

2010 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
organizations to protect and promote the Chemung River and
its tributaries and encourage the public to better use, enjoy
and respect our waterways.**

Board of directors and advisers

- **President: Lee Hanle Younge**, Big Flats, N.Y.; retired director of environmental management with Cornell Cooperative Extension.
- **Vice-president: Robert Bailey**, Elmira, N.Y.; Elmira city councilman, New York State Athletic Commission inspector.
- **Secretary: Thomas O’Brien**, Corning, N.Y.; attorney.
- **Treasurer: Jim Ripley**, Pine City, Chemung Canal bank vice president.
- **Board member: Jennifer Fais**, Corning, N.Y.; retired planner with Southern Tier Central Regional Planning & 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: Paul Minier**, Elmira, N.Y.; grocery store owner.
- **Director: James Pfiffer**, Elmira, N.Y.; public relations consultant and former newspaper reporter/columnist.
- **Adviser: Jim Arey**, Ithaca; transportation planner.
- **Adviser: Richard H. Bean**, Sayre, Pa.; retired production control manager.

Building the future of our rivers

Dear river supporter,

This year, our sophomore year, was a building year for Friends of the Chemung River Watershed (River Friends). We constructed two picnic pavilions and a solar-powered weather station at boat launches on the Chemung River. We built a riverside community garden.

We built partnerships with the New York State Department of Transportation, Chemung County and the city of Elmira to begin plans for a five-mile riverside recreation trail.

We worked with six municipalities in Southeast Steuben County to help them plan to develop river trails and connect those trails to nearby parks, existing trails, and to river projects in Chemung County.

We collaborated with the city of Elmira to plan and design projects to build a safe passage for paddlers around the river dam in Elmira, and to improve access to the river in downtown Elmira.

We built a partnership with the newly formed Finger Lakes Mountain Bike Club to promote safe and enjoyable mountain biking on river trails and to maintain and improve those trails.

We continued to build and expand community river trash cleanups, river safety and environmental education programs and eco-recreation trips – from a 250- boat flotilla and a mountain bike river trail ride for children to the Huck Finn Model Raft Race.

As a small organization, River Friends depends on broad-based partnerships with governments, academic institutions, businesses and environmental advocacy groups to ensure the protection and responsible use of our waterways.

Finally, 2010 saw us build trust, excitement and partnerships with people who share our vision and commitment to enjoy, protect and respect our waterways.

Jim Pfiffer

Director of the Friends of the Chemung River Watershed

Projects

Grove Street Boat Launch kiosk



We built a 20-foot-tall steel solar-powered informational kiosk and weather station at the boat launch. The kiosk provides temperature, humidity and wind speed and direction information. The kiosk includes a trash bin for recyclables and informational panels about local river organizations. We plan to add additional electronic monitors to the kiosk (river temperature and levels). The kiosk was financed with a \$10,000 Chesapeake Bay Gateway Network grant and Chemung River Friends funding.

Grove Street Boat Launch picnic pavilion



Near the kiosk is a 27-foot-long public picnic pavilion. The pavilion provides shelter for paddlers, anglers and hikers, and it's a great place for groups and organizations to meet or for people and families to hold picnics and community events. Donations and grants paid for the structure.

The pavilion is a true community project, built with the cooperation of New York state, Chemung County and local municipalities, private businesses, a carpenters' union, a nonprofit organization and people who volunteered time, materials and expertise to complete the project.

Bottcher's Landing Boat Launch picnic pavilion



We partnered with the town of Big Flats to finance and build a 30-foot-by-15-foot picnic pavilion at the Bottcher's Landing Boat Launch in Big Flats. A concrete pad, picnic tables and a barbecue grill will be added in the spring of 2011. Donations and grants paid for the pavilion.

Chase-Hibbard Dam portage

The Chase-Hibbard Dam in downtown Elmira prevents paddlers from boating through the downtown and paddling the river's 45-mile length. River Friends and the city of Elmira have collaborated to begin design plans to build a portage trail around the dam on the south side of the river, scheduled for 2011. Paddlers will be able to safely pull their boats out of the water above the dam and carry them along a portage trail to the downstream side of the dam. The project includes building a small public parking area and gate in the flood wall, near the portage, to provide river access from the south side of the river

Riverfront Park project – Elmira

The tall concrete flood walls make it difficult for the public to get to or see the river in downtown Elmira. River Friends has partnered with the city of Elmira to begin plans to improve Riverfront Park downtown to provide public access and views of the river. The work is expected to be completed in 2011. Possible improvements include a pedestrian viewing platform over the flood wall and a ramp or stairway over the wall leading to the river's edge.

River bridge signs



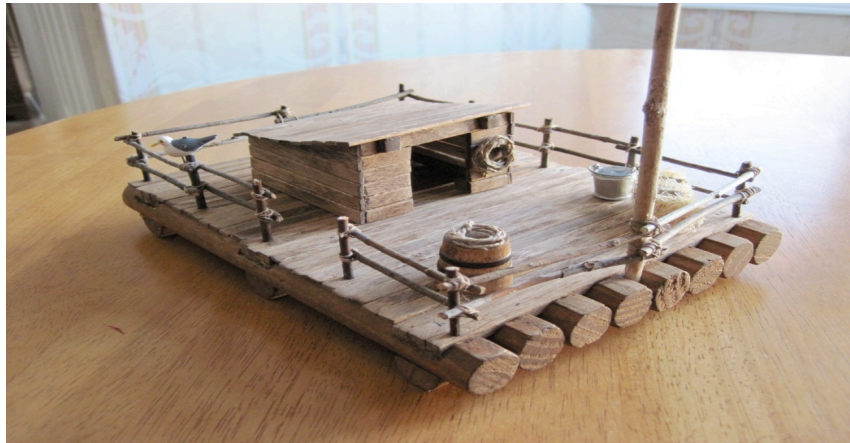
Erin Heard of the Upper Susquehanna Coalition holds the sign placed on the Clemens Center Parkway Bridge in Elmira.

The Upper Susquehanna Coalition and River Friends installed nine signs on bridges over the Chemung River to help guide paddlers along the waterway. The 3-foot-wide aluminum signs include the name of the municipality, route number and the distance to the Chesapeake Bay. A total of 45 signs were installed on eight rivers in the river basin.

Chemung River Basin boat launch survey

River Friends visited, inspected, photographed and surveyed 13 public boat launches on the Chemung, Cohocton and Tioga rivers. The information will be used in our updated website river trail guide, planned for 2011, and to plan improvements and repairs at the boat launches.

Huck Finn Model Raft Race



Children built and raced model Huck Finn-themed rafts like this one on the Chemung River.

To help commemorate the 100th anniversary of Mark Twain's death, we sponsored the Huck Finn Model Raft Race for kids on the river. A dozen elementary and middle-school kids built and raced 1-foot-long rafts on the river. Cash prizes were awarded to the winners.

Katy Leary Park Community Garden



Gardeners tend to the vegetables in raised beds in an old tennis court.

We partnered with the city of Elmira to convert an unused and deteriorating tennis court in an Elmira city park into a free community garden with 48 raised gardening beds. The city of Elmira removed the tennis courts and installed a mulch base, water line and tool shed. The Chemung County Soil & Water Conservation District provided free wood for the beds and local carpenters volunteered to build the beds for free. The town of Chemung donated topsoil. Volunteers from The Park Church in Elmira manage the garden. Some of the produce was donated to a local food pantry.

Riverside concerts

The river makes a great venue for entertainment. That's why we sponsored two free acoustic music-by-the-river festivals (July 10 and Sept. 19) at the river's edge on Elmira's Southside. Nearly 200 people attended the family-oriented concerts presented by eight musicians who donated their time.

Interstate 86 Riverview Trail

We began working with the New York State Department of Transportation, Chemung County and the city of Elmira to build a 5.5-mile multi-use recreation trail along the river from East Water Street in Elmira to County Route 8 in Lowman. If all goes as planned, a basic 15-foot-wide grass and crushed stone trail will be completed by the state and turned over to Chemung County by 2012. The trail includes a historic former railroad bridge over Newtown Creek in Elmira. The county, the city of Elmira and River Friends will then partner to refurbish the bridge and connect it with the trail. Proposed trail improvements include a trail head and parking lot, new trail surface, signs, benches, boat launch, fishing areas and restrooms.

Cornell University student trail project

River Friends contracted with a group of city planning and design architecture students from Cornell University to begin preliminary planning and design work for improvements on the I-86 Riverview Trail. The project included design ideas, materials, photographs and a public meeting to inform residents about the project and seek their input and ideas for trail development.

Steuben River visioning project

River Friends assisted six municipalities in southeast Steuben County in devising a river vision development plan. The project includes building river trails and connecting them to area parks, trails and communities. River Friends organized and led a van tour of the river for the project advisory team and helped organize public meetings and municipal presentations. The ongoing waterfront revitalization project will eventually connect river trails in Steuben County to trails in Chemung County.

Eco-recreation

River Friends teamed up with the newly-formed Finger Lakes Mountain Bike Club (FLMBC). The club sponsored a celebrity bike ride on the West Elmira river trails and

led five bike rides and cleanups/maintenance of the cycling trails along the river. The cycling club built a cycling shed on Hoffman Street in Elmira to loan free trail bikes and helmets to people who want to ride the river trails. The club also taught bike safety and bike repair seminars and led two youth bike rides.

To help commemorate the 100th anniversary of Mark Twain's death, River Friends and the FLMBC held Twain-related events every Saturday in September. They included the Huck Finn raft race, a Twain-themed trolley tour of the river, a historic river trail bike ride featuring Mark Twain and Huck Finn impersonators, and an old-fashioned croquet tournament with Mark Twain at a bed and breakfast near the river in Elmira.

River Friends also helped lead three public river paddles for 305 paddlers and a river trail hike for 13 participants.

Public safety

For the second year in a row, we joined the Sullivan Trail Chapter of the American Red Cross to offer a safe paddling class for 12 kayakers and canoeists on Eldridge Lake in Elmira. The class was sponsored by four area credit unions. A week later, the students used their new skills on a River Friends-guided paddle.

River Friends and the Finger Lakes Mountain Bike Club taught three safe cycling clinics and set up bike safety information booths at several public events, including an Oct. 10th "Take Your Kid Mountain Biking" ride and safety talk in West Elmira.

River cleanups

We removed more than four tons of trash and illegal dump sites during 10 cleanups along the river, involving 136 volunteers and 434 volunteer hours. We continued our partnership with the Chemung County Probation Department to use probationers to do river cleanups to meet their community service hour requirements. Chemung County Transit provided free bus transportation for volunteers during the cleanups.

Education

Education is a part of all our public programs, presentations and eco-recreation events. We connect people to the river by showing them how we depend on it for drinking water, recreation, natural beauty and economic growth. The river depends on all of us to protect and improve it. Education is the best way to get the public interested and involved in understanding, enjoying and protecting the waterway.

The Chemung Valley History Museum in Elmira took over our summer lunchtime river Walks-and-Talks programs. Nearly 30 people participated in the three events.

The master gardeners of Cornell Cooperative Extension of Chemung County taught three workshops on environmentally-friendly gardening at the Katy Leary Park Community Garden.

River Friends and the Chemung County Soil & Water Conservation District partnered to teach more than 50 students from Riverside and Diven elementary schools about river conservation, water quality and the water cycle. River Friends gave river education programs to more than 25 Girl Scouts at Broadway and Riverside elementary schools. The schools are in Elmira.

Public relations and promotions

River Friends began publishing a monthly electronic newsletter in September to better inform and educate the public about our programs, projects, and river and environmental issues. The newsletter provides information on upcoming events, river-related news, photographs, paddling tips, a volunteer spotlight and recognition of our sponsors and donors.

We expanded and improved our Facebook page. We produced and distributed educational brochures on river safety and use.

We began to update and improve our website river map and paddling information. The project is expected to be completed in 2011.

We assisted with and appeared in a locally-produced documentary film, “The Wall,” about the history and future of the Chemung River.

We received news media coverage at least twice a month and presented more than 15 public talks, panel discussions and presentations about the river.

Volunteers and interns

More than 575 volunteers provided 1,274 hours of service to help us with our projects and programs. Most of the volunteers were community residents who love and respect our waterways. Two student volunteers from Elmira College performed their community service with River Friends and a student at Binghamton University completed field experience volunteer work with us.

Grants and fundraising

River Friends raised \$40,752 in grants for projects and programs. The funds allowed us to build two picnic pavilions, a solar-powered weather station kiosk and a community garden. The grants were also used to purchase a new computer, canoes, kayaks and a boat trailer; to update and expand our website river map; and to plan future trail construction projects.

We received \$33,408 in donated supplies, materials and in-kind labor from private businesses and local municipalities to help build two picnic pavilions, a solar-powered kiosk and a community garden.

2010 Financial Report

(Jan. 1- Dec. 31)

Cash in hand as of 12/31/10 for capital funds and grant reserve: \$59,452*

*From grants, memberships, fund-raising, in-kind donations and donations of materials and supplies.

Revenues:

Local government grants.....	\$70,000
Memberships.....	\$5,571
Program service fees.....	\$295
Savings account interest.....	\$76
Business contributions.....	\$100
Special events contributions.....	\$239
Individual contributions.....	\$405
Grants.....	\$7,014
Total.....	\$83,700

Expenses:

Payroll	\$45,441
Fees/licenses.....	\$263
Legal/accounting.....	\$3,324
Insurance.....	\$3,023
Rent/utilities.....	\$1,500

Repairs/maintenance.....	\$25
Postage/printing.....	\$2,224
Telecommunications.....	\$1,333
Programs.....	\$9,609
Supplies.....	\$754
Advertising.....	\$264
Staff development.....	\$365
Travel/meals.....	\$1,352
Books/subscriptions.....	\$244
Other costs.....	\$962
Total.....	\$70,683

Help us protect our rivers. Send you tax-deductable donations to:

**River Friends
111 N. Main St.
Elmira, NY 14901**

Or donate on line with a credit card at www.chemungriverfriends.org

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