



Oxbow Preserve Expanded



*Jay Stratton in his Forsyth
Swamp restoration area
(photo by Twan Leenders)*

In June, CWC accepted the donation of a conservation easement from landowner Jay Stratton on 5½ acres within and adjacent to the Chautauqua Creek Oxbow Preserve, which increases the size of the protected area at this beautiful and popular preserve to just over 28 acres!

The property covered by the easement is known habitat for porcupines, opossum and other denizens commonly found in a northern mixed hardwood forest. Numerous bird species, including kingfishers, and various species of amphibians and reptiles also call the site home.

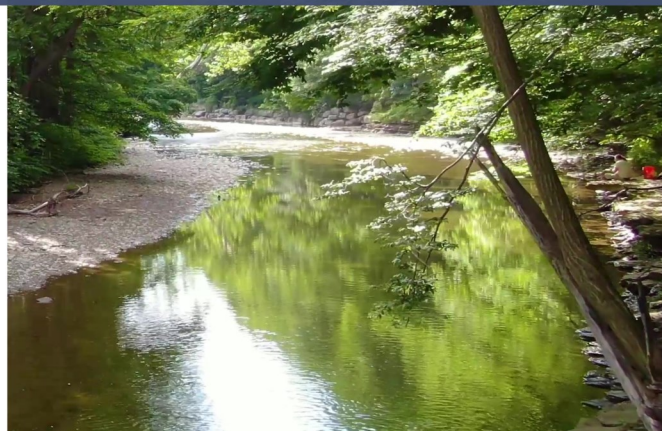
The property is located on the edge of a slope that borders a gorge created by the flow of Chautauqua Creek which flows out into Lake Erie and supplies fresh water to the Village of Westfield. As such, it is marked by steep tree-covered slopes that effectively hold soils in place and limit slope erosion and sediment loading into the creek below. The location of the newly protected property in relation to the existing preserve will also allow CWC to extend the preserve's ravine trail to course back to the access road.

This is not the first time CWC has been the recipient of Jay's generosity. Jay donated 21 acres of land in 2006 to establish the Chautauqua Creek East Branch Preserve and another 22 acres in 2014 to establish the Oxbow Preserve. Both have become favorite destinations for hikers, fishers, photographers, botanists and bird and wildlife watchers. Thank you, Jay, for your conservation vision and incredible generosity!

Fish Hawks & Steelhead Habitat Campaign: Goal Achieved!

Thanks to the generous support of our donors, the Lenna Foundation, Jessie Smith Darrah Fund, Rockwell Foundation, and the Northern Chautauqua Region Community Foundation we are so excited to announce that we have met our fundraising goal for the Fish Hawks & Steelhead Habitat Campaign.

These funds will provide for the purchase and permanent protection of 71 acres of important habitat on and near Chautauqua and Goose Creeks. We hope to close on these sites this fall and jump into initial site cleanup, invasive species control, and stewardship!





Chautauqua Watershed Conservancy is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization with a mission to preserve and enhance the water quality, scenic beauty and ecological health of the lakes, streams, wetlands and watersheds of the Chautauqua, NY region.

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Message From the Executive Director

First, I'd like to send a big thank you from our board, our staff and me to all who generously contributed to the Fish Hawks and Steelhead Habitat Campaign! It has been very heartwarming to see so many people and organizations come together to make conservation projects like these a success. I also send a big thank you to all who have supported the other work of the CWC so far this year. Our accomplishments and successes depend on you!

Now, on to water quality, water levels and water conservation . . . We've experienced quite a dry summer this year – something many of us have not experienced in a long time in western New York. We tend to take abundant water for granted in the Chautauqua region, but recently the water levels of Chautauqua Lake and other New York lakes are getting lower and lower. This has been a summer with many hot and dry days, with a few brief powerful downpours here and there. If that precious rain lands on rooftops, pavement or compacted yards, it quickly moves downhill to the nearest storm drain or road ditch and on to the nearest stream and then a lake. Heavy downpours cause a "first flush" effect of washing accumulated pollutants from surfaces into our receiving streams and lakes feeding algae growth.

It has become apparent that we must capture as much of the rainfall that lands on the ground as we can and enable it to more easily soak into the ground, where it can slowly recharge our groundwaters for our wells and the groundwaters feeding the streams that feed our lakes. We want our yards, farms, woods and landscapes to be managed and enhanced to capture the stormwater and have it recharge these groundwaters. This is essential to reduce flash flooding and to provide "base flow" in our streams to maintain late summer lake levels. The research is showing that our rainstorm events are growing in intensity. The more we can "capture the storm," the less flood damage will occur downstream and the less erosion will occur as well, which in turn will lead to less of fertile soils entering the lake where they fuel abundant and recurring plant growth.

The more we can naturalize our yards and grounds and capture the storms, the better off our lakes will be! Please get on board with CWC and engage these actions yourself on the properties you own and manage. Please also get on board with beautifying your yard with *native* trees and plants to benefit your wild neighbors, benefit the quality of our lakes and streams and to cool and benefit yourselves.



John Jablonski III,
Executive Director



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Simply email us at
info@chautauquawatershed.org

Slow it down, spread it out, and soak it in!

The dog days of summer are coming to an end.

After a chilly spring start here in western New York, we were treated to a beautiful summer with lots of sunny days and warm weather – perfect for enjoying the great outdoors!

Unfortunately, those gorgeous days sometimes come with a price, and the dog days found themselves parched and panting with a concerning lack of rain. The summer heat and humidity can bring with it severe weather, including downpours. When soil is dry and hard, it is more difficult for rainwater to soak in unless it is a nice, slow, all-day rain. A gully-washer, on the other hand, will pound the hard, compacted soil, and with nowhere else to go, the water just runs off. This is when stormwater runoff and flooding become a concern.

To help prevent stormwater runoff and mediate these concerns, try these 5 simple tips in your yard:

1. Collect and harvest rainwater

Make sure roof downspouts and gutters are not routed to empty out onto hard surfaces, streets, ditches or storm drains. Instead, direct them into rain barrels, lawn areas, gardens and raingardens that would enjoy and soak in the extra moisture.



Photo by Carol Markham



Photo by Jane Conroe

2. Install a rain garden

Creating nature's version of a rain garden in your yard is an easy and beautiful solution to deal with excess rain and stormwater runoff. This water-smart landscape feature is designed to catch and filter rain and water runoff with the help of native plants. Plus, your rain garden will recharge groundwater and provide a home to birds, butterflies and wildlife!

3. Improve hard soils

Hard, packed soil in lawns can act like pavement, sending a quick water flow off of your property, straight down storm drains and then into our local streams, rivers and lakes. Improve your soil to make it more nutrient-rich and permeable to stormwater. Core aerate your lawn and top dress it with organic material such as compost, sand and topsoil or soil mix. This will grow healthier grass and reduce stormwater runoff and erosion.

4. Make sure hardscaping is permeable

With the warmer months of summer comes the possibility of home improvement projects and severe weather. If you are considering a new patio or driveway, choose a permeable material which allows rain and stormwater to soak in through the surface. Permeable paving surfaces reduce stormwater runoff and help replenish our drinking supply.



5. Remove part or all of your lawn

Grass has very short and shallow root systems and offers limited erosion control. During periods of heavy rain, lawns often become saturated, flood and runoff – taking soil, sediment and pollution with it. Lawns also require a lot of watering and mowing. Try just letting your grass grow long or replacing part of your lawn with native plants. Native plants have longer, stronger root systems that can reduce stormwater runoff and help absorb sediment and nutrients before reaching downstream waters. As we head into fall, remember that many grasses, shrubs and trees will fare much better if they are planted in the fall rather than in the spring.

We can't underestimate the impact that we can collectively have as homeowners to help lessen and prevent stormwater runoff and flooding in and off our yards and properties. Get inspired to slow it down, spread it out and soak it in today!

Swinging “Fore” The Lake

On June 27th, more than 120 professional and amateur golfers hit the links at the Chautauqua Golf Club to help raise money and awareness for CWC’s conservation efforts. Our tenth Charity Pro-Am Golf Tournament was presented by Snug Harbor Marina & Service Center and raised more than \$19,000 (net) for CWC! Thank you to all our tournament sponsors, players and volunteers for making this a successful fundraising event!



Congratulations to the two teams who tied for first place at this year’s golf tournament! Pictured at left is the winning team of Dan Colwell, Mark Perry and Keith Swanson. Missing from the photo is PGA professional Dwayne Randall of Bartlett Country Club. Pictured at right is the winning team of PGA professional Kirk Stauffer of Chautauqua Golf Club with Tom Armstrong, Jake Cihal and Swell Cihal. (photos by Troy Moss and Lee Stein)



Thank You 2022 Golf Tournament Sponsors!

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Dr. Jeanne Wiebenga

Second Annual Sailing Rallye A Success

CWC held its second annual Chautauqua Lake Sailing Rallye on July 16th, raising more than \$13,000 (net) for our conservation programs!

The event had 68 participants and supporters, over 30 registered boats and 29 sponsors and in-kind donors. Rallye participants were able to add to this fun day on the water with a photo/scavenger hunt and a trivia challenge, with many cool prizes for the winners. Afterwards, participants had the opportunity to gather at Long Point State Park for a post-sail thank you with food and drink. Special thanks to CWC Board Director Greg Swan for starting and organizing this successful annual event!



Thank You 2022 Sailing Rallye Sponsors & Contributors!

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Gabe Tyger
Ruth Wahl
Rebecca & Ralph Wallace
Peter Wiley & Family



(photos, from left to right, by Stephen Conder, Becca Wallace and Jen Swan-Lueze)

Additional thanks to all registered participants and the following event supporters and organizers:

Chautauqua Yacht Club
at Chautauqua Institution

Chautauqua Lake Community Sailing Foundation
Lakewood

Chautauqua Lake Yacht Club
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Restoring the Chadakoin Update

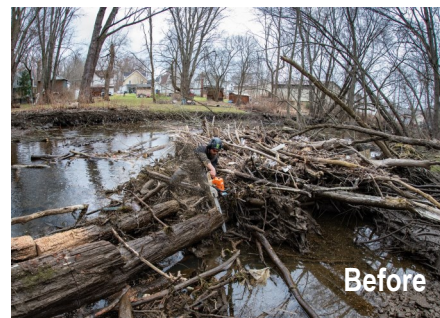


As you may remember, the City of Jamestown awarded a contract to CWC earlier this year to carry out phase I of our Chadakoin River Restoration & Activation project: the removal of obstacles, log jams and downed trees from 3.5 miles of the river. This work was completed in May by the highly skilled arborists from Tactical Tree Services, who removed well over 150 dead standing trees from the riverbanks and hundreds of cubic yards of woody debris from the riverbed. In some of the areas where lumber had accumulated over many years, log jams had formed that partially blocked the river and caused erosion, diversions in the river's flow and flooding downstream. With these obstacles now removed, this may very well be the first time in 50+ years that the Chadakoin River flows unobstructed through its original bed!

Stabilizing the Chadakoin's hydrology was a critical first step towards mitigating flood hazards and reducing the risk of personal injury to anyone enjoying the river recreationally, such as for kayaking or fishing. Removing obstacles also allowed us to better assess the condition of the river's banks and identify

areas that are compromised and/or where erosion is taking place. Bank restoration concepts were developed together with the Chautauqua County Soil & Water Conservation District for four sections of the river that are in urgent need of repair. A NYS Water Quality Improvement Program grant application was submitted recently to fund the physical restoration of nearly 0.75 miles of Chadakoin River bank, implement resilient living shoreline principles that deploy native plants for stabilization, remove non-native invasive plant species and add native vegetation where possible. A decision on the application is expected by the end of this calendar year.

While awaiting funding decisions, CWC is finishing up a shoreline improvement project with the Jamestown Board of Public Utilities at their power plant facility. In addition, Jamestown High School AP Biology students and volunteer crews from Cummins Jamestown Engine Plant are helping us get a head start on our restoration efforts by pulling invasive plants and planting native shrubs and trees. Even in these early stages of the project, the river is alive with progress!



CWC Awarded \$51,000 in State CPP Grants

The Land Trust Alliance and NYSDEC recently awarded CWC two NYS Conservation Partnership Program Capacity and Excellence grants totaling \$51,024! One grant provides \$36,000 to develop a Collaborative Regional Conservation Implementation Strategy for Chautauqua County to help prioritize regional conservation, land use and economic development efforts. Numerous environmentally sensitive areas exist in the county, but no objective regional land cover analysis has been carried out to identify which areas have the highest priority when it comes to protecting critical water



sources, wildlife habitat or natural resources. Conversely, no standardized analysis has been carried out county-wide to assess which areas are most erosion prone or flood prone or otherwise contribute negatively to our environmental health. CWC has run preliminary models to answer these questions in the Chautauqua Lake watershed, and this new grant will allow CWC to extend the analysis over the entire county and, consequently, allow better prioritization of the region's scarce conservation dollars by applying them where they will have the greatest impact. The grant also includes outreach to inform municipal leaders, landowners and other stakeholders of the presence of high priority conservation areas in their respective jurisdictions. The second grant provides \$15,024 for accreditation preparation and application support which will enable CWC to add needed capacity to augment and document its policies and practices and properly archive records to become an accredited land trust in 2023. Accreditation will help assure that CWC is meeting the highest standards for organizational governance, financial, fundraising and conservation practices among our peer group of land conservation organizations.

With Gratitude for Our Donors!

Our sincerest gratitude to all our continuing and new members and supporters who donated between April 1, 2022 to July 31, 2022.

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Bequest

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UPCOMING EVENTS

- Sept 7-10th Plein Air Festival (with RTPI)
- Sept 9th On-Water Citizen Science Survey for Aquatic Invasive Species (Chautauqua Lake Outlet)
- Sept 10th Full Moon Paddle at Cassadaga Lakes (with Cassadaga Lakes Association)
- Sept 16-18th Climate Ride (at Chautauqua Institution)
- Oct 15th Fall Foliage Walk (Salomon Preserve)
- Dec 9th CWC Holiday Open House

Visit www.chautauquawatershed.org for more details on these and other upcoming events!