying more of our processes to enhance efficiency and transparency, all while extending our reach to make a broader impact.

Conclusion

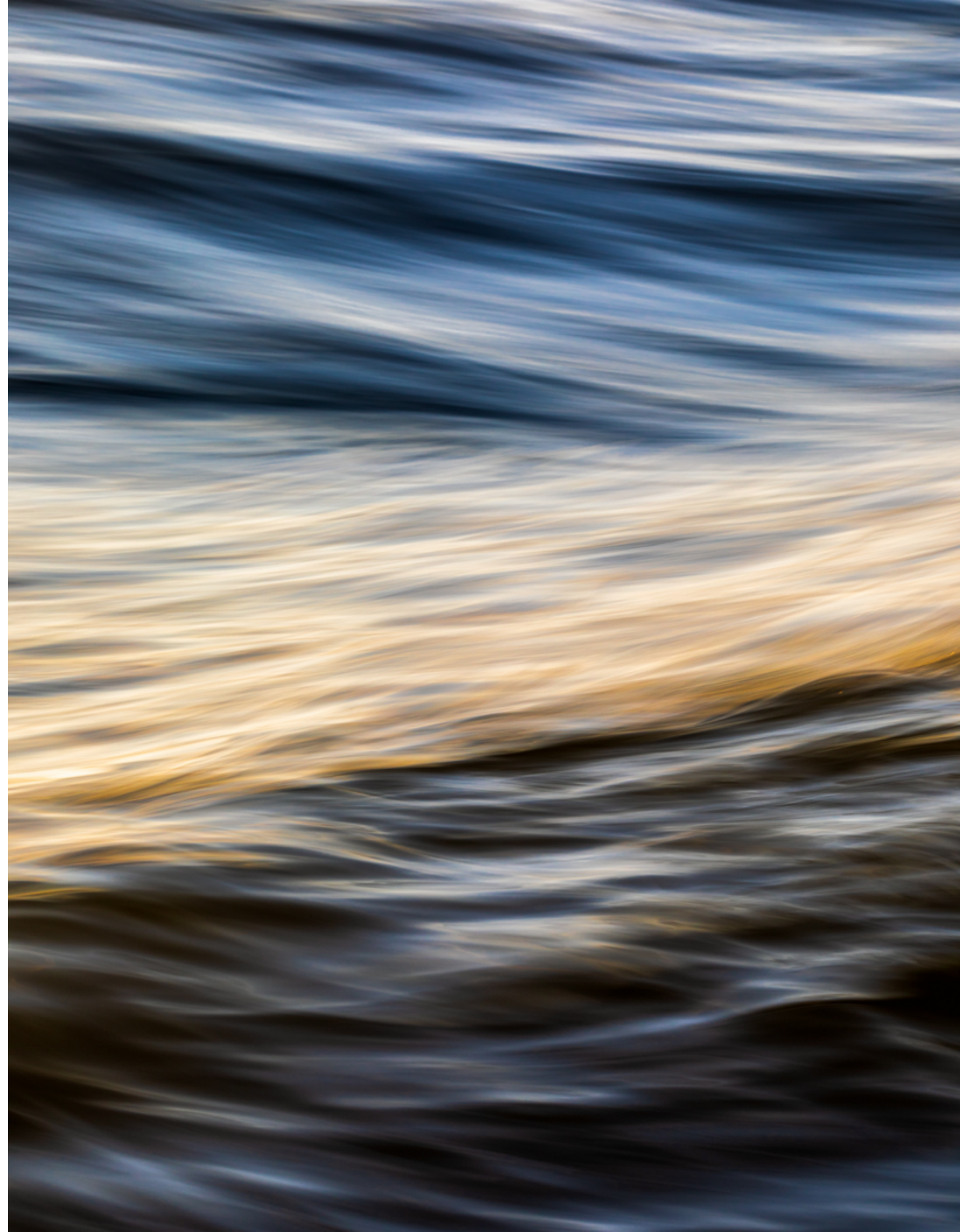


Thank You

In closing, our 2023 journey at Roots & Rivers has been one of transformative growth, strengthened foundations, and meaningful connections. As we reflect on our collective achievements, we look forward to the promising horizons of 2024, eager to continue our impactful work together.

Thank you for being part of our story.

Our Clients





**ROOTS &
RIVERS**

Enabling Transformative Change