
◆ The Watershed News ◆

Volume III, Issue III

Spring 2001

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

Maine

The Board of Directors voted in January to add a representative to the board from the Ossipee Watershed in Maine who will be a voice for the 20 towns in Maine that are our downstream neighbors. We hope that this will encourage a dialogue across our political boundaries.

Dennis Finn, executive director of the Saco River Corridor Commission (SRCC), will represent the Ossipee Watershed in Maine. Dennis has been with the Commission since the mid 1990s. He has a background in geology and has been working to protect natural resources around the US for several decades. His work has ranged from Alaska to Cape Cod to Boston Harbor.

The SRCC was created in 1973 by the Maine legislature as a regional level land use regulatory agency made up of a member and an alternate from each of the 20 communities in the Saco corridor. The Saco River begins in the White Mountains in Saco Lake, travels down to the Fryeburg plain, is joined in Cornish by the Ossipee River and the Little Ossipee River and continues on to Saco and Biddeford where it ends in Saco Bay. In order to protect and preserve the natural attractions of the rivers and valley and to protect drinking water, the Saco River Corridor Commission was created. GMCG looks forward to working closely with our neighbors in Maine emphasizing that our water knows no political boundary.

Visit the SRCC website at:

GMCG's Year Off to Great Start

GMCG's Annual Meeting was well attended by more than 100 watershed residents. The board of directors was pleased to announce that it has hired a part-time executive director, thanks to a generous grant from the Kendall Foundation. The Foundation's mission is to protect the environmental integrity of the northeastern and northwestern regions of North America based on "natural biological and topographical continuity" without regard to political boundaries.

The new executive director is Blair Folts, a co-founder of GMCG and its first board president. "This is an exciting step for GMCG," Folts said. "We will continue to follow our mission of education, advocacy and land protection, and we will also now have the opportunity to establish a stronger organization with paid staff."

Susan Slack is GMCG's new board president. Other officers are Don LaChance, secretary, Chip Kimball, treasurer, and Bill Piekut, education coordinator.

In addition to these announcements, GMCG also unveiled the draft maps from Dr. Robert Newton's project, mapping important recharge land in the aquifer region. In his keynote address, Dr. Newton spoke of the formation of the aquifer and why the recharge

land is important to protect. Whether or not the land is a recharge area is a direct result of what soils are present. Gravel pits are often part of the recharge land for an aquifer and can be particularly sensitive and more prone to pollution. In speaking on contamination, Dr. Newton said that just one gallon of benzene could contaminate as much as five billion gallons of water. Liza Mattison, a geology student from Smith College working with Dr. Newton, further explained her work on the map project.

In other GMCG news, Patagonia has again funded our advocacy efforts, enabling GMCG to continue to be a strong voice for watershed protection in the Ossipee Watershed. Lakes Region Charitable Fund has also funded a board development and training program

GMCG is also grateful to our members and friends who have continued to support us financially and emotionally. "You are the reason that GMCG has become a strong and respected voice in the Ossipee Watershed," said Blair Folts. "We look forward to seeing you at our upcoming events and working together to protect our natural resources. Thank you."

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

Susan Slack, President
Blair Folts, 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
Maine, Dennis Finn

Executive Director, Blair Folts

Forestry in the Watershed

Posting: Should I or Shouldn't I ?

BY PETER POHL

Posting one's land is an individual landowner right that tends to invoke considerable emotion both pro and con. The decision to post is generally based upon a landowner's desire to control the public use of one's property, to provide for one's safety during the hunting season and to protect against liability for any injury to the casual visitor.

New Hampshire's landscape is changing hands at an alarming rate. The latest U.S. Forest Service landowner study conducted in the early 1990's revealed that the average length of ownership is seven to nine years. The frequency of multi-generational ownerships of property for lengthy periods of time is on the decline. There are approximately 90,000 private landowners owning an average of about 35 acres. Roughly half are residents of the state and the other half claim their residence elsewhere. As the value of land increases, the rate of subdivision and sale of smaller and smaller parcels also accelerates. This action generally has a detrimental effect on the use of land for the purposes of growing forest products for harvest, and the promotion of hunting and other public recreational uses of the land.

There is a noticeable increase in the posting of land throughout the region. A number of different levels of posting are employed by the landowner. These range from limiting the use of the property by

signs that state, "Hunting by Permission Only," to the other extreme of outlawing any use with signs that state, "Posted, Private Property, Hunting, Fishing, Trapping or Trespassing for any Purpose is Strictly Forbidden, Violators will Be Prosecuted." This latter sign is the one that seems to be appearing in increasing frequency throughout Carroll County. These signs signal a disturbing trend that threatens a traditional way of life that has been enjoyed in many instances for generations.

While landowners have a right to do as they please with their private property, I do think that many who are moving from more urban areas may be taking things to the extreme. When new owners post their property against any public use, the question that is raised is how do they expect to be welcomed in their new community when the first message they convey is, "Don't take one step on my land or I will prosecute you."

In a discussion with a new landowner who has done some limited posting to prevent hunting on her land, I was reminded that it is a matter of two different cultures: the rural versus the urban mentality. Neither is right or wrong, just a different perspective. The urban dweller is accustomed to high density populations and the need to set boundaries, whereas the rural mentality is of wide-open spaces and the public use of the land for recreational purposes.

Forestry in the Watershed (Cont.): To Post or Not To Post

Tourism is New Hampshire's largest industry. The revenue generated from this industry drives a big segment of the economy. Significant income is derived from the sale of hunting and fishing licenses and the registration of snowmobiles and ATVs. Many of these uses of the land are being threatened by extensive posting of land.

There is no question that a very small percentage of the population shows little regard or respect for the land. They strew litter and other debris on the landscape or leave ruts on the land with off-road vehicles. Unfortunately, the 95% who respect the land and appreciate the public use of this private ownership are often penalized as a result of the actions of a few. In an effort to reverse the negative publicity generated by irresponsible snowmobilers and other users, organized clubs have sprung up throughout the state. These groups have met with landowners to lay out, construct and maintain a trail network that benefits both the landowner and the recreational user. This effort has helped to alleviate some of the fear. According to the New Hampshire Fish and Game Department, written permission of a landowner is required before operating an OHRV (ATV, snowmobile or trail bikes) on private property.

State law, RSA 215-A:34,II, recognizes the hazardous nature of OHRV operation. As a

matter of law, any person who drives one of these vehicles accepts the inherent dangers of the sport and may not take any action against the landowner from injuries that result from these dangers. According to the law, the driver assumes certain risks including variations in the terrain, snow or ice conditions, rocks, trees, stumps, structures on the land, pole lines, fences and collision with other operators or other persons.

Many landowners worry about hunters on their property. The law enforcement division of the N.H. Fish and Game Department will gladly meet with property owners to discuss the creation of safe zones including providing "Safety Zone" signs so landowners can post the area around the homestead but retain large portions of the ownership open to hunting and other uses. This is done to discourage the blanket posting of the entire property.

Landowners can also limit the number of hunters on their property by posting "Hunting Only with Landowner Permission" signs. Those opposed to hunting in principle can choose to post against hunting but still keep the property open for other recreational uses such as hiking, cross-country skiing, fishing, bird watching etc.

Under the Current Use statute, RSA Chapter 79-A, landowners who permit recreational uses of the land excluding vehicular use, receive an additional 20% reduction in the assessment rate of their land. The uses that must be

allowed for this reduction include hunting, fishing, snowshoeing, hiking, skiing, and nature observation.

If landowners persist in their desire to post, there are laws for that as well. According to RSA 635:4, posted signs must be of durable material with any words describing the physical activity prohibited printed in black letters no less than two inches in height with the name and address of the owner or lessee of such land. Signs must be posted not more than 100 yards apart on all sides of the property and must be posted at gates, bars and other entrances. Permission must be received by the power company, telephone company or the town and state if the posted signs are installed on either poles that belong to the utility companies or the trees within the town or state highway right of way.

For those landowners who are contemplating posting their property, I would encourage them to give some thought to their decision, the effort and expense to install and maintain the signs and the difficulty in policing and enforcing the outlawed uses of their land. It may just be a lot simpler to not post and permit a way of life that has been enjoyed for generations. Think about it.

Peter Pohl is a forester with UNH Cooperative Extension, Carroll County. Share thoughts or comments with him at 539-3331 or Peter.Pohl@unh.edu

Conservation Conversations

Editor's Note: This feature, 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.

Ossipee

The Ossipee Conservation Commission will sponsor an educational program on moose with wildlife biologist Kristine Bontaites, from New Hampshire Fish and Game on Thursday, May 3rd at the Ossipee Public Library.

There will be a walking tour of the Sumner Brook forestry operation on Saturday, May 5th at 10 a.m. Fellow foresters and interested parties are encouraged to attend.

The Commission will sponsor three students to the 4H Summer Conservation camp. They will be going to Bear Hill Camp and Barry Conservation Camp.

Effingham

The Effingham Conservation Commission has rescheduled its annual Earth Day "Trash and Treasure Hunt" roadside clean up to May 19 due to the lingering snow. All volunteers should meet at the Effingham Fire Station on Route 153 in Center Effingham at 8 a.m. to be given road assignments and to receive garbage bags. Helpers should bring all collected trash to the Effingham Transfer Station and then enjoy a picnic at the Fire Station from 11:30-12:30.

There will also be a special event to encourage more folks to participate — a treasure hunt. Hidden about the town will be "Blue Earth Day Bottles." Helpers are requested to turn in these "treasures" and thus be eligible for a prize drawing at the picnic.

At Town Meeting this year, the Conservation Commission proposed that the town deed 11 parcels of town-owned wetland over to the Commission to manage as conservation land. The Town voted to accept this proposal.

Freedom

The Freedom Conservation Commission has written a letter to LCHIP in support of The Nature Conservancy's proposal for funding to purchase a key 31-acre parcel as part of its continuing efforts to preserve what remains of the pine barrens in Freedom.

The Commission reviewed a ZBA application submitted by Danforth Bay Camping Resort for a 54-boat slip dock system. This application is part of Purity Spring Resort's (new owners of the old Shawtown Campground) upgrade of the campground, including updated water and septic systems.

The Commission is waiting for the outcome of an upcoming hearing by the Freedom selectmen concerning a list of complaints submitted by several property owners abutting the Ossipee Lake Marina. Their letter alleges numerous zoning and wetland violations made by the Marina.

Two expedited applications for seasonal docks on Spindle Point were received and approved.

Alan Grant stepped down as chairman completing 10 years of service to the town. Matt Rug and Bill Klotz will co-chair the Commission. The Commission is still looking for one new voting member and one or two people to serve as alternates. Contact Bill Klotz if interested.

Sandwich

The Town of Sandwich recently received a \$50,000 gift to be used to support the "Five Days of Sandwich" environmental education daycamp. This camp is run by the Conservation Commission in two one-week sessions during the summer with about 10 campers in each session. The campers range in age from fourth to sixth grade. Typical activities include canoeing, hiking, and exploring all around Sandwich. Last year the events included searching for deformed frogs and looking for invasive species. The gift has been placed in an expendable trust under the control of the town trustees of trust funds and the interest will be used to support the camp.

Bearcamp River Trail Day will be May 5 at 8 a.m. Anyone interested in helping out with trail maintenance contact Chip Kimball at 284-6421.

Tamworth

The Tamworth Conservation Commission has several spring and summer trail maintenance and repair projects scheduled including working on the foot bridge over the Swift River in the Big Pines area of Hemenway State Forest. Town Meeting voted to appropriate \$ 1000 to the Conservation Commission for this project, with labor to be provided by volunteers.

The Commission maintains the Great Hill Tower in Hemenway State Forest, which is visited by hundreds of people each year. Volunteers are being sought to help repaint the stairs.

The Commission welcomes new member Jim Alt.

WATERSHED BIRDER

BLUEBIRD FACTS

Several readers have asked for information on Bluebirds. The following information was provided courtesy of The North American Bluebird Society (NABS):

BY SUSAN LEE

Over the years, land has been cleared for housing and industrial developments, shopping malls, highways, and crop land; many old trees have been cut down for firewood. Wooden fence posts that provided nesting cavities have now been replaced with metal posts. With modernization, the supply of natural nesting cavities for bluebirds and other native cavity nesters has been greatly reduced.

Compounding the problem of habitat loss has been the introduction into North America of two imported species — the House Sparrow and the European Starling. Both starlings and sparrows are cavity nesters, and both are very aggressive. House Sparrows are small enough to enter any hole that a bluebird can, and are so aggressive that they will chase away the more timid bluebird. Starlings can be excluded from bluebird boxes by using the correct size entrance hole, but will out-compete bluebirds for woodpecker holes and other natural nesting cavities.

During the summer, bluebirds feed mainly on insects. In the winter, bluebirds depend on many kinds of wild berries for their food supply. However, the supply of wild berries has also decreased over the years. The few berries that remain are often stripped quickly by large flocks

of starlings. Birders in New Hampshire have commented on the number of Bluebirds seen this winter. Bluebirds regularly winter from New York and Connecticut south, although a few stay farther north. As a result of the mild winter last year and the abundant rain this summer, many common birds have found enough natural food and have been able to winter farther north than usual or have not needed to take advantage of backyard feeder stations. Most Bluebirds arrive in New Hampshire in March and April and less often in late February.

Even though the bluebird population has greatly decreased, the future can still be promising for them. The most important step we can take to help bring back the bluebird is to provide nesting sites by setting out a bluebird box or starting a bluebird trail. A bluebird trail is a series of bluebird boxes placed along a prescribed route. In areas where nesting boxes have been put up in suitable habitat, bluebird populations are increasing. Bluebirding is a great environmental, hands-on project that people of all ages can enjoy.

Habitat is the key factor to consider when setting up a bluebird trail. Open rural country with scattered trees and low or sparse ground cover is best. Suitable habitat should include perch sites, such as a fence line, wires, or tree branches where bluebirds may perch to search for food. Look for these when you are selecting a location for your nesting boxes. If bluebirds do not like the

habitat, they probably will not use your boxes. Pastureland, acreages, parks away from human traffic, and mowed areas such as cemeteries, golf courses are all good locations for a bluebird trail (provided pesticides are not used). Avoid brushy and heavily wooded areas — this is the habitat of the House Wren. Avoid areas where the House Sparrow is abundant (i.e. farmsteads and feedlots). Avoid areas of heavy pesticide use. Unless your trail is in an area where raccoons are not present, avoid mounting bluebird boxes on a fence line or on trees. Raccoons are known to walk fence lines and may find your boxes.

Don't be discouraged if your nesting boxes are not used the first year. If bluebirds are not common in your area, it may take them a few seasons to find your new box. Bluebirds generally return to the same area each year. Bluebird trails have been an extremely effective method of reestablishing the bluebird populations across North America.

For more specific information on choosing and mounting a nestbox, as well as setting up and monitoring a Bluebird Trail, send a self-addressed stamped envelope to:

*The North American Bluebird Society
P.O. Box 74*

Darlington WI 53530-0074

or check out

www.nabluebirdsociety.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

Calendar

SATURDAY, MAY 5 *TOM HOWE, SENIOR LAND PROTECTION SPECIALIST FOR THE SOCIETY FOR THE PROTECTION OF NEW HAMPSHIRE FORESTS AND DUANE HYDE, LAND PROTECTION SPECIALIST FOR THE NH CHAPTER OF THE NATURE CONSERVANCY,* will present a workshop for the *Green Mountain Conservation Group* on land conservation. The workshop will focus on the different options landowners have for ensuring long-term protection of their land. Associated tax benefits and limited funding sources will also be discussed. **At the Effingham Historical Society, 9 to 11:30 a.m.** For more information call GMCG at 539-7926 or Trish Churchill at SPNHF at 224-9945.

WEDNESDAY MAY 9 *The Green Mountain Conservation Group* will sponsor a slide lecture by Kristine Bontaites, wildlife biologist with New Hampshire Fish and Game, on *New Hampshire Black Bears: Living in the Bears' Backyard*. Ms. Bontaites will discuss the effects of this year's winter snowfall on bears. **At the Tamworth Town House at 7 p.m.** For more information, call GMCG at 539-7926.

SATURDAY MAY 19 *The Green Mountain Conservation Group and Bob Hardy, Forester for the New Hampshire Department of Resources and Economic Development,* will lead a walk in the Pine River State Forest to review the 121 acres that the Division of Forests and Lands is planning to harvest timber from this year. He will discuss forest management issues as well as explain the marking and cutting of this timber sale. **Meet at the Effingham Fire Station on Route 153, Center Effingham, at noon. (In case of rain, meet at the Effingham Historical Society.)** For more information, call GMCG at 539-7926

SATURDAY MAY 19 *The Effingham Conservation Commission* will sponsor the annual Earth Day road side clean-up and Treasure Hunt. **Meet at the Effingham Fire Station on Route 153 in Center Effingham at 8 a.m.** The Commission will treat all volunteers to a barbeque lunch following the clean up. For information on how you can help call Conservation Commission Chairman Larry Leavitt at 539-6157.

SATURDAY MAY 19 & JULY 21 *The Wonalancet Out Door Club (WODC)* will sponsor its annual trail clearing days. Everyone is invited to help and learn more about the trails that the club maintains. **Meet at the Ferncroft kiosk in Wonalancet at 8:30 a.m.** The day will be followed by a potluck supper in the evening. For more information contact Judy Reardon at 323-8827 or visit the WODC website at www.wodc.org.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 6 *The Green Mountain Conservation Group and UNH Cooperative Extension* will present the Effingham and Freedom Planning Boards with a complete set of Natural Resource Inventory maps. Phil Auger, UNH Cooperative Extension specialist, will discuss ways that the towns can incorporate these maps into their master plans and how the towns can use them to better plan for development and protect their natural resources. **The meeting will be at the Effingham Town Hall from 7 to 9 p. m.** For more information, call GMCG at 539-7926.

FRIDAY, JUNE 15 *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 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 one has a greater chance of seeing a bear, wild turkey, deer, moose or peregrine falcon than your great grandmother did. **The presentation is rescheduled from March 30 and will be at the Freedom Town Hall from 7 to 9 p.m.** For more information, call GMCG at 539-7926.

SATURDAY JULY 14 WATERSHED WEEKEND: LAKE MANAGEMENT ISSUES IN THE WATERSHED, featuring panel discussions, interpretive walks, guided boat tours, BBQ lunch, environmental arts, sponsored by GMCG and Camp Calumet. **Camp Calumet on Ossipee Lake, Freedom**, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Watch for more information in the summer edition of Watershed News or call GMCG at 539-7926.

SUNDAY JULY 15 WATERSHED WEEKEND: LAKE MANAGEMENT ISSUES IN THE WATERSHED, will feature a guided tour of Squam Lake with Tom Curren from Lakes Region Conservation Trust. Watch for more information in the summer edition of THE WATERSHED NEWS.

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

To submit Calendar listing for the Summer issue of **THE WATERSHED NEWS**, please send information to GMCG *Calendar* by June 21, 2001. Thanks

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

(Student membership)

Stream ___\$50 **River** ___\$75 **Pond** ___\$100

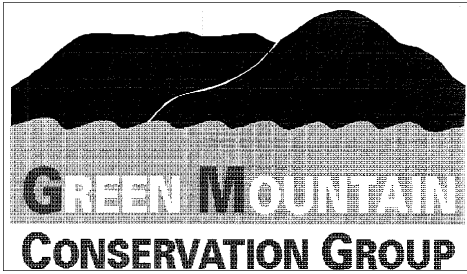
Lake ___\$250 **Aquifer** ___\$500 **Other** _____

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE _____ **E-Mail** _____

Alternate Address _____



GMCG
P.O. Box 95
South Effingham, NH
03882

Nonprofit Organization
U.S. Postage Paid
S. Effingham, NH
Permit No. 10

The Watershed News

Deadline for the next edition of The Watershed News is **June 20**. Mail news items to the above address or phone 603-539-7926.

Bring The Earth your love and happiness.
The Earth will be safe when we feel safe in ourselves.

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

