

2011 Annual Report

Friends of the Chemung River Watershed

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Friends of the Chemung River Watershed (“River Friends”) was formed in March 2009 as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization to protect and promote the Chemung River and its tributaries and encourage the public to better use, enjoy and respect our waterways.

2011 Board Of Directors And Advisers

- **President Lee Hanle Younge**, Big Flats, N.Y.; retired director of Environmental Management Council of Chemung County.
- **Vice-President Robert Bailey**, Elmira, N.Y.; former Elmira city councilman, New York State Athletic Commission inspector.
- **Secretary Thomas O'Brien**, Corning, N.Y.; attorney.
- **Treasurer Jim Ripley**, Pine City, N.Y.; Chemung Canal Trust Company vice president.
- **Board member Jennifer Fais**, Corning, N.Y.; retired planner with the Southern Tier Central Regional Planning and Development Board and co-chairperson of the Chemung Basin River Trail Partnership.
- **Board member Jenny Cole**, Corning, N.Y.; contract employee with Display Technologies, Corning Inc.
- **Board member Donald Hall**, Elmira, N.Y.; retired corporate administrator for Precision Filters, Ithaca.
- **Board member Rick Madl**, Elmira, N.Y.; Chemung County Legislator and service team leader, Wegmans.
- **Board member William Roe**, Elmira, N.Y.; Elmira City Councilman and retired senior transportation engineer with Hunt Engineers, Architects & Surveyors.
- **Director James Pfiffer**, Elmira, N.Y.; public relations consultant and former newspaper reporter and columnist.
- **Adviser Jim Arey**, Ithaca, N.Y.; senior transportation planner for the Elmira-Chemung Transportation Council.
- **Adviser Richard H. Bean**, Sayre, Pa.; Chairman of Athens Township Parks and Recreation and a retired production control manager.

Building The Future Of Our Rivers

Dear river supporter,

This year, the third year of river keeping, saw River Friends building on our past accomplishments.

We received more than \$23,000 in grants for projects and programs in 2011. We built two boat launch picnic pavilions, installed a boat launch security camera and purchased river rescue and training equipment. We also, removed two tons of trash in and along the river, expanded a riverside community garden and improved and expanded our online river maps (www.chemungriverfriends.org).

We assisted the city of Elmira, Chemung County and the New York State Department of Transportation plan an 8.5-mile riverside recreation trail from Elmira to the town of Ashland. We helped maintain other trails along the river.

Our eco-recreation programs featured guided paddles, including the annual Elmira Riverfest in June, and bike trips, hikes and cross-country ski trips along the river trails.

We expanded and strengthened our board of directors and hired consultants to assess and improve our operations and fundraising abilities.

Our year was successful because of the support of our municipal partners, members and volunteers who unselfishly donate their time and money to assure our continued growth and ability to protect and promote our precious rivers and streams.

Respectfully,

Jim Pfiffer, director

Friends of the Chemung River Watershed

Cornell University River Trail Design

We hired a design team of landscape architects and city planning students from Cornell University to develop plans, with Chemung County, the city of Elmira and the New York State Department of Transportation to plan an 8.5-mile nature trail along the Chemung River from Elmira to the town of Ashland.

Katy Leary Community Garden



We added 18 raised wooden garden beds to the 30 existing beds at the Katy Leary Community Garden, near the Chemung River on Elmira's Southside. In addition, we purchased and planted 14 dwarf fruit trees (apple, peach and pear) and five blueberry bushes in the 2-year-old garden. The Elmira Garden Club planted two beds with perennial flowers to transplant in the park and at other city-owned parks. The garden is run by Dr. Jon Homuth and volunteers from The Park Church in Elmira.

The garden beds are available for free to community residents, groups and organizations. The gardeners plant what they choose, and are responsible for tending to their gardens during the growing season. The garden supplies the water, gardening tools, fertilizer and gardening advice – all for free.

At harvest time, some of the excess produce is donated to local soup pantries.

Fitch's Bridge Boat Launch Repairs



The ruts, potholes and bumps on the access road and parking at the Fitches Bridge Boat Launch in Big Flats were removed and repaired in June thanks to a cooperative effort.

The New York State Department of Conservation donated tons of gravel and fill for the project. The town of Elmira donated the labor and equipment to grade the site, spread the gravel and fill in the ruts and holes.

Prior to the repairs, motorists were driving off the access road and into the grass to avoid the pot holes, creating ruts and holes in the grass.

This is another example of everyone unselfishly working together to make it safer and easier to use and enjoy the river. The boat launch is one of the more popular on the river and is frequently used for paddling, fishing or as a place to sit and watch the river flow and enjoy the wildlife.

Bottcher's Landing Boat Launch Picnic Pavilion



River Friends partnered with the Town of Big Flats to build a wooden picnic pavilion at the Bottcher's Landing Boat Launch near the South Corning Road Bridge. The pavilion features a concrete pad and metal roof, picnic tables and a barbecue grill. It's free and open to the public. The pavilion provides shelter to boaters during bad weather and offers a place for community members to hold family picnics, meetings or simply sit and enjoy the peaceful views of the river and surrounding farmland. The pavilion was built with a grant from the Community Foundation of Elmira-Corning and the Finger Lakes.

Public Safety Presentations and Donations

River Friends and the Elmira Fire Department gave safety presentations to 515 students and 27 staff members at Parley Coburn Elementary School in Elmira. Topics: River ice dangers, the importance of wearing life vests and why rivers are too dangerous for swimming.

In May, we received a \$1,523 Anderson Foundation grant to purchase two cold-water rescue suits and rescue training mannequin. The items were donated to the Elmira Fire Department. The fire department and other fire departments in the area use the equipment for river rescues and river rescue training. The equipment improves safety for river users and the firefighters who make river rescues.

Elmira Boat Launch Security Camera



This security camera was installed on the Walnut Street Bridge to provide 24/7 views and recordings of the river and the Grove Street Boat Launch in Elmira.

A state Community Development grant allowed River Friends to donate a \$7,660 security camera to the city of Elmira to monitor the river, the Grove Street Boat Launch and the Chase-Hibbard Dam in Elmira. The camera feeds a 24/7 view of the river to the Elmira Police Department and can be remotely operated to zoom and rotate 360 degrees to view the entire river. The camera deters vandalism at the boat launch and allows emergency personnel to view live feeds of river emergencies.

Improving Operations And Fund-raising

River Friends improved and streamlined our operations thanks to a \$2,000 grant from the Community Foundation of Elmira-Corning and the Finger Lakes and the Triangle Fund. The grant allowed the Institute for Human Services, in Bath, to study and assess River Friends' strengths and weaknesses and to provide training and assistance in improving our operations and financial stability. The program allows us to hire a fund-raising consultant in 2012 to develop a sustainable fund-raising program.

River cleanups



More than 200 Notre Dame students removed trash along three miles of the Chemung River

On April 15, 220 students and 30 staff members from Notre Dame High School in Southport and seven River Friends volunteers removed 800 pounds of trash along the Chemung River in Southport, Elmira and the town of Elmira. The students also painted the picnic pavilion at the Grove Street Boat Launch in Elmira. It was the school's first campus-wide community service project.

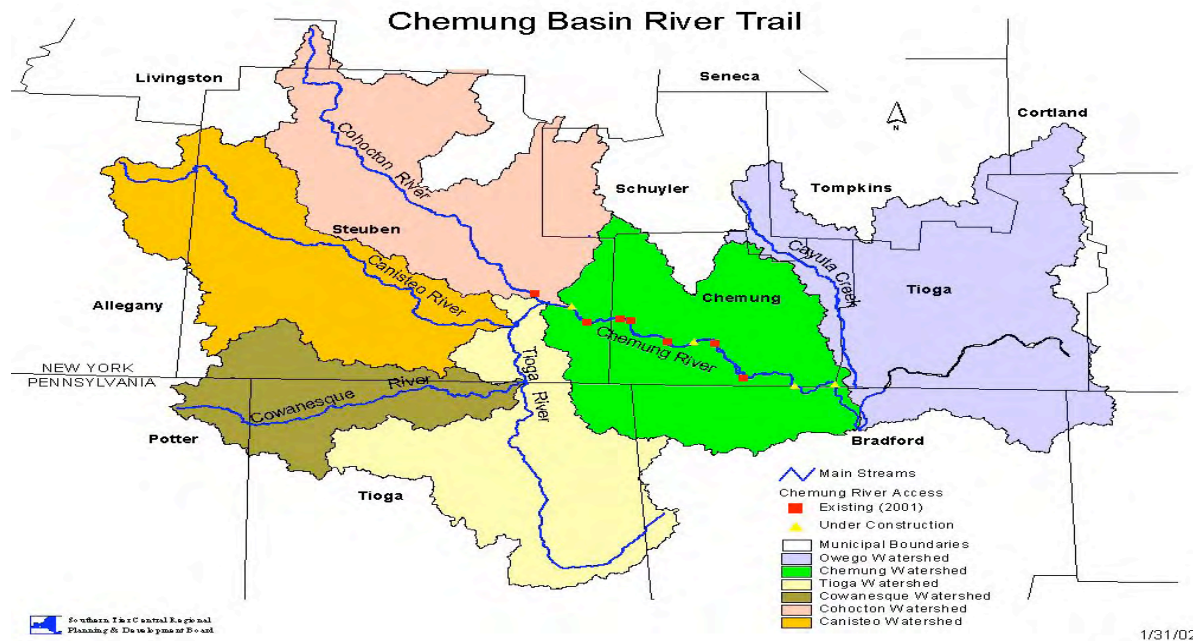
Between May and October our community volunteer cleanups removed 1,200 pounds of trash from in and around the river.



Redesigned Online River Maps

A better way to paddle, fish and enjoy our local rivers is now just a mouse click away at www.chemungriverfriends.org. River Friends redesigned and updated its online paddle guide and river maps, featuring interactive maps and information about the Chemung, Cohocton, Canisteo, Tioga and Susquehanna rivers.

The maps show the locations of public boat launches, their GPS coordinates, the distances between the launches, real time river levels and weather forecasts. The maps also include nearby roads, highways and municipalities -- making it easier for first-time users to drive to the launch sites. Click on a launch site and you get a lot of information, including - the launch name, the river, the nearest municipality, details about the boat ramps, access roads, parking spaces, restrooms, pavilions, picnic tables, benches and camping.



Each launch site page includes a satellite view of the launch, pictures of the site from land and the water, and beautiful scenic photographs of the waterways and their plant and animal life. Some launch sites include watercolor paintings by a local artist. You can also use the guide and maps to find helpful tips on paddling safety and river advice, and learn about nearby parks, business and tourist attractions and local history and river lore.

Education

River Friends partnered with the Susquehanna River Basin Commission (SRBC) to sponsor a Sept. 21 day-long educational program on water withdrawal and water quality monitoring and how it relates to the natural gas industry. The event included a presentation by the SRBC, a bus trip to a SRBC water monitoring station on Sing Sing Creek in Big Flats and a visit to a natural gas company water withdrawal station, also in Big Flats. The more than 20 participants included municipal officials, water quality groups and storm-water management organizations. Media coverage of the event provided public education about water withdrawal, monitoring and protection of the Chemung River Basin.

Annual Meeting

Our annual meeting was held Oct. 18 at the Chemung Valley History museum in Elmira. Elected board officers included: President Lee Hanle Young, Vice-president Robert Bailey, Secretary Thomas O'Brien and Treasurer James Ripley.

Elected Board members included: Jennifer Fais, Jenny Cole, Donald Hall, Richard Madl and William Roe.

Our 2011 Volunteer of the Year was Lynn Smith of Elmira and our River Friends Business of the Year was Express Café & Bakery in Elmira.

River Friends Director Jim Pfiffer gave a Power Point presentation on our 2011 projects and programs and the river trails planned for 2012 and beyond.



2011 Expenses

	2011 (actual)	2011 budgeted
Fees and licenses	\$119	\$500
Accounting fees	\$1776	\$3500
Fundraising consultant	N/A	N/A
Sub total	\$1895	\$4000
Property insurance	\$155.24	\$250
Liability insurance	\$2635	\$3000
Rent	\$1500	\$1500
Repairs/equip/maint.	\$514.96	\$250
Sub total	\$4805.20	\$5000
Books/subscriptions	\$249.48	\$0

Postage/mailing	\$679.93	\$1250
Printing/copying	\$1027.90	\$2500
Program expenses	\$5632.29	\$2000
Phone/computer	\$1464.01	\$1500
Supplies	\$604.18	\$1000
Subtotal	\$9657.79	\$8250
Advertising	\$305.85	\$750
Meals	\$201	\$500
Staff development	\$311.99	\$400
Subtotal	\$818.84	\$1650
Directors salary	\$42436	\$42436
FICA	\$3246.47	\$3250
NYS unemployment	\$121.13	\$130
Fed. Unemployment tax	\$56	\$56
Workers comp	\$487.02	\$400
Other	\$70.73	\$100
Subtotal	\$46417.35	\$46372
Mileage	\$2973	\$2000
Projects and programs	\$23256.29	\$24482
Subtotal	\$26229.29	\$26482
Total	\$89,823.47	\$91754

2011 income

Source	Amount
Municipal funds	\$70000
Grants	\$14273
Memberships	\$5934
Program fees	\$300
Corporate donations	\$3100
Total	\$93607

Long-term Strategic Plans

Our long-term strategic plans include working with our municipal partners to build riverside trails and construct more boat launches and improve existing launches in Chemung and Steuben counties. Additionally, we intend to develop a volunteer trail stewards program to maintain and improve trails and protect our environment.

Help us protect our rivers.

Become a member and donate online with a credit card at www.chemungriverfriends.org or send you tax-deductable donations to:

River Friends

111 N. Main St.

Elmira, NY 14901