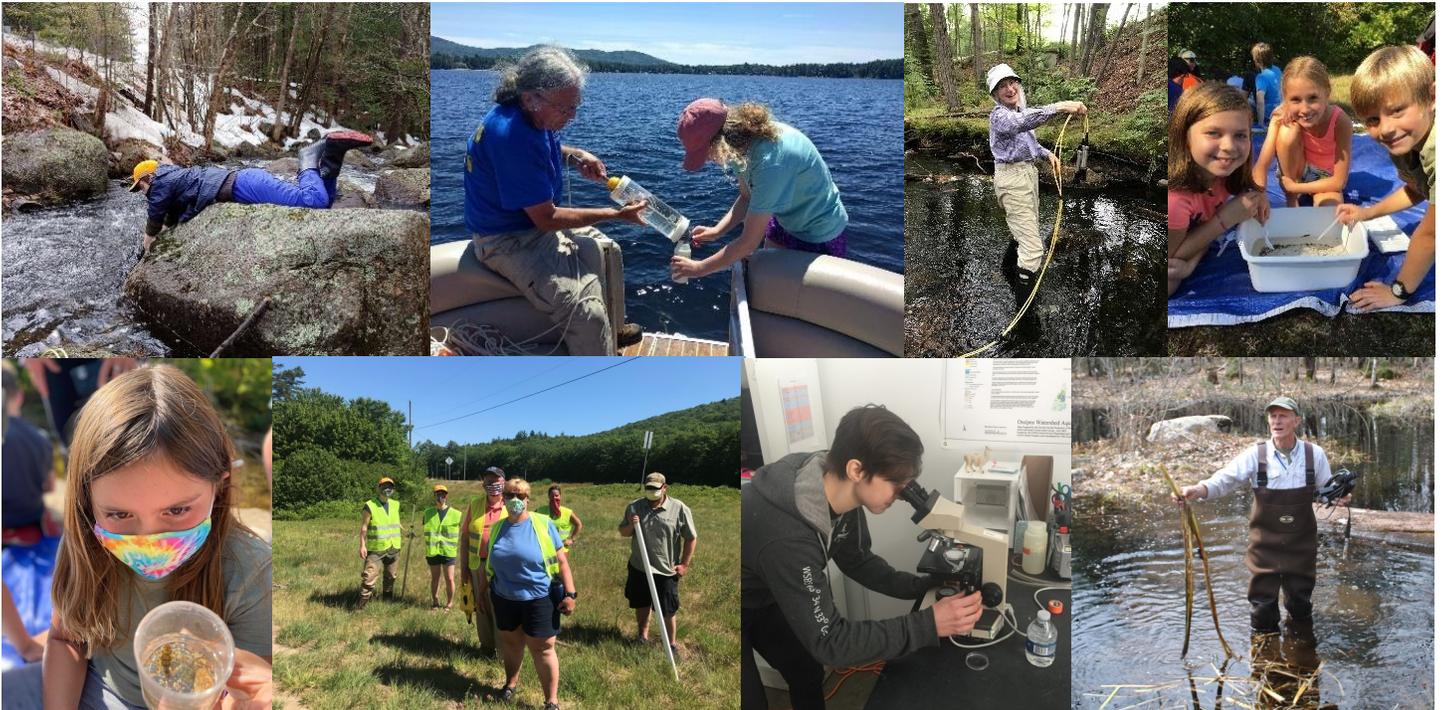


Protecting natural resources in the Ossipee Watershed since 1997



Since 1998 GMCG citizen science volunteers of all ages have gathered data to inform education and advocacy for natural resources.

Citizen scientists are protecting our water

By Jill Emerson

When we hear the word “scientist,” many of us automatically think of a person wearing a white coat and lab goggles who has an incredible depth of knowledge lodged away in their brain. Maybe you picture them toiling away in a lab, making important discoveries, and shouting “Eureka!” as they congratulate each other. Or if you are like me, those scientists are cackling maniacally while mixing funky colored liquids together that release a puff of vapor before turning yet another strange color. Even though I’ve been a scientist for all of my professional life, this latter description is still what I immediately think of, most likely the product of too many cartoons in my more formative years. Very rarely do liquids change color when I mix them. Puffs of vapor are never a positive development. I may or may not cackle.

The longer I’ve been a scientist, the more my opinion of what that means has changed. Gone are the days where I thought science was this elitist field of mega-brainiacs who could regurgitate facts at an alarming rate. Rather, I’m partial to a Carl Sagan quote that I see

every time I enter our water quality lab: “Science is a way of thinking much more than it is a body of knowledge.” Anyone who can utilize the scientific method of creating a hypothesis, collecting data, and then forming a conclusion based on their empirical findings can be a scientist. No PhD required.

With citizen science endeavors taking root in almost every field of science imaginable, it appears my colleagues are also switching gears in their thinking of what constitutes a scientist. Here at GMCG we have been utilizing citizen science in our programs for years. Our programs would not be nearly as consistent or comprehensive as they are without the help of passionate public support. The success of our first citizen science program, Regional Interstate Volunteers for the Ecosystems and Rivers of Saco (RIVERS), led us to expand into other citizen science endeavors. GMCG and its volunteers contribute to river, lake, precipitation, bird, and macroinvertebrate monitoring through various programs we either organize or partner on each year.

April is an important month to GMCG. It is National

Continued on Page 2 ...

Green Mountain Conservation Group

The Watershed News is a quarterly publication of the Green Mountain Conservation Group, a nonprofit, 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 knows no 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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Citizen science continued from page 1...

Citizen Science Month, and with that we acknowledge our volunteers for all that they provide to our data collection programs. We are only successful because of them, and that's the truth! It is also when we start to prepare to launch our seasonal monitoring programs. We have informational and training sessions for RIVERS volunteers starting this month, so if you think you might be ready to participate in one of our programs (or if you just want to learn more) visit our website. Come join us!

RIVERS is GMCG's flagship citizen science program. It is also our longest running program, going on 19 years as a joint endeavor with the Saco River Corridor Commission – our neighbors downstream. Our volunteers are trained to follow a precise protocol that can be found in our Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP), a document that gets reviewed and approved by state and federal agencies every five years. Our volunteers take their roles as citizen scientists seriously, and they know their contributions are helping their communities.

I have used the phrase “we can science and so can you!” over the years. While I say this in a humorous, albeit slightly awkward way, my point is anyone can be a scientist. And I honestly do mean that. I have learned that “scientist” is a relatively broad term that encompasses a rich tapestry of people. But what all scientists have in common are an intrepid spirit, curious nature, and the ability to collect data, form a

result, and then ask new questions. The mixing of funky colored liquids is optional.



*Jillian Emerson is the Water Quality Coordinator for GMCG. She earned her B.S. in Microbiology/Molecular Biology with a minor in Chemistry from Quinnipiac University in 2008. After her degree completion she spent ten years working in academic research in the Department of Molecular and Systems Biology (formerly Genetics) at the Geisel School of Medicine at Dartmouth College. Most of her work was focused in the area of circadian rhythms using a model fungal organism, *Neurospora crassa*. In 2018, she earned her ASCP certification in molecular biology (MB, ASCP (CM)).*

2021 Watershed Celebration to feature Wonders of Water art exhibition and volunteer appreciation on August 12th

By Moselle Spiller

GMCG is happy to announce the 2021 Watershed Celebration on Thursday, August 12, from noon to 3 p.m. on the grounds of the Patricia and Charles H. Watts Conservation Center in Effingham. The event will feature the second annual Wonders of Water community art exhibition (WOW) under an outdoor tent, appreciation ceremony for volunteers, and guided nature walks around the conservation center. The event is open to the public and those new to GMCG to learn what the organization is all about.

Last year on August 20th the first ever WOW community art exhibition was held virtually over Zoom and included over 30 artists of all ages from across the watershed and beyond. Their featured works explored the beauty of water and the myriad ways water influences our lives. Celebrated local naturalist Dr. Rick Van de Poll began the evening with a reading from his recently published work *Crossing Higher Ground: Poetry From the Mountaintops*, a book of poetry inspired by exploring countless mountaintops over fifty years. Participants had the opportunity to speak about their artwork and interact with other artists. All of the artwork was printed on a traveling outdoor banner that was displayed at libraries and galleries across the watershed throughout the fall.

Participation guidelines for the upcoming 2021 WOW exhibition will be posted to www.gmcg.org on May 1st, and submissions will be accepted through July 31st. GMCG welcomes artists of all ages and inclinations to express themselves through this project and consider what water means to them. Local organizations and businesses are invited to participate as project partners and have the option of hosting the traveling banner for public display. Project partners who help promote



Above: The traveling WOW banner at the Samuel H Wentworth Library in Sandwich.

the event will be listed in press releases, radio broadcasts, and on our website. Their names and logos will also be displayed on the traveling banner. Contact info@gmcg.org for more information on how to partner.

Artists may submit digital art that will be displayed online, or they can deliver the physical artwork to the Blue Heron House for inclusion in the August 12th exhibition.

Refreshments and light snacks will be provided and served by the Farmstand of Chocorua, NH. GMCG staff and AmeriCorps members will be on hand to guide walks along the Blue Heron Trail to observe riparian habitat surrounding the vernal pool and river bank. Staff members will also give a tour of the best management practices currently in use on the property, such as a butterfly rain garden and a double rain barrel system.

The volunteer award ceremony portion of the afternoon will

honor the many local citizen scientists who gather water quality data, upkeep GMCG buildings and facilities, and donate time and energy in countless ways to the mission of GMCG. Staff and volunteers will also give thanks to 2021 AmeriCorps members Trent Millum and EB (Emma Brandt).



Title: *Fall Marsh, III*
Medium: Acrylic on linen, 24" x 36"
Artist: Jennifer Van Cor

Learn more at
<http://www.gmcg.org/wonders-of-water-art-exhibition/>

Where are they now?

Former GMCG staff members, interns and AmeriCorps members share what they have been up to recently.

By Tara Schroeder

Haley Parent

In 2019 Haley accepted a position with Clemson University Cooperative Extension serving as a Water Resource Agent on the university's campus. "My new job with an extension system has been an excellent fit for me, expanding on the outreach, environmental education, and grant work skills I developed while serving as an AmeriCorps Member at GMCG from 2018-2019. The state of South Carolina is large and complex, with eight major river basins draining Blue Ridge Mountain streams to endless miles of salt marsh along the coast and large reservoirs and black water rivers in between. It has been rewarding to take on new responsibilities as I try to address some of the water resource challenges facing South Carolinians. I've attributed my passion for this work to my time with GMCG, where I gained my advocacy perspective and learned the real importance of a watershed approach."



Photo: Haley Parent presents to a group in South Carolina.

Victoria Green

After her AmeriCorps term with GMCG, Victoria moved to South Carolina to coordinate a volunteer water monitoring program for the Waccamaw Watershed Academy based at Coastal Carolina University. "While at GMCG I gained hands-on experience coordinating a citizen science research program - skills I



Photo: Victoria Green

use every day! But unique to serving with GMCG was the breadth of my experience. Beyond just the science, I was able to be a part of the many programs GMCG offers, from environmental education to community outreach events. I'm grateful for my time at the Blue Heron House and for the wonderful staff and volunteers that made the experience so worthwhile!"

Sarah Goldsmith



"After serving as the Water Quality Resources Assistant at GMCG, I began a new job in the Hicks-Pries lab at Dartmouth College in Hanover, NH, where we study the response of soils to global climate change. I have had the opportunity to conduct field work collecting soil in forests and farms across New England and work in the lab analyzing samples. I will forever be grateful for the incredible staff and volunteers that shaped my time at GMCG and

taught me valuable lessons of environmental stewardship and conservation and how to sit and enjoy the birds. (I put up a feeder here and still watch them every morning.) I learned a lot from my time at GMCG, but I think the most important one will always be 'don't flood the boots!' (especially in 10 degree weather)."

Elena Piekut



Elena Piekut, former Water Quality Monitoring Program Intern (2006) and Coordinator (2011) and daughter of founding GMCG board member Bill Piekut, recently left New Hampshire to return to Downeast Maine, where she graduated from College of the Atlantic with a BA in Human Ecology in 2009. After six years as Assistant City Planner and Zoning Administrator for the City of Dover, NH, Elena is now City Planner for the City of Ellsworth, ME. She previously worked for Ellsworth from 2012-2015, and for the Town of Kittery, ME. Her early experiences with GMCG have come up in each job interview, as the circumstances around its founding in 1997-1998 were her introduction to the idea of land use planning. Two of her first tasks in Ellsworth draw on knowledge and skills gained with GMCG: one as she seeks funding to complete a Watershed-Based Management Plan for the City's urban impaired stream and another as she reviews a proposed gravel pit overlapping a mapped sand and gravel aquifer.

By Tara Schroeder

GMCG staff have been busy all winter delivering new educational programs and revamping long-running programs to make them user-friendly to schools during the pandemic.

Nature Story & Discovery Time

This weekly program for pre-K through first grade has had great success moving to an online format with guest readers sharing stories and nature activities with young children and their families. A variety of topics, including frogs, moose, animal tracking, trees, and stars introduced youngsters to the natural world around them. Stay tuned for more fun Nature Story & Discovery Time programs to be held at GMCG's Blue Heron House this summer, as well as the launch of our new interpretive trail guides for budding naturalists!

Trout In the Classroom

This year, two local schools have been collaborating with GMCG for the Trout In the Classroom program. Sandwich Elementary School and Sacopee Valley Middle School students have been raising Eastern Brook Trout in their classrooms since January and early February as part of this annual program that is implemented through NH Fish and Game and the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife. Trout fry will be released into local streams and rivers once temperatures rise and food is available for the fish. Learning about water quality, macroinvertebrates and riparian ecosystems is all part of this annual hands-on program.

GET WET!

Approximately 160 students participated in the GET WET! (Groundwater Education Through Water Evaluation and Testing) program this year. Students from Freedom Elementary School, Pine Tree Elementary School, Northeast

Woodland Charter School, Sacopee Valley Middle School and the KA Brett School in Tamworth followed specific protocols to sample and test well water samples for six different parameters.

"GMCG has been awesome to collaborate with. Their programming provides our Northeast Woodland students with engaging hands-on learning experiences that help support our mission to awaken children to the wonder and joy of learning. Their work with students aligns well with both the Next Generation Science Standards and the Waldorf inspired main lessons that are taught at Northeast Woodland. The GMCG staff is knowledgeable, professional, and organized. These characteristics help to support the teachers they work with to deliver a meaningful place-based education."

- Miss Sirois, Northeast Woodland

Less Plastic Initiative, Virtual Earth Day Celebration & Less Plastic Challenge

The Less Plastic Initiative is in full swing, and is the focus of this year's Virtual Earth Day Celebration. This online event includes fun science experiments, crafts, and educational videos. Programs are available starting April 1st and can be found on gmcg.org and the GMCG

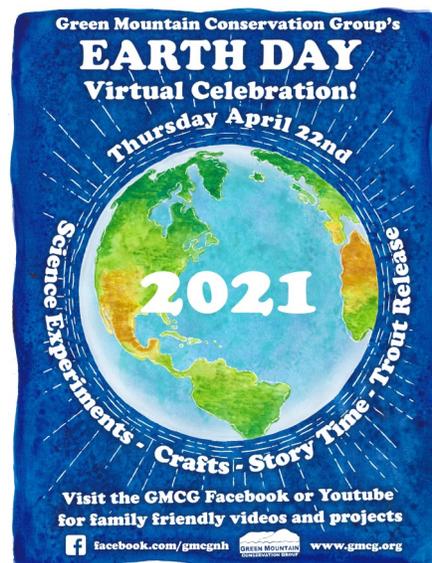
YouTube channel.

The Less Plastic Challenge is also part of the Earth Day celebration this year. This is a fun, creative opportunity for students to create their own solutions by upcycling single use plastics. GMCG will award cash prizes and gift baskets for first through third place. The prizes are donated by volunteers and TruEarth, makers of eco-friendly laundry strips and other environmentally responsible products. Students can submit entries through April 15, 2021. Winners will be notified on April 22nd.

Public Programs

GMCG continued to offer public programs this winter. These included the new Green Mountain Book Club, Blue Heron Bird Club, "The Night Visitors" with the Forest Society's Dave Anderson, and "Planning for Protection - Using Your Natural Resource Inventory" with Amanda Stone, Natural Resources & Land Conservation State Specialist from UNH Cooperative Extension.

Stay tuned for more programs this spring and summer! As always, feel free to suggest a program idea by contacting education@gmcg.org.



"As a classroom teacher for over 25 years, I have collaborated with many organizations and taken part in a variety of programs across the curriculum. I can say without a doubt that Green Mountain Conservation Group has been one of the best partnerships that I have been lucky enough to work with. The staff and volunteers do an excellent job bringing real life science to school age children. My students have always been thoroughly engaged in the hands-on activities offered. The pre and post visits are educational and easily allow for further investigation of the subject matter to increase understanding. In the year of COVID, GMCG went above and beyond creating step by step instruction videos, delivering supplies, and being available for staff and student questions during our GET WET testing day!"

- Heidi Belle Isle, Pine Tree Elementary School

It is never too late to spring into birding

By **EB (Emma Brandt)**
and **Trent Millum**,
AmeriCorps members

Birding has always been a beloved activity. A survey from US Fish and Wildlife found that in 2019, 45 million Americans regularly observed birds.¹ As COVID-19 has forced us to spend time locally, look for ways to get out of the house, and see friends and family safely, birding has seen a surge in popularity. The American Birding Association's podcast went from 5,000 downloads to 8,000 between February and May of 2020, and the Audubon Society's website traffic increased by 23% in March and April of 2020 compared to 2019.²

Birding is an accessible activity. To get started, all you need is a pair of binoculars and a field guide. Birds can be sighted year round. You can stay local and still feel the thrill of discovering new species. Birding also provides a number of mental and physical health benefits. Mentally, birding is a meditative and calming activity and increases your attention to detail. Living in areas with more trees and birds has been linked to lower rates of depression, anxiety, and stress. Birding also opens the door to a large community and can help forge social connections.¹

Physically, birding can be beneficial for cardiovascular health as it often involves walking and getting outside; and holding binoculars to one's eyes is said to increase arm strength.¹ There is also an abundance of evidence that links spending time in nature with increased happiness. If one is starting out, the Merlin and ebird apps from the Cornell Lab of Ornithology help identify birds and track birding adventures. With ebird, the public can participate in citizen science, submitting checklists of data that inform ornithologists on bird migration and range trends.

There is no better time than now to get started! This is the heart of spring migration. Food availability is the driving force, but changes in day length, temperature, and genetic predispositions are also believed to trigger migration.³ Insects become scarce in the winter months in northern regions of the country, forcing insect-eating birds to migrate south during this cold season. Most migratory bird species mate and breed in northern regions, so when spring rolls around, they need to make their way back home. Springtime provides the advantage of inflated insect populations, budding plants and an abundance of nesting locations.³

The most dramatic examples of migration come from our long-distance migrants that typically move from Central and South America to their breeding grounds in the northern part of the U.S. and Canada. This is an incredibly long distance to travel and demonstrates a bird's amazing navigational skills.

These skills are still not fully understood by ornithologists because a bird's inner compass comes from many factors such as the sun, the stars, and the ability to sense the earth's magnetic field due to the mineral magnetite in their beaks.³ Scientists study migration patterns by banding birds, satellite tracking, and using a tracking device called a geolocator. These instruments help identify winter stopover locations that can then hopefully be protected as key bird habitat.

The arrival of birds that have not been around all winter signifies that migrant species are returning to an area. Here are a few migrating species one might expect to see in the Lakes Region of New Hampshire and Mount Washington Valley in spring:



1.) The Scarlet Tanager: A long-distance migrant from South America. Males have a striking red coloration in summer.



2.) Warblers: Many species of these songbirds migrate north to find their breeding grounds in the springtime.



3.) The Osprey: You will find this "fish hawk" hunting and nesting along waterways.

Birding Hotspots in the Lakes Region/Mt. Washington Valley (according to ebird)

Thompson Wildlife Sanctuary - Sandwich, NH
Dahl Wildlife Sanctuary - Conway, NH
Freedom Town Forest - Freedom, NH

Citations:

- 1 Birdwatching for peace of mind and better health. CNN. Published September 25, 2019.
- 2 Glusac E. Birdwatching Becomes More Popular During the Pandemic. AARP. Published June 16, 2020.
- 3 Powell H. The Basics of Bird Migration: How, Why, and Where. All About Birds. Published October 25, 2017.

2020 Annual Report and donor appreciation



View of Green Mountain from Mary's Mountain, Freedom, NH.

Message from the Chair

I have been chosen by the Board of Directors to serve as the Chair. How fortunate I am to be following former chair Larry Wogman (who has recently moved to CT) and to be working so closely with Matt Howe (our no longer new Executive Director)! The board is made up of a handful of your neighbors and friends who live in the towns of the Ossipee Watershed -- and these folks are both committed and passionate. Among the changes we are in the midst of making is one related to the financial support we receive.

For many years GMCG has been using an older model that is rooted in "membership," and we are moving in the direction of a model that emphasizes "donors." The GMCG community won't see any difference in the way we do the important conservation work we've been doing for more than two decades. Where we will see a difference is in how we engage donors, grow the donor base, and encourage a whole new variety of ways for folks to give. Here's how you can help during 2021: Help us grow our donor base by inviting a friend, family member, neighbor, or like-minded conservationist to make a gift to GMCG in any amount. It doesn't matter *how much* a person gives; it matters *that* a person gives. Our goal for 2021 is to have 501 donors. We can do it! Thanks for your support and your attention.

Knute Ogren
GMCG Board Chair



Knute Ogren lives in Effingham Falls where he enjoys puttering around the house, visiting with friends, learning new skills, organizing groups, events, and playing his piano. A longtime advocate for both environmental stewardship and energy conservation, Knute has mostly lived out those passions through the Lutheran Church and through participating in local politics.

2020 Annual Report - Thank you to our 2020 supporters

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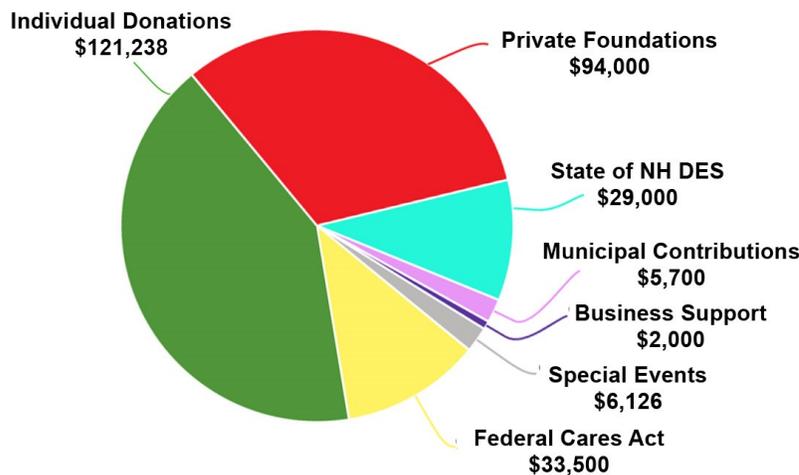
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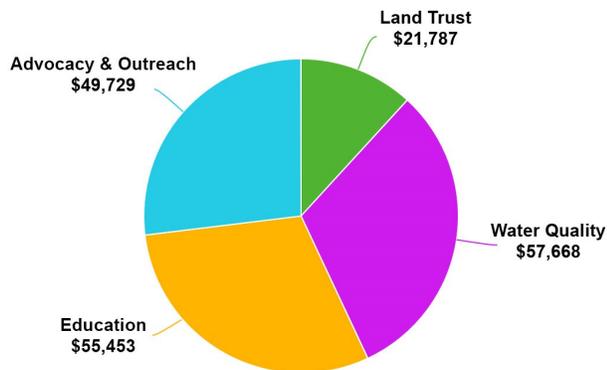
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- Foundations and public sector support:**
 Davis Conservation Foundation
 Dorr Foundation
 Francis Small Heritage Trust
 New Hampshire Charitable Foundation
 University of New Hampshire
 NH Dept. of Environmental Services
 Peqwauket Foundation
 Alfred Quimby Foundation
 Royal Little Family Foundation
 Adelard A. & Valdea Lea Roy Foundation
 Seabury Trust
 Carl Siemon Family Charitable Trust
 The Tamworth Foundation
 Thrivent Financial
- Towns:**
 Eaton, Effingham, Freedom, Madison, Ossipee, Sandwich, Tamworth
- Lake Associations:**
 Berry Bay Lake Association
 Broad-Leavitt Bay Association
 Long Sands Association
 North Broad Bay Association
 Ossipee Lake Alliance
- Businesses:**
 Camp Calumet
 Mr. Charles Hippy Shop
 Chocorua KOA
 Constanino Real Estate
 Cormack Construction
 Danforth Bay Campground
 Eversource
 Kindness Animal Hospital
 Madison Lumber Mill
 Camp Marist
 Province Lake Golf
 Rooster Productions
 Sacopee Energy & Climate Activities
 Snowvillage Inn
 Tappan Chairs
 Tru Earth
 Wayside Farm

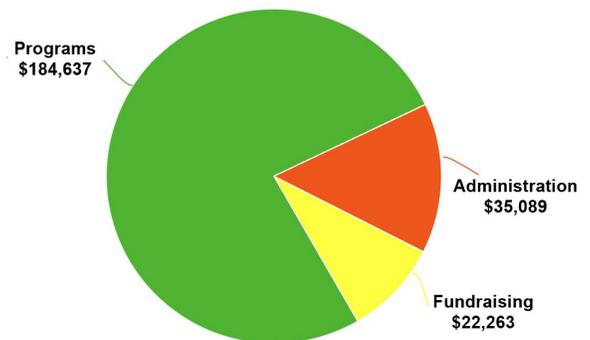
2020 Total Revenue: \$291,564



2020 Total Program Expenses: \$184,637



2020 Total Expenses: \$241,989



2020 Annual Report

Message from the Executive Director

Dear GMCG Friends,

Our favorite signs of spring are bursting forth, another Earth Day is coming soon, and vaccination rates are climbing fast. We are feeling hopeful here at the Blue Heron House! As you can tell from another information-packed edition of the *Watershed News* and our calendar of events, our staff and board are moving into 2021 in high gear. I am especially looking forward to the afternoon of Thursday, August 12th, when we plan on seeing many of you here for an outdoor reunion of friends and a joyful celebration of the watershed.

Amidst this optimism I resist returning to the topic of the pandemic, but to report on the year 2020 is to report on a year defined by COVID-19. Foremost on our minds are all the families and people who suffered and lost their lives. We remember all those lost and give thanks that our immediate GMCG family remained healthy throughout.

Yet just like all of you, the people of GMCG endured hardships. The long shutdown. Schools closed. Daycare and summer camps closed. Constant concern for the health of our children and ourselves. It was a long and stressful ordeal for everyone. I want to express my deep appreciation and respect for our Program Coordinators and AmeriCorps over the last year. They were creative, dedicated and strong. My gratitude as well to the GMCG Board of Directors for the countless ways they supported their staff and looked out for us.

As we anticipate life beyond COVID, it's good to take stock of what we have learned. We have learned many things small and large. Among the simpler things, we have learned that we've been driving our cars way too far and too often. It will be good to have some *real* meetings again, but thanks to our collective new technical savvy, we can burn less fossil fuel, save time, save money and probably be more productive at the end of the day. We also learned we can adapt and harness technology to connect with students in schools and people in their homes in ways that should not forever replace in-person learning but can enrich education through new options and 24/7 access to online content.

Perhaps the largest lesson for GMCG, however, is the reminder of what it means when we say we are part of a *watershed community*. Over the last year we have been reminded again and again how connected we are to the people, towns, schools, community service agencies, and businesses of the Ossipee Watershed. We truly are all in this together. When hard times hit and we all close down, the ripple effects reverberate. We must stay connected and support each other. Most of all we must be mindful that inequalities among us – differences in access to things such as land, wealth, and health care – mean that not everyone is equally protected from the perils of pandemics, natural disasters, and economic downturns. As an environmental organization we must strive for a human environment that ensures justice and opportunity for all of our neighbors.

By Monday, April 5, there will be a “2021 Annual Report” page on our website where you will find our FY20 Balance Sheet, Profit & Loss Statement and FY21 Budget. As reported in the Winter 2021 issue, we ended 2020 on a strong note and I am pleased to report the financial condition of GMCG remains good. Your continuing support in the year ahead will be put to work and used wisely as we continue to grow and evolve as a leadership organization for natural resource protection and community progress across the Ossipee Watershed.

Sincerely,

Matt Howe
Executive Director



Appreciating the Wonders of Water art exhibition from 2020

As we get inspired for the next round of artist submissions for the upcoming Wonders of Wonders community art exhibition set for August 12th, 2021, we would like to take a moment to look back and appreciate some of the artwork included in last year's exhibition. The full 2020 exhibition can still be enjoyed online at www.gmcg.org/wonders-of-water-art-exhibition/.



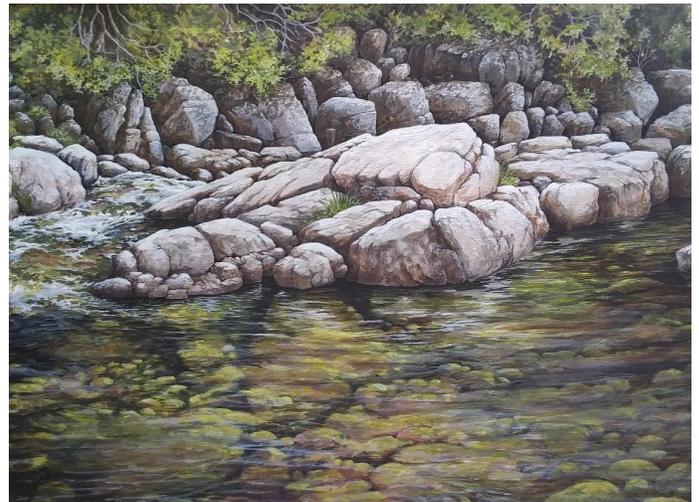
Title: *Different lake, different wetland, same water*
Medium: Acrylic on canvas
Artist: Ima Drinkwater



Title: *End of Winter*
Medium: Pastel
Artist: Terri Brooks



Title: *Silver Lake*
Medium: Felt
Artist: Zoe Groves



Title: *Jackson Falls*
Medium: Acrylic on canvas
Artist: Christopher Muzerall



Wonders of the River
Medium: ink print
Artist: Tamworth Print Princesses: Eden Piper Beauchesne, Wyllow Guyer, Lucy Menard with Blair Folts

Conservation conversations

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.

Eaton

The Eaton Conservation Commission has begun the process of creating a Natural Resources Inventory to assist in future planning.

Effingham

April brings the annual Earth Day Poster Contest at Effingham Elementary School, on schedule this year after last fall's delayed version. The theme for the spring edition is "Bee a Friend to Bees – What do bees do and why are they good for the Earth?"

April also brings the annual roadside litter cleanup. Following last year's extended version because so many people were available after the Covid-19 shutdown, the Effingham Conservation Commission (ECC) is once again looking at a longer version than a single day. Last year it lasted for almost the whole month. The weather was cooperative, and lots of volunteers contributed creative ideas. This year, with school in session, ECC is still going to try to broaden the reach the final two weeks of April.

While winter and spring are typically times to look ahead and plan, ECC did receive a presentation from abutters to a proposed subdivision on Jack Russell Road, because the proposed driveway access to two building lots has to cross a wetland that is actively

connected to properties and groundwater distribution downhill and downstream. The commission reviewed the materials presented and forwarded recommendations to the planning board.

The ECC will host a Zoom presentation with GMCG on Black Bears, with NH Fish and Game Wildlife Steward Don Allen, on Friday, April 16, at 7 p.m. ECC is also looking into establishing geocaches on conservation lands, as another way to increase public enjoyment of the protected land in Effingham.

The pandemic has suspended any planning of public gatherings and presentations until we know how well the contagion can be controlled. Outdoor meetings will resume in May.



Photo: The Story of New Hampshire's Black Bears program will be held on Zoom, on April 16th, at 7 pm. Visit gmcg.org for more information and to register.

Madison

The Madison Conservation Commission recently partnered with the Madison Veterans' Committee and Madison Public Works Department on a unique project. At a World War I memorial, many years ago, several white pines were planted on a local road with an accompanying plaque monument embedded in stone. Last summer, Eversource arborists determined that these

very large and very beautiful white pines needed to be removed based on age and proximity to local power transmission lines.

After approval at a public hearing with the Madison Planning Board, the trees were cut by Eversource's contractor and Madison Public Works department transported them to the Madison highway yard. In a joint effort between the Madison Conservation Commission and Madison Public Works these trees will now be milled into lumber for several town projects.

The conservation commission has evaluated replacement plantings near the monuments where the pines were removed. While sad to see these wonderful trees removed, the commission's partnership with the town has ensured a good reuse of the natural resource, created a safer electrical and driving/road environment, and a plan to upgrade the WWI memorial. We think we made lemonade from lemons, with a tear in our eye for some grand white pines!



*Above painting: The eastern white pine (*Pinus strobus* L.) is the tallest native conifer in the Northeast. Typically, it grows 75 to 100 feet tall, with maximum heights of over 150 feet.*

Notes from downstream

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

**By Rikki Haley,
Water Quality Coordinator for
the Saco River Corridor
Commission**

Hello, from the other side of the watershed! My name is Rikki Haley, and I am very pleased to announce our 19th season of the RIVERS program, a result of our continued partnership with Green Mountain Conservation Group. We are excited to continue our work conducting effective water quality monitoring in 20 Maine municipalities and look forward to another successful season.

In a tremendous effort to ensure the protection and conservation of our most crucial natural resource, the SRCC will be publishing a 10-year trend analysis of water quality within the Saco River Basin for the first time since the program's creation. This thorough evaluation conducted by FB Environmental Associates (FBE), will identify existing areas of decline, and provide feedback on the program including new sample parameters and more sample locations. Ultimately, we predict that this will improve our program that spans across 130 river miles and 37 sampling sites.

Given this information, we can then reassess our methods and procedures for the water quality monitoring program and potentially expand our field of research and data collection. This statistical analysis will also be integrated into the interactive mapping system (ArcGIS) on SRCC's website to facilitate user's understanding of how water quality is changing in their communities. We hope that this data visualization will generate an ongoing discussion for corrective action in areas with diminishing water quality so that we may work together in remediating areas of concern and reversing



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

negative trends.

The ultimate goal is to establish a baseline of the overall health of water resources and ensure maximum utility and effectiveness of our program. I would like to give a special thanks to the Maine Outdoor Heritage Fund (MOHF) for making this publication a reality, as well as Forrest Bell Environmental Associates for their work in evaluating our complex data set thereby providing the SRCC and the community a valuable tool in understanding the current status of our watershed.

As a third year student at Unity College pursuing my B.S. in Environmental Studies and Climate Change while preparing for a Master's in Hydrology, it is an absolute dream to be the SRCC's new Water Quality Coordinator. My passion for clean water action began at a young age when I discovered the impact of water scarcity on communities around the world. I felt an overwhelming sense of urgency to find ways to remedy this and artlessly "designed" an underwater device to filter ocean water at the age of 12. This was well

before I knew that desalination was a practice. Fourteen years later, I am writing term papers and manipulating data in geographical information systems to better understand the barriers/limitations of such water technologies.

Three years ago, upon my arrival to the Saco/Biddeford area of Maine, I sought out volunteer opportunities to serve a community I fell in love with. Flash forward to 2021 and I am working for SRCC, banding together with GMCG, and leading an excellent team of volunteers in creating a safer, healthier environment. I couldn't be more ecstatic to be part of such an astoundingly dedicated group of like-minded individuals. Happy spring, and cheers to a wildly productive season to come!



Save the date! 2021 spring calendar

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

Thursday, April 1-Thursday, April 22: Virtual Earth Day Celebration & Less Plastic Challenge. Students are invited to celebrate Earth Day all month long with an online lineup of fun science experiments, crafts, and educational videos. Programs will be available starting April 1st and can be found on gmcg.org and the GMCG YouTube channel. Teachers and families with children in preK-12 will find activities such as recycling games, making “plarn” or plastic yarn, making upcycled and natural deodorant, experiments to differentiate types of plastics, plastic audits, and more. Children will learn what plastic is, how it’s made, and how it can impact our environment and health. As part of Earth Day, the Less Plastic Challenge is a fun, creative opportunity for students to create their own solutions to upcycle single use plastics, such as plastic bags and bottles. GMCG will award cash prizes and gift baskets for first through third place, thanks to donations from some wonderful volunteers and TruEarth, makers of eco-friendly laundry strips and other environmentally conscious products. Students can submit entries through April 15, 2021. Winners will be notified on April 22nd. Contest details and submission instructions can be found at www.gmcg.org.

Tuesday, April 13 from 7-8pm: RIVERS Information Session. Join Jill Emerson, Project Manager for the RIVERS (Regional Interstate Volunteers for the Ecosystems & Rivers of the Saco) program to learn about this long-running citizen science program. Started in 2002 as a joint venture between Green Mountain Conservation Group and the Saco River Corridor Commission, the program samples sites throughout the Saco River Basin, from the headwaters to the outflow at the Atlantic Ocean. Learn how our citizen scientists are collecting data, making discoveries, and giving back to their local communities. Pre-registration is required at www.gmcg.org.

Friday, April 16 from 7-8:30pm: Black Bears with NH Fish & Game’s Don Allen. The black bear is one of New Hampshire’s largest and most majestic mammals. The presence of the black bear in modern New Hampshire is a wildlife restoration success story. In the 18th, 19th and early 20th centuries the black bear was reviled as a varmint to farmers and civilized life. Aggressive land clearing, having a bounty on them, and lax hunting regulations depleted their numbers to 500 by 1900. The combination of science-based wildlife management, research and carefully regulated hunting has allowed the state’s bear population to grow to nearly 5,000 animals just in the past decade. Come and hear the story of the black bear coming back from the edge of being lost to New Hampshire. GMCG and the Effingham Conservation Commission are co-hosting this program. Pre-register at www.gmcg.org.

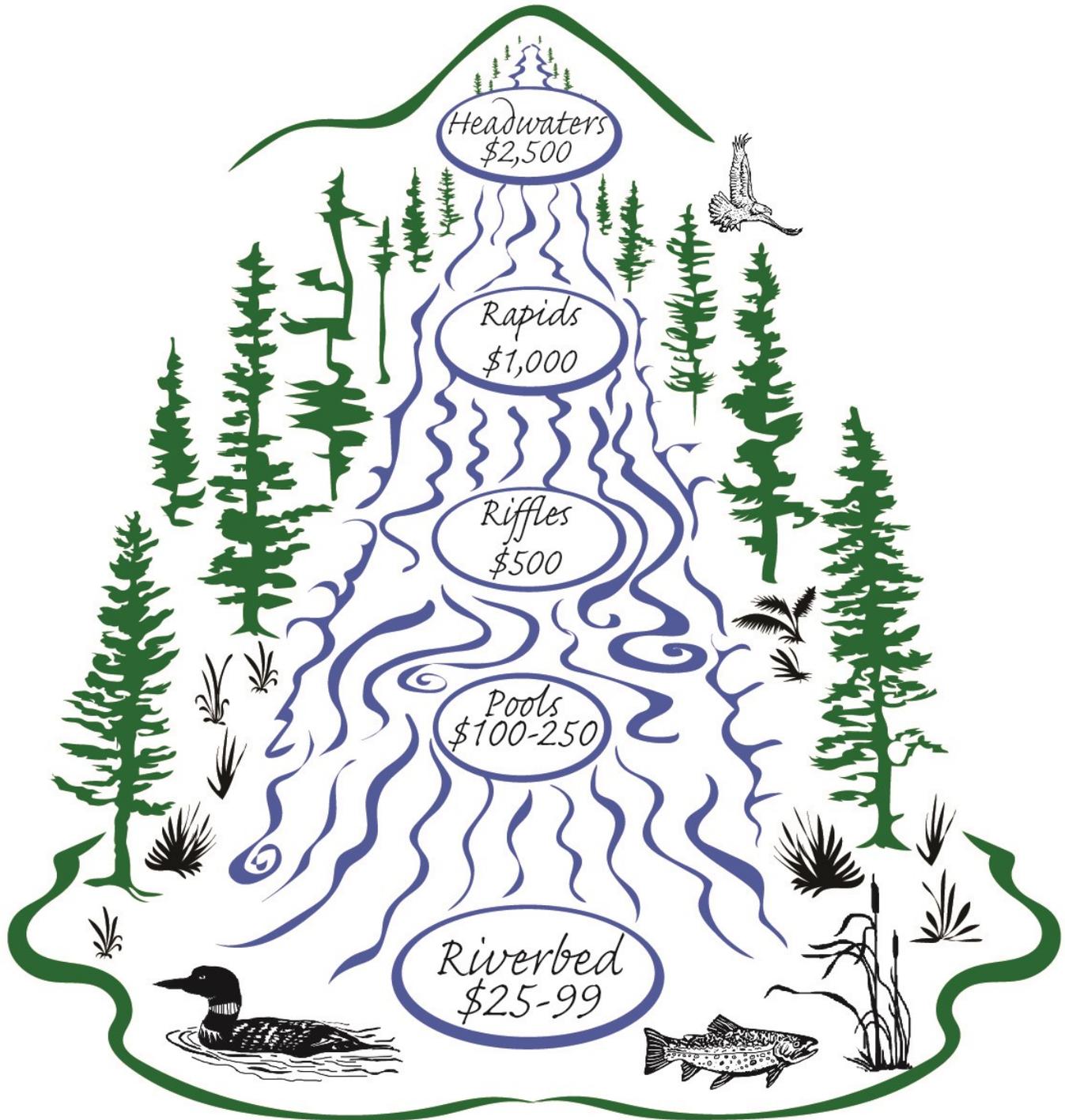
Saturday, April 24 and Tuesday, April 27 from 10-12am: RIVERS Training Sessions. Learn or refresh your skills on how to collect data for the RIVERS program. The training is required for new recruits, and returning members are strongly encouraged to attend as protocol requirements have changed from 2020. Staff from the Saco River Corridor Commission and Green Mountain Conservation Group will explain the protocol and volunteers will have an opportunity to use the equipment at a nearby river. Trainings will happen at GMCG’s Blue Heron House, located at 236 Huntress Bridge Road, Effingham. Only one session needs to be attended. Please bring a mask and dress for the outdoors. To pre-register contact water@gmcg.org.

Monthly, last Sunday of the month at 3 pm: 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 further notice. Look for Book Club books at 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, and www.gmcg.org to sign up and find out about the book of the month.

Saturday, June 12 2-3pm: DIY Rain Barrel Installation Program. Join GMCG Outreach Coordinator Moselle Spiller and local carpenter and long-time GMCG volunteer Tim Otterbach to learn about rain barrels at the Cook Memorial Library in Tamworth Village. GMCG has promoted Best Management Practices, or BMPs, for many years to protect water quality across the Ossipee Watershed. Rain barrels are simple BMPs that are highly effective at preventing erosion and pollution from entering nearby waterbodies, and also help with water conservation. Collecting roof runoff in rain barrels reduces the amount of water that flows from your property and it’s a great way to conserve water for use on lawns, gardens or indoor plants. This program is a collaboration between the Cook Memorial Library and GMCG, supported in part by a small community impact grant from Thrivent. Please pre-register for this outdoor workshop at www.gmcg.org.

2021: A Cascade of Giving

501 Friends for the Watershed - \$150,000 for GMCG Programs



A generous friend and neighbor has launched our 2021 individual giving appeal with a \$50,000 donation. Now we ask the rest of our watershed community to help us reach new heights! Our goal is 500 more donations this year to reach \$150,000 by year's end. Whether you can meet us at the Headwaters, among the Riffles, or on the Riverbed, your participation is what matters. Thank you for being a part of the 2021 cascade of giving!

**You may give online at www.gmcg.org or mail your check payable to GMCG to
PO Box 95, Effingham, NH 03882**

THANK YOU!



THE WATERSHED NEWS

A Quarterly Publication for the Ossipee Watershed

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SAVE THE DATE

***Watershed Celebration
August 12th, noon to 3pm
at the Blue Heron House***

Celebrate



In This Issue:

- Watershed Celebration set for August 12th
- Citizen scientists protect our watershed
- Where are they now? Former GMCG team members share life updates
- Wonders of Water art exhibition 2021
- A cascade of giving
- Spring into birding
- 2020 Annual Report
- ...and more!

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

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