

# RESTORING WETLANDS

## WATER QUALITY & HABITAT

Freshwater wetlands are habitat for many species of plants and animals. They also benefit water quality by trapping stormwater flows and keeping sediments locked into the root zone of aquatic plants. They cycle elements like phosphorus and nitrogen, and act as sponges to remove potential toxins like metals. The wetland before you is emergent, i.e., wetland dominated by grasses, sedges, ferns, and other smaller plant species, as well as forested and shrub habitats.

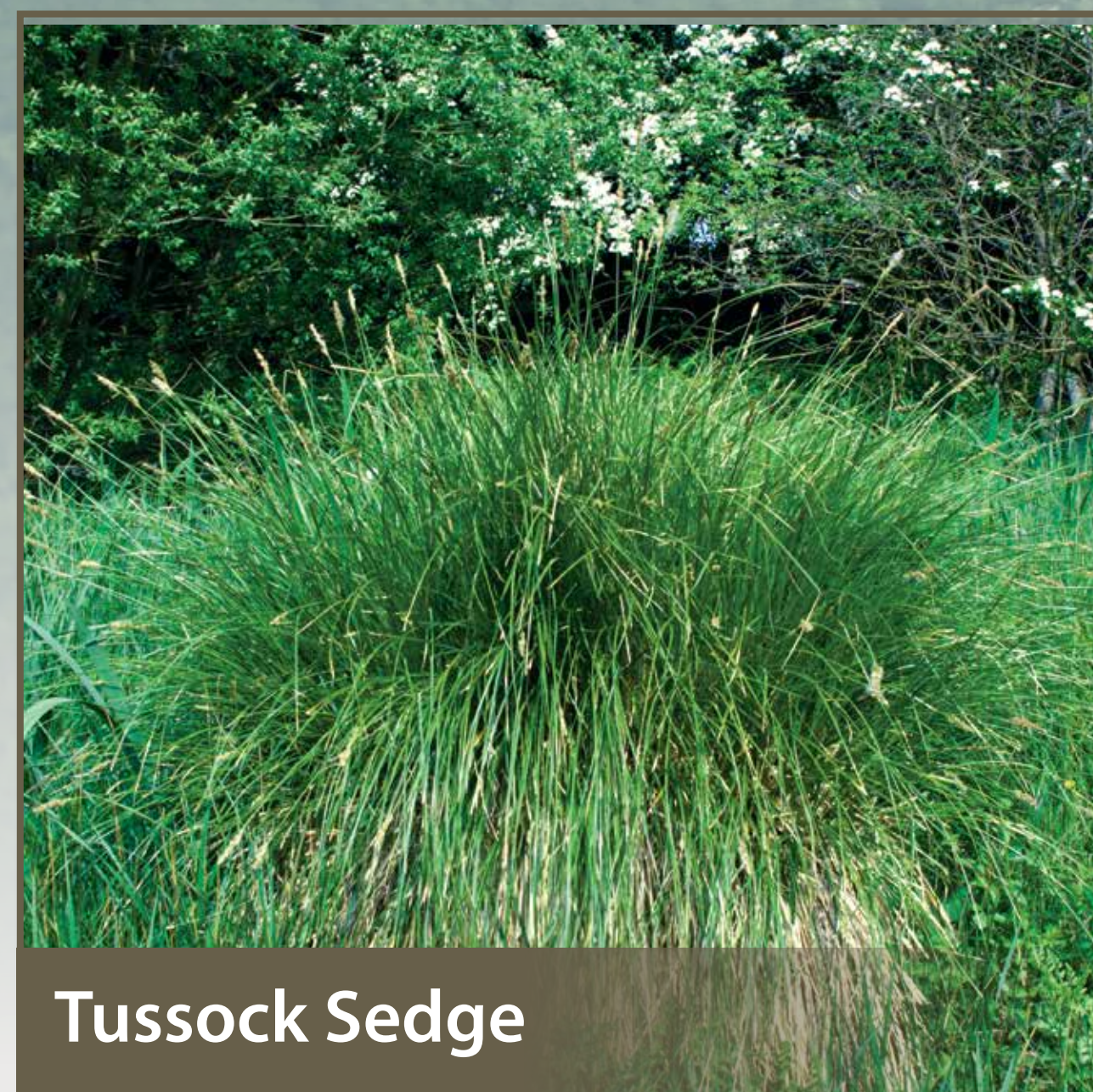
When the Ulster & Delaware Railroad was rerouted to follow a new path alongside the reservoir in 1913, parts of the wetland were filled to create a bed for the rails. The

railroad bisected the wetland, cutting off the natural flow of water within it. During construction of the Ashokan Rail Trail, fill was removed and this 520-foot-long boardwalk was built above the wetland to restore the natural flow of water through the wetland. The boardwalk also provides a covered crossing point for wildlife.

Some of the native and non-native plant species you can see from this boardwalk include red maple, buttonbush, tussock sedge, forget-me-not, and common reed. Some of the animal species you can find here include snapping turtles, mink, and green frogs.



Green Frog



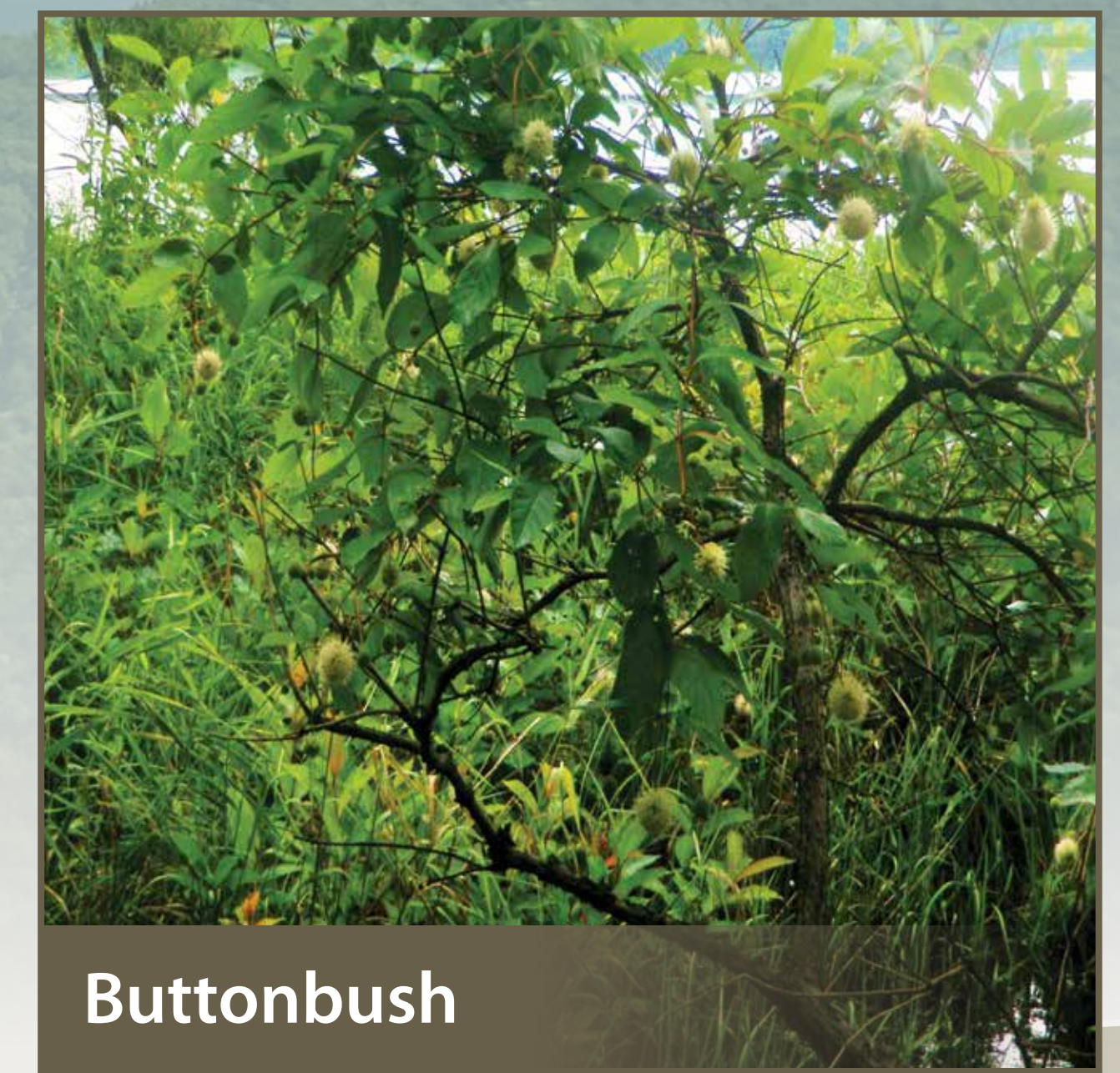
Tussock Sedge



American Mink



Common Reed



Buttonbush