

WINTER 2001

The Watershed News

The Watershed News is a quarterly publication of the Green Mountain Conservation Group, a non-profit, 501(c) 3, charitable organization established in 1997 and dedicated to the preservation of the natural resources in the Ossipee Watershed. The towns of Effingham, Freedom, Madison, Ossipee, Sandwich and Tamworth make up the boundaries of the Ossipee Watershed Protection Project. This watershed includes one of the largest and deepest stratified drift aquifers in N.H. It covers 47 square miles and receives drainage from a 330 square mile area. It is a critically important resource for existing and future community water supplies.

The GMCG's purpose is twofold:

1. To provide an organizational structure for a coalition of citizens and local officials interested in identifying sensitive areas within the Watershed in need of protection;
2. To offer public educational events about conservation concerns and possible solutions regarding the preservation of this unique natural resource.

Through education and advocacy we strive to promote an awareness and appreciation of our natural resources and encourage a commitment to protect them.

Board of Directors

Blair Folts, President
Susan Slack, Vice President
Chip Kimball, Treasurer
Don LaChance, Secretary
Bill Piekut, Education Coordinator

Town Representatives

Effingham, Greg Clough
Freedom, Bill Klotz
Madison, Dan Stepanauskus
Ossipee, Greg Bossart
Sandwich, Ben Shambaugh
Tamworth, C. Scott Aspinall

GMCG creates Stewardship Fund

Nearly 250 community residents, elected officials and representatives of conservation organizations attended our October barbeque celebrating GMCG's purchase of the 41-acre parcel at the corner of Route 25 and Green Mountain Road in Effingham.

GMCG established a Stewardship Fund for the long-term care of this parcel, and by year's end more than \$3,000 had been contributed to the fund. GMCG encourages public use of the parcel and plans interpretive walks on the site this spring, particularly with local schoolchildren.

GMCG is grateful to all who contributed to the purchase of the property and to the Stewardship Fund. We are particularly indebted to Lakeview NeuroRehabilitation Center for hosting the barbecue, providing music and refreshments and supporting GMCG's campaign to stop development of the site for a garbage transfer station.

We also thank Nancy Girard and the Conservation Law Foundation, as well as Tom Howe and the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests for their encouragement of our efforts to raise awareness of the importance of our groundwater resources and our efforts to conserve them.

3rd Annual Meeting will focus on geology of the Ossipee Aquifer

The third annual meeting of the Green Mountain Conservation Group will take place on January 20, 2001 from 6 to 9 p.m. at Runnels Hall in Chocorua. The evening will commence with a brief business meeting and election of officers followed by a potluck supper. Our featured speaker at this year's celebration will be Dr. Robert Newton, a Smith College geology professor, who will deliver a slide presentation about the formation of the Ossipee Aquifer. Dr. Newton is a long-time seasonal resident of Silver Lake; has been monitoring water quality in Silver Lake for nearly two decades; has mapped the Ossipee Quadrangle for U.S. Geological Survey, and is an authority on how the glacier formed the geology of the Ossipee region.

Dr. Newton has been working with GMCG on a project sponsored by the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services to identify and map the important recharge lands in the Ossipee Watershed. First draft maps of this project will also be unveiled and discussed at the meeting. Volunteers will be able to learn more about the significance of this expansive groundwater resource.

GMCG will also present maps from the Natural Resource Inventory project that we are working on with the University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension. GMCG is partnering with Extension to produce a series of natural resource maps for each of the six towns in the Watershed that include such features as hydrology, wetlands, soils of special importance, unfragmented land, natural resource co-occurrences and other features, such as roads and town boundaries. The Tamworth maps have been completed and will be available at the Annual Meeting to study.

As the new year begins we would like to thank everyone who helped make 2000 an important year for natural resource education and protection in the Ossipee Watershed. Thanks to all who donated time, money, and expertise and who advocated for the protection of natural resources in our region. We encourage all members, residents, and visitors to renew their GMCG membership or become members for the first time. Anyone can become a member at the annual meeting, or by sending in the form on page 7 of this newsletter.

The annual meeting is free and open to the public. GMCG invites everyone to attend and help celebrate our third year. The evening promises to be an exciting one full of good food and interesting discussion. Please bring a favorite dish.

For more information call 539-7926 or 539-7095.

New Year's Message from the President

BY

BLAIR FOLTS

In November, I had the opportunity to attend a conference, *Tools for Grassroots Organizing*, sponsored by Patagonia. Recipients of Patagonia Environmental Grants are invited to attend this 4 day event and meet with others from non-profit organizations from around the United States and Canada while they learn how to be more effective community organizers. As the plane circled over Reno, I was struck by the amount of sprawl that extended beyond the city as well as the amount of ATV trails that criss-crossed the sage brush in the open space just beyond the city limits.

I arrived at this conference feeling overwhelmed at the issues facing the Green Mountain Conservation Group in our watershed and was questioning whether or not our "voice" was actually making a difference. I soon met many other non-profit organizers facing similar challenges and others facing even larger environmental issues, including strip mining, dam removal, pesticide application, and wolf restoration. Attendees included people working on very specific issues such as a new development in just one neighborhood in L.A., to National Forest issues, to the enormous environmental concern of the proposal to dam the Yangtze River in China.

The most heartening thing about the conference was that no project was “too small” or “insignificant.” Everyone recognized that each person’s struggle was of equal importance and everyone recognized that each challenge was faced with equal passion and love for whatever that resource was. Some organizations had national funding and national recognition while others were very local and had very little funding. Patagonia had seen the passion and the need for each organization to exist and they had brought us together to share our thoughts, concerns and ideas.

Over the next few days, we heard speakers from around the country. Some of the speakers included, Brock Evans, manager of the National Endangered Species Coalition; Lois Gibbs who helped relocate 900 families at Love Canal; Paul Butler from R.A.R.E., who was instrumental in saving the St. Lucia parrot from extinction; and Chris Van Dyke formerly marketing director at NIKE and now Vice President of marketing for Patagonia, who spoke about the “marketing of ideas.” All spoke about the need for all of us to come together and work as one in protecting our planet, region, country, state, town, yard.

We, the people, put the demand on industry, recreation, healthcare...it is WE who must also push for reform and WE who must take responsibility for taking care of our own yards.

We must all use our voice to speak up for our natural resources. We must learn to listen to all sides, support our beliefs with firm science, and honor each others concerns.

As we head into the 21st century let us take the term NIMBY (Not in My Back Yard) and let it stand for **Neighbors in Many Back Yards.**

Forestry in the Watershed

Benefits of a town forest

BY
PETER POHL

The majority of towns in Carroll County own and manage tracts of land referred to as Town Forests for the purpose of encouraging the proper management of the timber resource, enhancing wildlife habitat, protecting water quality, offering educational and recreational opportunities to the general public and to help ensure the retention of the rural character of the community.

Town forests originated in the 13th century as large tracts of land granted to European towns by their rulers. In the United States, the first town forest was designated in 1710 by the town selectmen in Newington, New Hampshire with the purpose of preserving some of the town’s valuable natural resources from development and overuse. This precedent has resulted in the establishment of town forests throughout the country.

There are numerous reasons to support the concept of towns owning land. As rural communities become more developed, the value of preserving forested land within the town becomes increasingly apparent. Town forests serve many social, educational and economic purposes. The following highlight some of the major benefits:

1. The urbanization movement around cities and towns is depleting nearby forested lands. Although Carroll County is still very rural, one needs to only fast forward time 50 to 100 years and try to envision what the landscape will look like. Increased population, escalating land values, pressures to subdivide, communication technology that permits our former urban population to live in a rural area will exacerbate the transformation of our rural landscape into a more suburbanized state. The strategic location of publicly owned forest land will help to maintain a rural character.

2. Town forests are valued as areas of ecological stability by helping to protect soil and providing clean air and water.

3. The sale of forest products guided by the development of a long range natural resource plan can easily offset the loss in property tax revenue generated from the parcel if it was in private ownership.

4. Town forests provide the public undeveloped space for recreation such as hiking, jogging, and skiing.

5. These areas serve an important educational function by providing a location to demonstrate responsible forest management practices including timber harvesting and planting, timber stand improvement and pruning as well as wildlife management practices.

Interpretive trails can be developed to increase the sense of awareness among students and the general public.

6. Establishing a town forest can help change a town from just a place to make a living to a place in which to live while at the same time strengthening the sense of community by adding to the quality of community life.

Dr. James Barrett, a University of New Hampshire professor, has spent considerable time researching the subject of town forests. He has examined their uses in several European countries. His research has resulted in the development of a number of management guides to assist towns in the establishment and use of their town forest.

Many towns in Carroll County are very active in managing their town forests. In most instances a licensed professional forester guided by the detailed natural resource management plan carries out the recommendations. The management of this town property falls under the responsibility of either the Conservation Commission or a Town Forest Committee. Income generated from the management activities generally offset the loss in property tax revenue and help accomplish a variety of other town projects.

For further information on the subject of town forests and how to begin a management program, contact Peter Pohl, Carroll County Extension Forester, UNH Cooperative Extension, at 75 Main Street, P.O. Box 860, Center Ossipee, NH 03814 or phone 539-3331.

WATERSHED BIRDER

Communication tower casualties

BY
SUSAN LEE

Under this heading a recent article in the magazine *Birder's World* discussed a report released in June 2000 by the American Bird Conservancy (ABC) documenting the killing of hundreds of thousands of migratory birds at communication towers across the U.S.

Although the first report of birds being killed at towers was made in 1949, until recently little research has been done. "Basically we know that birds collide with tall towers and that on some occasions — particularly, but not necessarily always, during inclement weather — these towers kill large numbers of birds. The species impacted most seem to be night migrating song birds (warblers, thrushes, vireos, tanagers, cuckoos, sparrows, etc.), although smaller numbers of waterfowl, shorebirds and other species have also been documented. Current estimates of the numbers of birds killed annually by communication towers range between 4 and 10 million." (Paul Kerlinger, March 2000.)

There are more than 77,000 communications towers in the United States and this number is increasing at the rate of 5,000 per year. Several new towers have been built in the Ossipee

Watershed area in the past six months — in Ossipee and Tamworth. More towers are being proposed in Effingham and Albany. As the demand for cell phones, paging devices and digital television grows, so does the demand for more telecommunications facilities.

The ABC report lists 230 species of birds found dead beneath communication towers. Of these, 52 are listed on the US Fish and Wildlife Service's Nongame Birds of Management Concern List or Partners in Flight Watch List as species in decline and needing special management attention.

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) requires towers over 199 feet tall, in the immediate vicinity of airports, or along major highway travel routes, to be lit. Scott Weidensaul writes in his 1999 book on bird migration, *Living on the Wind*, "While the towers themselves are dangerous enough, when you add lights the situation gets considerably worse. In bad weather, lights disorient night-flying song-birds which rely on subtle glimmers from the stars and the shadowy tapestry of the landscape for navigation. Under low clouds or in fog, lights overwhelm these clues, forcing birds to circle toward lighted towers and buildings like moths around a flame, eventually ramming themselves to death or collapsing from exhaustion. Blinking lights in poor weather conditions are the worst of all."

Of the 10 birds most often killed by communication towers, seven nest in the Ossipee Watershed and all 10 migrate through. Ovenbirds were the most frequent casualty, followed by red-eyed vireo, Tennessee warbler, common yellowthroat, bay-breasted warbler, American redstart, blackpoll warbler, black-and-white warbler, Philadelphia vireo and Swainson's thrush.

Recommendations which could minimize bird deaths at communication towers include reducing the number of towers by placing multiple antennae on a single structure; requiring facilities to co-locate on existing structures such as church steeples, barns, town halls or fire stations; restricting tower height so that they are not required to be lit; and using the minimum amount and intensity of lighting allowed by the FCC when lighting is required. The complete ABC report can be downloaded at www.abcbirds.org.

Susan Lee is an avid birder and a longtime resident of the Ossipee Watershed. Share bird sightings or comments with her by e-mail at leegull@landmarknet.net

Calendar

SATURDAY, JANUARY 20 *The Green Mountain Conservation Group* will hold its 3rd Annual Meeting. A short business meeting will be followed by a potluck supper. The keynote address will be by Dr. Robert Newton, geologist at Smith College. Dr. Newton will deliver a slide presentation on the formation of the Ossipee Aquifer and discuss the important recharge land in this watershed. **Runnells Hall, Chocorua, 6-9 p.m. Please bring a favorite dish.** For more information call GMCG at 539-7926 or 539-7095.

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 24 *The Green Mountain Conservation Group and UNH Cooperative Extension* will present the Tamworth Planning Board with a complete set of Natural Resource Inventory Maps. Phil Auger, UNH Cooperative Extension Educator, Forest Resources, will discuss ways that the town can incorporate these maps into its master plan and how the town can use the maps to better plan for development while protecting natural resources. **The meeting will be at the Tamworth Town offices from 7-9 PM.** For more information, call GMCG at 539-7926

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 24 *THE GREEN MOUNTAIN CONSERVATION GROUP AND THE MAINE AND NEW HAMPSHIRE CHAPTERS OF THE NATURE CONSERVANCY* will lead a guided cross-country ski trip from New Hampshire to Maine through the Leavitt Plantation. This 8,600 acre parcel of forest land in Parsonsfield, Maine, bordering the town of Effingham, is the largest contiguous forest block in southern Maine. Regionally, it is part of an important forest ecosystem across the Maine, New Hampshire border. A group of concerned citizens is working with TNC and the Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands to secure funding from Land for Maine's Future in order to purchase a conservation easement on this parcel. Come learn

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TUESDAY, MARCH 6 **The Green Mountain Conservation Group and UNH Cooperative Extension** will present the Effingham Planning Board with a complete set of Natural Resource Inventory Maps. Phil Auger, UNH Cooperative Extension Educator, Forest Resources, will discuss ways that the town can incorporate these maps into its master plan and how the town can use the maps to better plan for development while protecting natural resources. **The meeting will be at the Effingham Town Hall from 7-9 PM.** For more information, call GMCG at 539-7926

FRIDAY, MARCH 30 **ERIC ORFF, WILDLIFE BIOLOGIST WITH NEW HAMPSHIRE FISH AND GAME**, will give a slide presentation, *Mending the Web of Life: Living in the Golden Years of Fish and Wildlife in New Hampshire*. Eric Orff has been with Fish and Game for over 20 years, is a statewide fur bearer project leader and co-leader of the black bear project. He also is on the board of directors of the New England Outdoor Writers Association and received two awards from them for articles written in 1998. He has been a member of the Londonderry Fish and Game Club for over 35 years and has served on the Epsom Conservation Commission for over 15 years. His presentation will address why you have a greater chance of seeing a bear, wild turkey, deer, moose or peregrine falcon than your great grandmother did. **The presentation will be at the Freedom Town Hall from 7-9 PM.** For more information, call GMCG at 539-7926

For more information about activities, or to find out how you can help please call GMCG at 539-7926 or 539-7095.

Your Membership Will Make a Difference.

The year 2000 was an exciting one for GMCG. In addition to our **monthly educational events, quarterly newsletters and hosting Watershed Weekend: Forestry in the Watershed**, we also have been partnering with UNH Cooperative Extension to produce a series of **natural resource inventory maps** for all 6 towns in the watershed; working on **mapping the important recharge land** to the aquifer with a grant from NH Department of Environmental Services with the goal of offering workshops for

land owners about the importance of land protection for drinking water. We also have continued our **activism** and have successfully advocated for:

- ◆ the protection of the Pine River State Forest from ATV trails
- ◆ the protection of important aquifer land from a high volume trash transfer station
- ◆ the protection of important aquifer land from becoming a sludge stockpile site

Our most recent news was the purchase of 41 acres of land with an anonymous donation.

In 2001 we will continue with our educational programs and will continue to be a voice for the Ossipee Watershed. We are excited to announce that in the coming year, we will also begin working with our neighbors “down watershed” in Maine, The Saco River Corridor Commission. Together with The Nature Conservancy in Maine and New Hampshire we will be working to establish a water quality monitoring program for the entire watershed from New Hampshire to Maine.

We need your help to continue these efforts. Through education and advocacy we strive to promote an awareness and appreciation of our natural resources and encourage a commitment to protect them. *Help protect the Ossipee Watershed by becoming a member of the Green Mountain Conservation Group today. Your donation at the highest level possible is greatly appreciated.* We look forward to seeing you at upcoming events!