

The Forum

NEW YORK STATE WETLANDS FORUM NEWSLETTER

NYS WETLANDS FORUM 2018 CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS

By: Chris Einstein

Since its incorporation in 1994, the NYS Wetlands Forum (NYSWF) has offered a yearly conference for its members and all others interested in wetlands and wetland related topics. The yearly conference brings together a mix of professionals from the public and private sectors and colleges and universities to share their knowledge, research, and lessons learned from across the state. This year’s conference was held at the Harbor Hotel in Watkins Glen, NY. This was a new location for the NYSWF conference that took advantage of a fun little Finger Lakes city, a classy hotel, and the surrounding wetland and aquatic resources.

The theme of this year’s conference was “Growth and Resources, Finding the Balance.” This is an issue of great concern in the Finger Lakes region, with the popularity of the lakes for recreation, tourism, and an outstanding wine industry, a balance is needed to ensure the lakes remain healthy.

We were very fortunate to have Aimee Clinkhammer from the NYS Department of Environmental

Conservation Finger Lakes Water Hub as our Keynote Speaker, discussing water quality issues, concerns and mitigation within the Finger Lakes region.

Concurrent sessions were held on Day 1, providing the attendees with numerous topics to choose from including some classic discussions of wetland mitigation and restoration strategies, classification and functional assessment, habitat restoration, invasive species, and many more. A very interesting session on public involvement and stewardship featured Rita Locke Pettine with a discussion of a mobile augmented reality demonstration project at an outdoor living museum and Dominic Cordisco with a case study on the impact of social media and “fake news” on the LEGO land project in the Lower Hudson region. Day 2 featured the usual legislative and regulatory discussion but in a panel format. Many great speakers from both the regulatory, resource agency, and private sector provided both regulatory updates and perspectives on the most recent hot issues.

The annual luncheon and business meeting featured some really great food, a little business, and the opportunity to recognize two students for their excellent research projects: Michael McGowan and Evie Brahmstedt. (Continued on page 3)

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Mission

The New York State Wetlands Forum is a non-advocacy corporation comprised of individuals and groups with diverse backgrounds, interests and viewpoints regarding wetlands and their science, use and management. Incorporated in 1994, the Forum is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization. Its purpose is to improve communication among people interested in wetlands; call attention to and objectively discuss local, statewide, regional, national and global wetland issues as they relate to New York State; improve its members' knowledge and understanding of wetlands; and, make available information about wetlands to its members and the general public.

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Hello NYS Wetlands Forum members. Hopefully you all had a wonderful summer and had the opportunity to get out and enjoy yourself with family and friends. I know each and every one of us is extremely busy, but we need to remember to take that time to get outdoors and relax. As we move into the second half of our year, I look back at this past April and hope that you had the opportunity to attend our 2018 Annual Conference in Watkins Glen. This was an area of the State that many had expressed an interest in seeing as a location for the conference, and we were finally able to make it happen. I think it turned out to be a great conference, with a wonderful mix of professional and student presentations, and at a great location in the Watkins Glen Harbor Hotel. The highlight of the conference for me, and for many of you, was the opportunity to see old friends and make new ones, while networking with our professional colleagues. At this past conference we said goodbye and thank you to Tim Post, as he stepped down from the Board after volunteering his time and assistance over the past couple years. Thank you again for your support Tim! We also welcomed a new face to the Board, Jeremy Waddell, and we wasted no time putting him to work as our next Secretary. I look forward to working with Jeremy, this year and in the years ahead. At this last conference we also finally unveiled our newly updated logo (see article on page 3).

Looking towards the latter half of the year, the conference committee has already made great progress on next year's conference. Next year the Annual Conference and Business Meeting will be held on April 2 and 3, 2019, and we will be returning to the Holiday Inn, in Saratoga Springs, New York. Members of the committee are beginning to work on the theme and breakout sessions. If you have any ideas, or recommendations on topics or speakers, please feel free to reach out to them. We are always looking for suggestions from the members to make the conference better and more interesting. If you think you would be available to volunteer to assist during the conference, reach out to us concerning that as well.

The training committee is also hard at work, organizing the next training opportunity. How many of you had the opportunity to attend the training entitled, "Aquatic Organism Passage and NAACC Primer & Field Demonstration", that was held the day before our last conference? What are your thoughts of holding a training at a similar time this year, and what would you like to see? These are the decisions the training committee will be making shortly, so don't hold back with your suggestions.



I thank you again for all your support of the NYS Wetlands Forum, and look forward to seeing and hearing from you in the future. Please reach out to us with ideas, suggestions, and recommendations regarding the upcoming conference, training opportunities, or anything that's on your mind. Please enjoy the articles in this latest Newsletter that our Board of Governors, Members, and Guests have contributed.

Brad Sherwood, Chair

NYS WETLANDS FORUM 2018 CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS (CONT.)

NYSWF looks forward to continuing the grant program. Thank you to all the students and others who contributed to the poster session. What a great job.

What would our conference be without the naturalist's quiz, prepared by Kurt Weiskotten. As usual, the quiz was challenging and fun. This year, many people did very well, and prizes were handed out to the top "naturalists". Kurt continued his tireless efforts to make the country...I mean conference...great again by leading the early morning bird walk (after a late night of sitting around the gas fire outside listening to Ed Frantz tell ghost stories) and organizing three field trips to the Seneca Meadows Wetland Preserve, the Finger Lakes National Forest, and the Catharine Creek Marsh Wildlife Management Area.

The Forum Board welcomed its newest member, Jeremy Waddell, and quickly gave him tasks to do. Fortunately, the membership sentenced (re-elected) our fearless leader, Brad Sherwood, to three more years of Board service and was latter reaffirmed as Chair by the Board of Governors.

We have a bunch of evaluations to go through to figure out what you liked and didn't like about the conference. More to come on that but please feel free to reach out to any of the board members to discuss the meeting and help us make things even better for next year.

Speaking of next year, the conference will be moving back to Saratoga Springs. Why? Because it's nice there and there's a lot to do. We are planning to head west in 2020, possibly to Clayton (another Harbor Hotel) or someplace further west. If anyone has a theme or topics they would like to see included in next year's conference, let us know. We look forward to another great year.

NYSWF 2018 STUDENT GRANT WINNERS

By: Kevin Bliss

If you attended our 2018 Conference and Business

Meeting you may recall this year's NYSWF \$500 scholastic grant recipients were Evie Brahmstedt, of Clarkson University, and Michael McGowan, studying at the Rochester Institute of Technology. Evie described her educational goals as gaining experience and background knowledge required for a career as a professor at a research institution studying freshwater wetlands and advocating for science in policy. Toward that end, Evie's ongoing work associated with her Ph.D. thesis, "Mercury cycling in riparian wetlands along the St. Lawrence River" was submitted to the Forum for consideration. As Evie explained it, the International Joint Commission (IJC) has embarked on a new water level regulation plan (Plan 2014) that will alter water levels above the Moses-Saunders power dam to simulate natural fluctuations and restore biodiversity in the St. Lawrence River. If the dominant macrophyte, Typha, is reduced in abundance, there is potential for soil, containing mercury (Hg), to become mobilized. When water levels decline, near-shore Typha will dry out, along with the soil they have trapped. If this causes a release of Typha downstream, the accumulated mercury-contaminated soil will be released. Evie's intent to study this occurrence, along with her other many accomplishments and ambitions was quite impressive. Michael's research and overall academic progress was also impressive. As a full-time student in the Environmental Science Bachelor's/Master Dual Degree Program, Michael studied the effects of carbon availability, nitrogen availability, and hydrology on denitrification and nitrogen fixation rates in two created wetlands in Perinton, NY. In particular, Michael used an operating waste management/compost site to assess the effect of carbon and nitrogen availability on denitrification and nitrogen fixation rates to improve our understanding of how management techniques can facilitate both the removal of reactive nitrogen and provide habitat in wetlands. As with all our grant recipients, these students represent the future of our wetlands management. Support by the Forum is thought to be a good investment. With thanks for their hard work, the Forum is proud to support their efforts.

NYSWF UPDATED LOGO

The New York State Wetlands Forum was proud to unveil our newly updated logo at this past Annual Conference in April 2018. This revised logo was based on member input from the last couple years and captured as many of the recommendations and comments as possible. We would like to thank all those that contributed to the new design, with special thanks to Kurt Weiskotten for putting it together and finalizing it for us all. Good job Kurt!

Birds of North America Wordfind

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cedar waxwing
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