

The Watershed News

Volume XVII, Issue III

Summer 2014

A Quarterly Publication for the Ossipee Watershed Published by the Green Mountain Conservation Group

Internationally known biologist, Denver Holt, returns to speak about Snowy Owls

Denver Holt will be the featured speaker at the Green Mountain Conservation Group's summer fundraising event hosted by the Inn on Main in Wolfeboro on Saturday, August 23. Holt, a renowned wildlife biologist and founder of the Owl Research Institute (ORI) (www.owlinstitute.org) in Montana, will share an engaging presentation about his research on snowy owls in the Arctic. He will discuss owl behavior and habitat, concerns about the effect of climate change on species and ecosystems, and present observations on the increased sightings of snowy owls in New England.

Holt was recently nominated for the 2014 Indianapolis prize, which is often considered the Nobel Prize of wildlife conservation. ORI's research has included partners in Alaska, Montana, Africa, Europe and Japan on the long-eared owl, great horned owl, barn owl, saw-whet owl, great gray owl, northern hawk owl, snowy owl, MacKinder's eagle owl and Blakiston's fish owl, among others.

In addition to research, ORI focuses on owl conservation advocacy, policy and environmental education at Ninepipes Center for Wildlife Research and Education. A special addition to the event is Holt's donation of a weekend in the field with him at the Ninepipes Conservation Center in Montana, which will be auctioned at the event.

The evening will commence at 5 pm with a social

hour and cash bar, followed by a buffet dinner and live auction led by auctioneer Tom Troon of Conway. Auction item details can be found at the GMCG website at www.gmcg.org. Door prizes will add to the fun.

The Inn on Main of Wolfeboro and The Lakeview Neurorehabilitation Center in Effingham are graciously sponsoring this event.

Those who had the opportunity to hear Holt speak at GMCG's Annual Meeting in 2008 will remember his amazing presentation before a packed room.



Photo by Dick Walker

To reserve tickets, contact GMCG at 539-1859, or email info@gmcg.org. To purchase tickets online visit www.gmcg.org or mail your check to P. O. Box 95, Effingham, NH 03882. Tickets are \$50 per person and must be purchased by Wednesday, August 20th.

Tickets purchased by July 15th are \$40 per person. Cancellations with full refund will be accepted up to 14 days prior to the event. All proceeds will support GMCG's mission of promoting awareness and appreciation for clean water in the Ossipee Watershed and natural resource conservation.

“Thanks” to our generous event sponsors:



Hotel Kenney

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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. This watershed includes one of the largest and deepest stratified drift aquifers in New Hampshire.

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 unique natural resources.

Through research, education, advocacy and land conservation we strive to promote an awareness and appreciation of our watershed's natural resources and encourage a commitment to protect them.

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Native Americans roamed the Saco Valley 13,000 years ago

by Robert Goodby, Ph.D.

While many people think history begins with the arrival of European settlers, the human story of the Saco River goes back as much as 13,000 years further. The first people to come to this area are called Paleoindians, and arrived only a few thousand years after the glaciers disappeared, when the land still resembled tundra, hunting caribou and leaving their distinctive stone spear points at sites in Ossipee, Intervale, and elsewhere. As the climate warmed, new types of forests with different plants and animals appeared, and fish filled the rivers formed by the melting glaciers. For the next 10,000 years, Native Americans would live and travel throughout the area, fishing at waterfalls in the spring, hunting deer and gathering nuts in the fall, and returning year after year to the same favored spots, leaving broken tools, pottery, traces of stone-lined cooking hearths, and the burials of their loved ones at sites throughout the Saco. They made particular use of rhyolite and hornfels from around Tamworth and Ossipee, fine-grained stones that were ideal for making spearheads, knives, and other tools. This stone moved great distances along Native trade and social networks, and can be found throughout the Saco drainage down to the Atlantic Ocean, across the Lakes Region of New Hampshire, and down the Merrimack River as far south as Manchester and Nashua.

The first Europeans referred to the Native people of the upper Saco as the Pequawket (or Pigwacket), which was possibly a place name that they mistakenly applied to any Native people they saw in the area. These people spoke a dialect of the Abenaki language, and had already survived a century of devastating war and disease brought by the Europeans before the famous "Battle of Pequawket" in 1725 in modern-day Fryeburg. Following the French and Indian wars, many of the Abenaki survivors moved to Canada, although they returned regularly to the Saco River well into the 20th century, when Abenaki basket makers would sell their wares to tourists at the grand hotels of the White Mountains. Prominent among these was Joseph Laurent, who established a trading post in Intervale, where he and his son Stephen maintained an Abenaki presence and published two dictionaries of the Abenaki language. The archaeological record of the Saco is part of a living tradition and connects the history of Native people from the melting of the glacial ice sheets up to the present.

The archaeological sites in the Saco River area are found in many locations, but particularly near streams, rivers, lakes and ponds, on level, well-drained terraces, near sources of good tool-making stone, and in locations that formed natural portage spots around waterfalls or between stream drainages. When the artificially raised levels of local lakes are dropped in the fall, artifacts can occasionally be found along the original shorelines that are now typically under water for most of the year. A number of sites were found along the level intervals along the Saco during an archaeological study done for the Conway bypass project. These sites are often shallow, easy to find, and even easier to accidentally destroy. Should you discover a site, think of it for what it is—a precious, non-renewable resource that, in the right hands, can tell a story about the deep history of this region. Notify the state historic preservation office in either Maine or New Hampshire so the site can be protected, and leave excavation to those with the proper training. If you have the urge to try archaeology yourself, volunteer with the New Hampshire Division of Historical Resources' SCRAP program, where you'll be trained in proper archaeological techniques while working on real sites and help ensure that these remarkable windows into history remain open for everyone.



For more information on the New Hampshire SCRAP program, visit their web site at <http://www.nh.gov/nhdhr/SCRAP.htm>

Dr. Robert Goodby is founder of Monadnock Archaeological Consulting and a professor at Franklin Pierce University

Water Literacy programs inspire youth and adults in data collection

The Late spring didn't slow the start of the **RIVERS** program which consists of 30 sites each year. Since 2001, volunteers collect water samples biweekly from May through October. Ten of these sites continue year round. A core of over 40 volunteers collect physical and chemical data across the watershed and follow a strict protocol to do so.

GMCG's **Volunteer Lake Assessment Program (VLAP)**, was delayed about a month this season due to the late ice out (official date was April 22) and fluctuating water levels which affected our volunteer captains trying to put their boats in the water.

GMCG's VLAP has a core of fantastic volunteers who donate their time, efforts, boats and gas to this program. Each month, volunteers collect physical and chemical parameters at the five deep spots on Ossipee Lake. Volunteers have been collecting data from the Lake and Bays since the late 1980's creating a baseline for trend analysis.

This year's **Trout in the Classroom (TIC)** participants included Madison, Effingham,

Moultonborough and Conway Elementary Schools. TIC is a NH Fish and Game program and pre approves release sites where classes release the trout in late spring. Students did a great job raising their eastern brook trout from eggs to fingerlings. Because trout are incredibly sensitive to pollution, students learned about water quality parameters and threats including non point source pollution while raising their fish. The fingerlings were released in local rivers a bit later this year due to the cold water temperatures because the macroinvertebrates, which are nature's fish food, are still "hiding" until the water is between 45° and 50° F. We are looking forward to adding Freedom Elementary to the TIC program in 2015!

Camp Calumet will continue assessing the Bearcamp River (OL-2) this year for the RIVERS program. GMCG hitches a ride on their boat every other week up the mouth of the River to a site that is only accessed by water where they collect data and samples for lab analysis. These

citizen scientists are crucial to the data collection so that the full picture of the health of the Bearcamp River, a major tributary to Ossipee Lake, can be known.

Camp Huckins is participating in the **Secchi Disc Dip In** this summer, a national volunteer program that teaches people about water quality through measurements of clarity using a black and white disc. Readings are entered into a national database and give a picture of the clarity of lakes across the country.

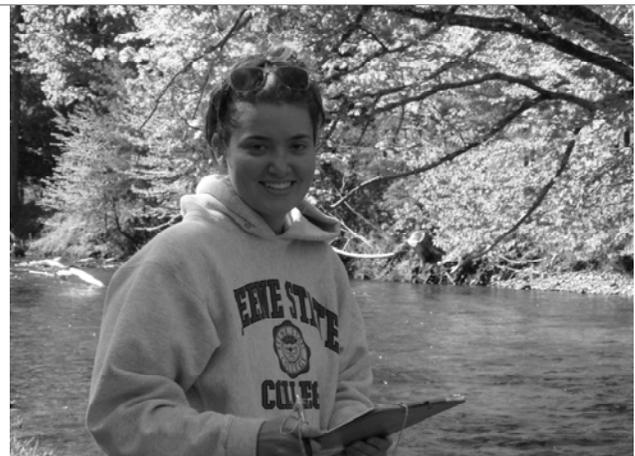
Camp Robinhood will be working on a **rain garden** this summer. A Rain garden is a shallow depression that is planted with deep-rooted native plants and grasses. The garden should be positioned near a runoff source like a downspout, driveway or sump pump to capture rainwater runoff and stop the water which transports pollutants, including phosphorus, from reaching a lake or river system.

We are always looking for volunteers! Please call the office at 539-1859 for more information.

Maureen Brooks will lead the summer water quality program

Maureen Brooks graduated from Keene State College in May 2013 with a Bachelors Degree in Geography. Growing up in the rural town of Freedom put the outdoors at Maureen's fingertips. She has been enriched in the love of nature from the hikes taken over the years. Through her studies at Keene State she found her home in the geography department, the subfield of interest, Physical Geography.

Maureen is excited to be the Summer Intern for GMCG and to learn more about the Saco/Ossipee Watershed, and the area she has chosen to continue to call home. Through Green Mountain's key programs, her hopes are to help continue work in raising awareness of the importance of clean water, not only for residents of the Ossipee Watershed but for the ecosystems that live within.



"I am really looking forward to testing the rivers, and working with the young water stewards from the summer camps who help with testing the lakes."

Anglers asked to assist with Mercury study

By Eric Stokes

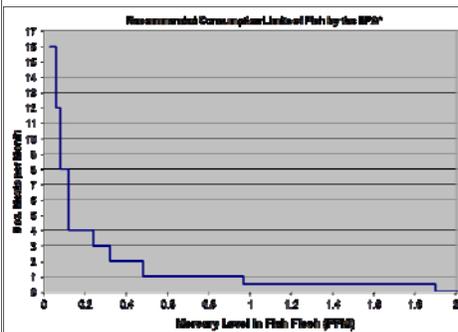
The element mercury (chemical symbol: Hg) is becoming ever more abundant in the environment. It occurs in both inorganic and organic forms. It is primarily one of the organic forms of mercury that is found in living organisms, i.e., methylmercury. It is this form that accounts for its toxic effects in humans. Mercury is introduced into the environment by both natural and manmade processes. It has been estimated that the burning of coal for the production of electricity and incineration of solid waste constitutes 87% of the emissions of mercury in the United States.¹ Emissions from these sources are released into the air and then fall back to earth attached to dust or with the rain; therefore, areas several hundreds of miles from the source can be affected.

In fish, methylmercury is found primarily in muscle bound to proteins unlike other contaminants that tend to accumulate in the fatty tissue. Skinning and trimming the fish does not significantly reduce the mercury concentration in the fillet, nor is it removed by cooking processes. Because moisture is lost during cooking, the concentration of mercury after cooking is actually higher than it is in the fresh uncooked fish. This form of mercury accumulates in an organism over time (it is not metabolized and excreted like other contaminants). Therefore, larger fish of a given species tend to have higher levels than smaller fish. Furthermore, higher levels of mercury are found as one moves up the food chain (bioaccumulation), e.g., predatory fish like pickerel tend to have higher concentrations than minnows or bottom feeding fish like the suckers.

The known toxicity of methylmercury in humans is primarily neurological. "It affects the immune system, alters genetic and enzyme systems, and damages the nervous system, including coordination and the senses of touch, taste, and sight. Methylmercury is particularly damaging to developing embryos, which are five to ten times more sensitive than adults."² As a result, pregnant and nursing women, children under age 7, and women who may get pregnant are particularly sensitive. A more thorough summary of the literature can found

elsewhere.^{2,3} Forty States have issued advisories for methylmercury on selected water-bodies and 13 states have statewide advisories for some or all sportfish from rivers or lakes, including all of the New England states with the exception of RI. EPA has formulated guidelines for the number of 8 oz. fish meals one should eat per month based upon the levels of mercury in a fish.³ The figure graphically shows this relationship. Two numbers should be remembered from this relationship: below 0.06 ppm one can eat as many fish meals as one wish and above 1.9 ppm one should not eat any fish at all. This relationship does not hold for the people in the sensitive group noted above that need a more restrictive intake of mercury.

Each state is responsible for collecting data on the levels of fish in that state. Since the early 1990s New Hampshire has been collecting data on the levels of mercury in fish flesh. As of this spring, roughly 3600 freshwater fish have been analyzed for total mercury content on a wet tissue basis. This data base includes most of the known species of fish in NH and many of the lakes and streams. However, as of this writing most of the data has come from the southern half of the state. In fact, of the five major watersheds in the state, i.e., Merrimack, Connecticut, Androscoggin, Piscataqua, and Saco, only 63 fish have come from the Saco



River watershed (which includes all of the Ossipee River Watershed) and only 7 fish have been analyzed over the last 12 years from this watershed. Many of the lakes have not had a single fish tested. These include, Big Dan Hole Pond, Little Dan Hole Pond, Conner Pond, Loon Lake, Duncan Lake, White Lake, the Eaton Ponds, the Beech

Ponds, Shaw Pond, the Porridge Ponds, Iona Lake, Chocorua Lake, and Ossipee Lake or any of its Bays.

So how can we get this corrected? Recently, NH Department of Environmental Services has started a program, the Volunteer Mercury in Fish Sampling Program, whereby fishermen can donate recently caught fish to be analyzed for mercury content. A person willing to donate a fish needs to: freeze the fish as soon as possible and include a card with: [the owners name and contact information, the lake and town it was caught in, common name of the fish and length, and the date it was caught]. When DES gets the result they will send you the data. Also, the values will be included in the NH mercury database.

In order to encourage the acquisition of more data from the Saco River Watershed, the Green Mountain Conservation Group is assisting fishermen who want to donate fish to be analyzed by providing storage and transportation for your fish down to DES's lab in Concord. Two collection points are currently available: Green Mountain Conservation Group, Huntress Bridge Road (Corey Lane, 539-1859) in Effingham and 19 Eaton Rd (Rt. 153) at the Ossipee River Bridge (Emery Stokes, 539-2637) in Freedom. anglers should call before leaving to drop off your fish to ensure that someone will be ready to accept the fish or call GMCG (539-1859) for possible alternate sites. NH DES is particularly interested in fish (size and species) that would normally be eaten. Please send comments or questions about this issue to eric.hartley.stokes@gmail.com or clane@gmccg.org.

1. US EPA "Mercury Update: Impact on Fish Advisories," EPA-823-F-01-011, June 2001.
2. USGS, "Mercury in the Environment," Fact Sheet 146-00, October 2000.
3. US EPA, "Guidance for Assessing Chemical Contaminant Data for Use in Fish Advisories, Vol. 2, Risk Assessment and Fish Consumption Limits," 3rd Edition, EPA 823-B-00-008, November 2000.

10 year Analysis of Watershed Water Quality Research will be June 19th



Fred Van Cor (left) and Larry Leavitt (right) were early WQM volunteers in 2001. Sadly they are no longer with us but their spirits live on in the Rivers.

On June 19th at 5:00 at the Freedom Town Hall, FB Environmental (FBE) will present the analysis of 10 years of water quality data that has been collected in the Ossipee Watershed through GMCG's RIVERS and Volunteer Lake Assessment Program (VLAP). This presentation will give watershed residents a greater understanding of the trends of the lakes and tributaries that flow through their towns.

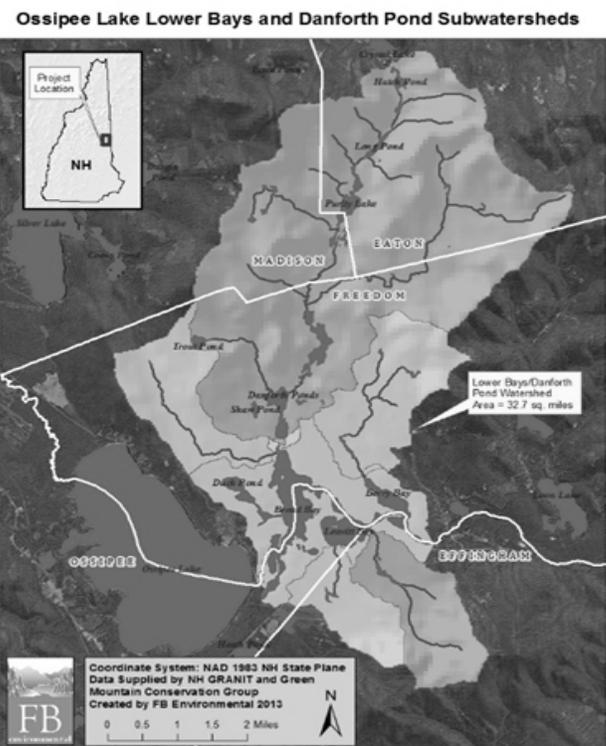
Since 2001, RIVERS volunteers have made over 5,500 site visits. Data has also been collected through the Volunteer Lake Assessment Program (VLAP) since the late 80's creating an incredible set of baseline data for the Lakes and tributaries in the Ossipee Watershed. Baseline data for any watershed is very important to determine the trends in water quality across the region.

Following these trends further allows us to recognize any issues that may be developing over a short or long period of time. Being able to identify areas of concern early is critical to the health of a watershed. This presentation will also contribute to the launch of the next phases of water protection programs, including specific identification of water sites that show they need remedial attention to sustain quality and/or correct detectable water quality imbalances that could be harmful to us and our downstream neighbors. Call GMCG for information.

Please Join us for a Community Forum on Saturday, July 12th!

The Green Mountain Conservation Group and FB Environmental Associates, in cooperation with many of our project partners, will be hosting a presentation and facilitated session on the Ossipee Lake Lower Bays and Danforth Pond Subwatersheds. This will be the final public meeting before the watershed plan is released and it is very important that we receive public input on what the conservation and restoration priorities should be for the bays and their watershed over the next 10-15 years. The first hour of this community forum will feature a thoughtful presentation of the results of the watershed study. This will be followed by a refreshment break and then we will engage in a facilitated session to enable the public to provide input on the "action plan" for this watershed.

The Forum will be held from 9 AM – noon at Totem Pole Park located on Pequawaket Trail Road in Freedom. Please RSVP to Corey Lane at clane@gmccg.org or 603-539-1859 if you plan on participating. We hope to see you there!



Conservation Conversations

Editor's Note: *Watershed Conversations is intended to provide a forum for the seven towns of the Ossipee Watershed to share news of their conservation and planning activities and an opportunity to find creative solutions to challenges.*

Eaton

The Conservation Commission was recently instructed on the proper way to conduct a prescribed burn, which is scheduled for fall 2014 on Foss Mountain. The objectives of this burn are to enhance growth of the organic commercial blueberry fields and to ensure the top of the mountain stays free of brush and young trees to allow for the well-known 360° view.

Zack Boyajian (white hat), Chair of the NH Prescribed Burn Council and the Environmental Program Manager for the NH Army National Guard, Concord was the instructor.

Members of the commission took a long hike throughout the blueberry fields, the



ridge and past burned and mowed areas of Foss to better understand the constraints and methods used in a prescribed burn. Additional training may be required later for members interested in taking part in the burn.

Effingham

Pondering the Effingham Conservation Commission's endeavors since the last newsletter report we can't relate exploits like the famed Wetland Inventory and Natural Resource Inventory studies, or even anything as in-depth as the Culvert Study. And, darn it, that's okay. Sometimes you really just have to maintain. Observe. Make small strides rather than great leaps.

The wandering picnic table came down from the summit of Green Mountain because the Boy Scouts beat us to the site. The table found a new home at the Route 153 boat ramp and plans are underway for a sturdy roof to protect the beautiful cedar table and its users from sun and rain.

Keep Effingham Litter Free (KELF) volunteers do their best to keep up with the ongoing efforts of Keep Effingham Looking Trashy, by collecting litter from the roadsides on a regular basis, as well as performing the annual Earth Day Roadside Cleanup in April. This year's tally was 119 bags of litter. The group saw some new volunteers, including families with children. Wear those gloves, kids. This stuff is gross. They were also joined by newly-elected Selectman Lawrence Edwards and family. That event does include lunch, so you might think about penciling it in for next year.

ECC continues to monitor areas of milfoil in various Effingham waters including sections of Ossipee Lake and Ossipee River, and works with the Province Lake

Association on their watershed management plan and other efforts to maintain and improve water quality in Province Lake.

The commission also maintains the Larry Leavitt Preserve on Route 153, with an informational kiosk, and ADA-compliant picnic table and a platform overlooking the wetland to facilitate bird and wildlife watching.

The commission is producing a new brochure and their website will be up on the Effingham town website soon.

Freedom

Summer is a great time to enjoy the 2,600+ acres of the Freedom Town Forest! The Town Forest is overseen by a conservation easement held by the State of New Hampshire in agreement with the Town of Freedom. The Conservation Commission has primary responsibility for managing the Forest.

The Town Forest Advisory Committee (FAC) is a standing committee of the Freedom Conservation Commission and serves to guide the CC in its' management decisions. A licensed forester acts as a consultant in the forest management. Goals and Objectives of the Town Forest Stewardship Plan are:

- Conserve wildlife habitat
- Preserve and enhance biodiversity (including the pine barren area within the forest)
- Maintain watershed health and restoration
- Community based forestry through timber management
- Safeguard low impact recreation

Notes from Down Stream

By Dennis Finn

The Saco River Corridor Commission is keeping step with the GMCG water quality volunteer monitors as we embark on a new water testing year. The Quality Assurance Protection Plan (QAPP) has been approved by the EPA and NHDES and we eagerly await what will most assuredly be the Maine DEP approval as we gather our equipment, our volunteers and our enthusiasm for monitoring our most precious resource – our water. Over on the Maine side of the watershed, we have made a number of changes. Most of them have to do with location and volunteer safety. In some instances however, we have adjusted where our samples are taken and have added new locations based on input from many of our towns. Over the winter, we met with a number of towns keen to participate further and more extensively in the collection of samples; and once again, the main concern for many of the towns is bacteria. It's easy to see why. Many of our lab samples have to do

with phosphorous, nitrogen, or alkalinity. While these are important, most folks in the upper watershed of the Saco, Ossipee and Little Ossipee Rivers use these waters for recreation. Basic elementary chemistry and acid base balances are important, and academic to many, but it is the bacteria that will make you ill and it's the bacteria that causes people to sit up and take notice. High phosphorous is trouble, but high bacteria means close the beaches.

I will end, once again, with what has become a mantra to me. The work of GMCG on the New Hampshire side is of tremendous benefit to us here in Maine. We do our part to keep it clean when it flows to us. But it's Blair, and Corey and the many volunteers that help to ensure that it is clean and healthy when it flows over that imaginary boundary from New Hampshire to Maine.

Dennis Finn is the Executive Director of the Saco River Corridor Commission and may be reached at 207-625-8123.

Save the Date! 2014 Summer Calendar

Thursday, June 19 5-6:30pm 10 Years Analysis of Water Quality Research, Freedom. GMCG will share a strategic milestone with the Ossipee Watershed Community at the Freedom Town Hall (upstairs). Presented by FB Environmental, the objective is to provide a greater understanding of the water quality which contributes to the launch of the next phase of water protection programs, including specific identification of water sites that show they need remedial attention to sustain quality and/or correct detectable water quality imbalances that could be harmful to us and to our downstream neighbors. Open to the public at no charge.

Saturday July 12 9-12 Totem Pole Park, Freedom. FB Environmental and GMCG will present the summary of the analysis of the 10 years of water quality data collection as well as a summary and update of the Ossipee Lake Lower Bays Watershed Management. A working group session will follow looking for input from the community for creating future plans of protecting the Ossipee Watershed.

July-August. Look for the GMCG display booth at local farmers markets and Old Home Week events in your towns. DES well water test kits will be available for those who may want to have their well water lab tested this summer and GMCG will coordinate delivery to DES over the summer. GMCG is working to provide more community presence and if you would like to volunteer as a way to learn more about GMCG, please contact the office at 603-539-1859.

Saturday August 23 5-8pm Denver Holt Owl Presentation and Fundraiser/Auction, The Inn on Main, Wolfeboro.

Sunday, September 28 3-6:30pm "Loons, Tunes and Spoons", Freedom. Based on Ossipee Lake at Calumet Conference Center, enjoy pontoon boat rides on the lake, a variety of local music, local food sampling, loons and the sunset. Bring a picnic. More details to follow.

Your Membership Makes a Difference.
PLEASE renew your 2014 membership today!
Every drop counts! Thank you!

(Please make checks payable to Green Mountain Conservation Group P.O. Box 95, Effingham, NH 03882)

You may also renew your membership online at www.gmcg.org/we-need-your-help/

Vernal Pool ___\$25 Stream ___\$50 River ___\$75 Pond ___\$100 Bay ___\$250 Lake ___\$500 Aquifer ___\$1000 Other ___

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE _____ EMAIL _____

Are you interested in being a GMCG Volunteer? YES



PLEASE RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP TODAY and encourage your family, friends and neighbors to join GMCG. GMCG is a non-profit 501 (C)3 tax-exempt organization. We are funded by grants, memberships, and donations.

Creating a future gift

One of the most meaningful ways to ensure your legacy of caring about clean water and the protection of our natural resources in the Ossipee Watershed is to include GMCG in your estate planning. Please contact us if you would like to discuss details and how you can support GMCG in this way. We accept donations of real property, stocks, bonds, mutual funds, life insurance policies and gift annuities. Donations are tax-deductible to the full extent of the law.

GMCG's Federal Tax Identification number is: 02-0498020.



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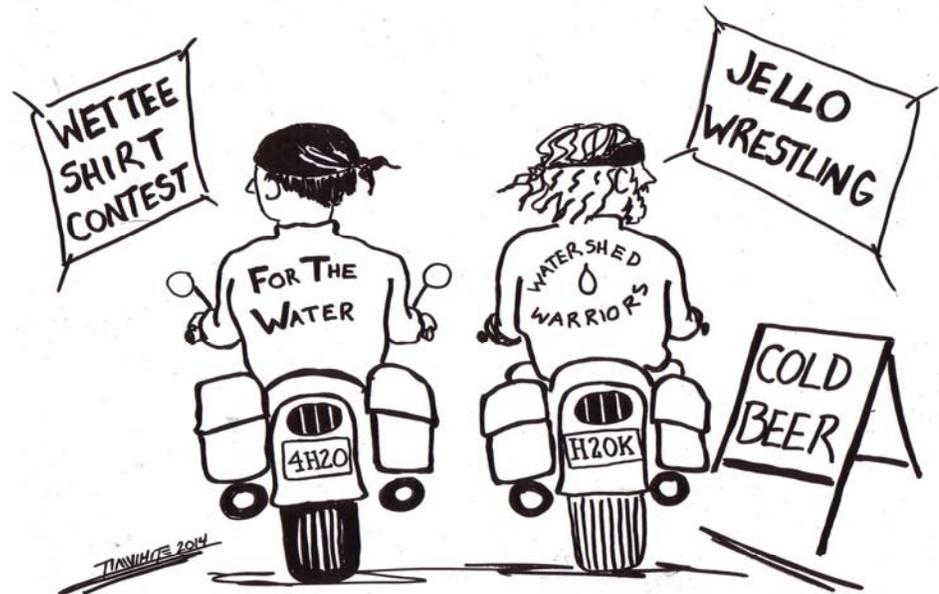
The Watershed News

Save the Date
Sunday August 23
Snowy Owls
Denver Holt
The Inn on Main
Wolfeboro

**Deadline for
Autumn Newsletter
submissions is September 10th**

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

BIKERS FOR CLEAN WATER



WE NEED CLEAN WATER FOR SO MANY GOOD THINGS

Sign up for event updates with *Watershed Happenings* and stay in the flow! Sign-up at www.gmcg.org