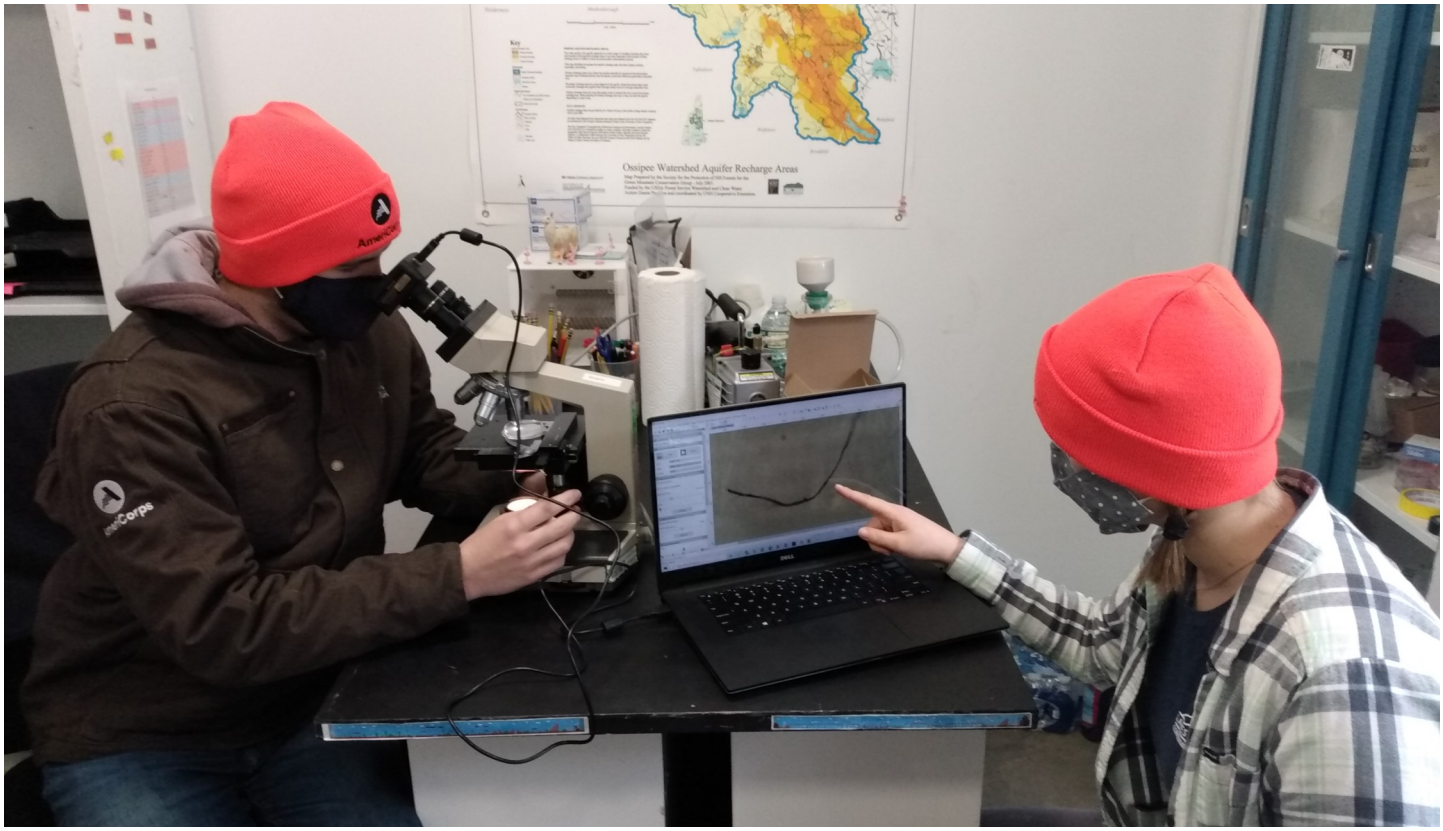
GREEN MOUNTAIN CONSERVATION GROUP

THE WATERSHED NEWS

Volume XXV Issue 1 *Winter 2021*

Protecting natural resources in the Ossipee Watershed since 1997



AmeriCorps members Trent Millum and EB (Emma Brandt) view a microplastic particle found in commercial bottled water.

GMCG expands Less Plastic Initiative

By Tara Schroeder

GMCG was recently awarded grants by the Dorr Foundation and NH Conservation Moose Plate Grant Fund to support the Less Plastic Initiative in 2021-2023. The Less Plastic Initiative began in 2016 in conjunction with 'More Clay Less Plastic', a movement from Venice, Italy that promotes use of ceramics instead of plastic. At the first Less Plastic Day, the movie "Bag It" was shown and inspired students at Kingswood High School to raise funds to replace their styrofoam lunch trays with reusable ones. The initiative has grown to include more local schools and a Less Plastic Challenge in April of 2019 in which youth from schools across the watershed in New Hampshire and Maine were challenged to upcycle plastic pellet bags.

Over the next year, GMCG will research and compile a "Less Plastic Initiative Guide" on plastic education including lesson plans, videos, and projects for grades K-12 that will be aligned with the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). The Guide will be given to local schools upon completion in 2021. GMCG will also begin research on microplastics in the Ossipee Watershed, after discovering microplastics in the Ossipee Lake system in the summer of 2019 while sampling for cyanobacteria. Microplastics are more commonly associated with ocean ecosystems so GMCG's research will help fill the information gap for microplastics in freshwater systems. While it is still unclear what effect plastic consumption has on humans, there is concern that microplastics contain and transmit toxic chemicals upon ingestion. A study from the University of Newcastle in Australia suggests that, on average, people consume five grams of plastic each week, or a credit card's worth of plastic.

To launch the project, GMCG held its 5th Less Plastic Day on December 18, 2020 with local schools.

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Green Mountain Conservation Group

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 Eaton, Effingham, Freedom, Madison, Ossipee, Sandwich and Tamworth comprise the Ossipee Watershed. This Watershed includes one of the largest and deepest stratified drift aquifers in New Hampshire. GMCG also partners across the Maine border into Parsonsfield and beyond. Water does not know political boundaries.

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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Executive Director's Corner

By Matt Howe

As reported in Tara Schroeder's cover story, GMCG received good funding news in late 2020 from the **Dorr Foundation** and the **NH Conservation Moose Plate Grant program**. These grants, $15,000 and $21,300 respectively, mean a major leap forward for our Less Plastic education and research. Combined with other grant support and your generous donations, I am pleased to report we are beginning the new year on a solid financial footing.

It is this kind of success and investment by respected foundations and state agencies that underscores the importance of our work and the wisdom of your donations to GMCG. You can continue your support in 2021 knowing that you are giving to a secure organization that is making things happen. Also keep in mind that these funders (and several others noted below) have confidence in us in large part because they see the base of support we have in the community and that GMCG is committed to growing and sustaining a deep and enduring network of friends who share our vision for the Ossipee Watershed.

A full FY20 financial report will be provided in our next newsletter, but here are a few more highlights:

- In November 2020, the **New Hampshire Charitable Foundation** awarded GMCG a three-year $60,000 unrestricted support grant, with the first installment of $20,000 issued in December 2020.

- In December, the **Estate of Dr. Stephanie Barnes**, a devoted conservationist and long-time supporter of GMCG, made a bequest to GMCG of $47,752 in accordance with Dr. Barnes' wishes.

- As previously reported and known to all of you who contributed to the 2020 Watershed Challenge, a generous family foundation awarded GMCG a $45,000 matching grant in November 2020.

- Also in 2020, the **Alfred Quimby Fund** awarded GMCG $2,000 and the **Tamworth Foundation** awarded $5,000 in support of our classroom education programs and other community education and service programs delivered to the Towns of Sandwich and Tamworth respectively. And our neighbors in Maine, the **Francis Small Heritage Trust** and the **Maine**

Continued on Page 11...

Less Plastic Initiative continued from page 1...

This virtual Less Plastic Day provided science experiments, crafts, films, discussions, and book readings. All are available on GMCG's YouTube channel and website.

The highlight of Less Plastic Day 2020 was a live Q&A session and discussion about plastic use with the film "Bag It" creator and star, Jeb Berrier. His award-winning film about plastic bags investigates the effects of plastic on our oceans, environment, and health, and explores what we can do about it. Jeb fielded questions from students from three schools during the hour-long program on everything from how he made the film to what he thought of sending our trash to the moon. His message was clear: "Let's look for ways for us to create less trash," he says, since "there is no away." Even though there are ocean clean-ups happening, and plans to redesign and make alternatives to plastic, we just keep creating more and more trash.

He shared that while it's depressing that plastics are still going into the ocean, there are positive things that have happened since he made the film. Examples include changes in the chemicals in plastics and progress with eliminating single use plastic bags around the world. Students shared that they were inspired by the film to use less plastic, and one class at Sandwich Central School has agreed to start using their own silverware instead of plastic as well as reduce their use of plastic bags. Students are also keeping logs of all the plastics they use at home and in school, which has been "eye-opening." Jeb encouraged them to keep up all of this great work. He also shared that there are talks of doing a follow up film to "Bag It."

The film "Bag It" can be borrowed from GMCG by contacting education@gmcg.org or it can be streamed on Vimeo or iTunes. GMCG also has other plastic-themed films to lend to schools or the public, including "A Plastic Ocean" and "Straws," with Kahoot educational quizzes for schools to help students process the films. Stay tuned for GMCG's 2021 virtual Earth Day celebration which will focus on the theme of plastic, as well as more citizen science opportunities.To learn more about the Less Plastic Initiative, visit GMCG's website.

Above: Jeb Berrier from the award-winning film "Bag It" in the "Bag Monster" costume which is made of 500 single use plastic bags, the amount of plastic bags the average American uses each year.

Above: Entries for the Less Plastic Challenge in 2019. The winning entry was a sleeping bag for the homeless with runner-ups of a Kentucky Derby outfit and reusable shopping bags.

Plastics keep falling on our heads

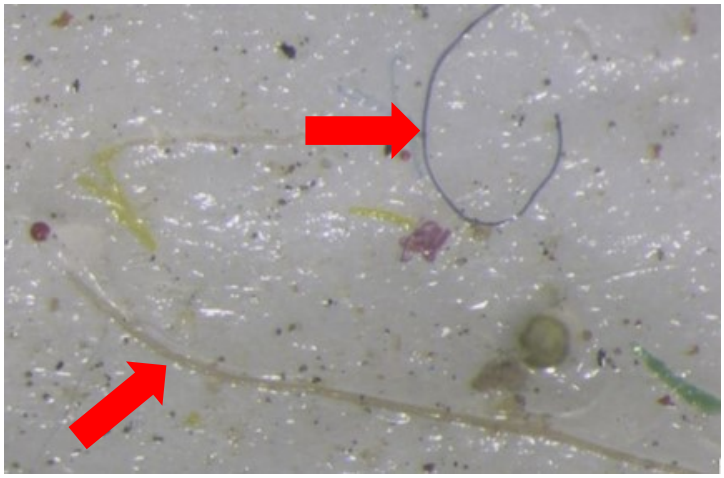
By Jill Emerson

There are a lot of songs out there that talk about precipitation. From the gentle timbre of "Singin' in the Rain", to more seasonal fare like "Let it Snow", to the classic dance anthem "It's Raining Men", there are a lot of songs that talk about things falling from the sky (okay maybe "It's Raining Men" does not fit into that category since I doubt The Weather Girls meant this literally). But these songs never talk about another thing that is literally raining down on us: microplastics.

We have talked about microplastics before in our surface water but research is finding that microplastics have disturbingly infiltrated our air as well. Monitoring that occurred at 11 different wilderness and national park areas in the western USA showed over 1,000 metric tons of plastic were discovered to have fallen on these lands in a single year (1). The route of contamination? Most likely the atmosphere. Researchers found that during rainstorms when wind blew from the direction of heavily populated places, the pieces of microplatics were larger. During dry conditions microplastics carried in by dust tended to be smaller in size but greater in number. The plastics carried by dust are hypothesized to have travelled from farther away – similar to how dust from the Sahara has been found in places like the southern United States and the Caribbean.

Due to their small size, microplastics are able to travel to far reaches of the planet via air currents and weather patterns. New research shows that plastic particles are being found in remote and unpopulated reaches of the arctic. In the Fram Strait, an area between Greenland and Svalbard (an island of Norway), microplastics have been found in snow collected from the tops of ice floes (2). On average, over 1,800 particulates were found in each 34 oz. sample, with a high of 14,000 at one site. This shows that in the arctic, an area of the world that conjures images of pristine nature, the contamination was significant. For comparison, snow was collected in more urban areas of Europe with 24,600 pieces per 34 oz.

Knowing that plastics can travel by air shows just how deeply they have permeated every location on the planet. There is no part of the world that



Above: Microplastics found in arctic ice core sample (Duncan Clark via REUTERS)

remains unaffected by human activity, which is a pretty sobering thought. Science has yet to determine the health impacts of eating, drinking, or inhaling microplastics on the human body. We are only beginning to scratch the surface in understanding how plastic contamination impacts other organisms. While many of our plastic contamination photos are of oceans and landfills, it is important to remember that plastic pollution is everywhere, even in the most remote places on Earth.

1 https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/thousands-of-tons-of-microplastics-are-falling-from-the-sky/
2 https://www.nationalgeographic.com/environment/2019/08/microplastics-found-in-arctic-snow/

Looking for something to do this winter?! Get involved with these (social distanced) citizen science programs!

1) Bird counting: Project FeederWatch, Cornell Lab of Ornithology. Visit feederwatch.org

2) Backyard snow depth measurements: The Community Collaborative Rain, Hail and Snow (CoCoRaHS) network. Visit cocorahs.org

3) Turkey observers: NH Fish and Game Turkey Watch. Visit wildlife.state.nh.us/surveys/turkey

4) Mountain snowpack measurements, CSO: Visit communitysnowobs.org

GMCG presents data, encourages BMPs for salt reduction

By Tara Schroeder & Moselle Spiller

This fall, GMCG's Water Quality Coordinator Jill Emerson and Education Coordinator Tara Schroeder partnered with the UNH Technology Transfer Center (UNHT2) for their annual Green SnowPro training. The two presented findings from surface and ground water quality monitoring programs in the Ossipee Watershed to a group of over 200 road agents and private contractors, as well as municipal and state officials. The training was created in an effort to reduce the impacts of road salt on water resources. The application of salt is a major component of winter parking lot and roadway maintenance in New Hampshire.

Each year, the training addresses the environmental impacts of salt and why it is important to be conscious of these effects. Everything from how to prepare for winter to cleaning up after a storm, all while minimizing salt use, is covered during the training. The course is free for municipalities, and, at this time, offers liability coverage through the state for private businesses and contractors who complete the course. There is currently a bill to incorporate municipalities into the certification program so that they can get liability protection as well. The liability protection covers the business owner, their staff, clients and property owners under the state statute as long as BMPs (best management practices) are followed.

GMCG has been tracking conductivity levels (a surrogate measurement for salt) in surface waters across the Ossipee Watershed since 2001, including levels for Ossipee Lake and its bays. Data show a steady increase in conductivity levels in all bays and the main lake since 2012.

Ground water studies with Dr. Robert Newton and Smith College in 2009, 2016 and 2019 also show increases in chloride levels over time (chloride is a component of salt, NaCl). "Salt is probably the thing that's going to have the biggest, long-term effect on the most wells in the area," says Dr. Newton.

In addition to posing health concerns for those with high blood pressure and on low sodium diets, salty water is corrosive and can cause the release of heavy metals like lead and copper into water from plumbing and the soil. Once salt is in the environment, it is nearly impossible to take it out.

Costs of chloride clean-ups can run around $300,000,000 for the state of NH, a cost that is estimated at 30-40% higher than efforts to protect drinking water in the first place, according to Scott Kinmond of UNHT2. Kinmond states that projected costs associated with direct and indirect damage from road salt in the next 10 years in New Hampshire will be around $1.1 billion. Not to mention the host of other issues associated with salt in the environment, from damage to vegetation and soils to increased moose and deer strikes from licking the salt off roads. Salt also damages everything from shopping carts to concrete and infrastructure, causing rust and corrosion over time.

BMPs are the best means available for reducing salt use and impacts. There are BMPs for salt storage, deicing materials, storage and management, calibration of equipment, use of alternatives such as brine, application rates for parking lots and roads, and good housekeeping tips available at: https://t2.unh.edu/nhdes-links. Structural BMPs such as vegetated buffers, swales, trenches, and retention basins strategically placed between roadways and water bodies can also help capture runoff and keep salt build up sequestered before it enters into freshwater.

Some communities are brining roads with a saltwater solution before a storm. Brining has been shown to be effective for ice removal, and is cost-effective too. It takes approximately four times less salt to prevent ice build up than it takes to remove ice after it has formed. Any reduction is a good reduction in keeping salt from polluting our fresh water.

Anyone interested in finding out about salt levels in their drinking water can contact info@gmcg.org to get a state water testing kit or find a certified lab near them.

Land trusts address climate change

By Matt Howe

As our hopes for an end to the pandemic become more viable and as the political winds breathe new life into our nation's response to climate change, now seems a good time for all of us as citizens and environmental organizations to renew our focus on the fight to save our atmosphere.

For land trusts, it's worth articulating the importance of land conservation and efforts to slow and reverse the release of carbon into the atmosphere. At GMCG our legacy of land acquisition and easement creation has focused on deterring unwise development above the aquifer. As we chart a course toward furthering land conservation in the Ossipee Watershed, that will remain a core criterion. Yet further consideration of our role in confronting climate change and mitigating its impacts underscores a layer of value that may be overlooked and strengthens the case for prioritizing and investing in land conservation.

The fundamental connection is clear. Undeveloped forested land absorbs and retains more greenhouse gases than land with roads, homes, parking lots, and shopping malls. According to the Land Trust Alliance *(visit climatechange.lta.org for excellent content on this topic*), every year 15% of the carbon emitted by human activity in the U.S. is absorbed by forests, prairies, farmlands, and other natural habitats. That is substantial. As federal and state policy makers, foundations, corporations, and private citizens look for long-term carbon

Above: *Looking to Provence Lake from atop Green Mountain, December 2020.*

reduction strategies, land conservation must be paramount for decades to come.

For every land trust, however, there is more to the solution than simply conserving land. We must begin to advocate more publicly and plan more intentionally to ensure that conserved land is maximizing its potential to protect the atmosphere and reduce the ill effects of climate change that are already occurring.

Near the top of the list is the importance of "Low-Impact Forestry (LIF)" a growing movement among concerned foresters and timber harvesters who advance the over-arching principle that forests can be managed in ways that are both economically sustainable and environmentally responsible. A central tenet of LIF is the recognition of the role that forests play in long-term carbon storage and that landowners, through the adoption of science-based harvesting methods, can reap value from their land while maximizing carbon retention and long-term forest health. Our friends at the Francis Small Heritage Trust (fsht.org) are working in partnership with the Forest Carbon Project to promote LIF. Land owners seeking more information are encouraged to visit their website for a thorough introduction to the topic.

Land trusts can also advise landowners on appropriate ways to utilize conserved land for the creation of renewable energy. The environmental impact of any such installations must be kept in mind - major projects can pose complex tradeoffs between forestation and construction – but carefully sited small-scale wind and solar projects can enhance a property's contribution to a cleaner atmosphere.

Beyond promoting carbon sequestration and reducing air pollution, land trusts have a leadership role to play in helping communities and landowners address impacts of climate change already underway. This includes discouraging development in flood-prone areas, preventing habitat fragmentation, and restoring natural streambeds. Though not directly aligned with our land trust work, GMCG's Stream Crossing Assessment Project is identifying situations where flaws in man-made structures are posing heightened risks to both wildlife and human safety in the face of climate change induced flood levels.

It can be hard to fathom how what each of us does with our one corner of the earth, or with our community's one land trust, can make a difference. But we have to try. We have no choice but to dig in and take the long view. We must see ourselves as part of a global movement of land trusts and environmental organizations determined to store every molecule of carbon we can. The science tells us we can't be wrong.

Conservation Conservations

Editor's Note: *Conservation 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.*

Effingham

The Effingham Conservation Commission (ECC) is currently meeting in the Effingham Historical society for short meetings adhering to COVID protocol.

Cliff Cabral of New England Milfoil described milfoil conditions as, "the best (he'd) ever seen" in Effingham's portion of the Ossipee Lake bay system, and in the river below the dam. The total harvest was only 10 gallons.

The ECC engaged Andrew Lester to design additional trails in the Pine River Cherubini Preserve on Pine River Road. He returned to the area this fall and has resumed trail building activities.

For the 2020 Earth Day Poster Contest, Students at Effingham Elementary School submitted their drawings on the theme, "Rain and Snow: How does it help our Earth?" ECC members juried dozens of entrants and selected a single winner in each grade level. Thanks and congratulations to all participating artists at Effingham Elementary School!

The ECC will work with the Effingham Board of Selectmen during 2021 to continue identifying culverts in need of repair and upgrading as part of the effort to improve road conditions and surface water flow.

Freedom

The Freedom Conservation Commission (FCC) is coordinating with GMCG, the Loon Lake Association, and the Lakes Lay Monitoring Program at UNH to establish a testing program for Loon Lake and Round Pond. The purpose is to establish a water quality baseline for each water body. Participating organizations met via Zoom to address funding and logistical issues. The final plan and testing schedule should be finalized in early spring 2021 with testing projected to begin in May 2021. The FCC and the Loon Lake Association will fund the project and GMCG will provide technical support and equipment. Water testing will be performed at the UNH laboratory.

The FCC has been meeting with The Nature Conservancy and the town forester to coordinate a twenty acre burn in the Ossipee Pine Barrens that would help to preserve Pine Barren habitat and species. The Freedom Fire Department plans to participate in the burn as a training exercise. The burn is projected to occur in 2021 and must be completed no later than 2022.

Madison

The Madison Conservation Commission (MCC) recently used the US Dept .of Agriculture's Conservation Stewardship Program categories to gauge the Town's overall conservation efforts. Categories evaluated were air, soil, water, plants, animals, energy, and cultural. This construct can be used to create goals and guide future Town conservation efforts.

The MCC found that by supporting the repair of the dam and boat ramp at Silver Lake they could affect positive conservation initiatives for the riparian buffer around the lake and downstream, reduce shore erosion, support downstream aquatic species, conserve lake water during the drought (Silver Lake was losing 3.2 million gallons a week to leakage), and repair lake bed damage to plant life and fish beds, due to motorboats.

A NH DES dam inspection defined what actions were necessary for natural resource conservation and structural safety. This synergy between Town officials, the MCC, GMCG, NH DES, and the USDA can provide future long-lasting conservation initiatives for Madison.

Sandwich

The Bearcamp River Trail traverses approximately 17 miles of private property and back roads between Sandwich and Tamworth. It begins at Sandwich Notch Park and ends at Bartlett Mill Bridge in South Tamworth.

This beautiful trail received necessary foot bridge repairs in 2019 and 2020, thanks to the expertise of Matthew Coughlan of Recon Trail Design. The Sandwich Conservation Commission hired Matt to build a new foot bridge on the northern part of the trail off Bearcamp Pond Road. A property owner has also kindly rebuilt a log foot bridge on that same section of the trail. In addition, Recon Trail Design rebuilt two foot bridges near the beginning of the trail, east of Mead Base.

Sandwich Notch Road is now closed to all vehicle traffic for the winter.

GMCG Welcomes New AmeriCorps Members

By EB (Emma Brandt)

On November 3rd, 2020 GMCG welcomed EB (Emma Brandt) and Trent Millum as their newest Americorps members for 2020-2021. AmeriCorps is a voluntary civil society program supported by the U.S. federal government, foundations, corporations, and other donors engaging adults in public service work with a goal of "helping others and meeting critical needs in the community." Members commit to full-time or part-time positions offered by a network of nonprofit community organizations and public agencies, to fulfill assignments in the fields of education, public safety, health care, and environmental protection. GMCG is one of multiple conservation organizations in New Hampshire that host members from the Lakes Region Conservation Corps which is funded by AmeriCorps through Volunteer New Hampshire.

EB is the Education and Outreach assistant. She will be assisting with programs such as the Less Plastics Initiative and Trout in the Classroom. EB will also be writing for the newsletter and developing an interpretive trail.

Trent, as the Water Quality Resources assistant, will be involved with data collection for the Regional Interstate Volunteers for the Ecosystems and Rivers of Saco (RIVERS) and the Volunteer Lake Assessment Program (VLAP) program as well as microplastics research. Both members will assist with the Saco River Stream Crossing Assessment Program (SRSCAP), as well as public trail building and maintenance.

EB hails from the north shore of Massachusetts where she first got to practice environmental education while working at an Audubon nature camp as a counselor in the summer. This gave her experience writing lesson plans and working with kids. While in college at St. Lawrence University, she studied Environmental Studies and English and participated in two off-campus programs. She participated in the Adirondack Semester, a program where she lived in an off-grid yurt village and took place based classes. She also studied abroad in Kenya, culminating that program with a month long internship with the conservation group Watamu Turtle Watch. For six seasons she worked for the Appalachian Mountain Club in their hut system. She held many roles there, including hut naturalist, where she gave evening programs on local ecology and tracked phenological phases of local flora for AMC's Mountain Watch program.

Above: Trent Millum and EB (Emma Brandt) cut GMCG's annual holiday tree for the office which staff decorate with water themed

Trent comes from northwest Connecticut where he grew up learning about the outdoors by simply spending time outside in the woods with his two older brothers. He went to college at Susquehanna University in central Pennsylvania and graduated with a B.S. in Earth and Environmental Sciences. Trent spent his first summer in college doing freshwater ecology research, electrofishing to collect fish population data and collecting and analyzing macroinvertebrate samples. A year later he began his independent research project looking at the water quality of four stream sites upstream and downstream of two man-made reservoirs to examine pollution effects of reservoirs on stream systems. The study went on for two and a half years turning into Trent's capstone, and a project he got to present at the National Conference on Undergraduate Research (NCUR). Trent enjoyed a summer in the Adirondacks at a Young Life camp serving as maintenance and landscaping summer staffer.

When he was not in the classroom or lab, Trent spent a lot of time off campus in a nearby town serving as a Young Life mentor to high school students, and assistant basketball coach his senior year of college. He loves to do scientific research, but has a passion for focusing that research in the conservation field in hopes of protecting and preserving land for future generations. He came to New Hampshire from Atlanta, Georgia where his family most recently moved to as of a few years ago, but he considers himself a northerner at heart.

Notes from Downstream

"Borders? I've never seen one, but I hear they exist in some people's minds." Thor Hererdhal

By Dalyn Houser, Executive Director of the Saco River Corridor Commission

Greetings from your friends at the Saco River Corridor Commission! The Commission has had a busy year reviewing 120 applications for development within the Saco River Corridor. The number of applications the Commission reviewed this year increased by 28%. This increase undoubtedly reflects an increase in development within our towns, potentially prompted in part by the COVID-19 pandemic. Our offices received more permit applications for single-family homes this year than in any prior year in the Commission's history. Additionally, the amount of land use violations that have occurred this year has increased dramatically. Likely in part due to the circumstances of the year.

Due to the increase in development, continued land use planning and responsible development will be critical within our watershed to ensure the preservation of our natural resources. The Commission is a Quasi-state agency tasked with the protection of over 130 river miles in Southern Maine. The Commission was established in 1973 due to concerns expressed by members of our communities over the future of the Saco River Corridor. Since then, the water quality of the river systems in the Corridor has improved dramatically.

With two Commissioners on the board for each of the 20 Corridor towns, the Commission acts more as a regional planning board. They work to ensure that development from surrounding communities does not negatively impact water quality for our neighbors downstream. The Commission will continue to keep a watchful eye over the Corridor for the benefit of public health and future generations.

Above: The Ossipee River flows through Effingham on its way into Maine.

The SRCC is seeking representatives for the towns of Acton, Baldwin, Denmark, Fryeburg, Limington, Newfield, Shapleigh, and Waterboro.

The SRCC is also seeking volunteers to ensure properly planned development and the protection of the Saco, Ossipee, and Little Ossipee Rivers from environmental degradation.

You could play an important role in preserving rivers, lakes, and clean drinking water – ensuring public health and the ability of our children to enjoy the rivers we know and value today.

Please contact their office if you're interested in volunteering as a representative for your town:

81 Maple Street Cornish, Maine
04020 (207) 625-8123
dalyn@srcc-maine.org

Save the Date! 2021 Winter Calendar

All programs are online, unless otherwise noted. Please visit www.gmcg.org for details and Zoom links.

Weekly, now through March: Blue Heron Bird Club. GMCG AmeriCorps members will host this program for the third year as part of Project FeederWatch through Cornell University. Participants can pick two consecutive days each week, or every other week, to watch their own bird feeder at home for one hour each of those days. No birding experience is necessary! For novice birders, you can use a simple identification card and guide book to help you determine which birds are at your feeders. Project FeederWatch is a citizen science initiative that challenges people of all ages to observe and record the wintering birds at backyard bird feeders. Cornell uses this data to monitor trends in bird populations and inform policy to protect birds around the U.S and Canada.

Thursdays, January 7 through March 25th at 10:30 a.m.: GMCG's Nature Story and Discovery Time. This fun program returns with a twelve-week series designed for children in Pre-K through first grade. Each program will be on Zoom and will be about 20 minutes long, beginning with a live reading of a nature-themed story with a follow up activity such as a craft, song, or outdoor exploration. GMCG is collaborating with libraries in Conway, Madison, Freedom, Tamworth, Fryeburg, Effingham, and Ossipee and welcomes all to attend.

Wednesday, January 27th from 5-6 p.m.: Planning for Protection - Using Your Natural Resource Inventory. GMCG hosts Amanda Stone, Natural Resources & Land Conservation State Specialist from UNH Cooperative Extension, for this free natural resource planning workshop. Learn why a natural resources inventory (NRI) is a critical piece for prioritizing and protecting key natural resources in your community. We will discuss a range of natural resources, such as wildlife habitats, wetlands, surface and groundwater resources, cultural resources and more. Some questions to address: How do you balance the need to protect important natural resources with the needs of development? How can you get started on your NRI? How does an NRI become a living guide to natural resources protection? We will also review how your NRI and the natural resources chapter in your town's master plan can (and should) complement each other. Come prepared for interactive discussion following an initial presentation! Town officials and members of the public are encouraged to attend. This program will be online, please visit www.gmcg.org to pre-register.

Monthly, last Sunday of the month at 3 p.m., beginning January 31: Green Mountain Book Club. This new program will focus on books related to GMCG's mission and environmental themes, with new books posted monthly. Meetings will be on Zoom until weather allows for socially-distanced outdoor meetings. Some resources for finding book club books include local libraries, The Libby App, New Hampshire's downloadable book consortium, and local book stores such as White Birch Books in North Conway, The Local Bookie in Conway, Country Bookseller and Eyes of the Owl in Wolfeboro. Visit https://www.indiebound.org/ to find independent booksellers to support.

Saturday, February 6, from 1-3pm: *GET WET!* Teacher Training. *GET WET!* (Groundwater Education Through Water Evaluation and Testing) is based out of the University of Maine and is designed to engage local students and the community in learning about and protecting drinking water. GMCG has implemented this program in schools across the greater Saco River Watershed since 2009. The program is geared towards students in grade six and above. All teachers new to the program must attend this training in order to participate in 2021. Returning schools/teachers have the option to participate. Please pre-register at www.gmcg.org.

Thursday, March 11 5-6 p.m.: The Night Visitors. GMCG hosts Dave Anderson, Senior Director of Education of the Society for the Protection of N.H. Forests, for this exciting nature program. Learn about New Hampshire's wildlife in his presentation of photos and footage from game cameras. See deer, coyote, bobcat families and more as they visit orchards and woodlots at night, and discover what animals may be in your own backyard.

Executive Director's Corner continued from page 3...

- **Community Foundation**, made grants of $2,500 and $1,000 on behalf of our environmental education programs in the Sacopee Valley.

- In May the **Davis Conservation Foundation** awarded GMCG $5,000 to launch the Ossipee Watershed Stream Crossings Assessment Project.

- In December the **Adelard and Valdea Lea Roy Foundation** made a $2,500 grant to secure a professional consultant to provide guidance on marketing, branding and making the most of social media.

- Further improving our finances in early 2021 will be the receipt of $29,000 from the **NH Department of Environmental Services** in fulfillment of our recently completed two-year Best Management Practices project focused on the Ossipee Lake System.

Just as we did in 2020, we will meet our 2021 financial goals through a team effort – a team that includes our Development Committee, our Board, our Staff, our foundation partners, local and state government, and you. Below is an overview of key fundraisers through the first half of the year. Thank you for taking a look and thinking about what you can do to help us maintain our momentum!

Spring Appeal – In early March we'll send a request for your continuing support. You may mail a one-time gift, make a monthly pledge, or give online.

Polar Plunge March 17 – This is our annual staff fundraiser when, buoyed by your pledges, the entire GMCG staff takes an icy dip in Ossipee waters. Details forthcoming!

NH Gives June 8-9 – In 2020, our first year of participation, we raised over $5,000 in this statewide online campaign. In 2021 we want to build on that success and reach new donors across NH by taking advantage of this powerful giving platform sponsored by the NH Center for Nonprofits and the NH Charitable Foundation**.**

Silent Auction, date to be determined – Planning is underway for our 2021 auction. We would love to run it in conjunction with a live event later in the year, but we'll have to see how things go. If you have an item, service, or experience you would like to donate, please write to info@gmcg.org.

Got Sneakers! (All Year!) - In 2020 GMCG recycled over 500 pairs of sneakers and raised over $250 in the process. Not every fundraiser is a gold mine, but every dollar matters and every pair of sneakers donated stays out of our local landfills and makes a difference in the life of someone who truly needs them to build a future. The Got Sneakers! barrel remains right outside our front door!

Mail in Donation Form

Please continue your support today! **Every drop counts. Thank you!**

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

You may also donate 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**_____

GREEN MOUNTAIN CONSERVATION GROUP

GMCG is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization funded by grants, memberships, and donations.

GMCG's Federal Tax Identification Number is: 02-0498020

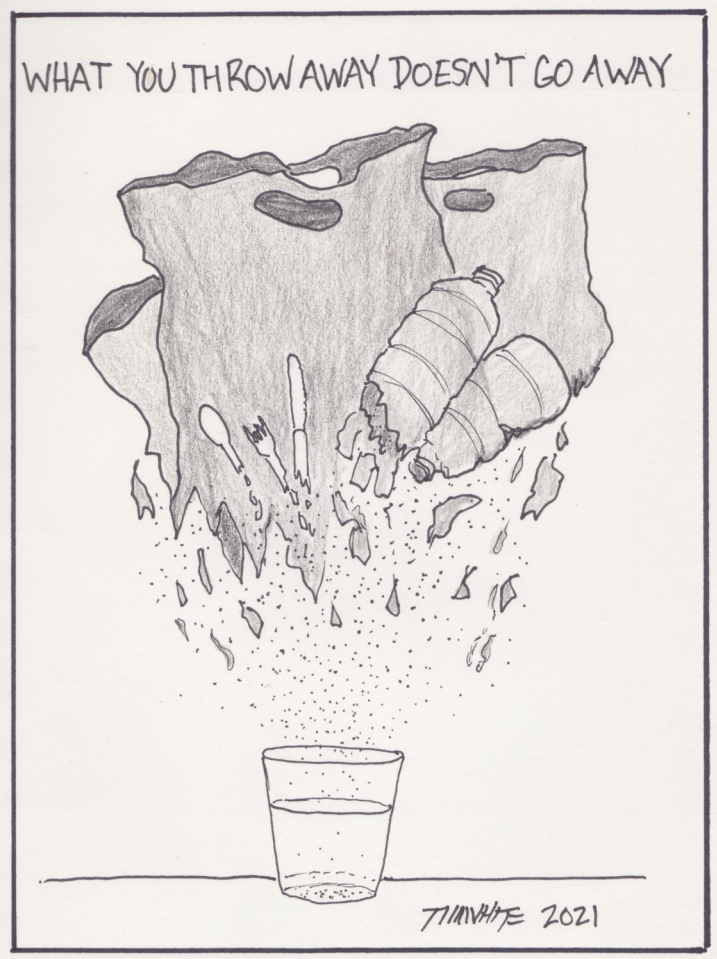
THE WATERSHED NEWS

A Quarterly Publication for the Ossipee Watershed

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

GREEN MOUNTAIN CONSERVATION GROUP
PO Box 95
236 Huntress Bridge Road
Effingham, NH 03882
(603) 539-1859
info@gmcg.org

We regret that our annual March gathering and celebration of the Watershed will not be held due to the continuing public health crisis. Please stay tuned regarding the possibility of an outdoor gathering in the summer or early fall, or a virtual meeting. Thank you for your understanding!



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- Less Plastic Initiative
- Reducing road salt
- Welcome new AmeriCorps members
- Notes from downstream
- Conservation conversations
- Land trusts address climate change
- Winter educational programs
- …and more!

Contributors: EB (Emma Brandt), Jill Emerson, Dayln Houser, Matt Howe, Trent Millum, Tara Schroeder, Moselle Spiller

Comments, questions, or ideas for a future article?
Please write to info@gmcg.org