






Bi-monthly

NEWSLETTER



DATES TO REMEMBER

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|---|--|
|  September: |  November: |
| 26 - Cortland SWCD Stream Cleanup | 1 - Buffer Steward Reports and Invoices Due |
| | 4 - Watershed Wednesday |
|  October: | 12 - Watershed Wednesday |
| 15 - Buffer Technician Resume Due | 18 - Watershed Wednesday |
| 15 - USC Water Quality Applications Due | |
| 23 - USC Meeintg Bimonthly Meeting (Call) | |

Add your event to our calendar by emailing Palmerm@co.tioga.ny.us

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USC Awarded NFWF INSR Funding!

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF), in partnership with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Chesapeake Bay Program, recently announced the 2020 round of funding for Chesapeake Bay Stewardship Fund projects. Fifty-six restoration and water quality improvement grants totaling \$18.06 million were awarded, leveraging \$18.9 million in match from the grantees to generate a total conservation impact of \$36.97 million.

The Chesapeake Bay Stewardship Fund is dedicated to protecting and restoring the bay by helping local communities clean up and restore their polluted rivers and streams. The fund also advances cost-effective and creative solutions with financial and technical assistance to local communities, farmers, and private landowners. NFWF manages the Stewardship Fund in partnership with government agencies and private corporations and in close coordination with the federal-state Chesapeake Bay Program partnership. Major funding is provided by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency through the Chesapeake Bay Program Office.

The Upper Susquehanna Coalition was awarded \$1,000,000 to build capacity within our member districts and partner organizations to plan and implement projects furthering the goals of the Watershed Implementation Plan. We will look to add technical staff and provide training to new and existing staff to further leverage partner program funding as well as provide a framework for the USC to evaluate available programs for sustainability. Funding for projects will be available for priority practices such as stream corridor restoration, wetland restoration, prescribed grazing, and riparian buffers. Funding to support staff and projects will be rolled out early 2021!

Shared From: <https://www.nfwf.org/programs/chesapeake-bay-stewardship-fund>

Environmental Advocate to Lead Chemung River Friends

Submitted By: Jim Pfiffer
Chemung River Friends

Chemung River Friends is proud to announce that Emily Marino, of Corning, will be taking over as the organization's executive director on Sept. 1 with the retirement of River Friends co-founder Jim Pfiffer.

Emily will lead the 11-year-old Elmira-based nonprofit organization in all professional capacities, including collaboration with the board of directors, management of volunteers, business operations, and public contact and spokesperson.

"As a long-time environmental advocate and supporter of the Southern Tier, I am thrilled to be able to contribute towards our region's continued enjoyment, understanding, and stewardship of our precious waterways. With our world changing so much every day, I think it is crucial that we find more ways to engage children and families in environmental education, and create more ways for our community to embrace the natural resources that we have available to us. I look forward to leading the Chemung River Friends, and to working with our community to promote one of our greatest recreational, educational, and historical natural resources."



Photo Provided: Emily Martino, Chemung River Friends
Executive Director

Prior to joining River Friends, Emily served as executive director and consultant for CCS Fundraising in Manhattan. During her time with CCS, she offered consultative services to New York-Presbyterian/Columbia University Irving Medical Center, partnered with Lincoln Center Theater on a fundraising campaign feasibility study, and developed an institutional giving infrastructure for the Catholic Foundation of Brooklyn and Queens. A 11-year veteran of the nonprofit sector and native of the Southern Tier, Emily has served with a variety of local nonprofit organizations in the Corning/Elmira area. She holds an MBA from the Simon School of Business with the University of Rochester (2019), an MA from Syracuse University (2010), a BA from Binghamton University (2004), and graduated from Corning-Painted Post East High School (2000).

"Emily has the leadership skills, experience, knowledge and regional contacts to continue River Friend's mission to improve and protect our waterways," Pfiffer said. "Her love of nature, passion and fundraising capabilities will assure the organization's growth and success, while protecting our natural resources and improving the region's quality of life."

Emily is an avid runner, hiker, kayaker, and gardener, and is excited to be back in her hometown of Elmira.

USC Water Quality Funding Available!

The USC Water Quality Program is currently being funded through several federal sources and seeks to offer financial compensation and technical assistance to increase the implementation and restoration of riparian buffers, wetlands, and stream corridor rehabilitation. Funding can support associated water quality BMP implementation, as well as easement and purchase transaction costs. USC district members and partners are eligible to apply for funding. Applications are due 10/15/2020 and require a 10% match. Request an application from Wendy Walsh (WalshW@co.tioga.ny.us) or find it on the [USC website](#).

The Search For The USC MOU

As a reminder, the USC MOU went out to Districts nearly one year ago. However, since it went out, we haven't heard much about it's whereabouts! Has your District signed the USC MOU? Or ... do you have it?

If so ... please email Wendy -
Walshw@co.tioga.ny.us !



Steuben County SWCD Project Spotlights: TNC/NFWF/Trout Unlimited Grant

Submitted By: Chelsea White
Steuben County SWCD

Location #1: Deusenbery Road; Town of Cohocton

This culvert was increased in size, also changed to an arch pipe & embedded 25% to increase fish habitat and passage in this area of the stream. Downstream, we kept the scour pool also for fish habitat, but the water level is equivalent to the outlet of the pipe allowing very easy passage for the fish. A cross-vane was installed approximately 30' below the culvert outlet to assist in keeping water levels high for them always, but creating spaces between the stones to allow fish through.



Location #2: Gardner Road; Town of Cohocton

It was necessary that this culvert also needed to increase in size, alter to an arch pipe & also be 25% embedded for fish habitat. Furthermore, there are also structures installed below the outlet of the culvert. To be exact, there are three structures present, they are 14' apart from one another and .4' difference in elevation. Increasing in height the closer you get to the pipe. Basically, working as stone step-stair elevations for fish to have assistance getting upstream.



Location #3: Weidman Road; Town of Cohocton

This job site was on a private land owners property, Barry Fairbrother. He allowed us to install 425' in length of streambank stabilization structures (rock vanes) along a tributary to the Cohocton River. This job was intended to minimize erosion, sediment deposition to the Cohocton River, and increasing fish habitat. Next spring, there will be a riparian buffer planted with the assistance of Trout Unlimited funding.





DIY Fly Tape Hack Brought To You By The Grass Whisperer



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01

CUT 15 GALLON BARREL IN HALF & PLACE SLITS



Everyone has a farm soap barrel laying around! Take a 15 gallon soap barrel and cut it in half, then cut slits in the top and bottom to accommodate the tape.

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02

PLACE SCREWS IN TOP AND BOTTOM OF BARREL



Place four screws in the top of the barrel to hold the roll in place.

Place one screw in the bottom of the barrel to secure the tape and keep it tight!

#

03

PULL TAPE DOWN!



Pull down the tape and get ready to catch those pesky flies!

#

04

ATTACH TO FREQUENTLY CLUSTERED AREA



Attach to an area where your animals are frequently and are constantly pestered by flies. Once your "curtain" is full, simply pull down and start fresh!

Announcement: USC Looking To Hire Additional Buffer Technician

Position Description: The USC Buffer Team is ready to grow by hiring a buffer technician. This position will build upon and support current efforts to implement riparian buffers to improve water and habitat quality. The successful candidate will facilitate riparian restoration by providing planning assistance, implementation oversight, and by engaging in outreach opportunities. Work will be coordinated with partner programs such as the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program and the Trees for Tributaries Program, and with conservation partners. The Buffer Technician will assist with current USC Buffer Programs such as the Buffer Steward Program and the USC Water Quality Program. Opportunity exists for the technician to participate in grant writing and development, will be provided training opportunities, and may assist other USC teams with planning and implementation as needed. This is a 12 month, temporary position with potential for extension.

Qualifications: A Bachelor's Degree from an accredited four-year college or university in Natural Resource Management, Forestry, Watershed Science, Stream Ecology, Agriculture, or closely related field; and excellent verbal communication skills with interest in working with the public, valid NYS Driver's License with reliable transportation, ability to perform physically demanding work in an outdoor setting, flexibility to occasionally work weekend hours, and an interest in forestry, habitat restoration or public outreach.

Supervision/Location: This position will be based at the Tioga County Soil and Water Conservation District office and will be supervised by the Upper Susquehanna Coalition's Riparian Buffer Coordinator.

Interested parties should email cover letter and resume to [Wendy Walsh](#) and [Lydia Brinkley](#) by **October 15, 2020!**



Tioga County Soil and Water Conservation District Premiers Tioga County Dairy Tails Series

By: Miranda Palmer
Tioga County SWCD



For the last 13 years, the Tioga County Soil and Water Conservation District has worked with local partners to host an annual event, Sundaes at the Farm. This year, the District had to make the difficult decision to cancel the event that attracts nearly 1,000 community members every year due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Each year the premise of the event remains the same, a free celebration of local agriculture that brings the public to a different farm where they are able to enjoy locally grown foods and other products while experiencing the farm firsthand. Additionally, attendees are able to meet and engage with the farm family and learn about agriculture from various agencies and businesses. Sundaes at the Farm is a cherished community event where you'll always find the Tioga County dairy princess speaking about the benefits of local dairy and serving milk punch; people eating free ice cream sundaes with locally made toppings; families shopping the farmers market comprised of various local foods and products, and learning stations staged throughout the farm where attendees are able to learn about different farm operations.

With Sundaes at the Farm off the table for 2020, District staff went back to the drawing board. A big part of Sundaes at the Farm is the family farm video that is made beforehand for advertising purposes. It is always a big hit! Based on the success of these videos, the District began to visualize a small series of videos that promoted and showcased both local dairy farms and farm owners working to be good stewards of the environment. And so, Tioga County Dairy Tails, was born.

This series of video's can be found on both the District's Facebook Page and YouTube Page. Videos have reached more viewers than ever anticipated, and with a post reach of over 40k people in just the first four days, the District couldn't be happier! A brief description of each video, and the link to the video are as follows.

[Dead End Farm:](#) Dead End Farm kicks off the Tioga County Dairy Tail's series, with the Whittemore family welcoming you to their family farm, located in the Town of Candor, New York. Farmers Ben, Kate, and Will are "ag-cited" to show you around their family farm and teach you about their organic operation, grazing cows, and their new livestock watering project!

[Lawton Jersey Farm:](#) On this episode of Tioga County Dairy Tails, you'll meet the Lawton Family, from Newark Valley, New York. Lawton's Jersey Farm is a multi-generational farm, with deep community roots. Watch this video to learn more about the benefits of cover cropping, and how the Lawton's work to remain good stewards of the environment!

[Mead Farm:](#) Today on Tioga County Dairy Tails, we're visiting the Mead Family Farm located in the hills of Owego, New York. Watch this video to learn more about the 6 generations that are working on this CAFO size dairy farm, and all the practices they've installed to remain compliant with New York State rules and regulations regarding their large farm size. Environmental sustainability and conservation is of upmost important to this family farm!

[Kwiatkowski Brother's Dairy Farm:](#) On this episode of Tioga County Dairy Tail's we celebrate Tri Kay Dairy Farm, run by the Kwiatkowski family. This family farm located in Owego, New York, received the 2020 Agricultural Environmental Management award from the Tioga County Soil and Water Conservation District. Check out the projects that they've implemented that helped them to win the award, and don't miss their unique feeding system!

[Luszczek Family Farm:](#) On this final episode of Tioga County Dairy Tails, we're visiting the small town of Speedsville, New York, where we'll meet the Luszczek family. Parents Chris and Debbie, and sons Josh and Chris Jr., will show us around their farm, and Mike from the Tioga County Soil and Water Conservation District will discuss the importance of streambank stabilization on farms!



Artist-Painted River Rocks Will Bring People To Chemung River

By: Jim Pfiffer
Chemung River Friends

Chemung River Friends and an Elmira artist will create painted nature scenes on river rocks and hide them along rivers and trails to attract more people to discover, enjoy and protect our natural resources.

The self-taught artist, Pong Tulachanh, will collect river and stream rocks, paint them and return them to their original sites for the public to find, share and hide for others to do the same. The 52-year-old Pong has been painting river rocks since 2018 to encourage people to see, enjoy and respect nature's beauty.

More than 100 rocks, ranging in sizes from a silver dollar to a teacup saucer, will feature colorful nature scenes, wildlife, plants, trees, canoes, kayaks and everything nature. Some of the rocks will feature felt-tip written poems, environmental protection tips and river-related proverbs.

The 2020-21 program is financed by a \$390 QuickARTS grant from the Arts Council of the Southern Finger Lakes in Corning and the Community Foundation of Elmira-Corning and the Finger Lakes in Elmira. The funds will pay Pong for his work and supplies and River Friends for administering the program.

"Pong will paint the rocks and recycle them to attract more people to our waterways and trails and educate and encourage the public to better understand, enjoy and preserve our natural resources," said River Friends Executive Director Jim Pfiffer. "These rocks themselves are amazing. They are millions of years old. They came from surrounding hilltops, and ended up in the river and will continue their journey downstream when the water is high and fast. "

The stones will be hidden along area waterways, trails and other outdoor recreation sites.

"We plan to use youth from local schools and community centers to distribute the rocks," Pfiffer said. "It's a fun way to get children to go outside, enjoy some fresh-air exercise and learn more about our trails and waterways."

The Painted River Rocks program is similar to geocaching, an outdoor treasure hunting game using GPS-enabled devices to navigate to a specific location to find the hidden geocache (container), sign a logbook in the cache and return the geocache to its original location.

The rocks are painted with environmentally-friendly pigments. The reverse of each rock will read "Found it. Enjoy it. Hide it. www.chemungriverfriends.org." Participants can visit the River Friends website to learn more about the program.

"I use rocks because they are from nature, don't cost much and have their own beauty," said Pong who lives 100 feet from the Chemung River with his daughters, ages 14 and 18, a dog, three cats, a cockatiel, a hamster and a snake. "I go to the river every day. It's peaceful, beautiful and it calms me down."



Photos Provided



Fish Passage with Steuben SWCD

By: Melissa Yearick

Steuben SWCD has been busy with fish passage projects in 2020. With 5 completed just this year, they've turned these projects into a science. The site pictured here is a small, cold water brook trout stream in eastern Allegany County. As with many locations where streams intersect infrastructure, a large drop between the culvert outlet and downstream waters limits the movement of aquatic organisms and fragments the stream. This culvert was identified by NYS DEC Region 9 as part of a large NAACC (North Atlantic Aquatic Connectivity Collaborative) survey. DEC fisheries staff evaluated 600 culverts throughout the region, prioritizing known brook trout habitat, and identified over 100 problematic culverts. This site ranked in the upper tier of the problematic culverts, and was restored through the partnership of NYS DEC, USFWS, and the construction team from Steuben SWCD.

Site design was based on Dave Derrick's Engineered Rocked Riffle (ERR) specs, seeking to raise water levels in the culvert without a full replacement, and without impacting the plunge pool habitat at the culvert outlet. Site prep on August 31 included the delivery of Steuben's excavator and 4, 70-ton loads of rock, and electroshocking to remove 70 brook trout from the project reach. Scott Cornett, a fisheries biologist from DEC Region 9 relocated the fish to protective flow through boxes upstream of the culvert for the duration of the project.

Site work began early September 1st, and by 9:00, the first 4 loads of rock were installed in the streambed, gradually raising the bed elevations through interlocking boulders. With the delivery of two additional loads of rock, the water-level controlling portion of the engineered rock riffle was carefully installed, seeking to lock the boulders together and ensure the lowest point of the dam was greater than 6" above the culvert outlet. The combined efforts of Dave on the excavator, and Jeff (Steuben) and Scott (DEC) hand packing smaller rock where needed, ensured the front edge of the ERR was water tight, and in minutes water levels in the pool began to rise. Within an hour the remainder of the rock was installed as bank protection and the water in the channel had backed up into the culvert and continued to rise.



Stream Site above the culvert

Project culvert



Culvert 1-hour after restoration



Project reach post-restoration

New Tools to Increase Tree Survival in Riparian Buffers

By: Jessica Moore
Delaware County SWCD

For the past three years, the Delaware County SWCD has hired seasonal Buffer Stewards to perform evaluation and establishment activities on riparian forest buffers in the Upper Susquehanna watershed. As a result of their analyses, we discovered that planted species had a much lower overall survival rate than anticipated. The most common cause of high mortality was competition with surrounding weeds and grasses.

In the past, we have relied on thin, plastic brush mats to help control the growth of weeds around our plants. These mats have proven to be ineffective and are not a long-term solution. They can also unintentionally provide shelter for small rodents that can damage trees.

This spring, we received funding through USC's National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) grant to complete two types of herbicide spraying on ten riparian forest buffers. Trillium Invasive Species Management, Inc. (New Paltz, NY), was hired to perform the work. The proper chemicals and rates were selected using the Cornell Cooperative Extension Guidelines for Product Selection and Application Rates.

Seven of the treated buffers were planted within the last year and were sprayed with a combination of Rodeo (glyphosate) and Pendulum Aquacap – a pre-emergent chemical that prevents unwanted seeds from sprouting. The herbicides were applied when the new spring vegetation was between 4-10 inches tall. The remaining three buffers were treated before they were replanted with native trees and shrubs. A mixture of Rodeo and Oust XP was applied in mid-May when the vegetation was between 6-18 inches. In each scenario, a circle with a diameter of 6 feet was sprayed around each tree tube or wooden stake.

Although there is more work involved, the pre-planting treatment can be an excellent option for new buffer areas. Prior to spraying, we chose to lay out the area and place wooden stakes where the vegetation would be spot-treated. It is important to choose a suitable location as you will be committed to planting in that treated area. It is also suggested to wait at least a week before planting any trees or shrubs in the buffer. Overall, the vegetation surrounding a total of 4500 trees on 32 acres of buffer was successfully treated. Our goal is to continue herbicide applications in these buffers over the next two years with the intention of increasing tree survivability and establishing a functioning, diverse riparian area. We are also exploring the idea of using herbicides in the future to manage invasive species.



USC Teams Up With OCCA For 2nd Round of Watershed Wednesday Webinars

The USC and OCCA are at it again, this time with a slate of 6 webinars taking place beginning in November. A draft agenda has been released with more finalized descriptions to come! Webinars will begin at 9:30am and last just 30 minutes!

November 4th – Aquatic Invasive Species: A Hands On Approach - Jeff O'Handley (OCCA)

- Since 2006, Otsego County Conservation Association has taken a hands-on approach when dealing with the problem of aquatic invasive species in several waterbodies. OCCA program director, Jeff O'Handley will review 15 years of AIS control projects in Otsego County and will discuss the pros and cons of OCCA's experience—is the hands-on approach right for you? "

November 12th – Improving In-Stream Habitat through Fish Passage Projects - Jeff Parker (Steuben SWCD)

November 18th – Best Management Practice (BMP) implementation on a HUC10 scale - Alex Hua (SUNY ESF) and Cassandra Davis (NYSDEC)

- The Upper Susquehanna Coalition have been actively implementing various best management practices (BMP) in southern New York, helping the state to reach its nutrient reduction targets as part of the Chesapeake Bay TMDL (Total maximum daily load). We conducted a series of analyses to compare the relationships between BMP implementations and the water quality measurements collected through the Nontidal Network (NTN) gaging stations and the Rotating Integrated Basin Studies (RIBS). In addition, we sought to identify the proportion of land uses for each HUC10 as well as the land use proportions of an estimated riparian management zone in their respective HUC10 region.

December 2nd – Customer Testimonials - Telling Your Customers Story

- Customers of the USC Water Quality Program tell their stories and share their project successes.

December 9th – Valuing our Kettle Lakes - Tarki Health (Cortland – Onondaga Federation of Kettle Lakes Associations), Meredith Becknery Perreault (Syracuse University Environmental Finance Center)

December 16th - Answering the 'So what?' question: A workshop on landowner attitude about riparian conservation - Andrea Armstrong, PhD (Lafayette College)

