

Protecting natural resources in the Ossipee Watershed since 1997



View of Ossipee Lake and Green Mountain from Bayle Mountain in Ossipee, NH on May 20, 2024 (Photo by Moselle Spiller).

GMCG 27th Anniversary Watershed Celebration to be held July 30th at The Preserve at Chocorua

GMCG is delighted to be returning to The Preserve at Chocorua on July 30th for our Annual Watershed Celebration in honor of the volunteers, donors, local organizations, and businesses who make up our watershed community. The celebration marks GMCG's 27th year of work to protect natural resources in the Ossipee Watershed. GMCG was founded in 1997 by a group of concerned citizens in Effingham and has evolved into a multi-disciplinary watershed protection organization engaged in research, education, advocacy and land conservation.

Arrive at 4 p.m. to enjoy a relaxed social hour with light snacks and beverages including beer and wine, and live music. A short, 30-minute program presented by GMCG Board Chair Peter Zack and Executive Director Matt Howe will highlight the organization's achievements, and will recognize AmeriCorps members,

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Election year places focus on environmental leadership

by Matt Howe
GMCG Executive Director

Less than six months from now New Hampshire voters will be presented with electoral choices of local, statewide and national importance.

As a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, GMCG does not take sides in electoral races. However, as a science-based educational organization, it is very much within our mission to help inform the public about where candidates of all political parties stand on issues and policies related to natural resource protection.

Over the last few years as GMCG has worked on many fronts to protect the Ossipee Aquifer, defend groundwater protection ordinances, and urge municipalities and the state to invest in such ventures as culvert replacement and road salt reduction, we have been reminded of how important elections are to natural resource protection. If our town leaders, town board members, state legislators as well as those in the highest

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volunteers, and staff who have contributed to GMCG’s success, as well as present the 2024 High Watch Award. Stay to explore GMCG information tables, and enjoy the beautiful scenery at this delightful open-air venue.

Whether you have been involved since 1997 or are new to the organization and would like to meet the people of GMCG and learn more, you are welcome to the celebration. Thank you to The Preserve at Chocorua for generously hosting this event. To attend, please fill out the RSVP form at www.gmcg.org/ celebration or call (603) 539-1859 or email info@gmcg.org



The open-air celebration tent at The Preserve at Chocorua.

Ossipee Aubuchon Hardware July “Round-Up” Fundraiser to support GMCG

This July, Aubuchon Hardware on Route 16 in Ossipee has offered GMCG an opportunity to raise funds through their generous “Round-Up” program. The store picks just three local nonprofits each year to benefit from this special fundraiser. GMCG is delighted to be picked this year and featured for the month of July!

How it works: For the month of July, each customer is asked if they would like to round up their purchase in support of GMCG. The “Round-Up” can be any amount. The store will match the “Round-Up” total and any other funds raised during the month up to \$2,500. Throughout the month the store will also be selling raffle tickets for three special in-store items, with proceeds also going to GMCG.

On Friday, July 12th and 26th from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. the store will host a cookout, serving up delicious grilled meat in their Green Egg cooker (a promotion for them). All donations collected for the meal are added to the “Round-Up.” GMCG staff and volunteers will be present at the cookout events to greet customers and share information about GMCG and the Ossipee Watershed.

“This is an opportunity not to be missed,” says GMCG Board Member Noreen Downs. “For GMCG’s benefit, let’s see if we can raise \$2,500 and then some!”



**AUBUCHON
HARDWARE**

The July “Round-Up” Fundraiser takes place at 1655 Route 16, Ossipee, NH.

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 protect the lakes, rivers and groundwater of the greater Ossipee Watershed, its aquifer, land, and associated natural resources to ensure prosperous communities and a healthy ecosystem for all.

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.

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Election year places focus on environmental leadership

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offices of the land are not sensitive to or informed about the environmental implications of their decisions, we have no assurance that the resources so critical to our quality of life and economic prosperity will be protected.

In the months ahead, in the tradition of the non-partisan 501(c)(3) League of Women Voters and League of Conservation Voters Education Fund, GMCG will gather information on the environmental voting records and environmental policy stands of local and statewide NH candidates of all political parties.

In addition to our own research we will link the GMCG community to organizations such as Citizens Count, www.citizenscount.org, a non-partisan NH nonprofit whose extensive database enables voters to quickly learn how the candidates on their ballot voted on everything from health care policy to state road funding to renewable energy.

Voters in Maine have a similar non-partisan resource, the Maine Conservation Alliance, www.protectmaine.org).

In addition to voting records, we also will draw attention to statements candidates have made on the record about environmental issues. For example, we know one topic of keen interest to the voting public is how a candidate views the issue of climate change. The world Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has declared:

“It is unequivocal that the increase of CO₂, methane, and nitrous oxide in the atmosphere over the industrial era is the result of human activities and that human influence is the principal driver of many changes observed across the atmosphere, ocean, cryosphere, and biosphere... Since systematic scientific assessments began in the 1970s, the influence of human activity on the warming of the climate system has evolved from theory to established fact.”



New Hampshire Capitol building in Concord; photo by Timothy Valentine on Flickr

Should a Democrat, Republican or Independent contend that this is not established fact, it is their prerogative to do so. It is also our prerogative to ensure that the voting public consider this information when it considers who it wants making decisions about natural resource protection.

To be clear, in this divided political climate we must be careful not to assume what a candidate’s party affiliation means about their commitment to environmental protection. Over the last several decades there have been champions from both major parties for land conservation, air and water quality, sustainable forestry, shoreline protection and countless other issues of concern to us here in the Ossipee Watershed.

As we often say at GMCG, “water knows no boundaries.” Similarly, we have every reason to aspire to a future in which the protection of our aquifer, lakes, ponds, streams, wetlands and forests transcends political boundaries. That is why we invite everyone on the ballot this fall to share their views and visions with the voters who will entrust them as guardians of the precious natural resources that sustain and define New Hampshire.

“One Aquifer” signs are back!



With summer travel and traffic increasing on our local roadways now is the time to help spread the word about the importance of clean water. Summer 2024 will be the third year these high-impact lawn signs have helped to spread awareness about protecting the Ossipee Aquifer. If you would like to display a “One Aquifer” lawn sign, write to info@gmccg.org.

Learn more about GMCG’s Ossipee Aquifer Campaign online at gmccg.org/oneaquifer.

Endangered plant research and protection at the Ossipee Lake Natural Area

by Maddie Severance
Ecological Information Specialist
New Hampshire Natural Heritage
Bureau

The Natural Heritage Bureau (NHB) is part of the Division of Forests and Lands in the NH Department of Natural and Cultural Resources. NHB provides information on New Hampshire's native plants and natural communities to landowners, land managers, state and federal agencies, and non-profit organizations. NHB serves as a resource to help protect the state's biodiversity while meeting land-use needs.

The 2010 Ossipee Lake Natural Area (OLNA) Management plan was developed to maintain OLNA for clean and safe recreation in designated areas and to protect its natural and historic resources. The OLNA stakeholder working group was established to make recommendations to the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources (DNCR) about managing OLNA. NHB holds biannual meetings with the OLNA stakeholder working group in the spring and fall to discuss how the OLNA Management Plan is being implemented, and to review results from annual monitoring by NHB staff of the rare plants and exemplary natural communities present at OLNA.

In May of 2023, NHB along with other DNCR staff set up fencing along the designated public use area in order to protect the threatened hairy hudsonia (*Hudsonia tomentosa*) from trampling. This set up occurs each spring, however for the first time, 100 feet of deer fencing was installed in addition to the usual snow fencing. The deer fencing is significantly taller and sturdier than the snow fencing and was expected to be more protective of the sensitive areas. The deer fencing proved to be effective and appeared untouched when it was

taken down in September compared to the snow fencing which had suffered considerable damage. Due to this success, NHB has purchased 100 more feet of deer fencing to install this spring.

In September of 2023, surveys of hairy hudsonia were completed on Short Sands using transects that were positioned over patches of the population and photographed. The photos of each patch were then examined using an image analysis program to determine the percent increase in growth for each plot from 2018 to 2023. The plots are still being analyzed but preliminary results show positive growth of the population.



Hairy hudsonia found at OLNA.

In September of 2023, NHB also continued assessing the population of bog birch (*Betula pumila*) in the exemplary poor level fen/bog system between Ossipee Lake and Route 25. This is the only known location of this state-endangered species in New Hampshire making it important to document the full extent of the population. In 2022 and 2023, NHB conducted the first formal survey of this population in over 10 years which resulted in revised population boundaries and the delineation of a second previously undocumented patch (first discovered in 2022). Overall, the population was found to cover 10.5 acres.

Otherwise known as Long Sands, the Ossipee Lake Natural Area is a 400-acre state-owned property on Lake Ossipee and is home to unique pond shore communities of plants as well as archaeological sites that are thousands of years old. Unfortunately, recreational use is destroying the rare plants and fragile habitat. In one report, the Ossipee Lake Natural Area is described as a state "hotspot" an environmentally significant property that is seriously threatened. Sandy pond shore communities are rapidly disappearing around the world due to increasing recreation and development, as well as lack of public awareness. GMCG and lake associations like Ossipee Lake Alliance have worked with the state and local stakeholders for many years to increase awareness about why protecting the Ossipee Lake Natural Area is so important. Please help spread the word to locals and visitors alike so that this special place is protected for the future.

For more information, including a boater brochure, key regulations, and map of the public use area, visit: <https://gmcg.org/advocacy/olna>.

What can you do to help protect the Ossipee Lake Natural Area?

- When visiting the Ossipee Lake Natural Area, please be sure to tread lightly and "leave no trace."
- Carry in/carry out all trash and belongings.
- Stay off of plants and other vegetation, and stay within lower, open sandy areas.
- Leave what you find, whether it is an archaeological artifact or plant.
- Please do not light fires or camp on the beach.
- Help to educate others about this special place and why it needs protection!
- For a full list of regulations and enforcement information, visit <https://gmcg.org/advocacy/olna>.

GMCG's conservation center offers trails and educational opportunities

by Tara Schroeder
GMCG Education Coordinator

The Blue Heron House at the Patricia & Charles H. Watts II Conservation Center opened in July of 2018 after four years of volunteer driven renovation guided by the vision of former Executive Director Blair Folts.

Blue Heron House:

Located on the Ossipee River in Effingham, NH, the Blue Heron House includes the Lawrence B. and Jacqueline M. Leavitt Water Resource Center, the Jann Leeming & Arthur Little Community Room, the Stan and Gladys Brown Natural Resource Library, and office space. Nature-based educational workshops and events for families, adults, and small children take place year-round at the center. Be sure to check out the online calendar at gmcg.org to learn about what events are coming soon!

Nature Trails:

The Patricia and Charles H. Watts II Conservation Center features two easy walking trails great for people of all ages. The Blue Heron Trail begins at a welcome kiosk located to the left of the parking lot where you will find interpretive guides for youth and adults. Children who complete the activities in their guide can earn their Youth Conservation Patch – just come in the Blue Heron House and show us your completed guide to receive your patch!

The Artemis Trail begins at an intersection branching off the Blue Heron Trail on the west side of the vernal pool. The Blue Heron Trail is a 0.25 mile loop and the Artemis Trail is 0.8 miles there and back with a stop at Bob's Brook. These trails have been named one of Mount Washington Valley's Age Friendly



The Blue Heron House at the Patricia & Charles H. Watts II Conservation Center is located at 236 Huntress Bridge Road in Effingham, NH.



The Blue Heron House trail loops around a vernal pool, through forest, and river shoreline habitat.

initiative "Walkable Trails."

Pollinator Garden:

In 2021 GMCG worked with volunteers, businesses, residents and AmeriCorps members to install a pollinator garden to demonstrate how we can all help create habitat for pollinators like birds, bees, butterflies, moths, flies and beetles. GMCG's pollinator garden features over forty native flowering plants with labels that share plant names (common and scientific) and which pollinators they benefit. The plants were donated by Susan Copen of NH Native Perennials of Silver Lake (www.nhnativeperennials.com), Karen Payne, and members of the Mt. Washington Valley Plant Exchange group. Volunteers Kristy Foster-Carbone and Mark Carbone of Eaton helped to design and install the garden with GMCG staff and AmeriCorps members. Look for the new Pollinator Garden sign installed last fall.



The Huntress Sawmill archaeological site is viewable by the Ossipee River from the Stephanie Barnes memorial bench.

Huntress Sawmill:

An archaeological assessment of this site in 2015 revealed the remains of the 19th century Huntress Sawmill (1836-c.1890). Remnants of the mill and a midden of artifacts were found, including dairy pails, machinery parts, a ceramic teapot, wooden cribwork and stone wedge pieces. Though the site has been eroded by the river over time, the stone walls of the mill and cribwork can still be seen. Look for the new sign overlooking the river and learn about the location's history!

The public is encouraged to visit the Blue Heron House to meet the staff, tour the building, including the Water Resources Center, explore the trails and learn about charitable and volunteer opportunities. The land and trails are open to the public year round. Business hours at the office are 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Monday through Friday.

GMCG partners with CLC for the first Salamander Brigade in the Ossipee Watershed

by Tara Schroeder
GMCG Education Coordinator

It was a rainy, slightly chilly night April 11th with snow from the last snowstorm still lining the roadsides and blowdowns and tree limbs everywhere from the heavy snow that took its toll on our forests the previous week. Debra Marnich, Stewardship Director of Chocorua Lake Conservancy (CLC) and I had been watching the weather closely for weeks waiting for the right moment to put out the alert to the 20 individuals who had filled the workshop registration within two days in March, all waiting to hear when the “Big Night” would be. Big Night refers to the amphibian migration when the many frogs, toads and salamanders in our region are on the move trying to find their way to waterbodies to breed and lay eggs. Conditions have to be just right for this event to happen; it occurs on the first warm (above 40° F), rainy nights of spring, after the snowpack has melted.

This year the first migrations had already happened in the Monadnock region of New Hampshire starting on February 28 and again on March 6, the second-earliest amphibian migration in 18 years of keeping track according to the Harris Center for Conservation Education¹. With predictions for temperatures in the 40s and a steady rain after dark, and much of the ground in the uplands near the Chocorua River thawed, we knew the time might be right on April 11th for our first ever formal Salamander Brigade.

Salamander Brigades have been held for many years in southwestern parts of the state to help salamanders and other amphibians cross the road and to collect important data about these animals. Most of these amphibians spend the majority of their lives underground, but in the spring they leave the woods and migrate to their breeding wetlands to court and lay eggs. Spotted salamanders, spring



The spotted salamander (Ambystoma laterale) is a mole salamander native to the northeastern United States.

peepers, wood frogs, red backed salamanders, American toads, gray tree frogs and many other amphibians come out on these early spring nights to move en masse to their breeding pools, often returning to the same breeding pools year after year, and in many cases, to the very pool where they themselves were born. Unfortunately, more and more they encounter roads on their journey resulting in roadkill. As an important source of food to many other organisms in the food web and contributing what we have come to understand as a significant amount of biomass in the forest and wetland ecosystems, amphibian mortality

on Big Nights could have far reaching impacts. One study in eastern Canada recorded 32,000 dead amphibians over the course of just four seasons on a two-mile stretch of road and a study in New York found more than 50% of salamanders attempting to cross a paved rural road did not survive. In fact, increased road mortality has led researchers in western Massachusetts predict that local extinction of spotted salamanders could happen in as few as 25 years².

I never noticed amphibian roadkill growing up unless they were big green frogs or bullfrogs that were readily seen. I later learned that it was because these other, smaller and more cryptic amphibians had



Volunteers gather before nightfall to learn about the amphibians they might encounter and how to collect data for Big Night on April 11th.

been scavenged by predators in the night or early morning hours.

For the past four years I have walked our road on Washington Hill in Tamworth next to the Chocorua River, just hoping to get the timing right so that my daughter and her friends could be a part of this magical event. I learned about this phenomenon from the Harris Center’s trainings years ago, and found myself living on a road that I learned was a real hot spot for amphibian migration.

As an 8-year-old, my daughter started this journey with me learning about the different species of amphibians and eventually we started to gather data and send it in to the Harris Center to get our site on the map. When she exclaimed this year that “there is nowhere I’d rather be right now, Mom, than saving salamanders” and that she felt like she was “making a difference,” my heart swelled with happiness. April 11, 2024 was indeed a Big Night!

Overall 13 hardy volunteers showed up with GMCG and CLC staff to help 156 amphibians cross the road safely to get to the Chocorua River and wetlands. We counted 72 spotted salamanders, 15 red back salamanders, 2 wood frogs, and 67 spring peepers. We also saw some predators looking for dinner, including mice, a shrew and a barred owl.

Special thanks to everyone who came out. We look forward to collecting more data at this and other sites in the Ossipee Watershed next year. Our gratitude as well to Deborah Marnich and Juno Lamb of CLC, Grace Piselli, GMCG AmeriCorps Water Quality Resources Assistant, and Eric Marnich for all of their help putting on the program.

To learn more about this program visit <https://harriscenter.org/>. If you are interested in participating in a Salamander Brigade, we urge you to find a crossing close to home and to stay off the roads after dark to minimize roadkill, and to follow all proper safety precautions including wearing a reflective vest and bringing a flashlight or headlamp. Please share any crossings and data with GMCG so we can learn more about important crossings and "hot spots" for amphibians in our watershed.

References:

- ^{1, 2} Salamander Crossing Brigades. Harris Center | Making Tracks in the Monadnock Region Since 1970. (2024, March 1). <https://harriscenter.org/programs-and-education/citizen-science/salamander-crossing-brigades>



Volunteer Eden Beauchesne holds a spring peeper she helped cross the road. Eden has participated in several crossing brigades over the years.



AmeriCorps member Grace Piselli is delighted to help her first salamander cross the road.

by Tara Schroeder
GMCG Education Coordinator

Students from Sandwich, Freedom, Ossipee, Conway and other towns in Mount Washington Valley and the Ossipee Watershed have been learning about the importance of protecting water and natural resources this winter and spring. Whether it was ensuring excellent water quality conditions for the Eastern brook trout that they raised in the classroom or understanding their own drinking water quality from home, students had the opportunity to engage with GMCG staff, AmeriCorps members and volunteers in the classroom and outdoors to learn about their environment and how to be good environmental stewards.

Trout in the Classroom: This year, Northeast Woodland Charter School (NWCS), Pine Tree Elementary, Sandwich Central School and Freedom Elementary School participated in the Trout in the Classroom program. It was a challenging year for many reasons, including an early hatchery pick up in January due to siltation and water quality issues from the early January rain, one school's chiller needing emergency replacement, and fry-gobbling filters that needed troubleshooting (with success!). NWCS had an extra lesson with GMCG about monitoring their tank water quality, calculating percent development and using a water quality kit to measure nitrates, nitrites, ammonia and pH. Trout "swim up" started to happen in April after the alevin's yolk sacs were completely absorbed, and teachers and students then began to carefully feed the young fry their food consisting of mashed up macroinvertebrates.

Water temperatures of release sites were closely monitored and relayed to teachers and students from the GMCG RIVERS program which regularly monitors rivers and streams across the watershed.

Finally, once river temperatures were 45 degrees or higher and tank temperatures were brought to within three degrees of the release site, students were able to release their trout. The program is a great way to bring the fall's Volunteer Biological Assessment Program full circle. After the students have learned about the release site's ecology and water quality, they can then ensure their trout will have the high quality habitat they need to survive.

GET WET! (Groundwater Education Through Water Evaluation and Testing): In March, after a training for new teachers, AmeriCorps members and volunteers, GMCG delivered the GET WET! program to three schools including Pine Tree Elementary and a homeschool group from Ossipee. Students test their drinking water for seven different parameters including: pH, conductivity, nitrates and nitrites, chloride and sodium chloride, iron, hardness, and microplastics. Students learn about their source of drinking water, common contaminants, and how to ensure their drinking water is safe.

Whenever there are questionable water quality results, students are provided with more information and resources to share at home for mitigation as well as testing at the state's lab for other contaminants like radon, arsenic, lead, fluoride, bacteria and uranium. Students have an opportunity to learn about pollution and contamination of ground and surface water using a groundwater model. This program is available to schools, libraries and other organizations. Please inquire at education@gmcg.org if you are interested in participating!

Watershed Programs for Young Children: GMCG also continued watershed education programs for younger children at Children Unlimited, Effingham Library and GMCG's conservation center for



GMCG Board Chair Peter Zack works with a student from Tamworth to test his drinking water.



Preschoolers try snowshoeing at GMCG's 2024 winter ecology programs.

Nature Story and Discovery Time this winter and spring. Fourteen programs for preschoolers and their caregivers covered everything from animal tracking and snowshoeing to owl and moose ecology, water and trees. Everyone had fun exploring the nature trails, using all of their senses, singing songs, playing games, doing yoga, creating crafts, drawing in nature journals and planting trees.

These watershed education programs are made possible by support from The Kendal C. and Anna Ham Charitable Foundation, the Alfred Quimby Fund, and donors like you. Thank you for your support!

Where are they now? *Catching up with past GMCG AmeriCorps members*

by Tara Schroeder
GMCG Education Coordinator

Bethany Mestelle, AmeriCorps member and GMCG Education and Outreach Assistant 2021-2022



I am teaching science at Spring Grove Public School in Spring Grove, MN. Spring Grove is a small town of almost 2,000, and the school has pre-K through 12th grade all in one building, so some days I get the honor of subbing for kindergarten music class right up to the minute that I teach 16-18 year-olds physics. Spring Grove is on the border of Minnesota and Iowa, and a lot of my students actually live in Iowa (similar to Fryeburg kids going to school in Conway).

Teaching has certainly been challenging, but also a lot of fun! I love being able to integrate hands-on learning and inquiry-based activities into my classroom. We've had a very mild winter, so I'm hoping we can get outdoors for some of our environmental chemistry lessons soon. Right now we're learning about how ionic bonding forms crystal minerals in rocks and soil, but we spend almost an entire month learning about water and solutions, which is my favorite part of the course. I've adapted some of the tests from the GET WET! and other GMCG programs into full chemistry labs, so the students can measure the concentration of various ions in water using different lab techniques.

I am living in a karst region with a lot of agriculture. We have a lot of nitrate pollution with very little soil to filter it out.

When I'm not doing schoolwork, I keep myself busy with my musical

endeavors. Right now, I'm singing in a choir at Viterbo University and playing trumpet in a band in La Crosse. I also played clarinet for the Spring Grove production of the Wizard of Oz, which was a lot of fun! In between all of these things, I've been reading a ton, knitting socks, following the new professional women's hockey league (go PWHL Minnesota!), studying German, and traveling.

While the school year is busy, it's nice to have the summer to travel! This past summer, I was able to visit my high school best friend who was living in Seattle at the time, and we hiked in Mt. Rainier National Park. I also have a friend that works for Sun Country Airlines, which means he gets free flights quite often (far more than he could use), so he brought a group of us to Alaska, which was INCREDIBLE! We flew into Anchorage, and spent a week traveling and hiking around the area.

Caitlin Noseworthy, AmeriCorps Member and Water Quality Resources Assistant 2021-2022



I have been with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources as a Hydrologist since completing my AmeriCorps term in August 2022. A large part of my job involves traveling around the state and measuring how much water is flowing in rivers and streams. Last year I was able to measure the highest flow ever captured at several rivers. But three to four months later most of Minnesota was in a severe to extreme drought so I also measured the lowest flow at those same rivers. Just goes to

illustrate how quickly things can change. Aside from measuring streamflow, I also monitor many groundwater wells, analyze streamflow data, and occasionally get to explore and survey wetlands. Aside from work, I have been playing golf, skiing, and traveling as much as I can.

Madison "Maddie" Martin, AmeriCorps Member and Conservation Assistant 2022



I've spent the past year in California as part of a trail crew with American Conservation Experience (ACE). I've slept more nights in a tent than in a bed and I've traveled all over the west coast. I've worked on sections of the Pacific Crest Trail, Big Sur State Park, Death Valley, and many other places. In August, I became an assistant crew lead and I'm actually currently on my last project with ACE. Next week, I will be moving to Colorado to start a new AmeriCorps term as an education assistant with Cherry Creek State Park in Aurora.



AmeriCorps

Brittney Semone, AmeriCorps Member and Conservation Assistant 2022

I moved back out west to New Mexico and am working for a non-profit as the project manager for the Collaborative Wildland Interface Project. The goal of this project is to work on private forested lands to reduce fuels and create defensible space around homes in order to better protect communities from



catastrophic wildfires. We work in collaboration with the State Forestry Division and US Forest Service to strategize for our work to make as much of an impact as possible. It's been a lot of fun and I am learning a lot!

Spencer Wilson, AmeriCorps Member and Conservation Assistant 2021



A wise Jill once said, "You're gonna be alright." It's important to note that a timeframe is not mentioned. After GMCG, I headed to Manchester, New Hampshire where I worked at Queen City Bike Collective as an outreach/volunteer coordinator

and assistant mechanic. Which if you ever get the chance, go! It is an incredible space and the people are second to none. During this time, I realized that what I wanted to do was work in water quality. So naturally a few months later my wife Marlee and I decided to move to New Mexico, The Land of Enchantment. But to make the move, we had to build a tiny house on wheels out of a six foot by 22 foot long cargo trailer and tow it a thousand miles across the country. After a great deal of problem solving, we arrived in Taos, New Mexico, and parked out on Taos plateau.

In Taos, I worked as a contracted Wilderness Ranger for the Bureau of Land Management while Marlee managed the launch of her business. We spent a year in the high desert facing challenges we didn't know existed. Like having your door ripped off by 60 mph winds. With some experience, stories, and a thirst for running water, we returned to the East. Back in the humidity of the Southeast, we quickly made our way North to Abingdon, VA where Marlee and I currently live. I am working for the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality as a Water Monitoring Specialist and Marlee is happily running her business in many more square feet. And since I've never been good at predicting the future, that's where I'll leave it. P.S., for anyone else who is trying to find their career, I spent a good chunk of time applying to jobs and working in between the ones I mentioned. It was quite stressful yet rewarding when looking back. So if you're also struggling just remember, "You're gonna be alright."- Wise Jill. And you're living your character backstory. Choose today who you want to be tomorrow.

Meet our new half-term AmeriCorps members



Josey Curley, AmeriCorps Member Conservation Assistant

My name is Josey and I'm from Gilford, New Hampshire. I have a B.A. in Biology from Keene State College. I enjoy exploring and collecting things along the way. I am super excited to be a part of the Lakes Region Conservation Corps and can't wait for what these months will hold! I love doodling, animals and learning fun facts.



Ellie Hatt, AmeriCorps Member Conservation Assistant

Ellie is a graduate from the University of Maine at Farmington where she received her B.S. in Earth and Environmental Science. With a passion for aquatic ecology, GMCG is a place where she can tap into her love for watershed science and exemplify the importance of citizen science. Recently she worked as an Intern for the Friends of the Cobbossee Watershed on a plant survey team to mitigate/eliminate invasive aquatic plant species.

Facets of the Same Gem

by Barbara Bald

We see him there, resting on the forest floor, blending-in with brown leaf litter and rotting logs. We notice his smooth skin, so unlike that of the lumpy American toad, and marvel at the precision of the black mask around his third-lid eyes. We're wondering where he came from, where he is going and how old he might be. We both question whether he might really be a she. Just how does one tell the sex of a wood frog?

"Are you a scientist or a poet?" many well-meaning folks ask. Others send jibes in words, "Are you schizophrenic? Which do you want to be?" Both is always the answer. You see, it is even possible for a scientist and a poet to take up residence within the same mind, within the same heart. Often, both sides see details other folks miss. For instance—how animal tracks make different patterns in the snow, how slightly drooping leaves of a philodendron are calling for water, how sand granules come in different sizes and hues.

Both sides observe, and wonder—wonder why the feathers of a turkey's wing are rounded on the bottom, while those on the tail are blunt. Ponder why some cats like catnip while others do not? They muse, "What might happen if..." Curiosity always gets the better of both them.

Their approaches may ultimately begin to diverge, but in the wondering, they will both explore creative paths. Returning to our black-masked Wood frog, the scientist might take photos of our woodland friend or draw pictures of him, label them with detailed field notes. The poet, who might snap the same photos, make similar sketches, may lose herself in words and metaphors that strive to capture the essence of what she's seeing and feeling.

The scientist may question what the advantage is of the black markings around the frog's eyes, pose a hypothesis about that advantage. Alternatively, he may start seeing environmental threats to our masked bandit and begin imagining ways to address them.

Noticing how similar the black markings are to the mask of a raccoon, the poet may imagine the small amphibian with a tiny sword, fighting for survival. Alternatively, feeling the frog's heartbeat within her own chest, she may start penning a poem to help others experience the interconnectedness between all species.

So there you have it— scientist and poet, both facets of the same gem, a partnership in which each calls upon the other when needed. Housed in the same body, or not, awed by the beauty and complexity of life, each may begin, or end with, being awed by the realms of possibility.

Perhaps, as poet Ellen Bass recently postulated at a conference on Eco-poetry at the Yale Forestry Forum—perhaps it will take both the scientific mind and the poetic heart to save this beloved planet that we call home.

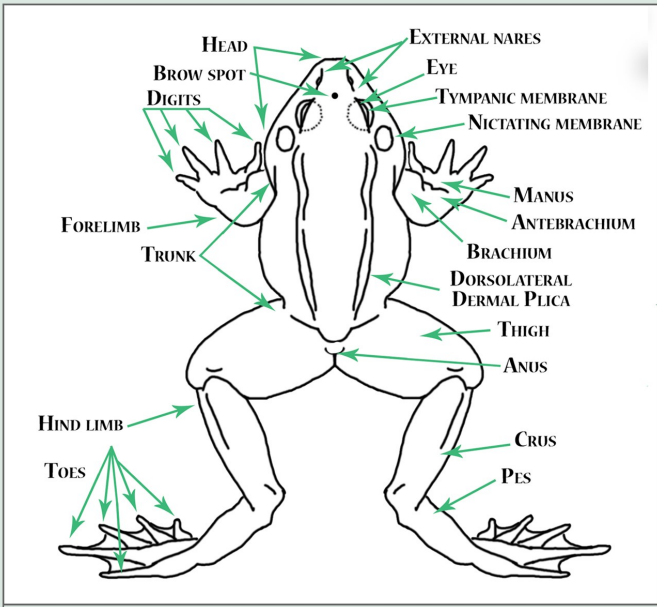
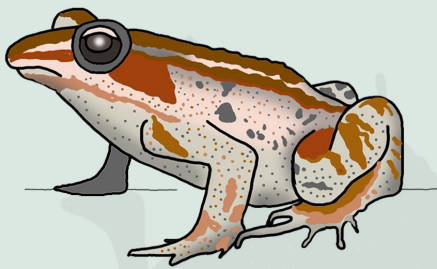


Illustration by Peaco Todd, 2024



Now, in our eighteenth spring
like dreamers awaking, we heard
the ludicrous May uproar and racket of frogs...
We left them to their ungodly, helpless
anonymous singing, frogs trying to attract a mate
which, had we been strangers, might
have made this a love poem, though it is not.

From *The Tree Frogs* by William Logan

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.*

Effingham Conservation Commission

The April roadside cleanup event netted a total of 112 bags, collected by 20 volunteers, with 15 attending the picnic afterward. Anya and Grace Bartoswicz collected 28 bags on Green Mountain Road. Erik Jones found \$11 while cleaning up Elm Street. He donated this to the Effingham Conservation Commission (ECC). Linda Seamans cleaned up Jones Road. Thanks to Diane, Jack, and Tim for the food they contributed to the picnic, and to Harriet and Charlie Greystone for Charlie's grillmeister expertise, and for the use and transportation of the Lord's Hill Meeting House grill. Thanks to Jason Earle as well.

The ECC will sponsor a Live Animal Presentation at the Effingham Street Fair on Saturday, Aug. 10. The topic will be Owls of New Hampshire, presented by the Squam Lakes Natural Science Center. The exact location has not been confirmed.

The ECC juried submissions for the Effingham Elementary School Earth Day Poster Contest from grades K through 6. The theme was composting. Grade winners received books on composting on May 13. These books are fully biodegradable.

Tamworth Conservation Commission

The Tamworth Conservation Commission (TCC) was chaired for the past decade by Nelson O'Bryan. This spring, Nelson stepped down, becoming an alternate, and Ned Beecher is now the Chair. Kit Morgan remains as Vice Chair, with Charlie Townsend continuing as Treasurer. Chris Conrod continues to provide critical administrative assistance, including maintaining the TCC website.

The TCC continues to have strong rapport with, and support from, the town Select Board and Planning Board.

When Select Board members recently had questions about conservation easements in town, Nelson O'Bryan presented key information at a Select Board meeting. Through the TCC's work, the Town continues to take on new conservation easements when landowners wish to protect their land. This winter, easements on lands east of Bryant Road, near the Bearcamp River, were protected through gracious easement donations by the landowners and careful work by the Commission.

TCC is working with the Planning Board, which is finalizing a "build-out analysis" that will help inform a possible updated town Master Plan. The TCC is supportive of the new (first-ever) Town code compliance person, who would enforce the groundwater protection ordinance adopted by the town last year.

Other current TCC projects include: routine maintenance of town trails, creation of an educational backpack for the Cook Memorial Library to loan out that focuses on exploring the TCC's "Hikin' Heron" trails, supporting the efforts of the Tamworth Community Nurse Association and Chocorua Lake Conservancy in developing an all-person's trail north of Lake Chocorua, conducting the twice-a-year red-backed salamander census as part of SPARCNet, and supporting – and very much appreciating – the ongoing water quality data work facilitated by GMCG.

The TCC continues its responsibility of reviewing NH DES wetland permit applications. Related to that, there have been a few wetlands and shorelands concerns observed around Tamworth this past winter and spring. The TCC is considering ways to provide more visible and effective education about the importance - and the requirements - regarding protecting these sensitive areas.

Plastic Free July - be a part of it!

GMCG is participating in Plastic Free July again this year and encourages Ossipee Watershed towns to take up the challenge with us. Plastic Free July is a global movement organized by the Plastic Free Foundation to create solutions and raise awareness about plastic pollution.

Center Harbor, Hopkinton, New London and Dover have made formal proclamations asking their businesses and residents to voluntarily reduce the use and distribution of single-use plastic during the month of July. GMCG encourages other towns to do the same.

Any town, business, organization, or individual can participate in Plastic Free July by taking steps to reduce the use of single-use plastic and spreading awareness of plastic pollution through social media and word of mouth. Individuals can also urge state legislators to pass Zero Waste laws that will hold companies responsible for the plastic waste that they create with their disposable packaging. These laws will require companies to redesign their packages to reduce waste and exclude toxic chemicals.

For more information visit: <https://www.10towns.org/actions/policy-actions/plastic-pollution-proclamation>



Fall 2024 Online Auction will run for 10 days starting Friday, October 25th

GMCG is seeking unique quality items for our Fall Harvest Auction. We will gladly receive your donation of new or slightly used items and help with pick-up. We also welcome donations of gift cards and certificates to local restaurants and businesses. Maybe you want to contribute to the auction in other ways? You can offer a coupon for a few hours of service such as: baking, cleaning, sewing, yard work, car detailing, transportation, grocery shopping or closet organizing. A handmade item and little home help could make a difference for someone who will make an auction bid in support of GMCG. To donate an item email GMCG staff member Moselle at outreach@gmcg.org.

All funds raised at the auction will support GMCG's programs in research, education, advocacy, and land conservation in the Ossipee Watershed. October 18th is the deadline for contributions. The online auction will run from Friday, October 25th to Sunday, November 3rd at 9 p.m.



GMCG selected as July's nonprofit recipient of Hannaford Community Bag Program in Ossipee

GMCG has been selected again by the Store Leadership Team as a Hannaford Community Bag Program Nonprofit Partner! We will receive \$1 for each \$2.50 reusable Community Bag sold during the month of July 2024 at the Hannaford store located at 896 Rt. 16, Ossipee, NH.

This opportunity coincides with our efforts to promote *Plastic Free July*. Read about Plastic Free July on page 12. If you find yourself at Hannaford in Ossipee without your re-usable shopping bag or just need to stock up on more, please remember to ask for the "Community Bag" and help support GMCG!



Your support makes all the difference!

Please make checks payable to Green Mountain Conservation Group
PO 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

Thank you!

GMCG in action



A participant in Winter Nature Story & Discovery Time learns about trees with AmeriCorps members on the Blue Heron Trail in March.



On May 9th sixth graders at Northeast Woodland Charter School released about 300 Eastern brook trout fry that they raised since January as part of the Trout in the Classroom program. The students learned all about this species of special concern and its habitat needs and water quality requirements, and how many obstacles and threats trout face in completing their life cycle.



Wendy Scribner of UNH Cooperative Extension led a workshop on invasive plants this May at the Blue Heron House.



From left to right: Sloane Jarell, Fay Melendy, Susan Lee, and Clare Long show new book donations to the Madison Library made through GMCGs Sponsor a Book Program.



Volunteers learn how to test well water at the GET WET! Volunteer & Teacher Training Workshop at the Blue Heron House.



In April, salamander brigade volunteers helped salamanders safely cross Washington Hill Road in Tamworth.



Rick Van de Poll of Sandwich plunged in the 44 degree Ossipee River at GMCG's 6th Annual Polar Plunge for Healthy Water on April 12th.



AmeriCorps member Grace Piselli demonstrated water quality monitoring equipment with volunteers at the spring RIVERS training on the Ossipee River.

Save the date! 2024 summer calendar

Friday, June 21: Creating Habitat for Native Pollinators from 10:00 a.m. to noon at GMCG

Celebrate Pollinator Week by learning how you can make your property more appealing and beneficial to native pollinators. Pollinators are vital to our food system, and with research showing significant declines in native species, we can all help native pollinators by considering their habitat needs as we landscape our properties. Even small areas can provide important food sources and nesting sites for pollinators like native bees, butterflies, moths and other insects, as well as birds and bats. Experts Wendy Scribner, Natural Resources Field Specialist with UNH Cooperative Extension, Debra Marnich, Stewardship Director of Chocorua Lake Conservancy, and Catherine Dufault, District Manager of Carroll County Conservation District, will explore the importance of native pollinators, share first-hand research experience and examples of how to create habitat for native pollinators. Participants will be able to see an example of a pollinator garden, bee hotel and pollinator field. Donations are greatly appreciated. Visit gmcg.org to register.

Friday, July 12 and 26: Aubuchon Hardware July Round-Up Fundraiser

For the entire month of July any purchase made at the Aubuchon Hardware store located on Rt. 16 in Ossipee may be rounded up to benefit GMCG. On Friday, July 12 and 26 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. the store will host a cookout, serving up delicious grilled meat in their Green Egg cooker. All donations collected for the meal are added to the Round-Up funds raised.

Tuesday, July 30: Watershed Celebration from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. at The Preserve in Chocorua

Join us on July 30th to celebrate GMCG's 28th year of Ossipee Watershed protection and honor the volunteers who make our work possible! Featuring updates from GMCG leadership; presentation of the annual High Watch Award for exemplary service, and light refreshments. Please register by Friday, July 26th at gmcg.org/celebration

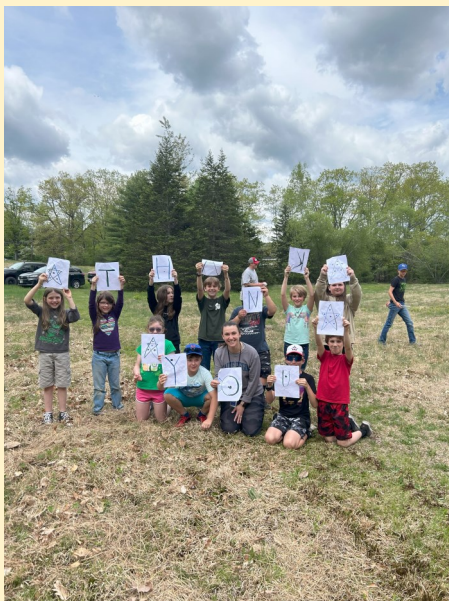
Mondays July 8, 15, 22, 29th and August 5 Nature Story and Discovery Time from 11:00 a.m. to noon at GMCG

AmeriCorps members will lead Nature Story & Discovery Time every Monday in July. Programs are by donation and will include a book reading as well as songs, crafts, games and an outdoor activity around the day's theme. The themes this summer include: Vernal Pool Exploration, Nature as Art, Air and Light, and Mud! Activities are tailored for children ages 3-8 and their caregivers. Meet at the Blue Heron House located at 236 Huntress Bridge Road in Effingham.

For the month of July at Hannaford supermarket in Ossipee

We are so excited to let you know GMCG has been selected again by the Store Leadership Team as a Hannaford Community Bag Program Nonprofit Partner! GMCG will receive \$1 for each \$2.50 reusable Community Bag sold during the month of **July 2024** at the Hannaford store located at 896 Rt. 16, Ossipee, NH.

Trout release in Freedom a success



Freedom Elementary School third and fourth graders successfully raised Eastern brook trout in their classroom this year for GMCG's Trout in the Classroom program. Students in Freedom released trout on May 17th and participated in a trout life cycle activity led by GMCG. The students shared their thoughtful thank you cards and a coordinated "Thank You" that they planned themselves to show their appreciation. Eastern brook trout are our state fish and a species of special concern in New Hampshire. Only 9% of their former habitat remains intact. Students learn trout ecology, biology and conservation through the Trout in the Classroom program, and why it is important to protect the water quality of our rivers, streams, lakes and ponds.



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236 Huntress Bridge Road
Effingham, NH 03882
(603) 539-1859
www.gmcg.org

THE WATERSHED NEWS

A Quarterly Publication for the Ossipee Watershed

Save the date!

Tuesday, July 30th

4 to 6 p.m.

**GMCG 27th Anniversary
Watershed Celebration**

at the Preserve at Chocorua

IF ONLY...



In This Issue:

- GMCG 28th Anniversary Watershed Celebration is July 30th at the Preserve at Chocorua
- Ossipee Lake Natural Area update from the New Hampshire Natural Heritage Bureau
- Election year places focus on environmental leadership
- Public is welcome to explore GMCG's nature trails
- Spring Salamander Brigade re-cap
- Watershed education programs engage children of all ages
- Meet the new GMCG AmeriCorps members
- and more!

Contributors:

Matt Howe, Tara Schroeder, Barbara Bald, Peaco Todd, Josey Curely, Ellie Hatt, Nancy Walser, Moselle Spiller. Cartoon by Tim White.