

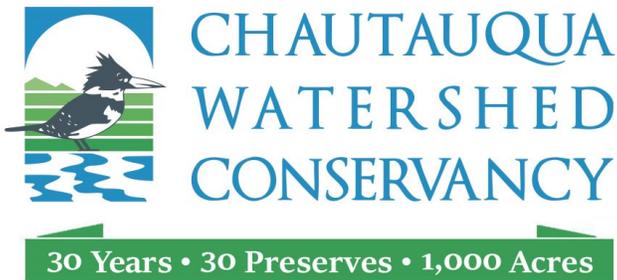
# The 'Shed Sheet



Spring 2020

## CWC Celebrates 30 Years!

CWC is celebrating its 30th anniversary in 2020! With the support of our many members, donors, granters, partners and volunteers, CWC has made great strides in the protection and enhancement of the watersheds and waterways of Chautauqua County since 1990.



This includes establishing and managing 31 nature preserves and one 16-acre conservation easement, conserving more than 2 miles of shoreline on Chautauqua Lake and its outlet and 1,059 acres of land county-wide, making CWC the leading organization in the area in saving and restoring natural vegetative shoreline habitats.

CWC has held numerous educational programs and tours for the public, municipal officials, landscapers and highway personnel which has led to a heightened awareness, acceptance and implementation of more watershed and water quality responsible land use practices on the part of governments, service providers,

institutions, businesses and individuals. CWC has also been delivering landscaping technical assistance to landowners through its *Healthy Landscapes ~ Healthy Waters* and *Starve the Algae! Save the Lake!* programs since 2008.

CWC has also promoted best land management practices, conservation awareness and lake and watershed stewardship information and news through this newsletter, our "Watershed Notes" column, e-news and social media posts reaching countless landowners, residents, elected officials, local businesses and organizations. (*continued on page 5*)

## Cassadaga Lakes Nature Park Becoming A Reality!

The Cassadaga Lakes Nature Park is one step closer to becoming a reality! Earlier this year, CWC closed on the purchase of 77 acres of beautiful woods and wetlands at the head of the Cassadaga Lakes as the first big milestone for creating the Cassadaga Lakes Nature Park.

The property includes 26 acres of shoreland wetlands and 1,100 feet of natural shoreline along Upper Cassadaga Lake. It is a refuge for birds, waterfowl, amphibians and other wildlife and also features mature stands of hemlock and white pine trees. This land is also vital to the quality of water that enters the lakes from the Arkwright Hills watershed. This acquisition was made possible with support from the NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, Lenna Foundation, Jessie Smith Darrah Fund, Northern Chautauqua Community Foundation, Cassadaga Lakes Association and many individuals and families.

Contributions are still being sought for enhancements to the park, such as the addition of a hiking trail, kiosk, picnic area and wildlife observation blind and for the ongoing and future upkeep of the park. For more information or to make a donation to this project, visit the CWC website.



*This issue of The 'Shed Sheet has been partially funded with a grant from the Rockwell Foundation.*



# CHAUTAUQUA WATERSHED CONSERVANCY

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**The Chautauqua Watershed Conservancy is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit 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 region.**



## Message From The Executive Director

First, I hope that you and your family are staying well through this crisis, both physically and mentally.

Second, I thank you for your support of the Chautauqua Watershed Conservancy! What an amazing legacy you, our members and supporters, have made possible through the work of the CWC! Thirty years ago, a small group of lake lovers, naturalists, fishermen and other conservationists came together to: 1) help save a place for wildlife and protect our area's watershed forests, stream banks and shoreland habitats; 2) address Chautauqua Lake's excessive plant growth and uncontrolled erosion from construction sites on and near the lake; 3) conserve the most important fish and wildlife habitats county-wide; and 4) help people connect to the gifts of nature in the Chautauqua region.



**John Jablonski III**

2020 marks the 30th anniversary of the birth of this organization, and we have so much to celebrate! The founding trustees were Becky Nystrom, Becky Albaugh, Albert Cala, and myself, who along with other charter members came together out of a profound concern for the ecological and economic health and future of Chautauqua Lake and our area's waterways.



This small group knew that a new voice was urgently needed in the midst of the ongoing degradation of the Chautauqua Lake's natural shoreline habitats and increasing evidence of harmful land use practices such as lakeshore development without erosion controls, filling of tributary floodplains, nutrient loading that fueled excessive plant growth and harmful practices higher in the watershed. We perceived that government leadership was lacking in addressing these larger issues. The focus of local leaders was only on "weed control," and a more holistic, proactive and preventive approach was clearly needed.

The Chautauqua County Planning Department had just completed an extensive Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement process for plant management in Chautauqua Lake that regrettably ignored the root causes of the lake's excessive plant growth problems and only focused on in-lake harvesting and herbicides as management options. The Conservancy founders had witnessed troubling changes taking place on and within the lake and recognized disturbing and undesirable trends for water quality, fisheries and the ecological health of the lake and its wildlife and human users.

As a result, we set out to start an organization that would seek to:

- 1) Save the most threatened sensitive, ecologically valuable and scenic Chautauqua Lake shorelands and similar sites county-wide, and
- 2) Change the careless and improper land use practices that were filling the lake with sediments, nutrients and other pollution, using a more watershed-wide paradigm.

In those early days, our handful of committed, knowledgeable and concerned citizens, meeting in one another's kitchens and living rooms, drafted a wish list of priority conservation sites which had scenic, steep slope and wetland  
*(continued on next page)*

## Executive Director Message Continued. . .

lakeshore features including the Cheney farm, Stow Farm lakeshore, Prendergast Point wetlands, Goose Creek wetlands and Chautauqua Lake Outlet wetlands. We held wetland education events, presented *60 Ways to Love your Lake*, made a watershed model and started publishing what physicist John Antonevich named *The 'Shed Sheet*. Our core team fostering this fledgling conservation organization included our own Becky Nystrom, a JCC biology professor who had done her Master's thesis on Chautauqua Lake's Eurasian watermilfoil, the beloved Dr. Robert Kochersberger, also a retired JCC professor, Becky Albaugh, a wonderful Audubon environmental educator/naturalist, Al Cala, a nature-loving draftsman, landscape designer and artist, Don S. Weaver, a businessman and an avid outdoorsman, and myself who, in six years of college, sought to learn everything I could about lake, watershed and fisheries management while bringing experience as a land use and environmental planner and providing leadership in the operational establishment of our group, its mission and incorporation. Al Cala created the CWC kingfisher logo, symbolizing our young organization's purpose to "watch over the waters."

In 1995, CWC received its first land donation from Willis Dobbins, now the lovely 100-acre Dobbins Woods Preserve in Ashville. In the years since, the CWC has tirelessly remained true to our shared vision and mission of preserving, healing and protecting the water quality, scenic beauty and ecological health of the lakes, streams, wetlands and watersheds of our region. How appropriate that founding trustee and past president Becky Nystrom, with her deep knowledge of lake ecology, passion for and profound love of our natural world and all its inhabitants and her keen understanding of that vision has returned to lead the CWC as president for our 30th anniversary year!

As we remember our history and look to the future, we are grateful for the numerous individuals, businesses and foundations who have supported our mission over these many years. CWC has grown from a handful of concerned citizens to an organization with over 1,000 members and supporters. CWC has, in collaboration with New York State and other partners, thus far conserved over 1,126 acres of wooded wetlands, streambanks, shorelands and other natural areas to help absorb and filter rainfall and stormwater and help reduce downstream nutrient loading and sedimentation that otherwise fuel excessive weed and algae growth in our waterways. More than 470 acres of wetlands, two miles of ecologically valuable Chautauqua Lake and Outlet shoreline and three-quarters of a mile of shoreline on the Cassadaga Lakes have been protected! CWC has also facilitated a NYS investment of \$8.7 million in land conservation and outdoor recreation facilities in Chautauqua County! You, the donors and funders of CWC, can be very proud of the leveraging of your investment and the amazing and important work you have made possible, for today and long into the years to come.



*Dobbins Woods in Ashville, NY — CWC's*

The future is bright with promise — but the urgency for conservation action and education continues, and much more remains to be done. Together we will continue to "watch over the waters" and remain faithful to our mission. We are grateful for your partnership and thank you for sharing in this important work!

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## Ellery Proposes Herbicide Treatment Expansion

For 2020, the Chautauqua Lake Partnership, Ellery, Bemus Point, Ellicott, Celoron, Busti and Lakewood have proposed the treatment of over nine miles of near-shore areas of Chautauqua Lake using the newly-registered systemic herbicide, ProcellaCOR EC (florpyrauxifen-benzyl) for application before June 30th. These municipalities have authorized SOLitude to apply to the NYSDEC for herbicide permits with little or no information or opportunity for public input. When lakeshore residents adjacent to proposed treatment zones received "Letters of Notification," it was revealed that Ellery was seeking to treat along three miles of shoreline north of Long Point to the Town of Ellery line, just south of Dewittville and across the lake from Chautauqua Institution. As of press time, these permit request proposals showing acreage, chemical concentrations and other details have not been publicly available on any town website.

While some people believe that herbicides should be the primary means of lake plant management, CWC believes their use should be strictly limited to carefully targeted areas where milfoil is verified to be growing at high densities and likely to impede lake use in specific high-use areas. Herbicides are a management tool. Unless excess stormwater generation, erosion, sedimentation and excess nutrients entering the lake are addressed, weed and algae problems will intensify over time.

## A Message of Caring

As the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) continues to impact our daily lives, CWC wishes each and every one of you health and safety during this time of concern and uncertainty as well as peace and resilience in the midst of it all.

During this unprecedented and altered season, we are reminded of what is most important in our lives – the health and well-being of our loved ones and a healthy, sustainable and safe environment. We are also reminded how very grateful we are for each of you, our members and supporters, and wish to thank you for your dedication to our shared mission of preserving and protecting the water quality, scenic beauty and ecological health of the lakes, streams, wetlands and watersheds of our region. Be assured that while this coronavirus crisis brings new and difficult challenges, CWC resolves to successfully navigate these waters and continue our conservation education, technical assistance and land conservation work while abiding by the New York State Department of Health and CDC safety protocols to protect our staff, families and the public.



Now more than ever, we encourage you to seek what is beautiful and good. Our 1,000+ acres of preserves remain open for you to explore and enjoy (using social distancing, of course!) from sunrise to sunset, and they await your visit. The gifts of nature found in our woodlands, wetlands, meadows and lakeshores promise refreshment, renewal and healing for body, mind and spirit. Walk the trails...take your children fishing...launch your kayak...meander among the wildflowers...and seek the joy and serenity of nature amidst our chaotic and crazy world!

Please let us know if you have questions or concerns or if we can assist you in any way. Because we continue to conduct our work remotely for the foreseeable future, the best way to reach us is by e-mail to [info@chautauquawatershed.org](mailto:info@chautauquawatershed.org) or to a specific staff person using the format of [firstname@chautauquawatershed.org](mailto:firstname@chautauquawatershed.org) (e.g. [john@chautauquawatershed.org](mailto:john@chautauquawatershed.org)). You may also call the office at 716-664-2166 and leave a message. We will respond as soon as possible.

Please note that, using proper safety and social distancing protocols, and as we are able, we intend to:

- ◆ continue providing technical assistance on landscaping for water quality, stormwater management and habitat enhancement on lands owned by families, businesses, organizations and the public;
- ◆ offer conservation staff site evaluations and guidance on healthy lawn care practices, improving yards for capturing and filtering stormwater via buffers, swales and raingardens and/or for creating habitat for pollinators and wildlife;
- ◆ continue to steward and protect our preserves, along with the biodiversity they sustain and the hydrological and ecological gifts they provide;
- ◆ conserve and restore lands with collapsing stream banks and severe erosion to substantially reduce the thousands of tons of soil entering our lakes and fueling excessive plant growth; and
- ◆ continue identifying and conserving woodlands and wetlands which capture, store, filter and deliver clean waters to our lakes, streams and drinking waters downstream.

CWC is thankful for your partnership in our work to conserve the landscapes, habitats and waters that make Chautauqua County a special place in which to live and recreate – a refuge for humans and wildlife alike! With your help, we will continue delivering conservation activities and stewardship of our beautiful preserves for many years to come. Please consider a donation to assist us through these very challenging times, and thank you so much for your support!



### Update on Events

In keeping with current NYS social distancing guidelines, and for the safety of our staff members and the public, CWC has suspended most of our in-person spring events due to the COVID-19 outbreak. However, we are optimistic and hopeful that we will be able to reschedule many of them this summer and fall. Additionally, we will be holding a number of virtual events and hope to see you there! Watch our website, Facebook and Instagram pages and our e-news mailings for further updates!

## Meet Our New Outreach Assistant . . .

Tracy Carlson has joined the CWC staff as our new outreach assistant!

Tracy grew up in the West Ellicott area and is currently living in Lakewood, where she enjoys the view of Chautauqua Lake each morning with a cup of coffee. Having spent much time on the lands and waters of Chautauqua County growing up, she pursued the CWC with a shared goal of keeping this area a place that people and wildlife can enjoy for generations.

Tracy holds a BA in Political Science from SUNY Fredonia and has interned with the City of Jamestown's Department of Development. She is interested in local government and politics, especially when it pertains to environmental issues. She previously worked nine years in retail management and has extensive customer service experience, where she has gotten to know many local and seasonal residents. At CWC, Tracy first worked as a volunteer and was then hired to help kick-off the 2019 storm drain stenciling campaign. She is looking forward to her expanded role with CWC and getting to know its many members.



*CWC's Outreach Assistant  
Tracy Carlson*

In her spare time, Tracy and her husband can be found in the Harmony area where they are building their new home and where they can both get out into the woods with their Labrador and Golden Retriever. She enjoys the abundance of wildlife on their property and especially appreciates the Monarch larvae and butterflies who visit and feed off the milkweed in their backyard.



*CWC's Water Quality  
Program Manager  
Whitney Gleason*

## . . . And Our New Water Quality Program Manager

Whitney Gleason has also recently joined the CWC team as our new Water Quality Program Manager!

Born and raised in Chautauqua County with running enthusiast Robert "Doc" Rappole as her dad and coach, Whitney grew up running all over our beautiful county. All of this time outside gave her a great appreciation for the outdoors and a passion for protecting our natural spaces.

Whitney received her undergraduate degree in political science and biology at The College of Wooster and went on to obtain her law degree with a specialty in environmental law from Emory University. After practicing in Atlanta, Georgia, for a couple of years, she moved to Ohio with her husband Cody and transitioned her career to the development of public conservation and education programs – first at Cuyahoga Valley National Park, followed by the Cleveland Metroparks Zoo and now the Chautauqua Watershed Conservancy! Outside of work, Whitney loves running, walking and hiking with her husband and 10 month old son Jack.

Whitney looks forward to working with homeowners, municipalities and the public to build a community of people passionate about protecting our watershed!

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## Celebrating 30 Years Continued . . .

CWC has also partnered with Chautauqua County, Chautauqua County Soil & Water Conservation District and/or Chautauqua Lake & Watershed Management Alliance to provide publicity and education as part of the project team on Chautauqua Lake NYSWQIP tributary erosion control and re-vegetation projects at 12 sites between 2015 and 2020, which substantially reduced lake sedimentation and nutrient loading, both of which fuel lake plant growth.

As we celebrate and reflect on 30 years of conservation action in Chautauqua County, we are proud of all that we've accomplished and grateful for the support of you – our donors, grantors, volunteers and friends – who have helped make them happen. We look forward to continuing our mission to preserve and enhance the water quality, scenic beauty and ecological health of the lakes, streams, wetlands and watersheds of the Chautauqua region for many more years to come!

## A Healthy Community . . . One Yard At A Time

We all live in a watershed and what we do on our land matters to our waters. The simple acts of enhancing or creating a filtration garden or beneficial plant buffer and reducing water and chemicals used on our lawns are all positive practices that go a long way to keeping our waterways healthy, clean and enjoyable year-round. We have the power to be the most influential component of preserving, protecting and enhancing the health of our watershed!

CWC wants to continue to inspire and connect with homeowners and their communities in our watershed and around the lake. You don't need to own lakefront property to improve water quality, benefit habitat for local wildlife and beautify your own personal space. Your own yard, no matter the size or location, can act as a beautiful, functional filter, cleaning pollutants and storing nutrients as water flows through your property. Whether it is a raingarden situated in a wet corner of your yard, a landscaped front entrance or a native flower garden at the edge of your property...all of these are beneficial to the health and beauty of your yard as well as the watershed that surrounds it.

CWC, in partnership with and partially funded by the Lenna Foundation and the Chautauqua Lake & Watershed Management Alliance, is proud to present our new LakeScaping Program — a program created to connect and support homeowners and their communities in a joint effort to protect, enhance and restore the health and water quality of Chautauqua Lake and its watershed. Our unique program motivates homeowners to take pride in their personal space and enjoy improving water quality by taking ownership of their own backyards — and it is now even easier to create a healthy stand of shoreline vegetation or beautiful filtering garden system in your own yard! No matter where you live or what size garden you want to create, these vegetative plantings will absorb and filter nutrient runoff from your yard, beautify your landscape and enhance the quality of life for you, the lake and the wildlife that live and thrive within it!



*Rain gardens and shoreline buffers are two of many ways property owners can beautify their yards while at the same time improve water quality and benefit the health of our waterways!*

**LakeScapes**  
A Healthy Community...One Yard at a Time

This property is now connected to a community of homeowners dedicated to protecting, improving, and enhancing the health and water quality of Chautauqua Lake.

Visit us at  
[chautauquawatershed.org](http://chautauquawatershed.org)

CHAUTAUQUA  
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Yard consultations and technical assistance are free and can include free plant and landscape design recommendations as well. And all of this can be done while still practicing social distancing! After you take advantage of this free program, we invite you to proudly display our beautiful, informative LakeScaping sign (pictured at left) in your yard or garden, designating your property as one committed to preserving the health of our lake and community. In exchange for the sign, which is completely optional, we ask a suggested donation of \$30 to help support this and other CWC programs. Even in these difficult times, it's as easy as contacting CWC Conservationist Carol Markham by emailing [carol@chautauquawatershed.org](mailto:carol@chautauquawatershed.org) or calling 716-664-2166 to learn more about this unique program today!

Your community involvement will raise awareness, educate your neighbors and motivate action and change as it helps us all understand our importance to our watershed. Your donation supports CWC and its programs, inspires others to make a difference and helps address the issues of declining habitat and water quality in our Chautauqua Lake watershed.

All it takes is a healthy community . . . one yard at a time!

## Starve the Algae! Save the Lake! Yard Signs Available



As spring rolls in and we all begin to get outside to work in our yards, it's a good time to remember that what we do in our lawns and gardens affects the health of our waterways! Here are a couple of easy things that you can do to protect the health of your family, your pets and our lake:

- ◆ Conserve natural shorelines.
- ◆ Plant waterfront buffers.
- ◆ Scoop your pet's poop.
- ◆ Skip the use of weed and feed products.
- ◆ Fertilize once in the fall, if at all.

CWC would love for you to help us spread the word about the easy ways each of us can help protect our community's waterways and drinking waters and have created brand new yard signs to do just that! If you would like a free sign delivered to you for display in your yard, contact us at [info@chautauquawatershed.org](mailto:info@chautauquawatershed.org) or 716-664-2166.

## Ball Creek Preserve Improvements

CWC, along with the Chautauqua Watershed Management Alliance, has completed a wide-ranging, multi-year water quality improvement project on CWC's Ball Creek Preserve. This project was primarily funded through the New York State Water Quality Improvement Program with matching funds provided by Chautauqua County.

Ball Creek is a small but significant preserve located on Old Bridge Road just around the corner from Hogan's Hut in Stow. At only six acres, Ball Creek is by no means vast in area, but it is located in a critical area along the banks of Ball Creek just 200 yards from Chautauqua Lake. When CWC acquired the site, a wide selection of invasive plant species was present, and along the banks of the creek was a major area of stream bank erosion that was dumping sediment into Chautauqua Lake.

To help stabilize the stream banks, large stone blocks were added along the exposed banks, anchoring back into the banks and extending over a 250-foot run. These same large stone blocks were used to create a riffle area to reduce stream velocity and sediment loading before dropping down towards the lake. Dogwood and willow were then planted along the margin of the stabilized banks. These trees and shrubs help to reduce the amount of nutrients flowing into Ball Creek, which empties into Chautauqua Lake just south of Stow. This is the shallowest basin of the lake, making it very vulnerable to issues related to sediment and nutrient loading from stream flows.



In preparation for invasive species treatments, the Town of North Harmony assisted in the project by mowing the site to reduce the volume of invasive vegetation. One of the invasive species was Mugwort, which releases materials into the soil that inhibit the growth of other plants. Once the invasive areas of Mugwort, Common Reed and Knotweed were dealt with, a no till seeding machine was utilized to plant seeds for a variety of native species of herbaceous plants. After seeding, the next step was to plant an important plot of trees within this area next to the waterway, also known as a riparian zone. The tree planting in the riparian zone included 50 trees divided among five native species: Red Maple, Silver Maple, White Oak, Swamp White Oak and Pin Oak. These were planted by a wetland restoration contractor and by volunteers and staff from both CWC and CLWMA.

The ecological health of the Ball Creek Preserve location was greatly enhanced by this extensive effort. The major change in character created by stabilizing the stream bank against erosion, seeding native grasses and plants and restoring the riparian forest area will reduce the amount of sediment entering Chautauqua Lake. Significantly reduced invasive species on the site lowers the likelihood of invasives spreading from this site to other sites on the lake. The reintroduction of a selection of tree species that are native and well suited to the location along the banks to restore the riparian forest will add even more to the site's capacity for water filtration, habitat enhancement and sediment retention.



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