

# Chemung River Friends 2016 Annual Report



*Prepared by Chemung River Friends Executive Director Jim Pfiffer*

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## 2

### 2016 Chemung River Friends Board of Directors

**President Thomas Beecher**, Pine City, N.Y.; retired electrician, I.B.E.W. Local 139.

**Vice-President Donald Hall**, Elmira, N.Y.; retired corporate administrator for Precision Filters, Ithaca.

**Secretary Thomas O'Brien**, Corning, N.Y.; attorney.

**Treasurer Jim Ripley**, Pine City, N.Y.; retired Chemung Canal Trust Company vice president.

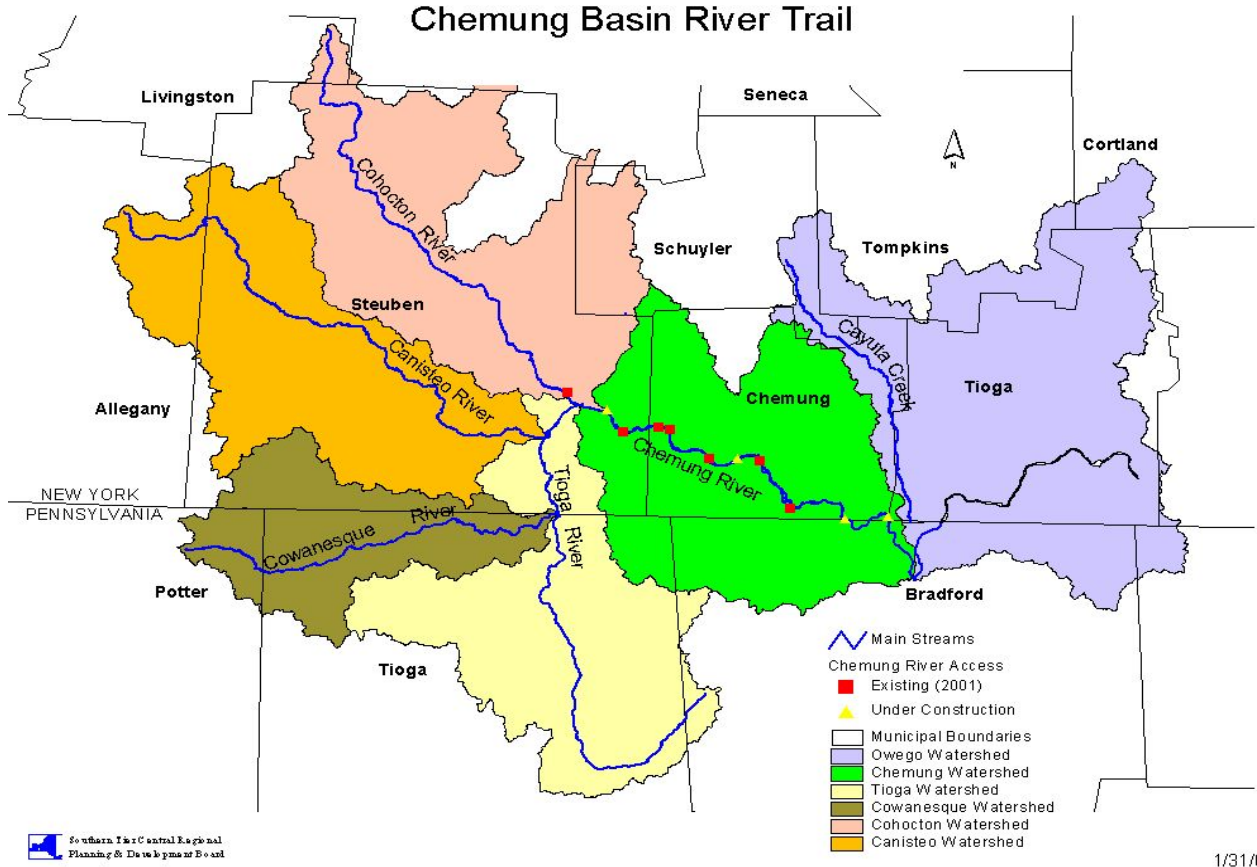
**Board member Jennifer Fais**, Corning, N.Y.; retired planner with the Southern Tier Central Regional Planning and Development Board and co-chairperson of the Chemung Basin River Trail Partnership.

**Board member Pauline Emery**, Elmira, library director, Southeast Steuben County Library.

**Executive director James Pfiffer**, Elmira, N.Y.; public relations consultant and former newspaper reporter and columnist.

**Adviser Scott Shaw**, Horseheads, N.Y.; associate planner 1, Elmira-Chemung Transportation Council.

**Adviser Richard H. Bean**, Sayre, Pa., retired production control manager, Ingersoll-Rand.



## We made the river easier and safer to use

We partnered with the Big Flats Community Days Committee, town of Big Flats and Chemung County to replace a former muddy, rutted path with a 30-foot concrete boat launch at the Minier’s/Sen. Smith Boat Launch in Big Flats.



The new ramp makes it easier and safer for boat trailers and paddlers to use the river and provides another put-in and take-out for paddlers and emergency responders.

## Safety

Thanks to our partners, the Golden Glow Volunteer Fire Company, we were able to use their portable pool to teach water safety and basic paddling to nearly 200 children. The pool lets us bring the river to the students, when we can't get the students to the river. We plan to seek a grant to purchase our own portable pool.

Our River Friends members helped raise \$5,000 toward installing a boat launch and resurfacing a rutted road in Big Flats, used by fire departments to access a section of the river where boaters frequently get into trouble. The town of Big Flats, Chemung County and private landowners contributed to the project to make the river safer and more accessible



The Elmira Fire Department joined us in teaching river safety and basic paddling at the Grove Street Boat Launch in Elmira to 85 students from Elmira's Finn Academy charter school.

Ten experienced paddlers from River Friends and the AHWAGA Canoe & Kayak club provided free paddling and water safety lessons to 36 children at the annual River Fest in downtown Elmira in June.

An Anderson Foundation grant purchased 39 life vests that we gave away to children after teaching them basic water safety and life vest use.

River Friends partnered with the Town of Big Flats, Chemung County and the Golden Glow Volunteer Fire Company to resurface a badly damaged dirt road that leads to a tricky section of the Chemung River, in Big Flats, where many paddlers get stranded or need to be rescued. . The road improvements will make it easier, faster and safer for the fire department to access the river. The fire department plans to build an emergency boat launch at the site to be able to get their river rescue boat into the water quickly and easily.

## Trail projects

We partnered with the Town of Riverside in Steuben County to mow a one-mile loop path in wide and flat river plain along the river.

The mowed path is the first step in a project that could expand the path -- up to five miles in both directions -- to adjacent municipalities along the river.

**Trail swings:** River Friends worked with the Chemung County Chamber of Commerce Leadership Chemung Program to raise money to build and install two wooden bench swings along the West Elmira River Trails. The steel swing frames were built and installed by NUCOR/Vulcraft, Town of Chemung. The land where the swings are located was donated and prepared by the Town of Elmira and a volunteer work crew from the ARC of Chemung.



The swings provide trail users with a place to rest and enjoy beautiful river scenery and the solitude and peace of nature.

We continued to clear and maintain the West Elmira trails of downed limbs and brush. Our community volunteers, adopt-a-launch groups and River Friends staff helped keep our trails clear of trash, brush and downed trees and limbs.

## Education

We began a Fish Hawk/Clean Water education program for children, using ospreys (fish hawks) that nest on the river as a drawing card to get youth interested in the river and in keeping it clean to attract the ospreys.

We partnered with the Chemung Valley History Museum's 2016 River Exhibit and arranged a June 1 panel discussion -- with a state DEC conservation officer, nuisance wildlife operator and an SPCA executive director – to teach the public about what to do and not do when you encounter wildlife.

We gave an Aug. 3 public lecture/presentation on threats to our rivers and what the public can do to mitigate those problems.

River Friends staff completed a New York State Department of Environmental Conservation class on using river macroinvertebrates (tiny creatures usually found under rocks) to measure water quality.

We brought 87 Hendy Avenue Elementary School students to the river and taught the same class to the children.



We presented lectures and programs to more than 350 people on water quality, river history, invasive species, how to deal with wildlife encounters, snowy owls, river ecology and other river-related subjects. The audiences included schools, civic groups, summer camps, churches and history museums.

Deputies from the Chemung County Sheriff's Department taught our staff and volunteer cleanup crews how to dispose of hazardous trash – from hypodermic needles and meth-making debris to dirty diapers and animal carcasses – found along our rivers.

River Friends partnered with the Chemung Valley History Museum to help promote and design a summer river history exhibit at the museum on how the river impacted the region's settlement, economy and culture. River Friends gave two public lectures about the river at the museum and a live paddling demonstration in the parking lot using a portable pool to teach children basic paddling and water safety.

On Oct. 13, River Friends led 50 first-grade students, from our partner Finn Academy charter school in Elmira on a field trip to the river to visit the site of a former Native American village.



The Chemung River Friends and the Rockwell Museum, in Corning offered a mid-winter public presentation about the Chemung River, followed by a summer paddle. The program included a River Friends lecture at the museum for 82 people. The topic was threats to our clean water and what we can do about it. The second part of the program featured a guided summer paddle on the Chemung

River for 21 people so they could experience the beauty of the river and learn more about protecting the waterway. Members of the audience were invited to participate in the paddle.

## My Reverend Doctor River Friend

- The Rev. Dr. Cynthia Huling Hummel
- Formed Paddlin' on the River paddle club for people of all abilities.
- Organizes, promotes and leads the events.
- Started a Paddlin' on the River Facebook page.



We helped the Rev. Dr. Cynthia Huling Hummel (wearing purple T-shirt in photo above) to

form the “Rollin’ On the River Paddle Club,” for beginners. The club held five paddles and plans to expand its membership and paddle trips in 2017.

## Cleanups

In 2016, our volunteers helped remove more than four tons of trash and litter from in and along our rivers and trails. Trash included: electronic equipment, deer carcasses, dirty diapers and over 300 pounds of mozzarella cheese dumped at the South Corning Road Boat Launch on the Chemung River.

River Friends staff, volunteers and 11 members of Painted Post Kiwanis Club cleaned and repaired the Kinsella Nature Trail and Boat Launch on the Cohocton River on Sept. 24. The work included trail repairs, installation of four birdhouses and painting trail-finding blazes for hikers.



**Photos above: Jeff Boylan installs a woodpecker birdhouse along the Kinsella Nature Trail. Painted Post Kiwanis Club members and River Friends volunteers give a thumbs-up to the new trail and boat launch.**

**Town of Corning Boat Launch:** River Friends volunteers cleaned more than 700 tons of trash and removed brush and downed trees from the South Corning Road boat launch on the Chemung River in the Town of Corning -- the first River Friends cleanup of this site.





Town of Corning Supervisor Kim Freehan & volunteer, Tim Maney, clean trash from a riverbank boat launch.

## Katy Leary Park Community Garden

On March 30, volunteers from Chemung River Friends, the ARC of Chemung County and the community helped replace rotted wood in nearly 50 of the 58 raised beds at the Katy Leary Park Community Garden on Elmira's Southside.

The eight-year-old garden is a partnership among River Friends, the City of Elmira and volunteer community garden coordinator Jon Homuth of Elmira that turned an unused and decaying tennis court into a successful community project. The beds are free to the public on a first-come, first-serve basis, and gardeners plant, care for and harvest their own fresh bounty.



Above photos: Staff and job trainees from The Arc of Chemung help repair and build garden beds.

## **Eco-recreation**

River Friends helped lead four guided paddles this year for more than 75 people with Southern Tier Kayak Tours.

We helped the club host a full moon paddle at the Grove Street Boat Launch in Elmira, a safe and well-known area of river in October, as a test run for a similar public paddle in 2017.

We guided a paddle on the Sullivanville Dam reservoir and explored and learned about the reservoirs wetlands.

River Friends led 28 guided hikes for more than 260 people on trails along rivers, streams, lakes and dam reservoirs. Our Nature Stroller Hikes along rivers, streams and trails in Chemung County attracted more than 75 toddlers and children, along with their parents and grandparents.

Each hike includes an eco-educational theme (wildlife, wildflowers, water pollution, river history, etc.) and information. The hikes bring families together for safe and easy outdoor recreation and help the public discover new places in our community to hike, cycle and cross-country ski.

During all of our hikes, the group picks up litter along the way and talks about how and why people litter the environment and what we can do to reduce litter.

We partnered with the Ultimate Fit Chick exercise studio in Elmira to begin a series of Saturday morning Hike it Healthy hikes along trails and waterways in Chemung County. Each of the seven public hikes includes a nature-related educational them, fresh-air exercise and hiking tips. The program, planned again for 2017, runs from April through August and is designed to promote outdoor fitness and discovery of the area's nature trails and parks.



**Photos above: Guided hikes for adults and children included a litter cleanup and a talk about nature and clean water.**

We teamed up with the Town of Elmira to hold an October fund-raising River Stroll & Town Festival in West Elmira. The event included a guided one-mile walk along the Chemung River Trails in West Elmira to highlight the river's stunning fall beauty and support River Friends and the West Elmira Volunteer Fire Department -- while enjoying a fresh-air walk along a river trail. The walk was led by "celebrity leader" 13-year-old Cassidy Tryon of Horseheads, who competed in the cable TV show "Chopped Junior," where she turned a basket of mystery ingredients into delectable tasty treats. Following the walk, Cassidy did a brief cooking demonstration.

## **Public education, interaction and feedback:**



**River Friends Vice President Don Hall discusses environmental issues with a college student. River Friends Executive Director Jim Pffifer gives a clean water Earth Day presentation to employees at the Eaton Corp. in Horseheads.**

Led by our board Vice President, Don Hall, River Friends participated in more than a dozen river-related presentations, outdoor expos, college fairs, Earth-Day celebrations and environmental information events. Our board members and volunteers assisted and staffed many of the programs. Public events allows us learn what our regional residents want, need and dream of for the future of our rivers. The public feedback helps us develop better plans, projects and programs.



**River Friends board member Jennifer Fais (left) and Jim Ripley, board treasurer, work our info tables at public events**

**Finger Lakes Land Trust partnership protects the Chemung River**

We worked closely with the Finger Lakes Land Trust to begin a Chemung River Greenbelt program to conserve and protect riverfront property along the river – especially in Big Flats – from encroaching development.

The long-term plans include building more boat launches, trails, camping areas, an RV park, nonprofit nature preserves and municipal-owned conservation lands.

The river’s proximity to the Interstate 86 corridor and population centers increasingly threatens the nearly pristine river and surrounding land.

New York state’s Department of Environmental Conservation most recent open space plan identifies the Chemung River Greenbelt as a priority.

Recommended projects include a region-wide effort to reduce stream and river erosion, agricultural runoff, the spread of toxic algae; restore vegetation buffers between farms and the river; and restore or build new wetlands to filter water runoff.

## Yoga on the river

On June 21, International Yoga Day, more than 80 people participated in a yoga demonstration on the grass flood levee along the Chemung River at the Grove Street Boat Launch in Elmira. The event featured a Native American water blessing and a litter cleanup. The participants donated \$190 to River Friends and plan to do more riverside classes in 2017.



## Annual meeting

A woman with Alzheimer's disease, a New York state Department of Environmental Conservation officer and a steel-fabricating company received awards Nov. 15 at the Chemung River Friends annual meeting at the Chemung Valley History Museum in Elmira.

- **2016 River Friends Volunteer of the Year:** The Rev. Dr. Cynthia Huling-Hummel, of Elmira, for organizing a paddling club for people of all abilities. Cynthia learned to paddle this summer and started the Rollin' on the River Paddle Club after she was diagnosed with early-stage Alzheimer's disease. "Learning to paddle was on my bucket list," she said. "Forming the paddle club was icing on the cake."
- **2016 River Friends Business of the Year:** Vulcraft Inc. of Chemung for its financial support of River Friends events and programs, and for donating the construction and installation of two metal and wooden bench swings along the West Elmira river trails in the Town of Elmira. The award was received by Vulcraft Engineering Manager Tony Burke.
- **2016 River Friends Law Enforcement Officer of the Year:** State Environmental Conservation Officer John Lifrieri was honored for helping keep our public boat launches clean, safe and enjoyable. Officer Lifrieri helped arrest people involved in two illegal incidents involving environmental pollution and vandalism at a Big Flats boat launch.

*Dear River Friends,*

***2016 was a success thanks to your financial support, ideas and participation in our events. Our mission to protect and promote our rivers can't be accomplished without your involvement.***

***While this annual report lists the great projects and programs accomplished in 2016, please remember that you were and always will be an important part of our successes and our efforts to preserve, enjoy and respect our natural resources and environment.***

***We're all in it together and River Friends is proud and happy that you are part of our mission. Let's continue to keep our paddles in the water and paddle in the same direction.***

*All my respect and thanks,*



**James Pfiffer**

*Executive director Chemung River Friends*

## 2016 Chemung River Friends final bookkeeping reports

**Friends of the Chemung River Watershed, Inc.  
Profit & Loss  
January through December 2016**

	<u>Jan - Dec 16</u>
Ordinary Income/Expense	
Income	
Direct Public Grants	
Grants/Admin Fees	5,000.00
Nonprofit Organization Grants	3,825.00
Total Direct Public Grants	8,825.00
Government Grants	
Local Government Grants	44,940.16
Municipal Funds	10,850.00
Total Government Grants	55,790.16
Other Types of Income	
Board Fundraising	3,705.00
Business and Industry	100.00
Interest	84.08
Total Other Types of Income	3,889.08
Program Income	
Membership Dues/Mail Fundraisin	22,966.73
Program Service Fees	1,550.00
RFD Presentations	542.00
Total Program Income	25,058.73
Total Income	93,562.97
Gross Profit	93,562.97
Expense	
Business Expenses	
Fees and Licenses	183.47
Total Business Expenses	183.47
Contract Services	
Accounting Fees	3,205.00
Total Contract Services	3,205.00
Facilities and Equipment	
Equip Rental and Maintenance	250.33
Fire Inspection	100.00
Property Insurance	173.25
Rent, Parking, Utilities	1,850.00
Repairs and Maintenance	13.50
Total Facilities and Equipment	2,387.08
Operations	
Books, Subscriptions, Reference	392.00
Postage, Mailing Service	3,130.90
Printing and Copying	2,130.63
Program Expense	4,849.35
Supplies	2,431.98
Telephone, Telecommunications	1,841.47
Total Operations	14,776.33
Other Types of Expenses	
Advertising Expenses	444.94
Insurance - Liability, D and O	1,827.00
Meals and Entertainment	227.68
Memberships and Dues	420.00
Other Costs	75.00
Staff Development	30.00
Total Other Types of Expenses	3,024.62

**Friends of the Chemung River Watershed, Inc.**  
**Profit & Loss**  
January through December 2016

	<u>Jan - Dec 16</u>
<b>Payroll Expenses</b>	
Director's Retirement	500.00
Director Salary	49,433.76
FICA Expense	3,781.71
NYS Unemployment Insurance	173.88
Workers Compensation	508.81
Payroll Expenses - Other	8.03
<b>Total Payroll Expenses</b>	<u>54,404.19</u>
<b>Travel and Meetings</b>	
Conference, Convention, Meeting	82.08
Travel	2,414.50
<b>Total Travel and Meetings</b>	<u>2,496.58</u>
<b>Total Expense</b>	<u>80,477.27</u>
<b>Net Ordinary Income</b>	<u>13,085.70</u>
<b>Net Income</b>	<u><u>13,085.70</u></u>



**Friends of the Chemung River Watershed, Inc.**  
**Balance Sheet**  
 As of December 31, 2016

	Dec 31, 16
<b>ASSETS</b>	
<b>Current Assets</b>	
Checking/Savings	
Director's Checking	3,333.98
Payroll	10,054.70
Savings	166,910.32
Undeposited Funds	48.25
<b>Total Checking/Savings</b>	180,347.25
<b>Total Current Assets</b>	180,347.25
<b>Fixed Assets</b>	
Furniture and Equipment	5,412.01
zAccumulated Depreciation	-4,951.00
<b>Total Fixed Assets</b>	461.01
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>180,808.26</b>
<b>LIABILITIES &amp; EQUITY</b>	
<b>Liabilities</b>	
<b>Current Liabilities</b>	
<b>Other Current Liabilities</b>	
<b>Payroll Liabilities</b>	
Federal Income Tax Withholding	340.00
FICA Payable	630.25
NYS Income Tax Withholding	184.90
<b>Total Payroll Liabilities</b>	1,155.15
<b>Total Other Current Liabilities</b>	1,155.15
<b>Total Current Liabilities</b>	1,155.15
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	1,155.15
<b>Equity</b>	
Opening Balance Equity	685.08
Unrestricted Net Assets	165,882.33
Net Income	13,085.70
<b>Total Equity</b>	179,653.11
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES &amp; EQUITY</b>	<b>180,808.26</b>

## CHEMUNG RIVER FRIENDS

2016

	<u>DEC</u>	<u>JAN - DEC</u> <u>2016</u>	<u>Annual</u> <u>Budget</u>	<u>\$</u> <u>Remaining</u>	<u>%</u> <u>Remaining</u>
Expense					
Business Expense					
Fees and Licenses	0.00	183.47	350.00	166.53	47.58%
Accounting Fees	640.00	3,205.00	3500.00	295.00	8.43%
Total Business Expense	640.00	3,388.47	3,850.00	461.53	11.99%
Facilities and Equipment					
Property Insurance	0.00	173.25	200.00	26.75	13.38%
Rent, Parking, Utilities	150.00	1,850.00	1800.00	-50.00	-2.78%
Repairs, Equip., & Rental	53.95	363.83	1,600.00	1236.17	77.26%
Total Facilities and Equipment	203.95	2,387.08	3,600.00	1212.92	33.69%
Operations					
Books, Subscriptions, Reference	0.00	392.00	400.00	8.00	2.00%
Postage, Mailing Service	235.00	3,130.90	8000.00	4869.10	60.86%
Printing and Copying	822.09	2,130.63	6000.00	3869.37	64.49%
Program Expense	0.00	4,849.35	21000.00	16150.65	76.91%
Supplies	97.95	2,431.98	3000.00	568.02	18.93%
Telephone, Telecommunications	266.66	1,841.47	2000.00	158.53	7.93%
Total Operations	1,421.70	14,776.33	40400.00	25623.67	63.42%
Other Types of Expenses					
Advertising Expenses	417.22	444.94	600.00	155.06	25.84%
NYS Disability Insurance	0.00	0.00	200.00	200.00	
Insurance - Liability, D and O	80.00	1,827.00	2000.00	173.00	8.65%
Meals and Entertainment	29.16	227.68	500.00	272.32	54.46%
Staff Development Mem Dues Other	0.00	525.00	1000.00	475.00	47.50%
Fund Raising Expense	0.00	0.00	500.00	500.00	100.00%
Total Other Types of Expenses	526.38	3,024.62	4800.00	1775.38	36.99%
Payroll Expenses					
Director's Retirement	500.00	500.00	300.00	-200.00	-66.67%
Director Salary	4,119.48	49,433.76	49433.77	0.01	0.00%
FICA/MED Expense	315.13	3,781.71	3781.68	-0.03	0.00%
NYS Unemployment/NYS RE-Emp	0.00	181.91	181.91	0.00	0.00%
Workers Compensation	0.00	506.81	521.00	14.19	2.72%
Total Payroll Expenses	4,934.61	54,404.19	54218.36	-185.83	-0.34%
Mileage	239.80	2,496.58	2500.00	3.42	0.14%
Grant-Financed Projects & Programs	0.00	0.00	25000.00	25000.00	100.00%
Total Expenses	<u>7,966.44</u>	<u>80,477.27</u>	<u>134,368.36</u>	<u>53,891.09</u>	<u>40.11%</u>

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