

FRIENDS OF THE CHEMUNG RIVER WATERSHED



2020 Annual Report

MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

As a native of the Southern Tier, I am thrilled to be back home serving an environmental stewardship organization that is so valued by my community! As many of you know, after finishing my MBA last year, I moved to Manhattan to begin fundraising and management consulting with non-profits in the New York City Metropolitan. My experience there gave me a greater perspective on how larger organizations managed their fundraising and operations, but also reminded me of how much I missed the nature and beauty of my home in upstate New York.

Those lessons have allowed me to step confidently and quickly into the role of executive director of the “River Friends” in the last few months of the year, after Jim Pfiffer’s retirement in October. Jim and the board of directors worked hard for many years to repair the relationship between the community and the river, after years of fear and concern over what the river could do in the worst circumstances. This year, we continued our mission to promote the benefits of having an amazing natural resource on which to kayak, fish, bird watch, or simply take a walk near its bank. Next year, I plan to continue the work that Jim and the board began, and find creative ways to meet our mission amidst this pandemic.

I think we are all tired of thinking about COVID-19 and its effect on our lives, but this is the reality of our world, and we need to continue to keep our friends and families safe. This past Spring and Summer, many of us were able to “escape our homes” and go to the river for socially distant fun. We did not have to travel far to go outside and “put our toes in the grass” or “get paddling”. Next year, no matter what the status of this global pandemic, we have planned more engaging programs and activities that will be safe and open to the public around the river.

As this new year begins, I want to ask our members and supporters to continue to engage with us, and follow us on social media, as we roll out our slate of 2021 projects. I also want to personally thank all of you for your belief in our mission, for your love of the Chemung River and our community, and as Jim Pfiffer would say: “Let’s keep paddling together!”

Thank you!

Sincerely,



Emily J. Marino
Executive Director
Friends of the Chemung River Watershed

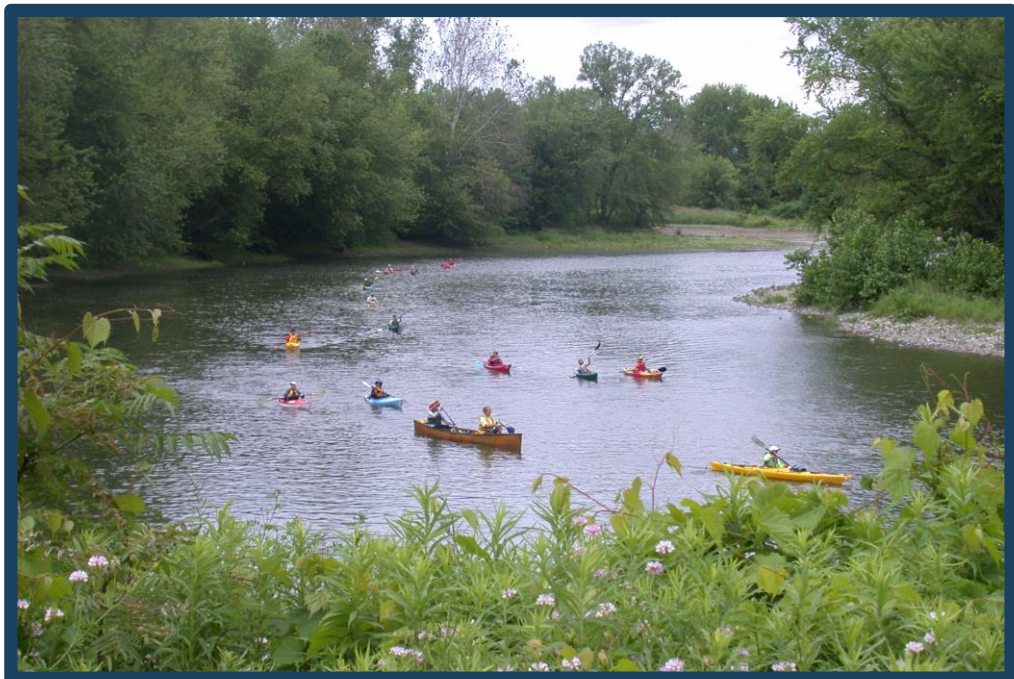




OUTDOOR RECREATION & SAFETY

We supported the promotion of the river and trails, and worked to keep them safe for the community to enjoy year-around by initiating the following projects.

- Collaborated with Nucor Vulcraft NY and Chemung County to place metal and wooden benches and swings along the Lackawanna Trail.
- Hung birdhouses on the Lackawanna Trail, built by the Chemung Soil & Water Conservation District and painted by students of the Finn Academy.
- Applied for and received grant funding from The ARTS Council of the Southern Finger Lakes to partner with a local Artist to hide “Painted Rocks” along the river and trails, in collaboration with the program: “Chemung/Steuben County Rocks”.
- Purchased “Dam Ahead” signs from Eastern Metal, and worked with the county to install these warning signs on the Walnut Street Bridge to warn of the Chase Hibbard-Dam.
- Hosted a Memorial Day river event with the Chemung County Sheriff’s Department and the DEC, where the Friends of the River visited all the board launches and several fishing spots to share information and speak with people about water safety. The Friends also checked for fishing licenses, gave out life vests, and picked up litter.

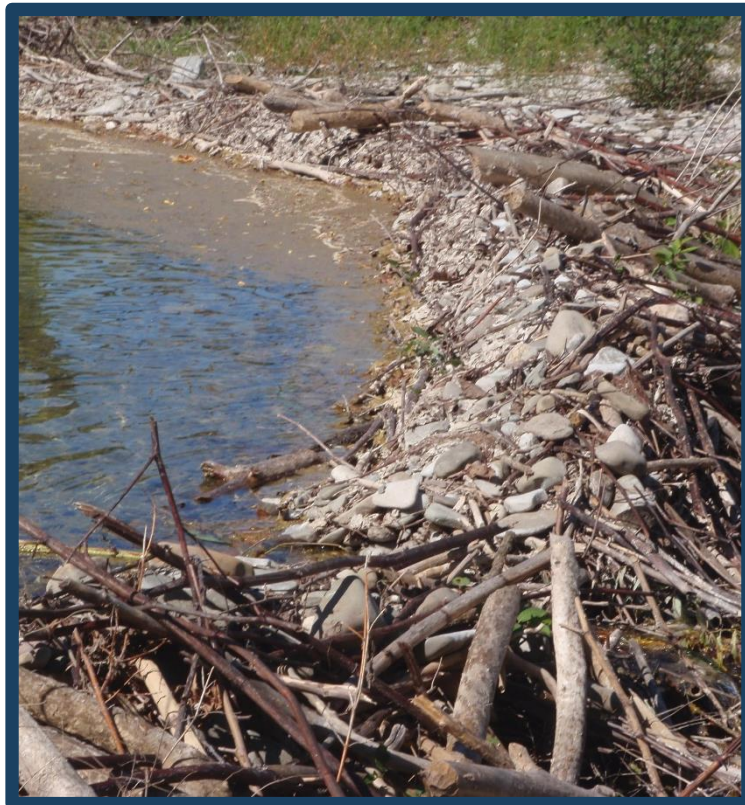




ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

We worked to increase awareness of environmental protection issues, and educate the community around the ecology of our watershed through the following projects.

- Assisted the Elmira Rotary Interact Club at Elmira Free Academy High School to erect a memorial plaque on the Lackawanna Trail in honor of Tess Rothstein (a bicyclist who lost her life in traffic in San Francisco).
- Offered a program on the Great Horned Owl, presented at the Finger Lakes House and open to the public.
- Presented a science program to the students at Corning Community College on the river pollution problems and methods to solve these issues.
- Provided public education to the general public around an increase in Red Fox dens and local Beaver activity around the Chemung River and its tributaries.
- Partnered with Finn Academy to paint birdhouse to be placed on the Lackawanna Trail in Elmira, in coordination with their environmental education programs.





CLEANER WATERWAYS

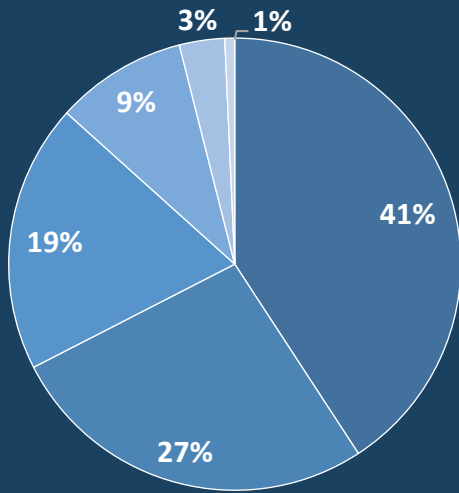
We coordinated the following projects to improve the quality of life in the Southern Tier, and to keep our river clean and healthy.

- Organized river and trail clean-up efforts near the Route 427 Un-Official Boat Launch in the Town of Chemung.
- Organized clean-up efforts on the Lackawanna Trail and surrounding riverside areas.
- Collaborated with the DEC to clean-up illegal homeless encampments in the Towns of Elmira and Southport, who were littering on the riverside trails.
- Partnered with BSA Troop 154 (which serves adult scouts whose members have disabilities) to plant 15 willow seedlings along the river.
- Partnered with Casella and the Chemung County Landfill to educate the public about the environmental protection efforts that are ingrained into waste management, and the operations and safeguards in place to prevent damage to the river and our natural environment.
- Partnered with the West Elmira Police Department, NYS DEC Environmental Conservation Officers, and DEC Flood Control Engineers to patrol trails on a monthly basis to remove any illegal camps and address additional illegal activities on and near the river.

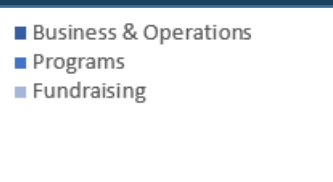
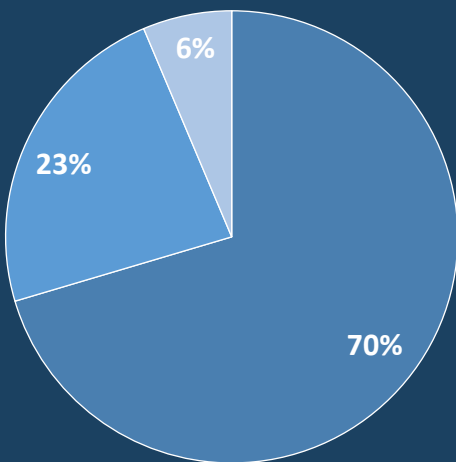




Revenue By Source



Expenses



FINANCES

Like so many of our neighbors, COVID-19 affected the Friends of the Chemung River Watershed from an operational perspective, as much of our municipal and corporate funding was drastically cut. However, we were able to change our staffing matrix, which helped us to cut costs. We reduced our one employee to part-time to survive this difficult year. Even though this changed the scale of work we were able to accomplish, we made a significant impact on our mission and ended the year in a healthy financial position. We are looking forward to being back to full capacity as soon as possible, and to seeing people in-person again once this pandemic is gone! We appreciate the community rallying around us, by continuing to donate during these difficult times. Without your support, we would not have been able to make the impact we had this year, and we thank you for your continued support of the Friends of the Chemung River Watershed!



FUNDING SOURCES

- Memberships
- Donations
- Corporation Partners
- Municipal Funds
- Foundation Grants
- Program Fees



USES OF FUNDS

PROGRAMMATIC

- Trail Clean-up & Maintenance
- Boat Launch Building & Maintenance
- Environmental Education Programs
- River Safety Training & Outdoor Recreation

OPERATING

- Business Expenses
- Facilities & Equipment
- Travel & Transportation

FUNDRAISING

- Community Outreach & Events

THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTERS, SPONSORS, & COMMUNITY PARTNERS

- American Legion – Post 443 Elmira
- The Anderson Foundation Inc.
- The ARTS Council of the Southern Finger Lakes
- Community Foundation of Elmira-Corning and the Finger Lakes
- Casella Waste Systems
- Caywood Funeral Home and Gardens
- Chemung County
- Chemung Valley Audubon Society
- CMG Pharmaceuticals
- Cooper, Pautz & Weiermiller LLP
- Coseo Agency
- Elm Chevrolet
- Hesselson's
- Hilliard Corporation & Hilliard Foundation
- IBEW Local 139
- Lighthouse Liquors & Wines of Southport
- Light's Bake Shop, Inc.
- McInerney Funeral Home
- Perry & Carroll Insurance
- Pump Doctors
- Sayles and Evans
- Town of Big Flats
- Town of Chemung
- Town of Elmira
- Town of Southport
- Wallin Insurance Agency
- Young's Tires

A special thanks to all local Police, Fire, and Rescue Departments who have supported us throughout the years!

THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS & MEMBERS

Without the support of our donors and members, we would cease to exist. Thank you all for your continued support of our mission, and your belief in the Chemung River as an amazing natural community resource.

River Friends

Charlie & Trudy Craig
Katharine Morrisey in memory of
Robert Bell
Arthur & Connie Thompson

Stewards

Anonymous in memory of Brock Morey
Lee & Pam Doud
Sandra Gordon
David & Claudia Radin
David Sandore
Karen Meriwether & Tom Snow

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Eugene Agan
David & Julie Biviano
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Terry Foody
Marjorie Hamilton
Beth & George Honadle
James & Kimberly Kaffenbarger
Kevin & Eileen McNerny in memory of
their "Awesome" Dog Doolin
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Nicholas Borrelli & Kaye Newbury
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Theresa Woodruff

WHO WE ARE

As a small non-profit organization, we work hard to serve our community!

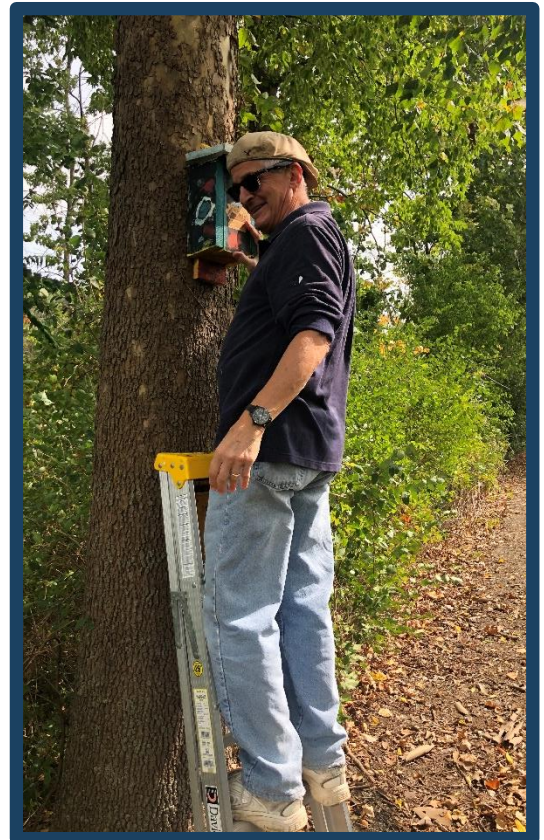
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Jennifer Fais, Vice President
William Tanner, Treasurer
Donald Hall, Secretary
Jeff Demeritt
Jim Emmick
Austin Farrell
Claudia Radin
Melissa Rinker

STAFF

Emily Marino, Executive Director

We run on assistance from volunteers and community members, like you! If you see things along the River or Riverside Trails that you would like to help us with, or report on, please feel free to contact us via email at info@chemungriverfriends.org. You can also call our offices at 607-846-2242. Our offices are located at 111 North Main Street, Elmira, NY 14901



We would also like to take this opportunity to thank our outgoing executive director, Jim Pfiffer. Jim was a co-founder of our organization and dedicated 11-years of his life working to achieve our mission of promoting, preserving, and protecting the Chemung River, its tributaries and watershed. Although Jim will stay involved with our organization as a volunteer to help with educational programs, he has earned his rest and retirement. Jim - we would not be here without you! Thank you so much for your tireless hard work and passion for our river and natural resources!

