

◆ The Watershed News ◆

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A Quarterly Publication of the Ossipee Watershed Protection Project Published by the Green Mountain Conservation Group

Celebrate GMCG's 5th Annual Meeting with NH's 'Bear Guy' — Ben Kilham

On Saturday, January 25, the Green Mountain Conservation Group will celebrate its 5th annual meeting at Runnells Hall in Chocorua from 6 to 9 p.m. The evening will commence with a brief business meeting and election of officers, followed by a potluck supper.

The featured speaker this year will be noted black bear specialist, Ben Kilham. Ben lives in Lyme, NH where he has been working with orphaned, sick and injured black bear cubs for nine years. Since Kilham met his first bear cub, a sick yearling, he has worked to rehabilitate more than 31 bears.

Unlike other bear rehabilitators who favor minimizing human contact, Kilham's work is centered on establishing a direct bond with each cub. His unique and successful technique has earned him quite a reputation and just this past March he was featured in National Geographic magazine.

In his slide presentation, Kilham will explain his process of acting as a surrogate mother to the cubs. He will also dispel typical fears that most people harbor about these unique and shy

creatures. Despite people's widespread fear that bears are dangerous animals, in the last century only 43 people in all of North America were actually killed in a black bear attack.

During the Annual Meeting, GMCG staff and board members will present a synopsis of the group's conservation and educational projects and will be on hand to discuss ideas and concerns members have regarding future projects.

In 2002, GMCG partnered with the Chocorua Lake Association, Saco River Corridor Commission and NH Department of Environmental Services to implement a watershed-wide water quality monitoring program. Maps, data and our final report will be available for attendees to study. AmeriCorp Volunteer and Water Quality Monitoring Director, Elisha Lindquist will give a short presentation outlining this new program and discuss additions to the 2003 program.

The Annual Meeting is open to the public. The evening promises to be an exciting one full of good food, and interesting discussion. Please bring a favorite dish to the potluck supper. A suggested donation of \$5 is encouraged to celebrate GMCG's 5th

Message from the President

BY SUSAN SACK

In a year in which people have turned their attention to global terrorism, homeland security and a precarious economy, the Green Mountain Conservation Group has continued to "think globally, but act locally." We were very pleased to have received our first donated conservation easement, which will protect in perpetuity 405 acres of forested, scenic and aquifer recharge land off Route 113 in Wonalancet, and we continue to explore further land protection projects in the Ossipee Watershed.

GMCG also facilitated the design and implementation of a watershed-wide water quality monitoring program with the cooperation of the Saco River Corridor Commission, UNH Cooperative Extension, the EPA and the Department of Environmental Services. Under the direction of GMCG's AmeriCorp Volunteer Elisha Lindquist, this program will provide baseline data for long-term analysis of water quality in the watershed.

GMCG provided support for the formation of Friends of Trout Pond, an exciting group working with local volunteers and the national Trust for Public Lands to protect nearly 2000 acres in Freedom and Madison.

We are grateful to all who have supported our work, including our generous members, as well as New Hampshire Charitable Foundation, Department of Environmental Services, Patagonia, NH Lakes Association and several anonymous family foundations. We look forward to your continued support as we continue our efforts to protect the Ossipee Watershed's vital natural resources.

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 New Hampshire. 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 issues 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

Susan Slack, President
 Bill Piekut, Vice President
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 Freedom, Bill Klotz
 Madison, Dan Stepanauskus
 Ossipee, Greg Bossart
 Sandwich, Ben Shambaugh
 Tamworth, C. Scott Aspinall
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Staff

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Special places A look back at Freedom

Editor's Note: Special Places is a regular feature of the Watershed News, highlighting an historical or cultural resource within the Ossipee Watershed. GMCG continues to endorse the Land and Community Heritage Investment Program, a public-private partnership committed to conservation of New Hampshire's natural, cultural and historical resources. For more information on LCHIP, call Citizens for NH Land and Community Heritage at 230-9729, www.specialplaces.org

BY ELISHA LINDQUIST

As a newcomer to New Hampshire and the village of Freedom, it has been a great pleasure to learn some history about this unique village. This opportunity came in a recent visit with Freedom resident Robert Fowler.

Bob was born in Freedom in 1910, in the gray house on the corner of Elm Street and the Old Portland Road, which was owned by his maternal grandparents. His paternal grandparents lived just across the bridge in the house where Bob now resides. While Bob spent the majority of his life in Billerica, Mass., where his family moved in 1915, he vacationed at his old family home every year. Indeed, Freedom remained such a special place to Bob that he refrained from telling people down country where he vacationed each year. "I wanted to keep Freedom quiet and small," he explained.

In Bob's youth, Freedom was a bustling town. In the early teens there were three general stores, three blacksmith shops, a dry goods store (now the current location of the Freedom Village Store and GMCG's office), a hotel and Bob's family operated mill. Bob's grandfather ran the mill on Cold Brook for many years until his death in 1928. The mill ground cornmeal, made shingles and planed boards, all by the power of water. In fact, like many towns, there was no electricity in place in

Freedom until the 1920s, and only those who were well off could afford it.

Around the time that electricity came to Freedom, people were moving to the cities to find work. One by one, the general stores and blacksmith shops closed. Shortly after Bob's grandfather passed away, his father tore down the old mill, which was no longer in operation. The Great Depression had arrived by this time and Bob's father was forced to consider selling his old family home for \$500. Fortunately, however, his father was able to hold on to it.

In addition to commerce, Freedom was also the center of attraction for many tourists. In fact, the townspeople were so concerned with the number and, more importantly, the type of people who would visit their town, that they prevented the Boston to Conway railway from putting a stopover in Freedom. Instead, the railroad made a stopover in Center Ossipee. Travelers could then come to Freedom by stagecoach. "The townspeople didn't want the type of people that would be around the railroads" in Freedom, according to Bob. The railroad brought a lot of activity to the area, however, as it was equipped with 18 passenger cars that would arrive twice a day.

Growing up, Bob remembers the fireworks on top of Towle's Ledge, now known as the Cushing Corner Road. Until the early 1900s, from this vantage point one could see all the way to Loon Lake because 75 percent of the land then was open farmland. It was quite a different place than it is today.

Reflecting on his youth and the time period in which he lived, Bob said, "I feel as though I grew up in a period of unwritten laws. We didn't have any laws like today – nobody thought of suing you." I can't help but wonder what Freedom's first settlers would think if they could see their town and their country as it exists today.

GMCG accepts first conservation easement

BY SUSAN SLACK

The Green Mountain Conservation Group entered a new and exciting phase this year when we gratefully received a donation of a conservation easement that restricts development on 405 acres of land off Route 113 in Tamworth. GMCG's programs have focused on education, research and advocacy, but as we enter our fifth year, we are extending our efforts in the area of land protection to include holding conservation easements. We believe that these efforts compliment the work we are already doing in advocating for the protection of natural resources through land use regulation on the municipal level and through the encouragement of wise land use decisions by private landowners.

The owner of the Wonalancet property, the Wonalancet Nominee Trust, donated the conservation easement to GMCG. A conservation easement allows the landowner to retain ownership of the property. The owner, in essence, grants the right to develop the property to the easement holder. In the case of a conservation easement, the agreement, transferred by deed and recorded in the county Registry of Deeds, guarantees that the property

will not be developed, but will forever maintain its current conservation values.

The 405-acre Wonalancet property includes 7,200 feet of frontage on Route 113 and is valued for its scenic views of the field, Mount Katherine and large tract of forested land. In addition to protecting those views forever, the easement donation requires the land to continue to be maintained for sustainable forestry and wildlife habitat, as well as protection of a portion of the large aquifer for which the Ossipee Watershed is known. GMCG's research, funded through a grant from the Department of Environmental Services and conducted under the supervision of Dr. Robert Newton of Smith College, has confirmed the importance of protecting the forested land that allows for the recharge of the aquifer so that clean groundwater is available in the future. Groundwater protection is a primary focus of GMCG's land protection efforts.

The owner of the Wonalancet property has graciously for many years allowed access to the property for hiking. In fact, the Wonalancet Outdoor Club has maintained the trail known as Red Path and will continue to do so. Forest management of the property in the last few years has focused on storm damage clean up that was caused by the ice storm of 1998. These

efforts have opened the summit of Mount Katherine, which now affords beautiful views of the surrounding area. The easement agreement ensures continued sustainable forestry practices on the property in perpetuity.

GMCG is particularly excited about receiving this conservation easement because of its proximity to other land in the Wonalancet/Whiteface area that has high conservation value, and we will work cooperatively with landowners and others in the future to encourage further land protection efforts in this area and throughout the Ossipee Watershed. We are working now to raise money for our Stewardship Fund that will allow GMCG to monitor this and other conservation easements in the future to ensure that the conservation values of the properties will be forever protected.

Conservation easement donations may offer individual property owners important federal tax benefits, as well as an advantageous way to protect family land. We encourage interested property owners to consult their financial and/or legal advisers about these tax benefits and to contact GMCG for more information. Call us at 539-1859.

Conservation Conversations

Editor's Note: Conservation Conversations is intended to provide a forum for the Conservation Commissions in the six towns of the Ossipee Watershed to share news of their activities and an opportunity to find creative solutions regarding watershed issues. It is the goal of the Green Mountain Conservation Group to encourage the six towns to create a strong voice as a united watershed community.

Think Locally; Act Watershed.

Effingham

In the last few months, the Effingham Conservation Commission has concentrated on preparing a parcel of conservation land for walking trails. The land, located on Route 153, abuts the Leavitt Plantation tract in Parsonsfield, Maine. Most of the land is wetland and home to songbirds, hawks, herons, rabbits and moose. Weasel and bobcat tracks have also been observed. Hopefully, we will be able to make the trails handicapped accessible. Future plans include a viewing platform to encourage all who use

the trails to enjoy the wildlife. Anyone interested in this project can call Henry Spencer at 539-4964.

Freedom

The Freedom Conservation Commission continues to support the efforts of The Friends of Trout Pond (FTP) to protect the 1900 acres of land around Trout Pond. This group of local volunteers has continued to work closely with the Trust for Public Lands, a national nonprofit conservation organization to apply for various grants to obtain funding to purchase this property. The group is exploring a federal Forest Legacy grant, as well as a state Land and Community Heritage Investment Program (LCHIP) matching grant. In order to qualify for these various grants, the group has prepared a forest management plan for use of the land as a town forest, as well as a stewardship plan that anticipates public access for traditional recreational uses such as

hunting, fishing, snowmobiling, hiking and horseback riding. Friends of Trout Pond continues to meet to hear suggestions from area residents and visitors and is working closely with volunteers from the town of Madison and the Madison Conservation Commission.

The group hopes to answer the questions and concerns of as many local residents as possible in anticipation of presenting a warrant article at the March town meeting. For information, contact Katie Gove of the Freedom Conservation Commission.

Sandwich

The Conservation Commission recently performed its annual monitoring of the 12 town-held conservation easements. Monitoring of the terms of the easements was accomplished through aerial and on-site inspections.

Water Quality Monitoring pilot year a great success

BY ELISHA LINDQUIST

The Green Mountain Conservation Group completed its first year of the RIVERS (Regional Interstate Volunteer for the Ecosystems and Rivers of Saco) water quality monitoring program in October. The program, which began in May and ran on a bi-weekly basis, lasted 12 weeks. A total of 13 volunteers were trained prior to the kick-off of the program to prepare them for testing water using scientific equipment and collecting water samples for further analysis. Ten sites were selected for water quality monitoring, all within the Ossipee Watershed. There were two sites each in Freedom, Effingham, Ossipee, Tamworth and Madison. GMCG and each of the five towns' conservation commissions jointly decided upon the selection of these sites. The selection was based upon locations felt to be the most important for establishing baseline data. Forming a partnership with Saco River

Corridor Commission of Cornish, Maine, in order to combine efforts and share data, GMCG modeled its water quality-monitoring program after that of SRCC's. Both GMCG and SRCC tested water for pH, dissolved oxygen, temperature, turbidity, total Kjeldahl and total phosphorous. In addition, SRCC tested for E. coli. Under the guidance of Dr. William McDowell, UNH professor of Water Resource Management, GMCG tested for other parameters including silica, cations, anions, DON, ammonium and phosphates. UNH Cooperative Extension in Durham did the analysis of these parameters.

SRCC has completed two seasons of comprehensive water quality monitoring. That data is available on its website at www.srcc-maine.org.

If you would like to learn more about this program or would like to be a volunteer next season, call GMCG.

*Watershed Birder***New program identifies important bird areas**

The Audubon Society of New Hampshire has recently embarked on a new program: the Important Bird Area Program. The New Hampshire effort is part of the United States IBA Program administered by the National Audubon Society, which in turn is part of an international effort run by BirdLife International. To date 46 states and more than 100 countries have IBA programs at various stages of development. In New Hampshire, Audubon is working with the NH Fish and Game Department, UNH Cooperative Extension and the state's Partners in Flight Working Group.

The goal of the IBA program, in New Hampshire and worldwide, is to identify and conserve areas that are critical to one or more bird species for breeding, feeding, wintering or migration. Potential IBAs must meet strict scientific criteria to qualify, including the presence of rare or endangered species, significant concentrations of birds, or rare and threatened habitats. By designating such areas as IBAs, the goal is to inform both the general public and state and local decision makers about the value of bird conservation and ultimately enhance the protection of areas important to birds.

Despite its small size, New Hampshire hosts a diverse array of habitat types, and more than 250 bird species spend time in the state. Some species are here during the breeding season, others are year-round residents and others come into New Hampshire only in

migration or winter. Habitats range from the 18 miles of coastline, including sand dunes and salt marshes, to the high mountain peaks with alpine and subalpine habitats.

Many of the state's potential IBAs are obvious, but others may be well-kept secrets known only to a few. And this is where the birders of New Hampshire enter the picture. We are ultimately the source of most of the knowledge about the state's birds, whether through submission to NH Bird Records, participation in Christmas Bird Counts and local field trips, or by volunteering for Audubon or other organizations. In the process of collecting all these data, birders are no doubt aware of any number of special places in New Hampshire and especially in the Ossipee Watershed that might qualify as IBAs. If so, I encourage you to consider nominating some of those areas, as explained below.

In addition, there will likely be opportunities to help collect additional data at potential IBAs during the upcoming year, and thus help in determining which areas will be officially designated later on. This program is an excellent opportunity to take birding to a new level: from enjoyable pastime to a vehicle to enhance bird conservation in New Hampshire and in the Ossipee Watershed. The NH IBA Program has developed a Preliminary Nomination Form that people can submit to recommend an area for review and possible identification as an IBA. Potential IBAs may include private or public land and should be based on ecological rather than ownership boundaries. Educational

information on the significance of a given area for birds will be shared with landowners that may fall within a potential IBA. This includes guidance on voluntary stewardship and conservation options.

If you are interested in nominating an area as an IBA, you can contact the Watershed Birder or visit the UNH Cooperative Extension "Forestry and Wildlife Resources" website (ceinfo.unh.edu/forestry/documents/FWRhome.htm) and hit the "Bird Areas" button. Information on the national and international IBA programs is also available at www.audubon.org/bird/iba/index.html, or contact Pam Hunt, NH IBA Program Coordinator, Audubon Society of New Hampshire at 603-224-9909 (ext. 328), or phunt@nhaudubon.org or contact Ellen Snyder, Biodiversity Specialist, UNH Cooperative Extension at 603-862-4277 or e-mail at ellen.snyder@unh.edu.

This article was prepared by Pam Hunt and appears with the permission of the author.

Susan Lee, GMCG's regular Watershed Birder columnist, is an avid birder and a longtime resident of the Ossipee Watershed. Share bird sightings or comments with her by e-mail at : leegull1@earthlink.net.

WATERSHED ACTIVISM

“I am only one, but still I am one. I cannot do everything, but still I can do something.” *Edward Everett Hale*

West Ossipee Charrette Report

BY DAVID LITTLE

The recently released *West Ossipee 2020 Visioning Charrette Report* documents plans for developing the West Ossipee area, including five funded transportation projects beginning in 2003. The report contains much to be optimistic about. But the West Ossipee Task Force has more work to do before plans adequately address environmental concerns for the area.

On the positive side, we can be encouraged that an open, public, inclusive planning process is going on before construction begins. The meetings have been well publicized and well attended. Environmentalists will be encouraged that the top three priorities, as voted by charrette participants were:

- *Transportation center with park-n-ride*
- *Bike trails*
- *Landscape ecology/preservation*

However, staff from the state Department of Environmental Services attended the Charrette and offered specific comments about water supply, wetland protection and septic system requirements, included in the report Appendix. The issues DES raised are not addressed in the Six Phase Implementation Plan.

*Water Supply and
Ground Water Protection*

DES states: “West Ossipee is likely to require a community water supply system.” Further, it is “advisable to consider some level of protection for the larger aquifer recharge area to insure long-term quality and yield of the aquifer.” Plans for acquiring land for water supply, a 4,000-foot wellhead protection area and funds for constructing the water system are not included.

*Wetlands, Shoreland Protection
and Storm Water Management*

DES Wetlands staff suggest that any planned development concentrate on the east side of Route 16. Yet, Phase 6 of the plan says, “Develop retail and housing parcels on west side of NH 16....”

Subsurface (Septic) Systems

Concerning septic systems, DES says: “additional land may have to be secured in order to meet land density issues for disposal of wastewater.” Further, “without controlling this property, the design of the wastewater disposal systems to support the use of development within this area may be very difficult, if not impossible.” Plans for acquiring land and funds for constructing the needed septic system are not included.

The proposal for a roundabout at the Route 16/25 intersection has gained considerable reaction. The plans need to accommodate businesses that will be directly affected. But we shouldn’t sacrifice or delay the chance for cleaner air, which the redesign will provide.

There is a natural conflict between local traffic and through traffic uses of Route 16. Placing a dense, attractive, walkable village development right on Route 16 will create Conway-style congestion. The planning process has gathered input from the businesses and residents in West Ossipee, but the plans will also impact Madison, Tamworth and all the tourists, vacationers and truck traffic trapped on Route 16. Congestion mitigation plans and air quality mitigation programs for the increased traffic need to be included in any proposal. The planning process needs to be expanded to include regional input about traffic concerns.

West Ossipee sits atop a primary recharge area for the largest and deepest stratified drift aquifer in New Hampshire. Primary recharge areas are vulnerable to easy contamination. Land use and potential contamination sources need to be evaluated carefully. Additional development here may be attractive because of existing roads, but this is not an optimal development location from a natural resource protection perspective.

Alternative sites for dense village development should be considered and the costs as opposed to the environmental benefits should be weighed thoughtfully.

David Little is a member of the Green Mountain Conservation Group and a seasonal resident of Tamworth.

Calendar

SATURDAY, JANUARY 25, THE GREEN MOUNTAIN CONSERVATION GROUP will celebrate its 5th Annual Meeting. A short business meeting will be followed by a potluck supper. The keynote address will be given by New Hampshire's noted Black Bear biologist, Ben Kilham. (See story Page 1) at **Runnells Hall, off Route 16 in Chocorua, 6-9 p.m.**

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 13. THE GREEN MOUNTAIN CONSERVATION GROUP will host a Water Quality meeting to discuss the 2002 pilot year of GMCG's water quality monitoring program. Bob Craycraft and Michelle Daley, both of University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension, will present interpretations of the 2002 water sampling data. Discussion will also include the upcoming macroinvertebrate and water quality monitoring programs. *Runnells Hall, Chocorua, 7 to 9 p.m. Refreshments will be served.*

THURSDAY, MARCH 27. THE OSSIPEE CONSERVATION COMMISSION will host a slide presentation by Kathy Gregg from the Elaine Connors Center for Wildlife in Madison on rehabilitating injured and baby animals. There will be a question and answer session following the presentation. *Ossipee Public Library, Center Ossipee 7 to 9 p.m. Refreshments will be served.*

MARCH (DATE AND LOCATION PENDING), THE GREEN MOUNTAIN CONSERVATION GROUP and BROAD BAY ALLIANCE will sponsor an informative slide presentation about the globally rare pondshore communities on Ossipee Lake. Lionel Chute and Dan Sperduto from the New Hampshire Heritage Inventory at the New Hampshire Department of Resources and Economic Development will discuss what a pondshore community is and explain the unique nature of the Ossipee Lake pondshore communities. Jeff Lougee from the New Hampshire chapter of The Nature Conservancy will also present

***Your Membership Will Make a Difference.
Please Join Today!***

*(Please make checks payable to Green Mountain Conservation Group
P.O. box 95, South Effingham, New Hampshire 03882*

Raindrop ___\$10 **Puddle** ___\$15 **Vernal Pool** ___\$25 **Stream** ___\$50 **River** ___\$75
(student membership) **Pond** ___\$100 **Lake** ___\$250 **Aquifer** ___\$500 **Other** ___

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The Watershed News

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Deadline for Spring
Newsletter is March 21.

morning comes
and so we do move
into the longer days

each morning stretching with extra minutes
each ray of sun
with an extra infusion

I feel it
it warms my face
and melts the cold dark places
in my heart

no more a space for pain
it runs off like snow melt
tumbling over boulders in the spring

winter is here
and so it begins this day
it begins
with a bit more light than yesterday
who would ever imagine it?

for within the intricate design
of the sun and earth and seasons
there is implanted already
the essence of hope

seeds do wait within the earth
as do the newborns of spring
within their wombs
not just the idea of spring and birth
and life
but the essence of life.

Winter is here.
It is its own time.....

Embrace it!

kmr 12-22-02

EVERY PERSON CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE AND EACH PERSON SHOULD TRY.

