
◆ The Watershed News ◆

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II

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

GMCG introduces the Ossipee

The Green Mountain Conservation Group, with funding from New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services, will begin the Ossipee Watershed Planning Initiative—a two year project designed to engage local residents, municipal officials and state and non-profit organizations in watershed-wide environmental planning. The Ossipee Watershed is expected to experience one of the most rapid spurts of population growth in any region in New Hampshire over the next 20 years. With this growth comes the loss of forest land and impacts to ground water resources.

The Ossipee Aquifer is New Hampshire's largest stratified drift aquifer. In New Hampshire, primary responsibility to land use regulation falls to municipalities, yet in this area few towns have adequate resources to deal with the protection of ground water. The Green Mountain Conservation Group, in an effort to educate residents about the important natural resources in the

region, will create a Watershed Coalition. These stakeholders will work with municipal officials in the six towns, Effingham, Freedom, Madison, Ossipee, Sandwich, Tamworth, to establish planning protocols based on protecting the ground water and other important natural resources.

In 2004, GMCG will hire an Environmental Planner, Steve Whitman, and form a Watershed Coalition of area stakeholders. 2004 will focus on gathering information, establishing a watershed-wide Coalition, and conducting an environmental survey. 2005 will focus on working closely with town planning boards and municipal officials to create stronger and more comprehensive environmental planning based on shared regional resources.

If you would like to be a part of this Coalition or to learn more about upcoming meetings, please contact GMCG at 539-1859.

2004 WQM season begins in May

GMCG will begin its third season of Water Quality Monitoring (WQM) in May. GMCG began a comprehensive watershed-wide WQM program in 2002 in collaboration with the Saco River Corridor Commission (SRCC) in Maine. The goal was to establish a comprehensive WQM program that crossed political boundaries and studied water quality across one watershed in two states, and twenty-six towns.

A total of 17 parameters are tested including pH, temperature, dissolved oxygen, turbidity, and total phosphorus, among others. Some of these parameters are tested for with equipment GMCG provides and other parameters are sent to University of New Hampshire lab for analysis. GMCG hopes to observe trends in the water quality over time. This will allow GMCG to draw firm conclusions about the quality of water based on scientific evidence that tracks changes in chemistry over time.

In 2003, GMCG worked closely with stakeholders on Ossipee Lake and expanded the initial RIVERS WQM program to also include the 14 tributaries on Ossipee Lake.

GMCG has received wide support for both these programs. All six towns across the Ossipee Watershed have pledged financial support and in 2004, UNH has offered to help cover the lab costs as a way to help further establish this important program. Water quality monitoring programs rely on long-term data collection.

GMCG has had over 25 committed volunteers and without their help, this program would not be possible. We will keep you posted as to when the training for the 2004 season will begin.

Save the date!
Watershed Weekend—WETLANDS
July 24th and 25th

Special places

Trout Pond lands to become Town Forest

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.

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- Maine, Dennis Finn

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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 230-9729, or email www.specialplaces.org

For nearly three years the Green Mountain Conservation Group, and the Friends of Trout Pond (FTP), have been working to conserve the 2600 acres of land known as the Trout Pond properties in Freedom and Madison. FTP is a committee of GMCG with GMCG acting as fiscal agent. This hard working group of residents from both Freedom and Madison have worked diligently over the past two years toward conserving this important land. The vision has been to conserve the land and create a Freedom Town Forest.

In March, the FTP committee presented a warrant article before the Freedom Town Meeting asking the town to establish a Town Forest under RSA 31:110. Town Meeting voted unanimously to establish a Town Forest and also authorized the Freedom Conservation Commission to manage the Town Forest under RSA 31:112 11.

It has been a long process to get to this point and actually dates back to 2001 when current FTP committee chair, Jennifer Molin first approached GMCG with a vision and idea to preserve the property as open space. Since then, this project has grown into a primary conservation project in the Ossipee Watershed.

In 2002, GMCG and FTP joined in partnership with the national organization the Trust for Public Land. Working closely with TPL, the project was awarded a \$250,000 LCHIP grant toward the purchase of the property. According to LCHIP Executive Director, Rachel

Rouillard, "The Trout Pond Project was selected by the LCHIP Board for funding in a very competitive grant round because of its potential as a working forest, for its important ecological values and for its connectivity to other protected lands."

Working with the Trust for Public Land (TPL), the partners submitted a Forest Legacy grant application for 1.2 million dollars. Over the winter, it was announced that the Trout Pond project made the President's budget. We will not hear for several months as to whether or not we will receive full funding but clearly it is exciting news to hear that this conservation project is not only important locally but is being considered nationally important.

According to a recent report issued by the Center for Environment and Population and National Wildlife Federation, NH is loosing over 9600 acres of prime forest land to development a year. The Forest Legacy grant offers a way to protect important forest land, support sustainable forestry, conserve open space, protect drinking water lands, preserve wildlife habitat, and allow public access.

In March, TPL secured a purchase and sale on the Trout Pond lands from the landowner, Republic Financial. FTP, GMCG and TPL are now ready to enter into the next phase of their partnership to conserve the Trout Pond lands—fund raising! If you would like to help with the fund raising campaign, please contact Ed Reed at 539-6520.

There will also be several other sub-committees established to work with the partners. These committees will address a forest management plan, stewardship plans and assess natural resources on the property. If you would like to be involved with any of these projects please feel free to contact GMCG at 539-1859 or FTP chairman, Jennifer Molin at 539-4587.

Thurley Mountain Conservation Project

The **Ossipee Conservation Commission** and the **Dan Hole Pond Watershed Trust** are working together to preserve 295 acres of forestland on the southeast slope of Thurley Mountain in the Ossipee Mountains. They are concerned that the beautiful open space, forest resources, water quality and recreational lands that currently make Ossipee such an attractive place to live and to visit are now threatened by development pressures currently facing Ossipee and the rest of Carroll County. They know we cannot expect the beautiful Ossipee Mountains to retain their "wilderness" character forever unless we act now. Therefore, they are asking the residents of Ossipee and neighboring towns to contribute toward the \$190,000 purchase price and related costs.

The Trust will purchase and manage the property. It is a non-profit land trust formed in 2000 dedicated to preserving the forested open space and wildlife habitat of

the Dan Hole Pond watershed and nearby Ossipee Mountains. The Conservation Commission will hold a conservation easement on the property which will be open to the public for recreation activities such as hiking and hunting.

If you would like to support the project you can send tax deductible donations in any amount to The Thurley Mountain Project, Dan Hole Pond Watershed Trust, P.O. Box 8, Center Ossipee, NH 03814. If you would like more information about it, please contact Tim Nolin at 539-3730 or Mark Wright at 539-6325.

Thank you for helping to protect the Ossipee Mountains and Ossipee Watershed. Remember, **"Every Drop Counts"**, large and small.

Spring Calendar

SATURDAY, MAY 22 THE GREEN MOUNTAIN CONSERVATION GROUP, NH AUDUBON SOCIETY, NH CHAPTER OF THE NATURE CONSERVANCY AND NH DEPARTMENT OF RESOURCES AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT will host a spring walk in the Pine River State Forest from 8 a.m. until noon. Join forester, Bob Hardy from New Hampshire DRED, division of Forest and Lands, Laura Deming, NH Audubon and Jeff Lougee, a Stewardship Ecologist with TNC to learn about the unique forest habitat in the Pine River State Forest. **Meet at Huckins Pond, Effingham at 8 a.m. Dress appropriately for rain, shine or BUGS!**

SATURDAY, MAY 29 OSS�PEE LAKE ALLIANCE will host a public meeting to launch **Ossipee Lake Weed Watchers**. Learn how to identify and report invasive lake weeds from DES biologist, Amy Smagula. **Meet at the Freedom Town Hall, 10 AM-Noon.** For more information please call 914-588-3280.

TUESDAY, JUNE 1 PAM HUNT, BIOLOGIST WITH NH AUDUBON SOCIETY will host an **Evening Bird Walk** to the proposed Trout Pond Town Forest. The Ossipee area is home to several bird species of conservation concern, and it turns out dusk is the best time to find many of them. The target species for this trip is Whip-poor-will, but with luck Common Nighthawk and Vesper Sparrow will be heard as well. At the same time, other birds will be winding down for the evening, and a few frogs are likely to add their voices to the chorus. Although the moon will be full, it's advisable to bring a flashlight. **Meet across from Pequaket Trail on Ossipee Lake Road, (approx. 3/4 mile west of Blue Moon Country Store) 7 p.m. (rain date June 2)**

SATURDAY, JUNE 10 AMANDA STONE AND FRANK MITCHELL, UNH COOPERATIVE EXTENSION will present an evening workshop to the Friends of Trout Pond on **Developing an Effective Education and Outreach Strategy**. This workshop is designed to help communities prioritize and develop appropriate strategies for communicating with the general public, landowners, municipal officials, and others. The workshop will be a facilitated brainstorming session that will help the community to: identify the target audiences and the different messages for each audience, get the messages out in the most effective way, and develop an education and outreach action plan with tasks and timelines outlined. The outreach plan can include a variety of methods from press releases and informational flyers to educational workshops for the public. The workshop is being hosted by the Green Mountain Conservation Group to further promote and assist the Friends of Trout Pond committee with the Trout Pond Freedom Town Forest project. **Meet at the Freedom Town Hall 7-9 p.m.**

For more information, please contact GMCG, 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.

Think Locally; Act Watershed.

Freedom

The Freedom Conservation Commission continues to support the Friends of Trout Pond, Green Mountain Conservation Group and the Trust for Public Land to acquire the land known as Trout Pond for a Town Forest. The commission recently drafted warrant articles to set up the mechanism to establish a Town Forest. Town Meeting voted unanimously to establish a Town Forest. The conservation commission will actively play a role in helping develop a stewardship plan for the Town Forest. This plan must not only be manageable but also be sensitive to the unique properties of the land.

Town Meeting also voted to appropriate money to the GMCG Water Quality Monitoring program for 2004. The WQM program has been recognized as an important project in Freedom by the commission.

Ossipee

The Ossipee Conservation Commission hosted a workshop on conservation

options and related financial benefits with Tom Howe from the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests. Howe discussed ways landowners can set up legal arrangements to ensure the long term protection of their land from further development while enjoying significant tax savings. To learn more about how you can protect your land contact Tom Howe at SPNHF at 224-9945.

The Ossipee Town Meeting passed a warrant "to create an expendable trust fund under the provisions of RSA 31:19-a, to be known as the Invasive Species Control Fund for preventing and treating milfoil in Ossipee Lake and to raise the sum of five thousand dollars (\$5,000) to be placed in this fund ..."

The conservation commission is working closely with the Dan Hole Pond Watershed Trust to secure funding to purchase the Thurley Mountain property.

Sandwich

The Sandwich Conservation Commission recently flagged the Heritage Woods easement line. The easement was given to the town as part of a planning board subdivision several years ago, but the commission was not made aware of it. Unfortunately, the easement was not marked on the ground when it was granted. The parcel was brought to the conservation commission's attention several years ago in a routine review of the town's easements by the Office of State Planning.

The commission then studied the deed and made many visits to the site to find property lines. Rick Van dePohl and Chip Kimball did the final work, and ended up right on the mark thanks to Rick's accurate compass work. Others provided important assistance including: Kathy Starke, who found the initial pipe on an especially buggy day; Ben Shambaugh, who worked alone to uncover the last pin needed, and Jim Hambrook who provided all of the calculations.

The conservation commission will sponsor the Bearcamp River Trail cleanup day on April 24. Please meet at the Town Hall.

Tamworth

The Tamworth Conservation Commission established a subcommittee to review and develop comments to the Wetlands Bureau of the NH Department of Environmental Services (DES) on the Application for a Wetlands Permit for a proposed race track near Route 25 in Tamworth. Regular meetings are being held and a wetlands scientist has been hired. A public hearing will be held on April 12. It is anticipated the engineering group for the race track project will be present to provide information to the commission.

A second hearing will be held on April 27 at 7:30 p.m. at Brett School with DES.

Notes from Down Stream

“ Borders? I've never seen one, but I heard that they exist in some people's minds.” Thor

Editor's Note: Our downstream neighbors are represented by Dennis Finn, executive director of the Saco River Corridor Commission. SRCC is made up of 20 towns from Fryeburg to Saco, Maine. GMCG and SRCC have partnered since 2001 to create a comprehensive water quality monitoring program across two states, twenty-six towns and one watershed.

Excitement is high as the Saco River Corridor Commission prepares for a fourth year of water quality monitoring.

Why the buzz? With three years of data already under its belt, the Commission in 2004 will take a closer look at trends in water quality, and, where warranted, attempt to link those trends to surrounding land use. This is an important first step towards correcting pollution problems.

The Commission tests 27 sites biweekly on the Saco, Ossipee and Little Ossipee Rivers, and other key tributaries, as well. The

water is tested for nitrogen, phosphates, *E. Coli* bacteria, pH, turbidity, temperature and dissolved oxygen. April 13 is the kickoff date. Testing runs through late October.

Jeff Stern was hired recently by the Commission to coordinate the water quality monitoring program. Formerly project manager with the Oxford County Soil & Water Conservation District, Jeff has worked throughout western Maine to protect river and lake watersheds. He has extensive experience leading water testing programs.

This year, the Commission plans to expand public education throughout the Saco River Basin. The water quality monitoring program is an excellent springboard for this. Also in 2004, the Commission will begin publishing a quarterly newsletter.

Watershed Birder

Volunteers needed for nightbird surveys in Ossipee Watershed

BY
SUSAN LEE

The Ossipee Pine Barrens and nearby areas of Carroll County have long been home to a relatively high population of Whip-poor-wills, and are also one of the few remaining areas where Common Nighthawks nest in natural conditions.

These factors, in addition to substantial populations of shrub-nesting birds like towhees and thrashers, have led to the Ossipee Pine Barrens being nominated as an Important Bird Area for New Hampshire. Most of the specialty birds of the Ossipee Pine Barrens are those that nest in dry scrubby habitats. Foremost among these are Eastern Towhee, Prairie Warbler, Brown Thrasher, and Field Sparrow.

All of these species have been experiencing population declines in New Hampshire and throughout the Northeast for many years, largely a result of habitat loss to development or forest succession. For the Prairie Warbler, the Ossipee Pine Barrens are near the northernmost edge of the species' range. Vesper Sparrow also occurs in small numbers, usually at the more open edges of

scrubby areas such as gravel pits, cuts, and burns.

Both Whip-poor-wills and Common Nighthawks also nest in dry scrubby areas like the Ossipee Pine Barrens. Like other species in this habitat they are declining. Whip-poor-wills arrive by early May and are nesting by early June, when calling is at its peak. They lay only two eggs - right on the leaf litter! Whips are most active at dawn and dusk, when they feed on large flying insects captured in flight. Their bills are very wide and surrounded by long rictal bristles to effectively increase the surface area for prey capture.

Nighthawks don't appear until late May, but once they're here the ecology is pretty similar: 2 eggs on the ground, chase bugs in twilight. They tend to forage higher in the air and in more open areas however.

The Audubon Society of New Hampshire and the New Hampshire Chapter of The Nature Conservancy are teaming up to institute nocturnal bird surveys in the region during the summer of 2004. Surveys will be five mile roadside routes conducted three times between late May and early July, with training provided in early May. The data collected, especially on elusive nocturnal species such as Whip-poor-will and Nighthawks, will be used to support the nomination of the Ossipee Pine

Barrens as an Important Bird Area.

The surveys will occur between roughly May 20 and early July. Each is a 4.5 mile roadside route with stops every half mile. At each stop the observer listens for 5 minutes and records all birds heard (whip, nighthawks, woodcock, owls).

Routes are surveyed three times during this period. Routes will be chosen to cover potential habitat between Sandwich, Conway, and Effingham, thus including a larger area than just the Pine Barrens. There is also the potential for a few walking routes into areas of the Barrens that are not accessible via road.

People interested in volunteering should contact Pam Hunt at Audubon at either (603) 224-9909 extension 328 or phunt@nhaudubon.org.

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.

OSSIPEE MOUNTAINS—NOT AN APPROPRIATE PLACE FOR A RACE TRACK!

For nearly a year, GMCG and other conservation organizations have been following a proposal to build a race track in the Ossipee Mountains in Tamworth. There has been speculation that Tamworth may have been chosen because it did not have a land use ordinance. In reviewing the proposal and recent wetland and site specific applications submitted to NH Department of Environmental Services, it is clear that this extensive project is not appropriate for the Ossipee Mountains. The proposed race track may threaten water quality in the Ossipee Aquifer area, wildlife habitat, natural resource-based tourism in the region and quality of life not only in Tamworth but in the surrounding watershed towns.

At Town Meeting in March, Tamworth voters overwhelmingly passed a race track ordinance by a vote of 223-43. The ordinance, which was approved by selectmen last October, limits excessive noise, sets hours of operation, requires "best management practices" for the safe handling of petroleum products, and bans "spectator" events.

On March 4th, Club Motorsports Inc. (CMI) submitted a Joint Wetland Permit Application to NH Department of Environmental Services (DES), and US Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE). The Standard Dredge and Fill Application and the Section 404 Permit describe the project, current site conditions, the anticipated impacts to natural resources, and alternatives considered.

On March 18th, CMI submitted an Alteration of Terrain Application. The Site Specific (Alteration of Terrain) permit program is intended to protect New Hampshire surface waters by controlling soil erosion and managing stormwater runoff from developed areas. A permit is required whenever a project proposes to disturb more than 100,000 square feet of terrain. CMI's

plans impacts 5,663,000 square feet of terrain, or 130 acres.

These permits will be reviewed by DES, ACOE and the Tamworth Conservation Commission (TCC). TCC intervened to get 40 days to review the application and submit comments. They asked DES for an extension, in order to view the site after the snow melted, but were denied.

There will be two public hearings in Tamworth at the Brett School. **The Tamworth Conservation Commission hearing will be Monday April 12th, at 8PM. The DES hearing will be Tuesday April 27th, at 7PM.** ACOE has not announced a hearing, but will accept public comments for 120 days after posting notice, expected to start in mid April.

GMCG urges all residents and visitors to write letters to DES, Army Corps of Engineers, EPA and local officials and stress your concerns or questions.

There are a number of reasons to oppose the application for this extensive project in the Ossipee Mountains:

- ◆ This is the largest project ever proposed for Tamworth, altering 130 acres of terrain, and creating 45 acres of impervious surface, by blasting 400,000 cubic yards of ledge, and moving 1.2 million cubic yards of earth.

- ◆ This proposal may threaten the Ossipee Aquifer, the state's largest aquifer. The Spill Prevention Control & Countermeasure Plan is completely lacking required elements in NHDES requirements and is inconsistent with the Wetlands Application. CMI has not included measures to contain petroleum spills or treat runoff from the race track. Release of contaminants to groundwater may impact recharge to the Ossipee Aquifer.

- ◆ The application doesn't include

permanent storage tanks with containment measures for fuel, or BMPs for petroleum handling. Instead it has a portable vehicle fueling system.

- ◆ The application does not include any "noise abatement measures" – required by the Tamworth Race Track Ordinance. Without any abatement measures, noise will be 9-15 decibels above the ordinance limits.

- ◆ The assessment of wildlife functions, rare or endangered species, and likely impacts to vernal pools are inadequate. Investigation of likely archaeological evidence on site has not been completed.

- ◆ The application does not adequately address stormwater management impacts. It does not adequately address hydrologic alteration/dewatering of stream channels and basin wetlands as a result of stormwater/drainage basin design.

- ◆ The application does not describe any public benefit. A race track could threaten the present tourist economy. People visit the Ossipee Mountains for quiet and scenic beauty. The application claims there will be an economic benefit, but doesn't provide any evidence or analysis to back up that claim.

- ◆ Tamworth voters overwhelmingly approved the Race Track Ordinance, to control construction and operation of any race track. The application submitted does not comply with several important local ordinances. To date, CMI has not applied for any needed local permits. The DES process should allow town boards to evaluate site conditions and complete their analysis.

The financial benefits to Tamworth, outlined by CMI, are not guaranteed and are miniscule compared to the long-term impact on this rural community and its second-home and tourist economy. For more information and to view sample

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(student membership) **Pond**___\$100 **Lake**___\$250 **Aquifer**___\$500 **Other**___

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The Watershed News

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Deadline for Summer
Newsletter is June 21.

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

The Green the Rain Makes

The green the rain makes
Is more brilliant than even that which the sun produces.
It shines brighter than anything mined from the earth,
That which is grown from the earth
Is more valuable than emeralds
Damp red autumn grasses, more pleasing than rubies.
And the yellow leaves in spring left over from what the
wind did not take:
More awesome than gold.

Dream castles are made of metals and rock.
But enter the house of a faerie queen
And see the green the rain makes
More lovely than the jewels on the fingers of a princess.

JILL PIEKUT
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