



*An erosion control project on Ball Creek nears completion (photo taken in October 2021 by Andy Johnson / EcoStrategies)*

## **CWC, Town of North Harmony & Alliance Address Lake Sedimentation**

CWC Director of Development Whitney Gleason recently assisted the Town of North Harmony with writing a successful grant application to the Chautauqua Lake & Watershed Management Alliance to fund work to stabilize a creek bend threatening Stow Road and to create a larger functioning flood plain to store stormwater and the dissipate stream energy to reduce stream bank erosion downstream. The majority of work for this project was completed in October, with some additional rock rip-rap work and more plantings to finish it off scheduled for next spring. The Chautauqua County Department of Public Facilities assisted with the bank stabilization work. The CWC, County, Alliance and Chautauqua County Soil & Water Conservation District completed the first of several erosion control and restoration projects on Ball Creek at CWC's Ball Creek Preserve in 2019. *(continued on page 3)*

## **Meet Our New Ecological Restoration Manager**

Twan Leenders has joined the CWC team as our new Ecological Restoration Manager!

Originally from the Netherlands, Twan has a degree in biology with an emphasis on animal ecology. He worked in Europe, Africa and Central America before coming to the US in 2000. While living and working in developing countries, he saw first-hand how environmental challenges can easily become existential challenges and has worked on designing and implementing conservation efforts that benefit at-risk species, their habitats and the people that depend on these fragile ecosystems. After arriving in the US, Twan worked as a researcher at Yale University's Peabody Museum of Natural History and later as an assistant professor in the biology department of Sacred Heart University in Fairfield, CT. In the years leading up to his move to western New York, he was Connecticut Audubon Society's conservation biologist, where he developed innovative conservation and habitat restoration projects throughout the state of Connecticut and oversaw the organization's 2,500+ acres of nature sanctuaries that spanned old growth forest, managed grasslands and tidal marshes along the shores of the Long Island Sound.



Closer to home, in Chautauqua County, Twan has been a conservation partner with CWC through the Roger Tory Peterson Institute where he served as President for eight years and continues his involvement as the Institute's Senior Advisor for Conservation. He has been a member of the CWC Conservation Committee since 2012 and is excited to now apply his skills and experiences more deeply as CWC's new Ecological Restoration Manager. In this position, Twan will collaborate with landowners and conservation partners to carry out restoration projects that improve habitat quality, help reduce environmental impacts and increase our region's climate resiliency. He will also work with CWC staff on the management of existing preserves and selection of new conservation projects. Twan is currently working on resiliency planning and habitat restoration projects with the Jamestown BPU and the Chautauqua County Soil & Water Conservation District and is developing several other initiatives throughout the county.

These efforts are part of a larger CWC initiative to develop a collaborative regional conservation strategy that will provide the guidance we all need to best protect the beauty and environmental quality of *(continued on page 3)*



# CHAUTAUQUA WATERSHED CONSERVANCY

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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*Preserve Handyman*  
Jeremy Woolson, *Lands Manager*



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## Message From the Executive Director

Happy holidays to you! As I write this, nature is in that time of transition when trees and wildflowers go to sleep for the winter, with leaves, seeds and nuts falling to the ground, and we have received our first snowfall of the season. CWC, like the trees and flowers, is also in transition. With the end of our fiscal year on September 30th, we have finished one season of activity and are now planting the seeds for our conservation actions for the new year.



**John Jablonski III,**  
*Executive Director*

We at CWC are very grateful for all of you who generously supported our conservation and education work over the past year. We ended our 2020-21 fiscal year with a small surplus for our program and operating budget – much better than for the previous year when most of our in-person fundraising events had to be canceled.

We thank you who supported the CWC with financial contributions, event sponsorships, grants and volunteer activities – *you* fuel our work! Your contributions allowed us to work with landowners seeking to permanently conserve their family's special wetlands, glens and forests and allowed us to work with landowners seeking to re-grow their shorelines and yards to be stormwater filters, sediment traps and better habitats for birds, bees and butterflies. You funded stormwater management presentations and guidebooks for 14 municipal boards to engage them in preventing unnecessary erosion and lake pollution. You funded CWC assisting towns and homeowners' associations to address stream and stormwater management problems on both sides of Chautauqua Lake. You funded a major community effort to ready the Cassadaga Lakes Nature Park as a wonderful place to experience nature and observe wildlife. You also funded preserve walks and talks and educational webinars, helping to get the word out about the importance of our work and how every single person can help make a difference.

I'd also like to thank our dedicated board directors, who serve as volunteers and devote hundreds of hours of time and energy to a variety of tasks, from administrative work to preserve work, events and tours. I also thank our many other volunteers including our preserve stewards, education committee and conservation committee members, events volunteers and office volunteers. Dana Lundberg and Robert Van Every, legal counsel for CWC, have also graciously provided hundreds of hours of services on our many land conservation projects.

We're also excited to continue to use our unique set of professionals and funding sources in teamwork with partner agencies in the new year – such as the Chautauqua Lake and Watershed Management Alliance, Chautauqua County, Chautauqua County Soil & Water Conservation District, Chautauqua Lake Association, Chautauqua-Conewango Consortium, Ducks Unlimited, local towns and villages and others – to further CWC's work to conserve and restore habitats, arrest soil erosion and intercept pollutants before they reach the lakes and streams of the Chautauqua region.

We hope you will continue to support our conservation work in the coming year, as we seek to create more sanctuaries for human refreshment as well as for fish and wildlife and clean water. Your contribution – big or small – has a significant impact on our ability to deliver conservation actions. Thank you for your generosity and may your holidays be safe, healthy and enjoyable!

## Leenders Welcome Continued

Chautauqua County, for now and for the future. This plan will also lay out a potential framework for future land conservation to ensure that the most critically important natural areas and natural resources in our region are identified and protected as soon as possible. In his spare time, Twan is an avid nature photographer and loves to document all the amazing natural treasures he encounters on his forays into the woods – at home or abroad. His photographs have appeared widely in many books and magazines, including National Geographic, New Scientist and National Wildlife. Even though he loves all aspects of nature, he is admittedly partial to amphibians and reptiles. After spending more than 25 years studying these animals and how they interact with their environment, Twan has become an expert in that field. He has written four books and many research papers and popular articles on the topic and is currently working on several other book projects.

## Lake Sedimentation Article Continued

With funding from the Chautauqua Lake & Watershed Management Alliance, Gleason and Executive Director John Jablonski have also been assisting the Town of North Harmony and its Supervisor, Robert Yates, to address Chautauqua Lake sedimentation issues in Hadley Bay and contributing waters of Ball Creek.

In 2020, CWC engaged local engineering firm EcoStrategies to bring its environmental engineering expertise to evaluate erosion sites on Ball Creek, design stream bank erosion control projects and get those projects constructed. This evaluation resulted in identifying two more Ball Creek sites to target for erosion control work alongside I-86 and Stow Road. Additionally, CWC, the Alliance and Town of North Harmony are awaiting a funding decision on a New York State Water Quality Improvement Project (WQIP) Program grant application to undertake another major stream bank erosion control project just upstream with a total grant request of \$175,512. A decision is anticipated by January.



Staff from CWC and EcoStrategies evaluate erosion on Ball Creek in Stow. (CWC photo)

## Welcome to Our New Preserve Handyman, Johnny Mac!



CWC extends a warm welcome to John (“Johnny Mac”) McCarthy, our new part-time preserve handyman. Although Johnny is new to our staff, he is no stranger to CWC. Johnny has been a CWC volunteer for many years, generously donating his time helping with preserve maintenance and improvement projects, participating in preserve tours/events and serving as the preserve steward for our Cassadaga Creek Nature

Preserve. A retired corrections officer, Johnny is also an avid deer hunter, passionate outdoorsman, longtime volunteer with the 4H horse program, woodworker and owner of Goatshed Woodworking. Johnny and his wife live in Stockton and have two grown children and one grandchild. Welcome Johnny!

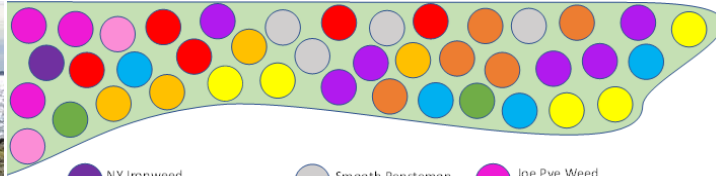
## Welcome to New Board Director Bill Ward!

CWC also extends a warm welcome to new board director Bill Ward! Bill is a lifelong Chautauqua Lake denizen, growing up in Cheney's Point, who has been passionate about waterways health since his youth. Bill is also a musician, promoter, teacher, youth worker and entrepreneur as well as an avid runner, biker and trail user. In addition to serving as a County Legislator for two years, Bill currently serves as president of Chautauqua Rails to Trails and sits on the board of directors for the Chautauqua County Visitors Bureau and Chautauqua Hometown Heroes. He and his wife Dena live in Mayville and have two daughters, Bille and Alice. They are also grandparents to Loretta, Macy, and Ellis. Welcome Bill!



## Another Successful Year for LakeScapes!

LakeScapes, our free personal yard consultation program, was extremely successful again this year! In the last two years, we have personally talked and visited with 232 homeowners and landowners across Chautauqua County! We want to thank each and every one of you who graciously invited us into your yards and shared your beautiful properties with us. We enjoy educating people about the benefits of environmentally-safe landscaping and lawn care, and we continue to share our knowledge and recommendations that positively impact the water quality of Chautauqua Lake and its surrounding watershed.



- |   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| 1 NY Ironweed<br><i>Vernonia noveboracensis</i>         | 4 Smooth Penstemon<br><i>Penstemon digitalis</i> | 3 Joe Pye Weed<br><i>Eutrochium maculatum</i>            |
| 4 Black-Eyed Susan<br><i>Rudbeckia fulgida</i>          | 5 Butterflyweed<br><i>Asclepias tuberosa</i>     | 5 Tickseed<br><i>Coreopsis verticillata</i>              |
| 5 Cardinal Flower<br><i>Lobelia cardinalis</i>          | 6 Blazing Star<br><i>Liatris spicata</i>         | 2 Clustered Mountain Mint<br><i>Pycnanthemum muticum</i> |
| 4 Willow Blue Amsonia<br><i>Amsonia tabernaemontana</i> | 2 Swamp Milkweed<br><i>Asclepias incarnata</i>   |  |

*An example of a LakeScapes buffer from start to finish, designed using native and pollinator-friendly plants.*



When we began the program, we found out rather quickly that summer visitors as well as year-round residents are deeply concerned about the health of Chautauqua Lakes and its watershed but just didn't know where to begin to help. LakeScapes has helped homeowners realize that there are small changes they can make in their own backyards which, collectively, will protect water quality, create wildlife and pollinator habitat and improve the health and well-being of their yards and the lake. It's also been wonderful to see multiple homeowner associations, condo associations and local businesses around the lake take advantage of our program as well and incorporate lake-friendly concepts into their entire communities. We should all be aware of and take care of our three main W's . . . Water, Wildlife and Way of Life!

If you have questions, concerns or ideas of what you can do to help keep your yard and water safe and healthy, or if you would like to have your own LakeScapes consultation, call our Conservationist, Carol Markham, at 716-664-2166, extension 1005. If you have already participated in our program and have not yet gotten a LakeScapes sign to proudly display in your yard, please contact Carol as well.

Thank you to everyone who has taken advantage of this wonderful program these past two summers. We look forward to meeting and helping even more property owners with their yards in 2022 and continuing to make a healthy community – one yard at a time!

### **READY TO START YOUR LEGACY?**

**Make a gift for future generations. A bequest to our organization will stay local and have a significant impact on your community. It's an investment that you can trust - an investment in the health and quality of our waterways for generations to come. You have chosen to support CWC because you believe in its mission. Now you have the opportunity to leave your mark on the organization for years to come. To learn more about our planned giving program, contact our Director of Development Whitney Gleason at [whitney@chautauquawatershed.org](mailto:whitney@chautauquawatershed.org) or 716-664-2166 x1006.**



## Continuing Preserve & Trail Improvements

CWC's lands manager, Jeremy Woolson, and volunteers continued to make improvements to our preserves and trails this summer and fall to enhance and expand opportunities for you to get outside and get in touch with nature!

The new trail loop at the Dobbins Woods Preserve in Asheville has even more new bog bridges, and a kiosk has been constructed at the preserve's trail head. The kiosk provides a visual of what the trail system looks like and gives additional information about the trail and the ecosystem that it wanders through.

At the Loomis Goose Creek Preserve, also located in Asheville, there is now a roller launch down the trail from the parking area that will help visitors launch a canoe or kayak onto Goose Creek. The launch is closed for use until May of 2022, but we anticipate a lovely full season of use for the new roller ramp next year. Many thanks to the Chautauqua County Department of Planning and Development for their help with installation and to the New York State Environmental Protection Fund for support of this public access ramp.



The Pamela A. Westrom Wildflower Trail at the Bentley Nature Preserve, just north of Jamestown, has had its share of bumps and troubles this summer, with some downed trees and flooding, but is currently walkable. The area may still be wet in spots, so we would recommend wearing mud boots on your walk and be prepared to possibly turn around if the trail is flooded over or blocked by trees chewed through by the resident beaver population who have been very busy there this year! At last count, they had constructed a five-tiered dam system running through the preserve that has started to raise water levels to "bank full" levels most of the time, which has the effect of making portions of the trail very wet, especially after heavy rainfall or, as will happen over the winter and into spring, major snow melt.



Improvements at the Cassadaga Lakes Nature Park also continued, with the addition of a very nice pavilion and wildlife observation station for public enjoyment. Along the trail, new primitive benches have been added in several locations, inviting visitors to stop and listen to the forest and enjoy the natural surroundings. We also undertook a removal effort for a species of invasive smartweed at this preserve, removing an entire trash bag of the pernicious little plants. This location will also require future surveillance and removal efforts. (If you would be interested in participating in future invasive species removal efforts, please let us know!)



We also managed to locate and remove more invasive water chestnut along the shore of our Chautauqua Outlet Greenway Preserve, located in the Town of Ellicott, as well as starting to work on some of the land based populations of invasive plants there. As we have done in previous years, the water chestnut was pulled out by the combined efforts of staff from the Roger Tory Peterson Institute and CWC. We are happy to report that the volume of plants removed this year was greatly reduced from years past, and subsequent checks of the area did not discover additional plants.

Our featured preserve trails continued to see good use by nature enthusiasts in 2021, with at least 3,500 visitors logging into our sign-in boxes this year alone!

***We hope you continue to enjoy our preserves over the winter months, and if you visit a preserve with one of our bright blue visitor sign-in boxes, please be sure to let us know you were there!***

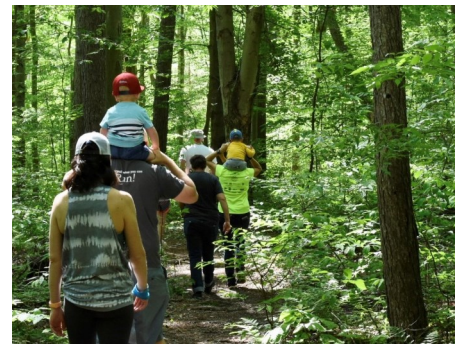
## Wandering Chautauqua's Watersheds



This summer and fall, CWC held its first annual hiking challenge!

The challenge, which was open to anyone interested in participating, kicked off on June 5th (National Trails Day!) and ran through October 31st. Participants were to visit eight pre-designated CWC preserves, hike the trail there, take a selfie with the preserve sign and submit it to us via email or a post on social media. An optional tree identification activity was also offered. Hikers could visit the preserves in any order and at their own pace, and those who completed this year's challenge were given a Wandering Chautauqua's Watersheds 2021 hiking decal (pictured at left)!

CWC will be offering another hiking challenge in 2022, so be sure to watch for an announcement in the spring! And if you aren't already, be sure to sign up to receive our e-news so you'll be one of the first to know!



*(Photos courtesy Jeff Sprovin and Lisa M. Schmidtfrerick-Miller)*

## Drain Markings . . . because it all leads to the lake!

This past July, CWC undertook the marking of 300 municipal storm drains using vinyl decals which read "No Dumping, Drains to Lake" in Fredonia, Dunkirk, Silver Creek and Westfield. Volunteers from these communities helped with the application of the decals and outreach about the project as well. Funding for the project was provided by the Lake Erie Management Commission, and the decals were provided by the Lake Erie Watershed Protection Alliance.

Many thanks to our summer intern, Hailey Dahl, and our fall intern, Hayden Backus, for their work and oversight on this project and to all the town and city officials who were supportive and cooperative with us throughout this project. We would also like to thank the communities who have taken the initiative for clean waterways and lakes! This project can stand as a long-lasting visual reminder to keep drains and lakes clean!



*(Photos courtesy Hailey Dahl)*

## 'Tis the Season for Salt . . . and Frozen Dog Poo!

With the colder temperatures and snowfall arriving, it's a good time to talk about salt deicers and frozen dog poo... two environmental issues that deserve some attention during wintertime here in western New York.

Salt and bagged deicers do an amazing job of melting ice and preventing falling snow from accumulating on sidewalks and driveways. But did you realize that some deicers, such as rock salt, can pose a threat to children, pets and the environment? As salt dissolves, it washes away, down sewer drains and into lakes and streams – and can even seep into groundwater and contaminate drinking supplies! It not only damages vegetation but is also harmful and potentially lethal if ingested directly.

If a deicer is necessary for safety, the best way to protect our environment is to use less salt. By reducing the amount of salt, you reduce how much gets into our soil and waterways. More salt does not equal more melting snow. When temperatures hit 15° or below, salt is not effective. As alternatives, consider using traction materials that contain acetate, potassium chloride, magnesium chloride or cracked cornmeal instead of the less eco-friendly alternatives of sand or kitty litter. Another strategy is to reduce the number of areas that need salt and deicing. Eliminate access to locations or entrances into your home or office that don't need to be used in the winter and let the snow accumulate. If there is a large parking lot or open surface somewhere that needs snow removal and it tends to suffer from drifting snow, strategically place native trees and shrubs to act as a natural snow fence.

Here are some more eco-friendly tips if salt is necessary:

- Shovel or sweep first, removing all the snow you can. You may find you won't need that much salt at all.
- Choose the right deicer by looking for eco-friendly, kid-safe and pet-safe options. Calcium magnesium acetate is one of the friendliest deicing products available and when you have colder weather, then calcium chloride or a calcium chloride blend are your best options because they work in very cold temperatures, yet you can use a lot less to get the job done.
- Read directions carefully and spread product only on ice.
- Sweep up any material remaining after the snow/ice melts.

And what about frozen dog poo? Many of us let our dogs in and out all winter long as we huddle in front of the woodstove and leave the mess for warmer days. Then, when the snow melts, we uncover a minefield of partially frozen dog poo piles that were wonderfully hidden under the beautiful accumulation of snowflakes.

Dog poo is not suitable as a fertilizer. In order for waste to be used as effective fertilizer, it must contain mainly digested plant matter. Because dogs are meat eaters, their by-products are unsuitable for soil enrichment, so those by-products should not just be left on our lawns. As pet waste decomposes, it adds harmful bacteria and nutrients to local waterways when it's not disposed of properly. It might not seem like a stormwater problem, but animal waste is one of the many seemingly small sources of pollution that can add up to big problems for water quality – and even human health. The easiest, safest and healthiest way to avoid these problems is to clean up after your pet each and every time and dispose of the waste properly!



And that is where doggy poop bags come in. I know what you're thinking... isn't there only one way to use a poop bag? Actually, it's not how you scoop the poop that matters, but how you throw it away. It takes a little extra legwork to maximize a poop bag's earth-friendliness. So, what is the best method of dog doo disposal?

If you want to dispose of dog poop in the most eco-friendly way, here are a few things to keep in mind:

- Do research on the most eco-friendly dog poop bags, choose a company that has testing to back up their biodegradable claims and dispose of them in your trash.
- Avoid flushing your dog's poop down the toilet.
- Don't take composting into your own hands. (At-home composting methods aren't strong enough to kill all the bacteria and disease in dog poop.)

These are just a few little changes we all can make in our daily winter routines that are safer for us, our pets and the environment! Contact the CWC for more environmentally friendly yard tips!



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## UPCOMING EVENTS

**January 2nd / 2:00 to 3:30 PM**  
**New Year's Open House**  
**(with refreshments & snowshoeing/cross-country skiing)**  
**Dobbins Woods Preserve, Ashville, NY**

**January 22nd / 2:00 PM**  
**Snowshoe / Cross-country ski**  
**Cassadaga Creek Wetland Preserve, Sinclairville, NY**

**February 6th / 10:00 AM**  
**Snowshoe / Cross-country ski**  
**Cassadaga Lakes Nature Park, Cassadaga, NY**

**March 2022 / Date & Time TBD**  
**Migratory Bird Tour**  
**Chautauqua Creek / Barcelona, NY**

*~ Visit [www.chautauquawatershed.org](http://www.chautauquawatershed.org) for more details! ~*