

# FRIENDS OF THE CHEMUNG RIVER WATERSHED



*2021 Annual Report*

# MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

2021 was the year of “adaptation” for the Friends of the Chemung River Watershed. We began in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic and, as soon as we started to see the “light at the end of the tunnel”, numbers and cases began to rise again in the Fall and Winter. Like so many other community-based nonprofits, we were forced to find new ways to serve our members, and new ways to support the Chemung River Watershed.

Throughout this year, we partnered with community organizations to reach new audiences and collaborate on various projects. We utilized nature as our classroom, providing almost all of our programs outdoors. In early Spring, we held many of our riverside clean-ups, and continued these volunteer activities all the way through to Fall. This summer saw a wide variety of programs, from kayak rentals to watercolor painting workshops to yoga and riverside family hikes. Near the end of the year, we were able to hold our Annual Meeting in-person, and finally give a proper retirement celebration to our former executive director – Jim Pfiffer.

We worked hard to have a positive impact on the Watershed and its residents throughout the pandemic, and each one of you supported us through these difficult times. You afforded us time to formalize many of our processes and procedures for our board of directors and the organization, as we improved operations increasing our ability to pursue national and federal grants. You helped us remake old connections and revitalize old projects, as we found time to pursue new funding sources to offset the losses we incurred from the pandemic.

Most strikingly, we were able to bring this position (executive director) back to full-time in July, thanks to a grant we received from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. As the full-time executive director and under the direction of this grant, I plan to undertake a five-year strategic planning process with the support the Upper Susquehanna Coalition and regional consultants. With this plan, we will set a clear path forward to achieve benchmarks and goals within our mission, creating a better vision of the future of our organization and the Watershed.

As we enter into 2022, I would again ask our members to continue to support all that we do. Sign-up for our quarterly digital newsletter, follow us on Facebook or Instagram, subscribe to our Nature Blog, and sign-up for as many programs as you can! We would not be able to protect the Chemung River Watershed, while promoting the safe and responsible use our waterways without you. Thank you so much for your continued investment in the natural resources of our region, and let’s keep paddling together!

Thank you!

Sincerely,



Emily J. Marino  
Executive Director  
Friends of the Chemung River Watershed





# ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION & RIVER SAFETY

We provided education around environmental protection and river safety issues to preserve our enjoyment of the river for future generations to come.

- Piloted “River Guardians” with Bethany Lutheran Church on the Southside of Elmira. The River Guardian program allows groups to “adopt” stretches of riverbank to keep clean, and report on any unusual or illegal activity. Participants receive training, supplies, contact information, regular support, and program t-shirts.
- Collaborated with YWCA Summer Enrichment Program and the Town of Elmira Summer Camp to offer beginner paddle instruction and life jacket safety lessons to children on-site using our portable pool. Also offered a macroinvertebrate class, riverside hike, and geocaching treasure hunt for children participating in the Town of Elmira’s program located at the river.
- Collaborated with Boy Scout Troop #2 from Corning to pilot an Eagle & Wildlife Observation program. Also provided a life jacket and river safety talk to local Cub Scouts at their regional summer camp.
- Partnered with Fire and Safety Personnel in Chemung and Steuben counties to distribute 200 life jackets to individuals in our community. Fire departments were also given rescue throw bags, rescue helmets, boat decals, and other safety gear from the River Friends for use and distribute. This was provided by a grant from the Community Foundation of Elmira-Corning and the Finger Lakes.
- Partnered with Casella Waste Systems to offer a Honeybee Keeping Demonstration on Casella’s Land Buffers to educate the public on the importance of honeybees to our ecosystem. We also offered this program LIVE online, and made a video that lives permanently on our website.





# WATER ACCESS & TRAIL IMPROVEMENTS

We coordinated projects to keep our river and trail system clean, as well as improving the community's access to our waterways and trails.

- Partnered with four “up-and-coming” Eagle Scouts on projects at the White Wagon Boat Launch in the Town of Chemung, Seeley Creek in the Town of Southport, the riverside trails behind West Elmira in the Town of Elmira, and Senator William T. Smith Boat Launch in the Town of Big Flats.
- Supported Inaugural Chemung River Race for Recovery from Fitch’s Bridge to the Grove Street Boat Launch in Elmira.
- Launched Chemung River Kayak Rental Program in partnership with Endless Mountain Outfitters from Sugar Run PA with a focus on Chemung county. The program averaged around 12 individuals per trip with 8 trips in total and ran from May to October; it will be expanding in 2022.
- Organized riverside Clean-ups with Corning Rotary, Elmira Rotary, Elmira College, Thomas Edison High School, Leadership Chemung Class of 2021, Southern Tier Custom Fabricators, and various schools in Corning and Elmira.
- Organized a Watershed-wide Virtual Clean-up Event on Earth Day, engaging with waterways enthusiasts and environmentalists at each corner of the 2,600 square miles of the Watershed.
- Partnered with NYSDEC and municipalities to begin discussions on improvements to Cohocton Street Boat launch and River Road access point in Corning.





# ECO-TOURISM & QUALITY OF LIFE

We organized outdoor recreation and environmental appreciation programs to improve quality of life, and promote the importance of environmental preservation.

- Collaborated with local artist to offer Riverside Watercolor Painting Workshop at Bottcher's Landing Boat Launch in Big Flats and Seeley Creek in Southport.
- Organized Riverside Family Walks with Flora & Fauna Identification with local bird and plant experts, and our Knowledge Under the Pines Program with former Executive Director in Big Flats on the topic of Trees.
- Began fiscal sponsorship agreement with Elmira Community Cycle, and a mission-based relationship with Environmental Science Club at Elmira College.
- Presented to various community groups, including AHWAGA Canoe and Kayak Club, Elmira Rotary, Elmira Sunrise Rotary, Horseheads Kiwanis Club, Corning Retirees, 2021 Leadership Steuben, and MWEE Teachers Program.
- Started a Nature Blog and added a volunteer form on the website, and began emailing out quarterly newsletter to our constituents.
- Partnered with the People for a Healthy Environment and Park Church to support a FREE documentary fill screening: "The Story of Plastics".
- Partnered with local businesses to offer food and drink destinations at the completion of many of our Chemung River Kayak Rental program trips.

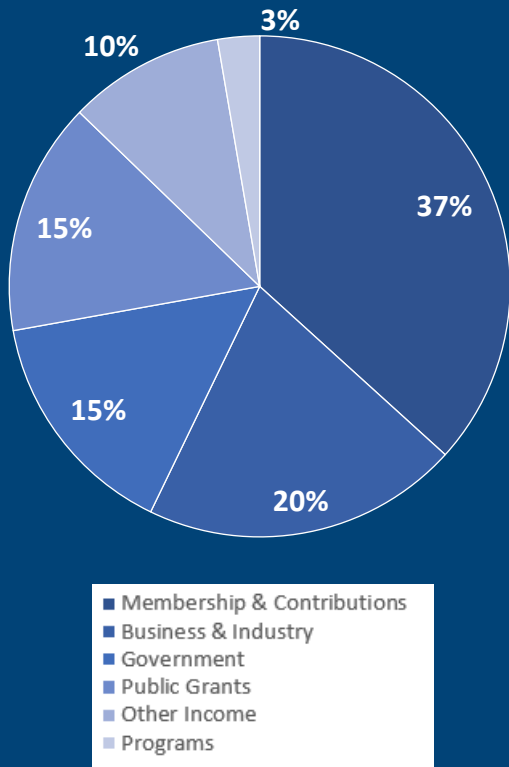




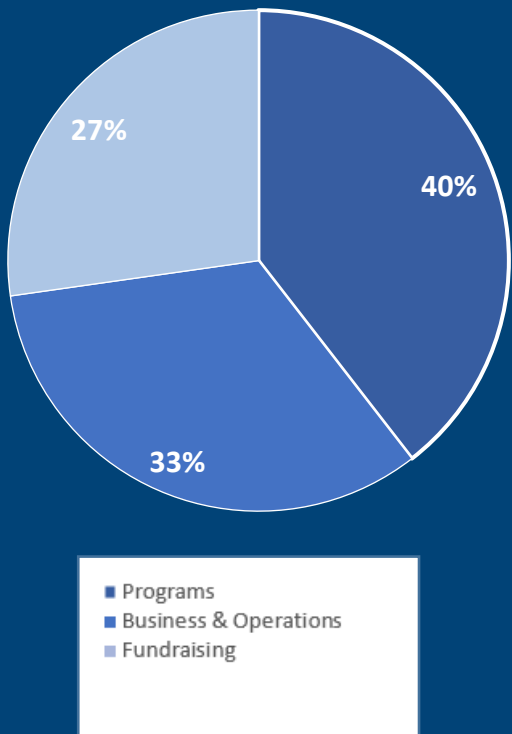


WE MAKE OUR RIVERS AND  
STREAMS SAFER AND EASIER FOR  
OUR COMMUNITY TO USE AND  
ENJOY!

# Revenue By Source



# Expenses



# FINANCES

This year, we were conservative with our programming due to continuing regulations related to the COVID-19 pandemic. This meant limiting the number of attendees at each program, and scheduling many of our programs outdoors. Our expenses centered around programs like the Chemung River Kayak Rental Program, various educational programs, river safety programs, riverside clean-ups, and our annual meeting and long-overdue retirement celebration for our former executive director. Additionally, we incurred the typical costs of fundraising and operations, as we work to continue our mission throughout the Watershed. Compared to last year, we saw an increase in revenue that came from public grants, other income, and programs. These factors helped us to end the year with a small surplus that will be rolled into next year’s operating budget to help sustain our work. As always, we could not do it without the support from our community and our funders, and we thank you all for everything you do!



## FUNDING SOURCES

- Memberships & Contributions
- Business Partners & Sponsors
- Municipal Support
- Foundation Grants
- Public Grants
- Program Fees



## USES OF FUNDS

### PROGRAMMATIC

- Trail Clean-up & Maintenance
- Boat Launch Building & Maintenance
- Outdoor Recreational Promotion
- Environmental Education Programs
- River Safety Training & Support

### OPERATING

- Business Expenses
- Facilities & Equipment
- Travel & Transportation

### FUNDRAISING

- Community Outreach & Events



THANK YOU TO  
OUR BUSINESS  
SUPPORTERS &  
SPONSORS,  
OUR GRANT  
FUNDERS, AND  
MUNICIPAL  
FUNDERS

- American Legion – Post 1612 Big Flats
- American Legion – Post 443 Elmira
- Ancient Order of the Hibernians
- The Anderson Foundation Inc.
- Cameron Manufacturing & Design
- Casella Waste Systems
- Caywood Funeral Home and Gardens
- Cheesy Dreams
- Chemung Canal Trust Company
- Chemung County
- Chemung Valley Audubon Society
- CMG Pharmaceuticals
- Collaborative Instructional Design System
- Community Foundation of Elmira-Corning and the Finger Lakes
- CopyExpress
- The Corning Foundation
- The Corning Rotary
- Downtown Grind
- Elm Chevrolet Company, Inc.
- The Elmira Rotary
- Endless Mountain Outfitters
- Finger Lakes House
- First Heritage Federal Credit Union
- Golden Glow Fire Department
- Hesselson's
- Hilliard Corporation & Hilliard Foundation
- Jeff's Westside Service
- Johnson-Schmidt & Associates, Architects
- JM McDonald Foundation
- Kennedy Valve, McWane Inc.
- Lighthouse Liquors & Wines of Southport
- Light's Bake Shop, Inc.
- McInerney Funeral Home
- Microsoft
- National Fish & Wildlife Foundation
- Swarthout's Bait & Tackle Shop
- Town of Big Flats
- Town of Chemung
- Town of Elmira
- Town of Southport
- Unitarian Universalist Fellowship
- Wallin Insurance Agency
- Warner's Way Real Property Services, LLC
- YWCA Elmira & the Twin Tiers
- Young's Tires



...AND THANK  
YOU TO OUR  
COMMUNITY  
PARTNERS!!

- AHWAGA Canoe & Kayak Club
- Allegheny County Conservation District
- The ARTS Council of the Southern Finger Lakes
- Chemung County Emergency Management
- Chemung County Historical Society
- Chemung County Soil & Water Conservation District
- The Chemung County Sunrise Rotary
- Choose Clean Water Coalition
- The City of Elmira
- Elmira College Environmental Science Club
- Elmira Community Cycle
- Elmira Fire Department
- Environmental Management Council of Chemung County
- Finger Lakes Land Trust
- Otsego County Conservation Association
- People for a Healthy Environment
- Schuyler County Soil & Water District
- Spencer Crest Nature Center
- Steuben County Soil & Water District
- Tanglewood Nature Center & Museum
- Upper Susquehanna Coalition
- West Elmira Fire Department
- YWCA Elmira & the Twin Tiers

***A special thanks to all local Law Enforcement, Fire and Rescue Services, Emergency Medical Services, Emergency Management, and Public Works who have supported us!***

# THANK YOU TO OUR DONOR MEMBERS

Without the support of our donor members, we would cease to exist. Thank you all for your continued support of our mission, and your belief in the Chemung River Watershed as an amazing natural community resource.

## River Friends

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Katharine Morrisey in memory of  
Bill Morrisey  
Arthur & Connie Thompson  
Scott & Renee Torrey

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Sandra Gordon  
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Karen Meriwether & Tom Snow  
Stuart & Lucy Schweizer in memory of  
Jackie Wells

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Carol & Richard VanDeusen in memory of  
Randy Olthof  
Sophie Wallace  
Nathaniel Weisenberg  
Theresa Wells  
Grace Whiffen  
Audrey Whitcomb

# WHO WE ARE AS WE HEAD INTO 2022

Thank you to our board of directors, advisors, and volunteers for helping us to “keep paddling together” in the right direction!

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Austin Farrell, Treasurer  
Donald Hall, Secretary  
Jeff Demeritt  
Monica Li  
Dave Pindel  
Kyle Reynolds

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Melissa Rinker  
William Tanner  
Nikole Watts  
Patrick Wood



## STAFF

Emily Marino, Executive Director

We run on assistance from volunteers and community members, just like the ones pictured here! If you see things along the river or riverside trails that you would like to help us with, or report on, please feel free to contact us via email at [info@chemungriverfriends.org](mailto:info@chemungriverfriends.org). You may also want to consider becoming a “River Guardian”, and help us protect the riverbanks year-round. For more information on this program, please fill out the volunteer form on our website. We are located at 111 North Main Street in Elmira, and you can contact us by calling either (607) 846-2242 or (607) 463-0327.

