

January 2016 Newsletter



Welcome to Genesee RiverWatch's first newsletter of 2016. Our aim with these regular updates is to keep you informed about our progress in achieving our vision of a

Genesee River Basin whose water quality is fully restored, whose rivers and streams are accessible and celebrated, whose beaches are open for swimming and in which economic development both benefits from and contributes to the water quality of our region.

In 2013, CEI launched the Genesee RiverWatch to provide a way for the citizens of the region to get involved, to increase use of and commitment to the river and to grow the sources and levels of funding available to address water quality issues. Our work is just getting started but we have made significant progress.

Informing the public: In June, 2015, we convened our 2nd Annual Genesee River Basin Summit. We gained input from a wide variety of stakeholders in developing a Genesee River Basin Report Card whose purpose is to:

- Raise public awareness of the overall state of the Genesee River Basin,
- Provide a basis for conversation about priorities for improving water quality in the Genesee River,
- Establish visible targets to improve the water quality in, and access to, the Genesee River, and
- Ensure that we, as a community are making progress toward those targets

Stay tuned for our **first Genesee River Basin Report Card** to be launched early in 2016.



2nd Annual Genesee River Basin Summit

Restoring our Waters: The two biggest causes of poor water quality in the Genesee River Basin are sediment and excess nutrients such as phosphorus and nitrogen. Eroding streambanks along the Genesee River contribute to both of these problems and are, therefore, an important focus on our work. With a 2015 grant from the Healing our Waters (HOW) Coalition, Genesee RiverWatch studied sections of the Upper Genesee River in the Town of Caneadea, identifying multiple priority areas for streambank stabilization. We are seeking funding for those projects in 2016. The [full report](#) is available on our web site.



Studying Streambank Conditions Upper Genesee

In Celebration and Recognition: Our [41st Annual Community Salute to the Environment](#) was held on October 1st at High Falls in Rochester, NY. The theme, a "Celebration of the Genesee River Valley", was realized through the exhibits of 17 organizations representing a broad array of the river-related work going on in our region. 31 sponsors and 150 attendees made the event an opportunity for the community to celebrate our river as well as a fund-raising success.

The **Elizabeth Thorndike Environmental Leadership Awards** were presented during the Community Salute to three individuals and organizations whose work on the river was especially noteworthy:

- **Allen Kerkeslager** received the Award for the significant contributions he has made in the founding and development of Genesee River Wilds, an Allegany County-based organization whose mission is to "Restore and protect the upper Genesee River."
- The **City of Rochester** received the Award for the significant contributions it has made to provide public access to, and improve the water quality of, the Genesee River in 2014 and 2015 including building neighborhood trail connections to the Genesee Riverway Trail and improvements to Turning Point Park Trailhead.
- **The Genesee Headwaters Watershed Association, based in Potter County Pennsylvania,** received the 2015 Elizabeth Thorndike Environmental Leadership Award

for its significant contributions to improving the water quality of the Genesee River.

Learn more about the work of these deserving [award recipients](#) on our web site.



41st Annual Community Salute to the Environment

New Board Members: Genesee RiverWatch welcomed three new Board Members in January: Joseph Makarewicz, retired professor of Environmental Science at SUNY Brockport, brings a wealth of knowledge about the river as the lead author of the 6 volume [Genesee River Watershed Project](#). Christy Tyler, Associate Professor of Environmental Science at RIT further strengthens our scientific understanding with her knowledge of aquatic ecology, wetlands and other relevant fields. Brad VanAuken, President of BrandForward, Inc. contributes skills essential to growing our organization and executing its public outreach mission.

Looking ahead: We are excited about 2016! With the continued help of our supporters, volunteers and partners, we will:

- Convene the 3rd Annual Genesee River Basin Summit.
- Launch our first Genesee River Basin Report Card.
- Establish a Genesee RiverWatch Water Quality Monitoring Program.
- Fund and execute projects to reduce sediment and excess nutrients in the waters of the Genesee River Basin.
- Collaborate with partners along the length of the River and its tributaries to restore water quality, improve access, increase use and encourage economic development.



**Discussing Streambank Stabilization with US
Army Corp of Engineers**

Want to know more? Visit our website and be sure to watch our film: "[Restoring Our River - Work Worth Doing!](#)". This 12 minute film tells the story of the Genesee River - it's history, significance to our region and how we can - as its caretakers - restore the water quality of the river.

Sincerely,

Mike Haugh, Board President

George Thomas, Executive Director



Support Us!

**Our work is just getting
started and we need your
help!**



Rochester Harbor

Working to restore the waters of the Genesee, improve access, increase use and encourage economic development that benefits from and contributes to the water quality of our region.

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