



CWC Adds 6.7 Acres to Salomon Family Nature Preserve



CWC is excited to announce that Rada Salomon has donated an additional 6.7 acres of land on Morris Road in the Town of Chautauqua to CWC to expand the Salomon Family Nature Preserve, located in the Prendergast Creek watershed of Chautauqua Lake. This donation is in memory of her husband Steve Hirschberg, who passed away in the fall of 2020. The trail at the preserve, which was established last summer, was named in memory of Steve.

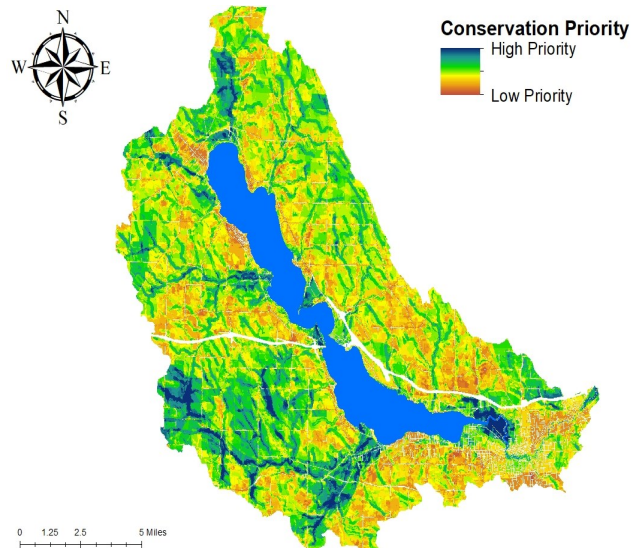
This gift will enable CWC to make permanent the trailhead and parking area entrance to this preserve and includes about 4 acres of forest and 2 acres of former fields slowly transitioning to shrubs and young pioneer trees. Rada and Steve had previously donated 51.9 acres of forest at this site to CWC in 2016. We are very grateful to Rada for her generosity and commitment to the mission of the CWC through these land donations!

CWC Undertakes Land Conservation Priority Analysis

CWC seeks to focus its limited financial resources on conserving the most important lands of ecological, hydrological or scenic value across the county. In 2021, CWC undertook a computer analysis of lands comprising the Chautauqua Lake watershed using 11 ecological and hydrological criteria to identify and prioritize landscapes for future conservation. Conserving and restoring as much of our natural open spaces in forests and wetlands is essential to the future health of our waterways, to our fish and wildlife and to fight climate change. This project was partially funded by the Chautauqua Lake and Watershed Management Alliance.

CWC produced a land cover map of the 180-square mile lake watershed and determined the percentages of forest and wetland cover in each town as a measurement of the land cover quality of each. The more forest and wetland cover in a watershed, the cleaner the water it “sheds” downstream to the lake. The higher the percentage of developed lands and impervious surfaces in a watershed, the more nutrients and sediments those lands deliver in runoff to the lake. The percentage of forest and wetlands was found to be most pristine at nearly 80% in the part of the watershed in the Town of Stockton and lowest at 48% in the Town of Ellicott.

CWC then analyzed the 11 hydrological and ecological indicator characteristics of the lands in the watershed. This map shows a preliminary prioritization of lands across the watershed, with lands in dark orange being lowest priority, yellow moderate and greens and blues the highest priority. Some of the factors included whether or not lands were within 300 feet of a stream, whether they were flood plains, wetlands, steep slopes or interior forest, whether known significant habitat areas were present and whether land was adjacent to existing conserved lands such as nature preserves and state wildlife management areas. Maintaining and restoring healthy, naturally-forested buffers and wetlands adjacent to all tributary streams feeding the lake is necessary to trap and filter pollutants before they enter the streams and flow to the lake. Additionally, as part of this initiative, CWC desires to work with the agricultural community to conserve these features on their properties and to help facilitate the conservation of the most productive agricultural lands across the region to keep those lands in the hands of farmers and not lost to other uses. *(continued page 2)*





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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Member of



Message From the Executive Director

Spring has sprung here in western New York! Like the buds on the trees and the blossoms in the yard, most all of us are looking to reconnect and re-emerge after a long winter. If you are looking for some activities to get out and enjoy this spring, CWC has a number of upcoming events, tours and programs, and we hope you will consider joining us for one or more of them!



John Jablonski III,
Executive Director

Spring is also a reminder to be optimistic about new and good things on the horizon . . . and CWC has many great projects and programs on the horizon this year! You as a member or donor to CWC make it possible for CWC to undertake these great conservation, restoration and enhancement projects. Contributions from you, individuals and families, remain the most important source of funding for CWC's work. CWC itself can permanently conserve some lands, but the rest is up to you. You as landowners and residents control your yards and grounds. We encourage you to return parts of your property back to nature, so your land and its plants can provide water quality filtration and water storage services and provide valuable habitat to our wild neighbors.

Your financial support is the fuel for our work. Using your contributions, CWC strives to:

- Conserve the forests, wetlands and other habitats providing the most ecological, hydrological and scenic benefits to the region and establish and refine criteria to identify and prioritize such sites for conservation ensuring responsible investment of your contributions for such purposes
- Seek landowners to partner with to conserve the highest priority sites
- Take advantage of opportunities to restore forests, wetlands, meadows and waterways
- Rehabilitate neglected and abused waterways and natural areas, such as the Chadakoin River through downtown Jamestown to Falconer so that it provides better habitat for fish and wildlife and its human neighbors who live and work alongside this living, moving, changing waterway
- Motivate and engage landowners to be good conservation stewards of their lands and provide the guidance they need to do so

CWC is seeking private individuals, families, foundations, and county, state and federal agencies to assist it to accelerate conserving these lands vital to our climate, the health of our waters, our ecology, fish and wildlife and families of our region, starting with our Fish Hawks and Steelhead Habitat Campaign. As always, thank you for your continued support and investment in CWC!

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CWC has applied for NY State Conservation Partnership Program and other funding to undertake this priority conservation landscape analysis across the entire county. CWC will be presenting this information to communities in coming months and encouraging input. CWC will be reaching out to the owners of the highest priority landscapes to introduce them to the various opportunities and benefits associated with voluntarily conserving these lands.

Restoring the Chadakoin River

This past December, Ecological Restoration Manager Twan Leenders presented CWC's proposed "Lower Chadakoin River Restoration & Activation" plan to the Jamestown City Council. The plan focuses on remediating decades of deferred maintenance along the 3.5-mile stretch of the Chadakoin River, downstream from the Warner Dam, to improve the health and sustainability of the river and develop a community-based plan for its beautification and activation.

On February 28, 2022, the City of Jamestown awarded \$277,500 of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Recovery Funds to CWC for the implementation of Phase I of this plan, which starts by clearing accumulated logs and woody debris from the river channel and removing hazard trees that are at imminent risk of falling into the river. Over the course of many years, downed trees have piled up in certain sections, forming debris dams that redirect the flow of the river, while increasing the scouring action of the river water. These issues cause severe erosion of riverbanks and floodplain areas which actively lose sediment and pollutants to the river each day – thus negatively impacting the river's water quality and hydrology. Decades of disinvestment in the Chadakoin River, arguably one of Jamestown's most valuable assets, is negatively impacting businesses and homeowners, who routinely face local flooding and collapsing banks, while logs floating in the river threaten bridges, retaining walls and other infrastructure.



All photos by Twan Leenders

CWC contracted with Tactical Tree Solutions to carry out the tree work because of their familiarity with the river and their considerable experience working under challenging circumstances near and in the water. A large percentage of the logs and woody debris that has accumulated in the Chadakoin River in recent years is a direct result of the damage inflicted by Emerald Ash Borer, a harmful invasive beetle that has led to a near-wholesale die-off in our local Ash trees. Dead and dying trees on the riverbank are assessed by a TTS certified arborist and removed if considered an immediate risk to

human health or property. Since the root masses of bank trees form the most resilient component of a stable riverbank, each tree that has a chance of survival is carefully assessed and trimmed to allow regrowth from the cut stump, leaving the roots intact.

Phase I is currently in full swing, and the appearance of the river is improving each day. Careful planning with representatives of the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, the county watershed coordinator and key personnel from the City of Jamestown and its Board of Public Utilities (who operate the Warner Dam) has resulted in the implementation of a series of short-term flow reductions in the river. These partial dam closures lower the water levels in the Chadakoin enough to create safe working conditions without impacting the fish and other organisms that live in the river. During these several hours-long windows, crews can enter the channel, cut up debris dams and reduce large logs into more manageable sections. When the dam re-opens later in the day, the force of the water carries the logs to the nearest downstream collection point – an area where a catchment system is installed to collect floating debris for safe extraction using cables and cranes.

The work being done right now is focused entirely on clearing the river channel and its banks below the highwater line. Above that line, banks and floodplain areas are privately owned, and those areas will be addressed at a later stage in this multi-year restoration effort. Anyone who owns property along the river is encouraged to contact Twan Leenders at twan@chautauquawatershed.org to discuss options for participation in this community-wide initiative.



Spring Into Action!

Yay! It's finally that time of year where we can ditch the snow shovel and start playing in the dirt! We are all itching to get outside, feel the sun's warmth and clean up what our long winter has left behind.

But before you grab that rake, stop, observe and listen to what early spring brings to western NY. As you step outside, spring can be heard as many birds have begun their migration northward and are making their way to and through our area. Red-winged blackbirds, turkey vultures and killdeer, as well as warblers and ospreys and soon to be hummingbirds and orioles, will all be seen flitting and flying throughout our yards. Spring ephemerals or native woodland plants that bloom and seed quickly are popping out and decorating the forest floor with color, adding to the beauty of our daffodils and crocuses that are slowly sneaking their heads above ground.

But spring can also be an ugly time...especially for water quality. The season's snow melt and first spring rains have already flushed a winter's worth of accumulated salt, sand and sediment off our streets and into our waterways and lakes.

So, now is the time to think about what WE can do to help improve our local water quality and protect necessary habitat for our emerging spring pollinators that are so important to these migratory birds and early blooming flowers.

Here are 5 easy early spring yard care tips that can help!



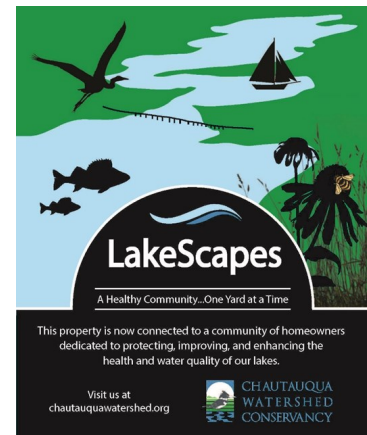
1. **Pick up and dispose of dog poo in your trash.** The winter snow melts and leaves us with a yard full of poo. As pet waste decomposes, it adds harmful bacteria and nutrients to local waters when it's not disposed of properly.
2. **Avoid rolling your lawn and using fertilizers in the spring.** Rolling your lawn leads to compacting your soil. It does not allow rain to soak into your lawn, weakens its roots and causes runoff. Avoid the use of fertilizers on your lawn in spring, as excess fertilizers can runoff with spring rains and end up fertilizing our lakes.
3. **Start planning a native plant garden.** If you have been thinking about that wet spot in your yard or wanting to add a few natives to attract birds and bees into your landscape, this is the perfect time to plan and plant!
4. **Enjoy a "No Mow May."** Dandelions, clover and other flowering plants in your lawn are wonderful habitat and food for early spring pollinators. Stop mowing in May and help transform the traditional American lawn – a manicured carpet of grass – into something more ecologically beneficial. Avoid the use of pesticides and herbicides as they can be toxic to pollinators and other beneficial plant and animal species and may kill insects and other creatures important for feeding baby birds. Enjoy the life in your lawn and leave it BEE.
5. **Plant a tree or replace a dead one.** WNY has lost a lot of ash trees in recent years. Fill in an empty space in your yard with a native tree or a planting bed with native shrubs and flowers and a tree in the center. Planting trees and shrubs will help intercept pollutants from reaching our waterways.

Look Into LakeScapes!

Our free yard consultation program is still growing strong!

If you are struggling to "spring into action" and want help and ideas on how to incorporate watershed-friendly landscapes into your yard, please reach out to Conservationist Carol Markham at carol@chautauquawatershed.org or 716-664-2166 ext. 2005.

And if you have already taken advantage of this wonderful program, we would love for you to share pictures of the simple changes you have made in your lawn and landscaping practices that have made a difference in your yard, in your community and to the health and water quality of our lakes!



The Forgotten Flush

We all do it.

We press down the handle and assume everything just magically disappears. Hit the lever, gone forever.

But is it?

No matter if you own a vacation property on the lake or a home in rural Chautauqua County, you should be familiar with the form and function of your home's septic system, and spring is a great time of year to familiarize yourself with it.



Simply put, a septic system is your very own onsite sewage treatment facility. It's used primarily where access to a municipal sewer system is neither available nor economically practical. A septic system is out of sight and odorless (when properly maintained). Unfortunately, it can also be out of mind for some when it comes to proper maintenance.

The cleaning and maintaining of your septic system need to be done on a regular basis, otherwise it is very unhealthy for your system, your local drinking water and the health and safety of our nearby creeks and lakes. However, many of us wait too long in between cleanings or only address the issue when a serious problem arises.

When you think about septic system maintenance, be mindful about what you and your family put into your septic system...this includes your toilet, sink, shower and laundry. Your septic system is a delicate biological balance of bacteria, and it doesn't take much to upset this natural process. Following a few simple rules will not only protect your local watershed and other nearby surface and groundwater from being contaminated but also will protect the water you drink, your health and your investment in your home.

- Pump out your septic tank every 2-3 years. Because we live in a cooler climate, bacterial action and decomposition are slower, so we need to make sure that solids are properly broken down.
- Conserve water and monitor usage. Discharging more water into the system than it can handle can cause it to back up — not a desirable occurrence.
- Don't use excessive amounts of any household chemicals. Avoid paints, chemicals, cleaners, gasoline, oil or other toxic materials that could kill the good bacteria in your system as well as things that can clog pipes such as diapers, flushable wipes, feminine hygiene products, paper towels, coffee grounds and grease and fat from cooking.

More detailed information on how to care for your septic system can be found at <https://www.epa.gov/septic/how-care-your-septic-system>.

In addition, a Mandatory Inspection Program for Lakeshore Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems (OWTS) was created in 2016 by the Chautauqua County Environmental Health Unit and aims to protect private drinking water wells, reduce lake water contamination and harmful algal blooms and protect public health from failing or old septic systems that are not adequately treating their wastewater. The program was implemented because public health risks related to declining lake water quality are increasing in Chautauqua County. The recent findings of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) determined that all OWTSs within 50 feet of the lakeshore and 40% of the OWTSs within 250 feet of the lakeshore are not working properly and contaminating lake water and groundwater. Detailed information regarding this program and what you should do can be found at <https://chqgov.com/sites/default/files/document-files/2019-09/2017-Mandatory-Inspection-Factsheet.pdf>.

Your septic system is reasonably maintenance-free if you treat it correctly and have it pumped out regularly. Constant foul odor, slow drains and drains that back up are all telltale signs that your septic tank needs pumping.

The answer is easy and simple...and spring is the perfect time! Maintain and pump your septic system regularly for healthy water and clean lakes...and preferably before your summer guests arrive!

Help Us Certify Chautauqua County as an NWF Community Habitat!



Photo by Carol Markham

CWC is working to certify Chautauqua County as a National Wildlife Federation Community Habitat! Along with support and assistance from various individuals and community partners, the Chautauqua County Wildlife Habitat Program will connect residents of the county and educate and engage them about the importance of wildlife and habitat conservation... one yard at a time!

With six beautiful lakes and approximately 50 miles of Lake Erie shoreline in Chautauqua County, there is no place in the county more than 25 miles from open water. Within the lands that surround these waters are key habitats that are home to our local wildlife. With increasing human impact and development, the success and longevity of these habitats are threatened and need to be protected. By certifying and adapting our own backyards and green spaces, we can encourage local and migrating wildlife to visit and thrive – transforming our yards into healthy, beautiful green spaces and creating native habitat to benefit and attract our birds, bees, butterflies and local wildlife!

The National Wildlife Federation has created an easy-to-use checklist for you to determine if your yard is already a certifiable habitat or if small additions may be needed. Certification focuses on five key factors that make up a sustainable wildlife habitat: 1) food, 2) water, 3) cover, 4) places for wildlife to raise their young and 5) sustainable practices. The certification checklist can be found at <http://www.nwf.org/certify>, and you can easily certify your yard online at www.nwf.org/certifiedwildlifehabitat.

Our program partners include the National Wildlife Foundation, Jamestown City Parks, Jamestown Public Market, Audubon Community Nature Center, Chautauqua-Conewango Consortium, Cornell Cooperative Extension's Master Gardeners Program, SUNY JCC, SUNY Fredonia, Royal Fern Nursery and Brigiotta's Nursery.

For more information or help on how to get your yard ready for certification, contact CWC Conservationist Carol Markham at carol@chautauquawatershed.org or 716-664-2166 x1005.

Sponsors & Participants, Save the Dates!



Mark your calendars to get out on the golf greens or get your boat out on the water to support the Chautauqua Watershed Conservancy this summer!

Our tenth annual Charity Pro-Am Golf Tournament is scheduled for June 27th, and our second annual Chautauqua Lake Sailing Rallye is scheduled for July 16th! Both events are important fundraisers for the CWC . . . and also a lot of fun! Register your team or crew now! Visit our website for event details and for registration / sponsorship information or call the CWC office at 716-664-2166.

(photo, left, by Jill Eklund | photo, right, by Emily Yeager)



Wandering Chautauqua's Watersheds 2022



CWC is offering a summer hiking challenge again this year! The challenge is open to anyone interested in participating and runs from June 1st through October 31st, 2022. To participate, visit 10 pre-designated nature preserves, hike the trail there, take a selfie with the preserve sign and submit it to us via email. Once we receive your 10 selfies, we'll send you a 2022 WCW decal (pictured at left). Hikers can visit the preserves in any order and at their own pace. In addition to our own beautiful preserve trails, this year we are partnering with Roger Tory Peterson Institute and Audubon Community Nature Center to showcase their beautiful hiking trails as well! Visit the CWC website for more info and a list of this year's designated trails.

CWC Receives Community Support!

The CWC has recently been awarded a number of grants in support of our ongoing programs and lands campaign:

- A \$277,500 grant from the City of Jamestown for our Chadakoin River Restoration Project, removing massive log dams and at risk trees from the river to make it safer for recreation and the infrastructure surrounding the river,
- A \$ 62,774 grant from the Chautauqua Lake and Watershed Management Alliance for our LakeScapes community education and technical assistance program,
- A \$23,734 grant from the Chautauqua County 2% Lakes and Waterways grant program to enable the extension of our LakeScapes program to Cassadaga, Bear and Findley Lakes,
- A \$10,000 grant from Chautauqua County in support of our technical assistance, education and community outreach activities,
- A \$7,000 grant from Chautauqua County / the Lake Erie Management Commission in support of our LakeScapes program in the Lake Erie Watershed as well as public education and outreach in that community, and
- A \$6,726 grant from the Chautauqua Lake and Watershed Management Alliance for the finding and removal of new invasive species in Chautauqua Lake.



Osprey photo by Jeanne Wiebenga



Steelhead photo by Taylor West

We have also received several grants in support of our ongoing Fish Hawks & Steelhead Habitat lands campaign to protect 71 acres of important habitat for our local osprey, eagles, and steelhead populations:

- A \$20,000 grant from the Jessie Smith Darrah Fund,
- A \$10,000 grant from the Rockwell Foundation, and
- A \$3,000 grant from the Northern Chautauqua Community Foundation.

Did you know there are more ways to give?

CWC accepts gifts of stock, IRA distributions, crypto currency, employer matching, bequests, and donor-advised funds!

Call or email our Director of Development today to learn more or make a gift, and ensure the people you love and causes you believe in are taken care of today.

716.664.2166 ext. 1006 whitney@chautauquawatershed.org



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UPCOMING EVENTS

- May 8th – Mother’s Day Wildflower Walk (two) at Bentley Nature Preserve**
- May 14th - Spring Migration Birding Tour at Cassadaga Lakes Nature Park**
- May 21st – Chadakoin River Clean-up**
- May 26th – NWF Kickoff Event at Riverwalk Panzarella Park**
- June 3rd – Invasives Documentary Viewing Party at Audubon Community Nature Center**
- June 27th – Charity Pro-Am Golf Tournament at Chautauqua Golf Club**
- July 1st – CWC guest bartending at Southern Tier Distillery**
- July 16th – Chautauqua Lake Sailing Rallye**

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