

# Executive Director's Report

Izaak Walton League of America National Convention

Lincoln, Nebraska

July 27, 2023



**CONSERVATION**  
AT A  
**CROSSROAD**

*Putting Solutions in to Action*



# Secure Future Building on Enduring Strengths

- ▶ Community-based conservation
- ▶ Volunteer science
- ▶ Policy advocacy
- ▶ Connecting people to the outdoors



# Executing on the Vision

Vision not only aspirational, action plan



National organization executing

Volunteer science

Policy advocacy

Defending bedrock  
conservation protections



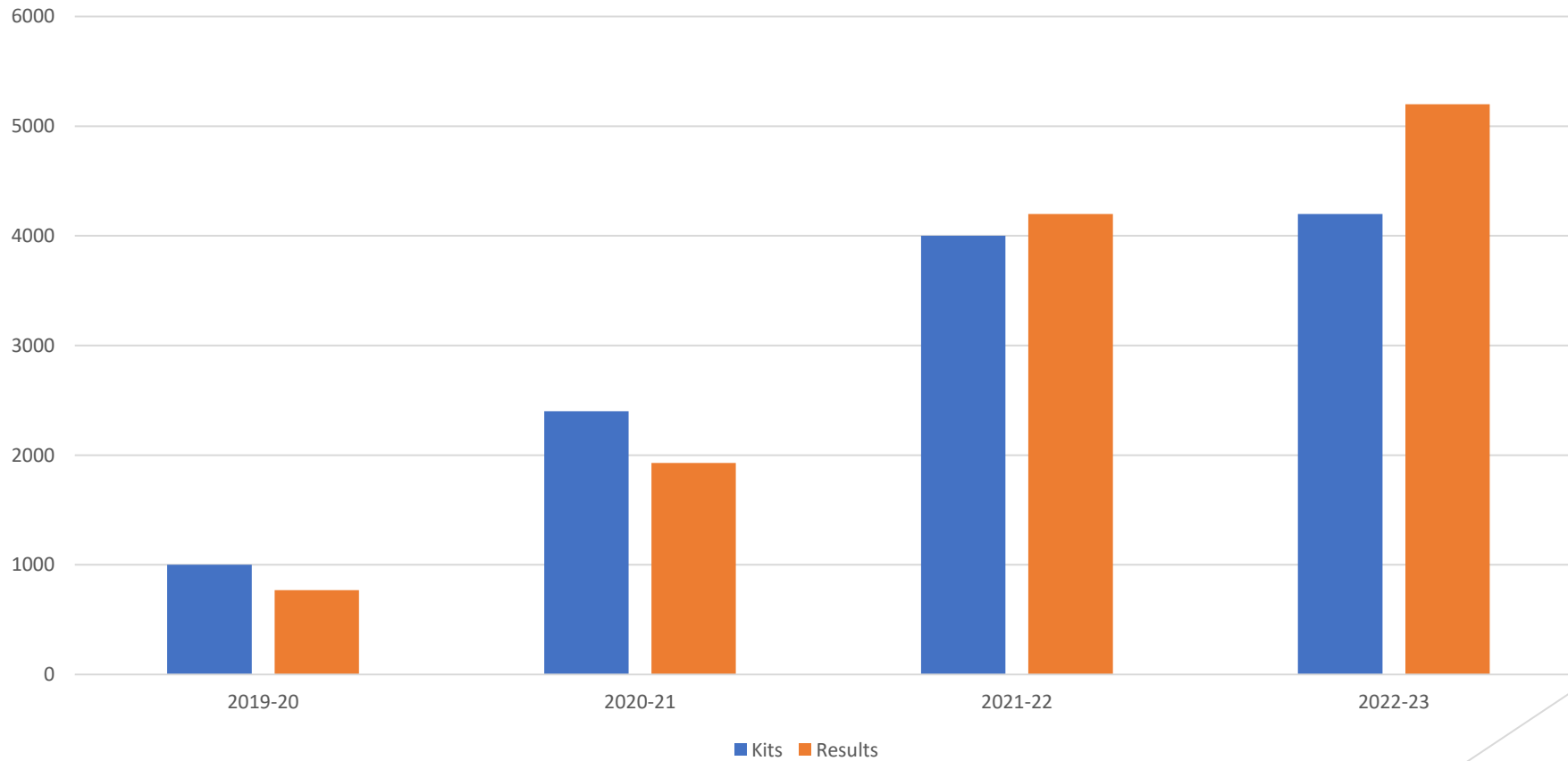
Need your help to

Amplify vision

Take action

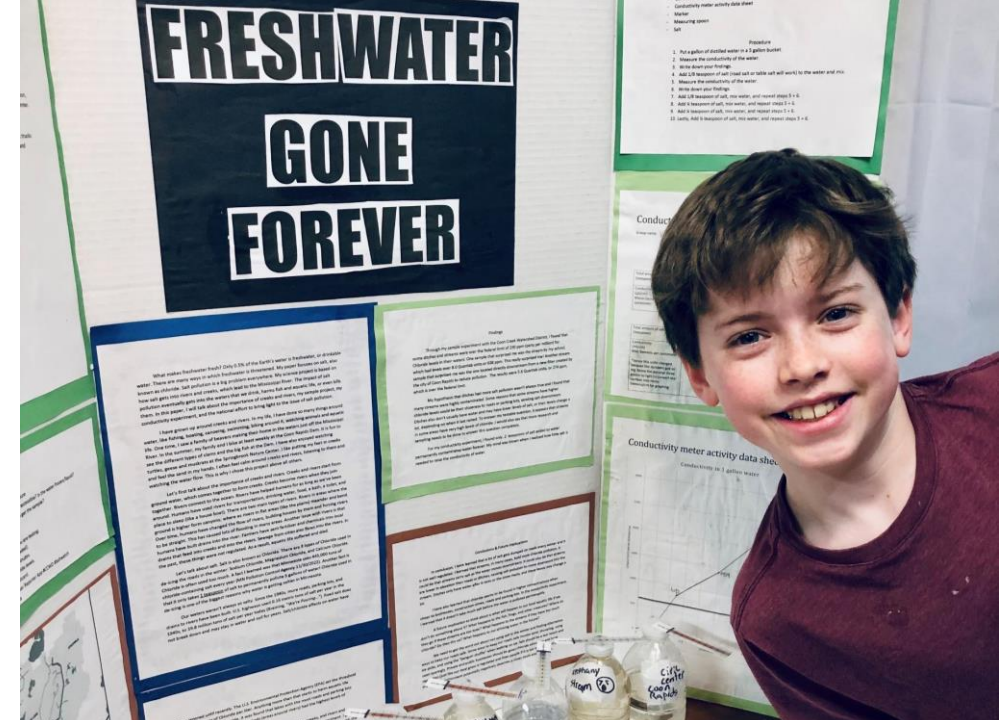
# League Leading on Volunteer Science Salt Watch

Growth of Salt Watch



# Data to Action in Practice

- ▶ Public education
- ▶ Grassroots advocacy campaigns
- ▶ Industry training and engagement
- ▶ Data to water utilities and govts
- ▶ State legislation
- ▶ Expanding networks, participation



# Nitrate Watch

- ▶ Nitrogen pollution widespread
- ▶ Damages the environment
  - ▶ Algae blooms
- ▶ Harms human health
  - ▶ Drinking water
  - ▶ Birth defects, blue baby syndrome
  - ▶ Colon cancer
  - ▶ Thyroid disease
- ▶ Costs everyone
  - ▶ \$210 billion annually





# Nitrate Watch - 0 to 60 in 6 months

## Launched February 2023

- ▶ 500 test kits distributed
- ▶ 32 states and DC
- ▶ Nearly 800 test results
  - ▶ Corn belt high levels
  - ▶ Mid-Atlantic drought
  - ▶ New England - Salt Watch volunteers

## Going forward

- ▶ Expand participation
- ▶ Public education
- ▶ Use results locally
  - ▶ Conservation on the ground
- ▶ Support advocacy
  - ▶ Farm Bill
  - ▶ Safe drinking water standards

**Testing the Raccoon  
River - May 11, 2023**



**Nitratewatch.org**



# Policy Advocacy

- ▶ Farm Bill is a:
  - ▶ clean water
  - ▶ public health
  - ▶ climate-resiliency bill
- ▶ Aggressive Hill outreach
- ▶ 30+ visits June
- ▶ Reinforce member, chapter & division advocacy
- ▶ Added capacity Jessica Gordon



# Defend Bedrock Conservation

- ▶ Early Ikes rallied against “drainage crime of the century”
- ▶ Supreme Court Sackett decision drainage crime this century
- ▶ Justice Brett Kavanaugh dissenting opinion
- ▶ Millions acres wetlands will be drained and filled



# Renewed RESOLVE, NOT Resignation



- ▶ Need renewed resolve
- ▶ Act now
  - ▶ Defend wetland conservation in Farm Bill
  - ▶ Press USDA enforce limits on drainage
  - ▶ Eyes on the ground
  - ▶ Build grassroots pressure on Congress

# Gateway to the Outdoors

- ▶ Chapters gateway
- ▶ Panel this week future participation
- ▶ Opportunities abound
- ▶ Improved collaboration = amplified impact
  - ▶ Common goals
  - ▶ Information sharing
  - ▶ Use tools



# Leadership Development

- ▶ Shared priority
- ▶ Challenging
- ▶ NOT only organization facing it
- ▶ Walk before we run . . .



# Small Steps Lead to Success . . . and

## Start small at chapter level

- ▶ Coordinate one activity
- ▶ Lead a committee
- ▶ Manage social media or website
- ▶ Empower to engage peer group: R3 and young adults

## Start small at national level

- ▶ Join a resource committee
  - ▶ Virtual meetings
  - ▶ Shape League policies/positions
- ▶ Get involved in volunteer science

# Success Hinges on Changing Mindset and . . .

Leadership begins with “LEAD” NOT  
“WORK”



League’s biggest challenge may be doing  
things differently



Helping new people achieve shared goals  
using different tactics



Let’s over-simplify goals and tactics . . .







### Using Your Nitrate Test Strips

- Immerse the water-resistant pouch in to sample (sample tap water, stream, spring, well, and pond) and shake the pouch for 1 second and squeeze the excess water out.
- Hold the strip level, part out up, for 30 seconds.
- At exactly 30 seconds, compare the color of the color chart on your bottle labeled "Nitrate Nitrogen ppm".
- Remove sunglasses before taking your reading.
- The color will continue to change after 30 seconds, so record your value as close to 30 seconds as possible.
- If your strip's color falls between two values, use the lower of the two.



The Safe Drinking Water Act sets federal drinking water standards for public water systems. Recent studies show that consuming water with high nitrate levels can have dangerous health effects. There is no regulation on drinking water obtained from private wells.

**NITRATE WATCH**  
Safe water starts on land.



# Starts From the Bottom Up!

- ▶ Likes fiercely proud bottom-up
- ▶ This is as bottom up as it gets
- ▶ This starts with each of us individually
- ▶ Walk before we run
- ▶ Take a simple first step

# Building on Momentum from the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

- ▶ Centennial inspiring
- ▶ Anniversary springboard
- ▶ Securing future hard work
- ▶ Focus on strengths, positives
  - ▶ Public shares our goals
  - ▶ Growing grassroots networks
  - ▶ Volunteer science informs policy, changes behavior
  - ▶ Community-based



Thank you for  
all you do!