

Protecting natural resources in the Ossipee Watershed since 1997



Looking upstream over the Ossipee River on Huntress Bridge in Effingham.

The Ossipee Aquifer: Our Wealth, Our Health

By Karen McCall

My family always took our summer vacations at the beach where I delighted for hours, bodysurfing large waves that pummeled me in the sand. As a teen, I took my first sailing lessons on the Potomac River, a river so polluted I needed vaccines against typhoid, typhus and tetanus to enroll in the school. These waters felt exhilarating but they were also threatening. Years later, with my baby girl in my arms, I visited Tamworth at the generous invitation of a friend. My exposure to this area's freshwater lakes, ponds, rivers and brooks impressed me so profoundly that our family returned every summer for over 30 years and now I live here.

Over time, I have learned that we all have our favorite swimming holes here in Carroll County. The first time I encountered mine, I stood transfixed as the afternoon sun's fire splintered its white light across ruffled waters. The rest of the pond's surface was placid, dark and shiny. I wondered what secret web of lives fed upon one another beneath that dusky skin, and, a bit apprehensively, I dove into that darkness. Surfacing chest deep in the pond, I was relieved to see that the water was actually clear and filled with subaquatic plants sheltering a myriad of life forms. I had loved the wild ride of the mid-Atlantic Ocean and the Potomac River for their challenge. *Continued on page 2*

Thank you!

By Matt Howe

Before we immerse ourselves in another year of watershed protection we want to take this opportunity to recognize and honor the hundreds of people, organizations, businesses, government agencies and foundations who sustain the Green Mountain Conservation Group! Together, all of you form an extraordinary circle of support that enables us to stay focused on the research, education, advocacy and land conservation essential to protecting our region's drinking water and other natural resources.

As you peruse the list of our 2022 supporters on pages seven and eight (where we hope you will find your name!), be reminded that your contribution is not inconsequential amidst all the others, but rather *indispensable* to an organization that has grown from the grassroots and can only meet the demands of the future through an annual process of renewed support from old friends and ongoing outreach to make sure that more and more new friends are joining the circle each year.

So with our deep gratitude for all that you have done and continue to do, we also thank you for every time in the year ahead you mention to a friend, relative or colleague that GMCG is a cause worthy of their attention, involvement and support!

Green Mountain Conservation Group

The Watershed News is a quarterly publication of Green Mountain Conservation Group, a nonprofit, 501 (c)(3) charitable organization established in 1997. The mission of GMCG is to promote an awareness of and appreciation for clean water and the wise use of shared natural resources across the Ossipee Watershed and advocate strategies to protect them.

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 serves the towns of Maine's Sacopee Valley. Water knows no boundaries!

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The Ossipee Aquifer: Our Wealth, Our Health *continued from page 1*

However, I had never felt the joy of immersing myself in the gentle, clean, silky waters of a New England pond. These freshwater havens invited, rather than challenged: this was a place I felt safe.

Much of the reason my husband and I moved here in our retirement was to access this area's rare gift of clean fresh water for recreation and drinking. Since only 2.5 percent of the world's water is fresh, and an even smaller percentage of that water is actually potable, there is great reason to celebrate our local treasure, the Ossipee Aquifer. This stratified drift aquifer is particularly vulnerable because it is made of porous sand and gravel that allow hazardous materials to percolate quickly to the groundwater below. Since groundwater moves, these pollutants can then spread to larger areas, contaminating wells and surface waters such as lakes, rivers, and streams. Up to 80 percent of households in our watershed have private wells that draw directly from the Ossipee Aquifer.

Others recognize our treasure: Carroll County is one of the fastest growing counties in New Hampshire, and beverage industries have moved here because they recognize the economic value of our freshwater supplies. At the same time, hazardous chemicals such as gasoline and PFAs, microplastics, and bacteria have been found in many New Hampshire wells, including locally. Once a well is contaminated, disastrous health and economic consequences can result. Safeguarding the Ossipee Aquifer is critically important because, in almost all cases, it is impossible to fully restore a polluted aquifer; and it is always more cost effective to prevent a problem than to have to remedy one. Tragically, it takes only one incident to harm our vulnerable aquifer and spoil it for the

thousands of people who share this groundwater.

Cell biologist and poet Loren Easley wrote, "If there is magic on this planet, it is contained in water." I feel this magic in the way my frequent pond immersions transform me from anxious adult to innocent child. The water in our lakes, ponds and rivers courses to and from the aquifer, the groundwater from this aquifer fills the well on my land and your land, and it flows through the tap in my kitchen and yours to fill our drinking glasses. When we drink from those glasses, a life-giving fluid swirls into, and around, every cell of my body, and yours. When rain seeps through the earth's layers to refuel the groundwater below, it animates every human, animal and plant within its reach, connecting us all in an unexpectedly intimate way. The great marine biologist and oceanographer Sylvia Earle says, "No water, no life. No blue, no green." Since there is no substitute for this natural gift, we must protect our local surface and groundwaters as though our lives depend on them, because they literally do. I want to treat these waters with the utmost reverence because they deserve to be healthy and fully alive. So do I. So do you.

Karen McCall, a retired environmental educator of 35 years, currently serves on the Tamworth Groundwater Protection Ordinance Committee, Green Mountain Conservation Group's Aquifer Protection Committee, Bearcamp Pond Association and Tamworth Community Nurse Association.

Tamworth citizens will have an opportunity to vote on the Tamworth Groundwater Protection Ordinance on March 14, 2023.

GMCG in action



AmeriCorps members Brittney and Maddy conclude the 2022 lake monitoring season in October.



Participants at the December Less Plastics Holiday Crafting event show off some of the festive crafts they made using natural and upcycle materials.



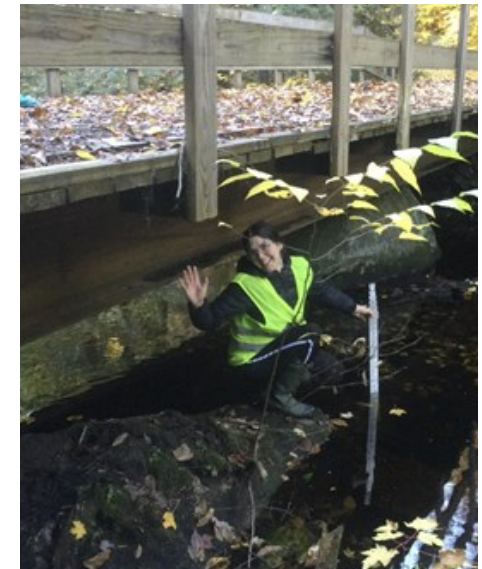
GMCG Chair Knute Ogren congratulates a participant in GMCG 5K fun run for water protection with a homemade apple pie.



Stephanie Doyle from the NH Mushroom Company leads a mushroom walk around GMCG's Blue Heron Trail in October.



Volunteer Tim Otterbach (right) stands besides AmeriCorps members from Squam Lakes Association and GMCG after a maintenance day cleaning up GMCG's properties in September.



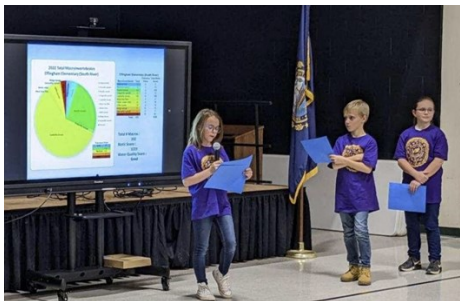
Outreach Coordinator Moselle helps collect data points on a stream crossing in October.



Board Member and Facilities Committee Chair Dana Simpson led the masonry work on the newly upgraded entrance to the Blue Heron House.



It was standing room only at the August 22nd meeting of the Effingham Planning Board's special hearing on Meena, LLC application to operate a gas station in Effingham's Groundwater Protection District.



Effingham Elementary students present the results from their macroinvertebrate survey to the community in November.



A seven inch moose print found near Polly's Crossing in Ossipee while assessing stream crossings.



AmeriCorps members Hailey and Grace take water quality measurements in November.

By Grace Kennedy and Hailey Williams, AmeriCorps Members

Natives of the northern U.S. are all too familiar with the sight of salt being liberally strewn across the surfaces of porches, sidewalks, and highways as the first indications of winter. However as research progresses, we are becoming more and more conscious that the 20 million tons of sodium chloride that are applied annually across the country are discharging into our lakes, rivers, and streams indiscriminately, posing unanticipated risks to the health of our natural resources. Unless reverse osmosis is used, which many municipal water treatment facilities were never equipped with and lack the finances to acquire, the presence of chlorides in a water body is irreversible once it has been introduced.

Chloride alters the aesthetic qualities of drinking water (adding a "salty" taste and increased hardness), and its "ecological consequences on fish and insects begin... about 150 milligrams per liter," which is equivalent to a fifth of an individual tiny salt packet according to research (Soglin & Capoot, 2022). In particular, chloride can be extremely harmful to amphibians, fish, and micro- and macroinvertebrates, frequently interfering with their biological processes (including reproduction), and so reducing the diversity and sustainability of aquatic ecosystems. It has been shown that the presence of chlorides in our environment have a negative impact on plant growth, photosynthetic capacity, and nutrient uptake, as well as a long-term deterioration of the "chemical properties of the soil and its ability to retain water, ... which are important to plant growth." (Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, 2022).

In the greater Ossipee



A pea size piece of rock salt melts the snow but with lasting harmful impact.

Watershed alone, 24 out of 29 sites sampled during GMCG's 2021 RIVERS summer survey period showed an increase in chloride anywhere from 5 mg/L to 75 mg/L. A similar trend of elevated concentrations can be observed nationwide, some of the most notable originating from the Great Lakes region, where Chicago is combating record high chloride levels in Lake Michigan. As a result, concerned citizens and law officials have banded together, passing orders, bills, and laws from Minnesota to New Hampshire to encourage responsible salting practices in an effort to reduce road salts while maintaining winter safety (Kruzman, 2022). Given these conclusions and the demand for materials on the evolution and fundamentals of salting for residents of the Ossipee Watershed, we spoke with Scott Kinmond, the Director of Public Works in Alton, New Hampshire and technical Assistant for NHLTAP at the UNH Technology Transfer Center, to learn about the different types of road salts that are available, their specific application details, environmental effects, and underlying costs.

GMCG: *Can you describe your role in NH's salt reduction efforts?*

Kinmond: When I first arrived in 2021, the previous road agent had completed all of his winter maintenance by applying sand/salt

to their paved and gravel roads for de-icing. We've moved on from that process, which required 6,000 yards of sand and 1,200 tons of salt to cover 92 miles of road. In three communities, we transitioned to doing this at a rate that is 30-50% lower than the normal application rate of salt from the state.

The sand/salt mixture was causing some melting, but the sand was causing more damage by insulating the snowpack on the road. Sand has traction only as an abrasive, not as a melting agent. As a result, it is only useful depending on the coarseness of the sand. Even if the sand is coarse, after being driven over so many times, it turns into silica powder, which becomes an environmental hazard by clogging our waterways and storm drains. The sediment will wash into brooks and lakes if there is no storm drain to catch it. It took us between eight and twelve weeks to sweep the entire town and gather up all the sand that was left behind, and we had to devote a lot of manpower and equipment to do it. So that was a significant problem, and it was a big clean-up problem. We went from 6,000 yards of sand to 1,200 yards utilized after switching from sand/salt applications to treated salt and super brine. In addition to not having the other issue of mineral loading with the sand, I find that we are putting out less salt than we would typically use with straight salt.

GMCG: *Is brining providing any cost savings to the state, towns or contractors?*

Kinmond: When I came here I had been involved in Green SnowPro and had used treated salts or salts with the addition of magnesium chloride. With this background, we transitioned two towns from sand/salt mix to treated salt. Using the treated salt at reduced application rates worked better at lower temperatures. I did not use any

more salt than they did when they were using it with sand. Additionally, the springtime saw less cleaning and clearer roadways. The savings were actually on the sweeping side of things because last year it only took around four weeks to sweep everything.

By not using as much sand, we were only using about 1200 yards of sand exclusively on gravel roads, and that was applied at a straight sand application with no salt with it. So the savings were actually in the cleanup, which was about \$50,000 for the town. We purchased less sand and the same amount of salt.

GMCG: *What is the difference between salting and brining? What are the benefits of using brine? Are there any drawbacks?*

Kinmond: With using a salt brine you're using even less salt in order to achieve either anti-icing (anti-icing is before a weather event) or deicing (during an event). In the case of anti-icing, brine is only effective at certain temperatures, if there's a dry period before its applied, and if there won't be any rain. Those are the three big conditions that jump right out, temp, rain, and dry period.

If you're doing any kind of deicing, you can utilize salt brine but the temperature is far more critical and it's usually not used in that type of application. It is more effective in anti-icing because in deicing, if things are wet then the solution can be diluted and then cause the compound to be more volatile to freezing. You can enhance your ability to use brine by adding a compound to it, we call these super brines. NH does this with their salt brine as well, they add magnesium chloride to it, which gives them that window so they don't risk refreeze. If a paved surface has a lot of cracks and crevices, sometimes the brine can puddle and seep into the crack instead of staying on the pavement, leading to less coverage. In the

private sector, they use brine a lot in parking lots, sidewalks, driveways and it works very well and saves money. In the southern tier of the state, where temperatures do not fluctuate as frequently and the city regularly maintains roadways, the use of brine is more commonly applied.

GMCG: *What does the process of brining entail? How is this process different from salting?*

Kinmond: Brine is applied with pencil tips on a sprayer versus a fan, while rock salt comes from a spreader. When you take into account the proportion lost due to bounce/scatter, rock salt becomes problematic. This bounce/scatter goes into the ditch line and is absorbed into our soils/water. We can use brine as an anti-icing agent and we can use it during a storm, but you need to be aware of factors like the storm's duration and the amount of snow cover. To avoid problems with your compound being compromised by diluting and then having it refreeze, you would use brine as a pre-treatment instead, and you would want to make sure you had a super brine during the storm.

GMCG: *Are there other alternatives like beet juice or other biosolids being used in NH in addition to brine, and can you elaborate on the benefits and drawbacks of these alternatives?*

Kinmond: At the American Public Works Snow and Ice Conference, I learned that beet juice is used throughout the Midwest, but I have never used beet juice that way. The sugar utilized to activate the salt comes from the beet juice. However, despite being natural, all organics nevertheless have problems. Any of those organic materials have some environmental impact, albeit a very minor one in contrast.

GMCG: *In your experience, what are some of the reasons why towns or other contractors may be reluctant to take up brining?*

Kinmond: Although I'm sure the midwest and other regions experience temperature swings akin to those in New England, not all of them are eager to adapt, try new things, or retrain their workforce. Financial implications are also important because purchasing new equipment and deciding whether to produce or acquire brine in large quantities both require investments. I tried out super brine and applied it well in Moultonborough for parking lots. We were able to set aside a small vehicle for that purpose, and we kept applying treated salt to the roads.

GMCG: *If a town or private contractor wanted help with setting up a brining truck and system, what should they do? Do you offer any assistance?*

Kinmond: A number of vendors are eager to assist local communities by allowing them to use premade product and equipment. Through the UNH T2 and the UNH LTAP programs, we provide technical assistance (<https://t2.unh.edu/>).

Kruzman, Diana. "Road salt is imperiling US waterways. States might have a solution." Grist. 23, Mar. 2022, <https://grist.org/cities/road-salt-is-imperiling-us-waterways-states-might-have-a-solution/> Minnesota Pollution Control Agency. "Environmental impacts of road salt and other deicing chemicals." Minnesota Stormwater Manual. 23, Nov. 2022, https://stormwater.pca.state.mn.us/index.php/Environmental_impacts_of_road_salt_and_other_de-icing_chemicals

Soglin, Talia, and Capoot, Ashley. "Chicago area grapples with reducing road salt as chloride levels rise in waterways, Lake Michigan." Phys. org. 28, Feb. 2022, <https://phys.org/news/2022-02-chicago-area-grapples-road-salt.html>

A closer look at the changing winter ice cycle on New Hampshire lakes

By Jill Emerson,
GMCG Water Quality Coordinator

With the arrival of winter, life in New England seems to take on a slower pace. Many animals have either migrated to warmer locations or have started hibernation, and the few that still roam have their sounds muffled by the snow. We bundle up and hunker down, awaiting the thaw that inevitably will come in the spring.

While it might seem counterintuitive, winter is a critical season in terms of lake health. Our lakes and ponds “ice over” rather than freeze – if they froze solid, all of the life underneath the ice would also freeze solid and die. Rather, the ice on the surface helps to create a pocket of air that insulates the water underneath, keeping it from becoming a solid block of ice. This helps to keep the aquatic plants and animals protected through the colder winter months by maintaining a relatively consistent temperature.

The ice on a lake also helps to keep water levels stable. The ice barrier between the air and the unfrozen part of the lake helps to reduce evaporation. That ice also reflects sunlight back into space, which helps to keep the planet from heating up as open waters absorb the sunlight’s energy. Lakes that lack ice coverage tend to be warmer than their iced over counterparts in similar climates, and this increase in temperature in the colder months can ultimately result in warmer waters in the summer - a necessary ingredient for cyanobacteria blooms. Some species of fish - like walleye and trout - also depend on cooler waters for survival, and increased water temperatures can cause them to die out, creating an imbalance in the aquatic ecosystem. Warmer waters later in the season may also lead to a higher chance of invasive species establishing a foothold in a lake thanks to an extended boating season.



Locals enjoy ice skating on thick safe ice on Conway Lake in February of 2022, a beloved New England pastime with a shrinking window of opportunity.

Finally, iced over lakes are important culturally and economically. Many activities that generate tourism dollars, like ice fishing and snowmobiling, depend on ice coverage. In Northern Canada ice roads are the only ways to access rural area and to transport goods and services to these locations.

Due to climate changes, ice over times for lakes has diminished, if it happens at all. “Ice in” - the date when a lake is completely or nearly completely covered in ice that doesn’t immediately thaw - has been steadily moving to later and later in the year, while “ice out” – the date when one could navigate a boat from one end of the lake to the other unimpeded – has been occurring earlier in the year. While the dates of these events do depend on human observation and interpretation is individualized, this trend of shorter ice coverages has been observed in many lakes globally.

If we look at ice out, or ice thaw dates (which historically speaking tends to be a more extensively kept dataset than ice in dates) we can see a clear shift to earlier in the year as time moves forward. This shift in thaw – about a day earlier every decade – combined with ice in dates also occurring at a rate of about a day later every decade, we are losing roughly 2 days of ice coverage every decade. *What is two days in the big scheme of things, you might ask?* Well, that ice coverage loss gets compounded, and after 150 years we’ve now lost an entire ice coverage month on average. And that’s only if the trend stays the same, and that ice loss rates do not increase due to a warming climate.

We have lost a lot of ice coverage globally the last few decades, and while lake organisms are paying a high price, they are not the only ones. We need ice coverage to help keep our lakes healthy, and the only way to preserve the ice is to start taking climate change seriously.

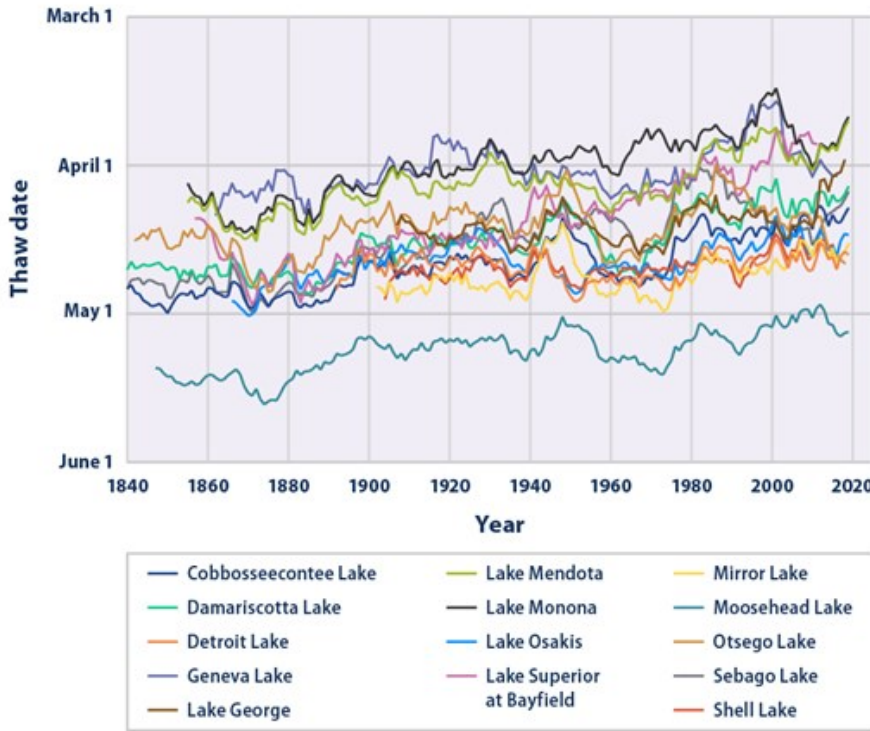


Figure 1: Date of ice thaw for select US lakes, 1840-2019 Credit: Environmental Protection Agency

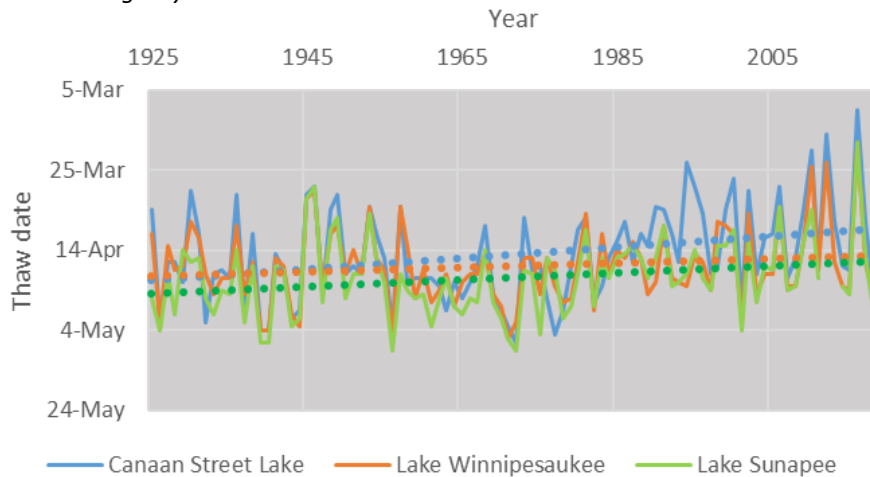


Figure 2: Date of ice thaw for select NH lakes, 1925-2019

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 Conservation Commission:

The Eaton CC had a great turnout for foresters Peter Hagerty and Daniel Stepanauskas. The ECC has been “ground truthing” our natural Resource Inventory by walking and mapping land boundaries.

Effingham Conservation Commission: The Effingham CC has submitted a warrant article to see if the voters will update the funding mechanism provided through current use change tax, by removing the annual \$2,500 cap placed on them in 2005. As development pressure increases,

conservation planning and land protection become more important than ever to maintain the quality of life that residents value.

The commission is planning for its spring programs including the annual Earth Day Poster Contest for Effingham Elementary School students, and researching options for a trail builder to complete the final trail marked out in the Pine River Cherubini Preserve. In the Larry Leavitt Preserve, storm damage from last fall will require heavy equipment.

Tamworth Conservation Commission:

During the summer and fall of 2022, the Tamworth relocated a section of the Betty Steele Loop at the Big Pines Area in Hemenway State Forest.

The relocation had become necessary because of erosion and occasionally treacherous hiking conditions on the slope immediately above the Swift River. The relocated section is now at the top of the slope. New blazing has been done, so hikers should have no problem following the relocated trail.

Two members of the Commission, Kit Morgan and Jeremy Phillips, have been working with the town Planning Board to prepare a proposed Groundwater Protection Ordinance which will be put before the Tamworth voters in March 2023. Thus far three public hearings have taken place to gather input from the public on specifics of the proposed ordinance.

The Tamworth Groundwater Protection Ordinance (TGPO) and the associated Summary and Facts documents are posted on the Planning Board page of the town website: <https://www.tamworthnh.org/planning-board>. Registered voters will vote to support the ordinance on March 14, 2023.

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 Anita & David Spencer
 Jack & Nancy Starmer
 Mary Stearns
 Leehobbs Steege
 Dan & Steph Stepanauskas
 Lauren Stoddard
 Wendy Stocker
 Eleanor Stokes
 Alan Stone
 Susan Stowbridge
 Frank & Mary Straccia
 Ruth Stuart
 Henney Sullivan
 Theresa Swanick
 Joy Tarbell
 Christine Taylor
 Louise Taylor & Nancy Sheridan
 Tara Taylor
 Mahra Teikmanis
 Chris Thatcher
 Katy Thompson
 Kevin M. Thompson
 Alex Thomson
 Sarah Thorne
 Denise and Jim Tinguely
 Nancy E. Trombini
 Gail Troseth & John Wheeler
 Mrs. Katherine Trout
 John Truelove
 Mr. Carrington Tutwiler
 Jennifer Van Cor
 Kathleen Van Deursen
 Donna & Michael Veilleux

Dennis & Johanna Vienneau
 Will Viner
 Frank Virnelli
 Karen & Victor Vitek
 Hilary Wallis
 Nancy Walser
 Richard & Cindy Ward
 Mr. Christopher Waring
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 Gabrielle Watson & Richard Doucette
 Charles & Holly Watts III
 Katharine L. Watts
 Cheryl Webb
 Ronna Flaschner Werner
 Paul Wheeler
 Barbara & Lawrence White
 Jennifer Wiley
 Joanne Wilhelm
 Ann T. & David C. Wilkins
 Janet & Freddie Wilkinson
 Larry Wogman
 Douglas W. & Patricia E. Woods
 Cynthia Wyatt
 Steven Yakutis & Guy Pugh
 Susan Yakutis
 Mark Potter
 Peter & Margaret Zack
 Cathie Zusy & Sam Kendall

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Charlie's Hippie Shop
 Chimney Man
 Chocorua Camping Village KOA
 Cormack Construction
 Costantino Real Estate
 East Ridge Property Maintenance
 Ecosystems Management Consultants
 Eldridge Family Sugar House
 First Christian Church of Freedom Ladies Guild
 Freedom Village Store
 GotSneakers LLC
 Hannaford Community Bag Program
 North Sandwich Woodlands LLC.
 Ragnar Events LLC
 Shell Oil Company Foundation
 Matching Gifts Program
 Sherwood Forest Inc.
 Snowvillage Inn
 The Tamworth Clearing LLC
 Tru Earth
 The Yankee Smokehouse
 YMCA Camp Huckins

Funders:

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 Carl Siemon Family Charitable Trust
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Municipal Contributions:

Eaton, Effingham, Freedom, Madison, Ossipee, Sandwich, Tamworth

Lake Associations:

Chocorua Lake Conservancy
 Berry Bay Lake Association
 Broad-Leavitt Bay Association
 Friends of Danforth Ponds
 Friends of White Pond
 Loon Lake of Freedom Association
 Long Sands Association
 North Broad Bay Association
 Province Lake Association
 Lake Sunapee Protective Association

In Kind Support:

Maud Anderson
 Walter, Ingrid & Peter Baily
 Barbara Bald
 Batter Up Bakery
 Black Snout Dog Biscuits
 Barbara Bloomberg
 Bear Camp Center for Sustainable Community
 Brooks Family Sugar House
 Karen Burnett-Kurie
 Central Tractor Supply
 Chocorua Boatworks
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 Stephanie Doyle
 Lorie Dunne
 Eastern Mountain Sports
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 Freedom Village Store
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 Harley Jacks Burgers & Brews
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 Indian Mound Golf Course

Inn at Crystal Lake
 International Mountain Equipment
 Jake's Seafood
 Kid's Work Aprons & Cloth Books
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 Lily Hill Farm
 The Local Grocer
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 Mac Hill Farm
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 Mountain Heartbeat Inc.
 Mountainview Station Restaurant
 The Nature Conservancy
 USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
 NH Dept. of Environmental Services
 NH Dept. of Fish and Game
 NH Kombucha Company
 NH Lakes
 NH Mushroom Company
 Carole Ogren
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 Timothy Otterbach
 Ossipee Adventures Boot Camp
 Ossipee Lake Alliance
 The Preserve at Chocorua
 Province Lake Golf
 Ragged Mountain
 Red Gables Farm
 Sap House Meadery
 Society for Protection of NH Forests
 Wendy Scribner
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 Sunnyfield Brick Oven Bakery
 Swift River Wood Products
 Tamworth Distilling
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 Jennifer Van Cor
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 Mark Potter
 UUFES Thrift Store
 Yankee Furniture Barn
 Young at Heart Fitness
 Zeb's General Store

GMCG to hold conservation easement on 28 acres of Berry Bay shoreline

By Matt Howe

With deep gratitude to GMCG friend and longtime volunteer Anne Turner Packard for her generosity, and to the Lakes Region Conservation Trust (LRCT) for their leadership, we are pleased to announce that GMCG will become the holder of a conservation easement on 28 acres on Berry Bay in Freedom. Anne donated almost the entire value of the land, which will be owned by LRCT and monitored by GMCG as the easement holder. The costs of the transaction and the creation of stewardship reserve funds for LRCT and GMCG were covered by a collaborative fundraising campaign supported by members of the Ossipee Lake Alliance and the Berry Bay Association along with many friends of LRCT and GMCG.

Additional support was provided by the NH State Conservation Committee, the NH Moose Plate Grant Program, and the Davis Conservation Foundation. The result is the long-term protection of critical wildlife habitat, water quality, and the stunning views of this undeveloped Berry Bay shoreline at the mouth of Square Brook.



View of the soon-to-be 28 acre conservation easement held by GMCG on Berry Bay, Freedom.

Please renew 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/donate

My/our gift of \$ _____ is enclosed.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE _____ EMAIL _____



GMCG is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization.

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



GMCG Welcomes New AmeriCorps Members

Interviews with 2022-23 AmeriCorps Members Grace Kennedy (Education and Outreach Assistant) and Hailey Williams (Water Quality Resources Assistant)

By Moselle Spiller, GMCG Outreach Coordinator

Moselle: *What about GMCG interested you as a place to serve as an AmeriCorps Member?*

Grace: Throughout my environmental education, water conservation was not discussed as much as I'd hoped. With GMCG being water focused I was excited to learn more about the conservation of water and the various methods of data collection/analysis. GMCG also has a lot of education programs and this was exciting to me because I'd love to gain more experience teaching and working with the public.

Hailey: I was initially drawn to the application for the position with GMCG during the summer of 2022 when I was looking for a career for a number of reasons. I was very intrigued in the chance to spend a year living in New Hampshire and the Northeast, as well as getting experience working with a small non-profit organization and obtaining valuable training and certificates that would be desirable attributes for my résumé. After expressing an initial interest, I was convinced during my interview by meeting and speaking with GMCG staff members that serving with this organization would be a warm and fulfilling experience with a wonderful group of committed people.

Moselle: *What is the most surprising thing you have learned about the Ossipee Watershed so far?*

Hailey: It has been interesting for me to learn about the divergent views of the public on the preservation of the Ossipee Watershed, the regulation of water quality, and the conservation of natural resources throughout my service thus far. Most of the time, especially when coming from an urban town in Texas, the communities have an overwhelming feeling of responsibility and passion for maintaining the natural environment around them are contagious. On the other hand, it is often shocking to learn that some municipalities and/or individuals oppose laws and other measures that were primarily put in place to safeguard the watershed and its resources for all.

Grace: Something that really surprised me was the size of the Ossipee Watershed. It was shocking to see how many towns, lakes, and sub watersheds reside within the boundary.

Moselle: *What activity or project are you most excited about working on during your service?*

Grace: There are many projects I'm excited to be a part of but TIC aka Trout in the Classroom and RIVERS are



Grace and Hailey continue the GMCG tradition of harvesting a Christmas tree to decorate at the Blue Heron House.

two that stick out. I am excited to be in the classroom learning and teaching about one of my favorite animals. I am also excited to help with RIVERS data collection as I've never been a part of a project that's focus was water research.

Hailey: The opportunity to deepen my knowledge of microplastics testing and acquire practical experience carrying out monitoring thrill me the most. My professional career will benefit greatly from having a background in and practical expertise of recognizing microplastic contamination in a world that is growing more and more aware of its absurd plastic consumption and waste. In addition, and from a standpoint unrelated to employment, I am most eager to improve my familiarity with the everyday activities involved with living in the Northeast.

Moselle: *What is your favorite aquatic animal and why?*

Hailey: Manatees are perhaps my favorite aquatic animal because of their friendly attitude and simplistic lifestyle. When I first saw a manatee in person at the Dallas World Aquarium as a child, that's when I first fell in love with them. Ever since then, I've looked for every chance to admire their aquatic agility and placid demeanor. I would also like to express my admiration for manatees and the need to maintain their habitat, which is vital to their survival.

Grace: My favorite saltwater aquatic animal is the humpback whale. I think the humpback is my favorite because of how large yet gentle they are. I'd love to see one. My favorite freshwater aquatic animal is the brook trout. I love brookies specifically because of their coloring and markings.

The lure and gifts of animal tracking

By Barbara Bald

You see them from the kitchen window, notice them crossing your deck, heading toward the wood shed. Suddenly they are everywhere—made visible by yesterday's light snow. Next you realize some are small, some larger; some round, some oval. Once you start asking, "I wonder who made those?" you are hooked. As with curiosity that snagged the cat, you are finished...

Obsessed with knowing, you will soon be outside with a ruler and a field guide. Kneeling next to the tracks, you'll be measuring the paw prints from front to back, noting the distance between the prints (stride of the animal), recording the width (straddle) of the animal's trail.

Soon you will be noticing the pattern of the prints, asking "Is the animal walking, hopping, leaping, sliding?" Without realizing it, you have become an animal tracker-in-training!

The next step? Snap a photo of the pattern and send it to someone who is a little more knowledgeable and obsessed than you are.

Over time, you will come to realize that many other things serve as signs of an animal's presence — cones, acorns, scratches,



Naturalist Barbara Bald will lead a series of educational programs in 2023 with GMCG.

disturbances on the grounds, feathers, scat.

Why bother, why care? Perhaps most simply, tracking gets you outside more, brings you, and maybe others, closer to the natural world. As with field sketching, you begin noticing more, appreciating the intricacies and complexity of this web we call life.

You start to learn not only what animals are visiting your back yard, but begin to realize which ones share this world with you. When you start asking, "I wonder what the animal might eat, where it might find shelter, what is its source of water? You start paying attention to the layout of the land.

One day on a path, as you munch on your trail mix, you may turn to the left, notice an animal has, like

you, been nibbling a snack to satisfy its hunger. Suddenly, it dawns on you—we are not very much different from one another, trying to survive on this fragile planet.

According to Gilgamesh, who wanted to find meaning in life, "When you love something, you protect it." As a beginner, or seasoned tracker, you are finally in a position to share the message with others, and hopefully help them do their part in saving this land and its inhabitants.

Barbara Bald taught science to sixth-grade students in Gilford for 22 years, has worked with GMCG conducting macroinvertebrate sampling, and helped facilitate the Sense of Place program for second graders in schools in Maine. She took tracking classes with Paul Rezendes and his senior trackers, along with members of the Appalachian Mountain Club and staff of the White Pines program in Maine. Bald has been tracking animals for 20 years, but with so much to learn about the land and the creatures that live in it, she still considers herself an intermediate tracker.



Participants at the 2022 Outdoor Animal Tracking Workshop on the Blue Heron Trail.



*Discover how to identify what critter made these tracks this winter!
Photo by Barba Bald*

GMCG's watershed education programs underway at local schools

**By Tara Schroeder,
GMCG Education Coordinator**

For the past 17 years GMCG has been bringing experiential education about water resources to local schools through programs like the Volunteer Biological Assessment Program (VBAP), Trout in the Classroom (TIC) and GET WET! (Groundwater Education Through Water Evaluation and Testing).

This fall GMCG conducted 15 school visits and field days from September through October for Effingham, Freedom, Ossipee, Sandwich, and Conway Elementary Schools for VBAP. The annual program is an extensive collaboration between GMCG staff, AmeriCorps members, volunteers, teachers, parents, chaperones and students. The program reached 143 students in five schools this year. GMCG also hosted a training at Blue Heron House with NH Fish and Game's Watershed Education Specialist Kayla Croteau for teachers and volunteers from Maine and NH.

The annual Community VBAP presentation held at Effingham Elementary School on November 10 marked the culmination of this year's program when three schools presented their results and extension projects for the program to 30 members of the community. The evening featured an interactive macroinvertebrate specimens display and microscope station where students and parents could investigate samples for microplastics. Samples were collected from snow, single use plastic water bottles, rivers and streams students sampled through VBAP, and more. Special thanks to the fourth and fifth grade students and teachers Sarah Olkkola and Maryann Vollaro and Principal Patricia Morrissey at Effingham Elementary School for hosting the program this year. Thank you to Kayla Croteau of NH Fish and Game for her support of the program and

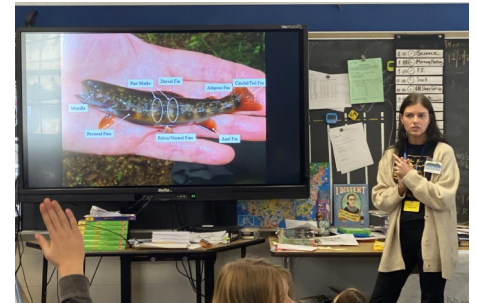


Effingham Elementary School students presented their results and what they learned this fall during the Volunteer Biological Assessment Program to the community in November. (Photo courtesy Patricia Morrissey)

for attending the Community Presentation, too!

GMCG's annual VBAP report is now available online at <https://gmcg.org/education-2/whats-happening/>.

Special thanks to the Quimby Foundation and Ham Foundation for their support of this year's program for area schools.



AmeriCorps Member Grace Kennedy fields questions from students during a recent school program for Trout in the Classroom.



Students used microscopes to investigate samples for microplastics. Sampling of local rivers and streams and investigating for microplastics was added to the VBAP program in 2021 through grants from the Dorr Foundation and NH Moose Plate Conservation Fund. (Photo courtesy of Patricia Morrissey)

Notes from downstream

**By Dalyn Houser, Executive Director
Saco River Corridor Commission**

Dear friends of the Saco River Watershed,

We want to wish you a happy new year as we enter 2023. Happenings on this side of the watershed remain very busy as development continues at a constant and steady pace. The number of permits issued in the Saco River Corridor has recently significantly increased, with 63 permits issued in 2019, 117 in 2020, 109 in 2021, and 113 in 2022. Before 2019, the average number of permits for development projects granted in the corridor averaged around 60-70 a year. Development projects have doubled in the corridor since 2019. Not only are permits for homes increasing but permits for large commercial development projects and subdivisions are also increasing. Inquiries regarding development proposals are also on the rise as more people look for opportunities to develop land in the corridor. The recent increase in development and land use activity has undoubtedly contributed to the increase in identified water quality threats throughout the corridor, making all agencies working in this arena even more critical to land use and water quality protection.

The Saco River Corridor Act was established at the will of the people who wanted to ensure their grandchildren and future generations had the same access to the rivers that they did. This sentiment could not be more applicable today as development continues at a steady and increasing pace along our waterbodies. The Maine State Legislature, with extraordinary forethought over future conservation, established the Saco River Corridor Commission (SRCC) to ensure properly planned development to protect the corridor's unique and



The Ossipee River flows through Effingham on its way to Maine.

exceptional natural resources. The corridor encompasses lands within 500 feet of the Saco, Ossipee, and Little Ossipee Rivers and up to 1,000 feet in areas of the 100-year floodplain. To provide more information to the public about our work, we recently published a new flyer available on our website.

As more and more people continue to develop the corridor, continued water quality monitoring and land use protection are necessary to preserve several communities' drinking water along with our region's unique natural resources. To continue to protect and conserve our region's natural resources to the greatest extent possible, the SRCC is expanding our joint water quality monitoring program, "RIVERS," with the GMCG in several ways, including a new notification system on our website that allows users to see any bacteria sampling events over the allowed state threshold at each site sampled. The new dashboard will allow the public to see if bacteria levels are safe for swimming at popular regional recreation sites. The system includes interactive trend analysis at each sample site with identified short and long-term

water quality trends. Over the past two years, the monitoring program identified sites throughout southern Maine with diminishing water quality, including increases in nitrogen, phosphorous, and bacteria approaching nuisance levels. The SRCC also continues to make expansions and updates to the Land-Use Regulatory program to ensure regulatory mechanisms are in full force to ensure proper planning with the least environmental impact.



The Saco River Corridor Commission is committed to protecting public health and safety and the quality of life for the state of Maine. The commission regulates land and water uses, protects and conserves the region's unique and exceptional natural resources, and prevents the detrimental impacts of incompatible development.

Save the date! 2023 winter calendar

To register for all programs below email education@gmcg.org unless otherwise noted

Friday, January 27 from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.— Winter Tree Identification & Carbon Sequestration Forestry Walk: Join UNH Cooperative Extension Forestry Specialist Wendy Scribner on Friday, January 27 from 1:00-4:00 for a Winter Tree Identification Walk at the GMCG's Blue Heron House located at 236 Huntress Bridge Rd in Effingham. Participants will learn how to identify a variety of trees using buds, bark, and branching patterns. Wendy will talk about how our forests sequester and store carbon, and how management practices can influence the rates of sequestration and storage. Factors including tree age, species diversity, past management practices, and soils influence how much carbon a forest can store. Trees will be measured to determine how much carbon is being stored. Pre-registration is required as space is limited. Snow date is February 3rd.

Wednesday, February 1 from 6 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.— GET WET! Information Session: GET WET! 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. This information session will be held on Zoom prior to the training on February 11 for new teachers and volunteers interested in learning about the program and who are considering bringing it to their students or becoming trained as a volunteer to help in the classroom. Register for the Zoom program at www.gmcg.org.

Saturday, February 4 from 10:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.— Outdoor Animal Tracking Program: Family-friendly and open to all ages, folks will be led on a short outdoor walk along GMCG's Blue Heron Trail with animal tracker Barbara Bald and also spend some time observing casts of tracks, pelts, skulls and more before heading out into the forest to explore. Participants will learn how to identify native animal and bird tracks in the snow. Dress appropriately for the weather and with proper footwear. Pre-registration is required as space is limited. Snow date is March 11.

Saturday, February 11 from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.— GET WET! Training: GMCG will host the annual Groundwater Education through Well Water Evaluation and Testing (GET WET!) training session for volunteers at the Blue Heron House. The mission of GET WET! is to bring collaborative environmental research into the community through the classroom in order to understand local environmental changes and promote public health through safe drinking water. Students collect water from their home following sampling protocols and test for seven different parameters, including chloride, nitrate, pH, hardness, iron, conductivity and microplastics.

Saturday, February 18 from 1 to 4 p.m.— Aquifer Crankie with Chocorua Lake Conservancy at Cook Memorial Library: Join GMCG, Cook Memorial Library, Chocorua Lake Conservancy, and Yeoman's Fund for the Arts at the Cook Memorial Library in Tamworth for the creation of the Ossipee Aquifer Crankie! Help create a beautiful, educational crankie depicting the Ossipee Aquifer. A crankie is a long scroll of images that gets rolled up and shown like a movie. The final art piece will be filmed for future use to educate and advocate for the Ossipee Aquifer. To register please visit <http://bit.ly/crankie-021823>.

Wednesday, March 1 from 1 to 1:45 p.m. on Zoom— Moose on the Loose Program for Kids: Animal tracker Barbara Bald will introduce young readers to moose that live in NH by reading and showing illustrations from the children's book "Antlers Forever" by Frances Bluxam. Through Zoom, students will have a chance to get answers to these questions and more. Participants will receive a Moose bibliography and samples of some hands-on activities to try at home. We hope you can join us! Please register in advance for this program at www.gmcg.org.

Tuesday, March 14 from 7 to 8:30 p.m. on Zoom— Salamander Crossing Brigade Volunteer Training: Every year, the Harris Center trains community scientists to serve on Salamander Crossing Brigades at amphibian road crossings throughout the Monadnock Region. Attend this fun, information-packed volunteer training to join their ranks – or simply to learn more about amphibian migration. Register at <https://harriscenter.org/events/salamander-crossing-brigade-workshop-2023>. For more information contact Brett Amy Thelen at thelen@harriscenter.org.

Saturday, April 15 and Tuesday, April 18 from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. — RIVERS Volunteer Training Sessions: At the Blue Heron House, RIVERS volunteers will learn and refresh their water quality skills, practice using monitoring equipment, and meet other volunteers. In order to provide the highest quality data, we strongly encourage all volunteers to attend one session. Sessions will be outside so please dress for the weather. For more information email Jill Emerson at water@gmcg.org.



THE WATERSHED NEWS

A Quarterly Publication for the Ossipee Watershed

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Effingham, NH 03882
(603) 539-1859
info@gmcg.org

SAVE THE DATE
POLAR PLUNGE
for Watershed Protection
March 31st at noon
in the **OSSIPEE RIVER**
at GMCG's Blue Heron House



In This Issue:

- Talking winter salt reduction with UNHT2's Scott Kinmond
- A closer look at the changing winter ice cycle on New Hampshire lakes
- Tamworth moves forward with Ground Water Protection Ordinance
- Thank you to our 2022 donors!and more!

Contributors: Jill Emerson, Matt Howe, Karen McCall, Tara Schroeder, Moselle Spiller, Grace Kennedy, Hailey Williams, Barbara Bald, Dalyn Houser