



Newsletter

FALL 2022

From your President

Summer in the Watershed felt almost normal this year. Many of our members reported that the brown tail moth invasion seemed to have retreated. People felt comfortable enough, between vaccines and boosters, to gather once again. The normal rhythm of early morning rowing and fishing, the shouts of kids jumping off docks and boats and Jumping Rock, and late afternoon visiting resumed. Other than a lack of rain and fewer bugs, it could almost have been any summer from years past.

In light of what we've all gone through there is definitely a renewed appreciation of the Watershed, of the opportunities it offers all of us in the midcoast for fun with family and friends, and of the importance of maintaining the health of our shores and waters. Our mission of clean water and safe recreation couldn't be more timely. While life on the Watershed feels unchanged in so many ways, changes are happening; we need to be aware of these changes and how they might affect the way of life that means so much to our members.

Several of the MWA Board are following the proceedings of the Town of Camden's Megunticook River Citizens Advisory Committee with interest. To date the meetings have focused on process; we are looking forward to learning more about the impact of the various options under consideration. The Board's Environmental Committee continues to examine factors affecting the water quality of the river, lake, and ponds, and how we can influence those factors for the better. Our summer interns play a vital role in making sure that the boats entering our waters aren't bringing hitchhiking invasive species, and the volunteer monitors who take water samples on a regular basis are vital to ensuring the safety of all who use our waters. Aaron Bailey has taken on the combined job of Executive Director and Lake Patrol with enthusiasm and initiative. He ran our successful gas-buddy raffle (thanks Port Harbor for the donation) and the First Annual Poker Run (won by Wayne Morong, who generously donated his winnings). Aaron was on the lake early and often this spring and summer, and late into the fall. He has re-commissioned the Association's snowmobile and is hoping to continue the lake patrol through the winter, subject to adequate snow. We are very lucky to have him.

On a personal note, after five years of thinking and two years of building, our lake house was finally finished just in time for the summer of 2022. Not willing to close the door on swimming quite yet, and with the involuntary cooperation of Lake City Floats (who pulled floats way late this year due to low water), my visiting nieces and I took a very last jump off the dock on Sunday, October 23rd. It felt both cold and wonderful!

Have a good winter and please let Aaron or me know if you have any ideas, questions, or comments regarding the Association. Thanks for your membership.

Micki Colquhoun

Micki Colquhoun
Board President



What Makes a Better Buffer

by Amy Campbell

It seems to me we all need a buffer refresher. From boating around the lake, I can see there is a lot of room for improvement along the water edge that will go far to preserve the water quality for years to come. Don't we all want that? Every little bit helps. We added a few feet this fall and will be adding more plants to it in the spring. And furthermore, a buffer zone can help a greater endeavor in replacing habitat that is continually lost in development.

1. Better buffers are bigger - wider, longer, deeper. The shoreline is best protected by a buffer of 75 feet going up from the edge. But any buffer is better than none.
2. Better buffers have multiple layers. Think tall and shorter trees, shrubs, shorter perennial plants and ground covers. Each have functions in slowing the flow of rain or run-off water.
3. Better buffers include a layer of duff on the ground that is nice and permeable to rain and filters out pollutants or other matter that otherwise can get into the water. Never rake away that layer thinking it's not useful or unnecessary or unsightly. It is helping keep the water clean and clear by allowing rain and runoff to sink in more easily.
4. Better buffers have different heights of plants. Each one catches more rain and helps "slow the flow." And try not to limb up all the trees even though it's tempting to have a better view. Those branches have leaves that work in your favor to protect the water quality.
5. Better buffers have different kinds of root structures. This means a good mix of plant species whose roots are not all the same depth or density. Grass roots only penetrate a few inches into the ground. Not good enough. More diversity in roots is of benefit for absorbing the run-off.
6. Better buffers have different sized leaves. This helps direct the rain water down to the ground. Look at the leaves of grass. How can they help? They don't. A mixture of different plants will have different size and shapes of leaves which all work together to divert rain from the slope to the water.
7. Better buffers support wildlife. You can plant shrubs that have berries for birds and mammals, perennials with flowers that feed pollinators and other insects, ferns and other greenery that offers safe shelter for critters. Some plants even feed fish indirectly by being habitat for insects. If the foliage overhangs the water, fish are helped as well by the protection given by the shady branches. It's not all about people!
8. BETTER BUFFERS ARE MADE PREDOMINATELY OF NATIVE PLANTS. They don't need fertilizing; they don't need soil amendments like compost. They don't need to be sprayed for pests and you shouldn't spray any plant close to the water anyway. Over the years this means less work. Look at the natural shoreline of your water body to see what is there already and doing a good job. Or there are plenty of resources on-line to guide your choices.
9. Better buffers are more beautiful. How boring is a lawn. It's basically a green desert. There is little life or excitement in all that grass. A buffer, well-layered, with plants chosen to offer flowers throughout the growing season, is much more pleasing to the eye and supports wildlife that is endlessly fascinating to watch. Your children and grandchildren need that exposure to nature and so do you!

10. The kicker: A buffer helps the trend toward sustainability in many ways. We really need this and especially in supporting all the small creatures that we need so the larger creatures including us can exist. We need more wild, native plant-rich, invasive plant-less areas everywhere. Read the news about the loss of insects, loss of birds.

You can help out - if everyone did this we can work our way back to a planet that has more health for all - just by adding native plants to your property. Please view this youtube recording of a recent webinar from Ohio State University featuring Dr. Doug Tallamy. Well organized, beautifully illustrated with photographs, and yes, passionately presented, it has many ideas, lots of them very easy, for ways to and reasons for turning your property into a wildlife habitat! <https://u.osu.edu/pollinators101/recordings/> and pass it on!

<https://www1.maine.gov/dep/land/watershed/buffhandbook.pdf> The Buffer Handbook

https://www.maine.gov/dep/land/watershed/buffer_plant_list.pdf Buffer plant list - not all native but a good reference with descriptions

For more resources, please go to our website www.megunticook.org

News from the Environmental Committee

Greetings from the Environmental Committee! Here are the four areas of concern for our committee as we move through the cooler seasons.

- We are looking at ways to significantly expand our testing of water quality and do a survey of milfoil in remote areas of the watershed. We are also planning to track the flow of salt from our roads into our waters this winter.
 - We would like to identify other stakeholders in the community who might help us develop a plan to manage flood waters and other impacts of climate change in a proactive manner.
 - Another area of concern is education v.v. the causes of algae blooms and ways to safely manage pests like BTMs and Hemlock Woolly Adelgids.
 - Last but not least, we would like to grow our team of LakeSmart evaluators and expand our number of evaluations.
- If you have any interest or expertise in these areas and would like to join our committee or help on a time-limited project, please let us know! Thanks. Lesley Devoe, Chair. Our members are: Paul Leeper, Paul DeOrsay, Micki Colquhoun, Aaron Bailey, and Heather Hearst.

Words from a Steward

My name is Sadie Woodruff and I am a freshman at Wesleyan University in Middletown Connecticut, studying Earth and Environmental Science and Science in Society. I am also a recent graduate of Camden Hills Regional High School in Rockport Maine, where I led the schools eco-team Windplanners for the past 3 years. You could say I am someone who is passionate about the environment and conservation. Even before I started working at MWA, I participated in many programs related to the field, working with organizations like Bigelow Labs and the University of Maine.

Despite all of my incredible experiences, I have learned the most and have had the greatest impact through my experience working as a Watershed Steward with the Megunticook Watershed Association over the past two summers. Doing this job has radically changed how I think about the environment, conservation, and how to communicate in the environmental sphere.

Though I am relatively well versed in ecology and aquatic ecosystems, none of this quite prepared me for this job. I had only ever had access to second-hand information about how conservation works and how it is applied in the real world. I have spent a lot of time in labs crunching numbers and looking in microscopes, but I had no idea what it would actually be like to be in the field. It was intimidating to think about applying my knowledge when talking to people of all different walks of life and with all different knowledge sets. These things that I was worried about were certainly true and challenging; however they taught me so much about how the world works outside of the lab.

I have never been more humbled than when I listen to the fishermen coming in talking about the lake. Their knowledge of Megunticook is far beyond anything I could ever hope to have. I sat in my chair every weekend in awe as I watched them pull their boats out with finesse, and tell me about the things they saw out on the lake that day. These people also had the best responses when I asked to check their boats; they either said, "Sure, you can check, just one thing I don't have to do later," or "Of course, but I power-wash it and check every time I take it out so I doubt there's anything on there." These people are real conservationists. They have more experiential knowledge of this lake than any scientist who can come here to study it. They have taught me so much, not only about the lake, but also about listening, and who to go to when having conversations about conservation on any scale. They taught me how important their knowledge is, knowledge that I might have once disregarded in an academic setting, and something that is safe to say, I will never do again.

Executive Director/Lake Warden's Report

The summer of 2022 has come and gone and fall is now upon us. This is a good time to pause and look back on the season behind us and forward to the work ahead.

It was a busy summer in and around the Watershed. Our five Steward Courtesy Boat Inspectors checked over 2,500 motorized and non-motorized watercraft entering and leaving the lake's and pond's boat ramps. Bog Bridge accounted for 1,727 boat checks, Route 52 accounted for 497, and Breezemer for 282. Our Stewards worked every weekend this past summer due to the amazing weekend weather, putting in more than 675 hours. I am happy to report that no invasive species were found on any boats coming or going from our ramps.

Both motorized and non-motorized watercraft traffic was high this past summer. I made well over 50 safety checks from the patrol boat this season. The two most frequent contacts made were due to the lack of a personal flotation device on a paddleboard, and boats failing to abide by the No Wake Zone and Headway Speed laws.

Looking ahead, our MWA snowmobile has been serviced by the students at the Mid-Coast School of Technology in Rockland and is ready for this winter's patrol and property checks. Let's hope for snow!

Our First Annual Megunticook Lake Poker Run was a huge success, bringing in just over \$2300 for the MWA. The winners of the Poke Run were Wayne and Caroline Morong, who graciously donated their winnings back to the Association. A huge thank you to Doug Kahn for giving sea plane rides in exchange for donations to the MWA. Those who went up with Doug got a wonderful view of the Watershed. To date, Doug's initiative has generated just shy of \$2,000 for the Association. I also want to thank Kate Killoran for scheduling and running the volunteer water monitoring program through the Spring/Summer/Fall. Thanks, too, to all our volunteer water monitors who make the program possible.

Coming off the recent drought conditions and with the increased number of large rain events, I have contacted the Town of Camden to begin work on a Water Management Plan for the dams. Having a proper and up-to-date plan ensures that we are doing the best we can for the levels on not only Megunticook Lake, but Norton Pond and the Megunticook River as well.

Many thanks to everyone who has donated to the MWA this year. It is because of you that the MWA is what it is today and continues "... to protect, preserve and restore the natural resources of the Megunticook Watershed to ensure a healthy ecosystem for the benefit and enjoyment of all."

Take care,
Aaron Bailey



MWA Board Members

Johanna Billington	Sarah Marriner- Treasurer
Jennifer Chipman	Wayne Morong
Micki Colquhoun- President	Stephanie Smith
Paul DeOrsay- Secretary	Seth Taylor
Lesley Devoe	Steve Thomas- Honorary
Maureen Flanagan	Dody Urquia
Jason Hearst	Jamie Weymouth- Vice
Hillary Jackson	President
Paul Leeper	Brian Wickenden

Aaron Bailey Executive Director/Lake Warden



Treasurer's Report

As we reach the halfway mark of our fiscal year, we are showing a net loss in our total income due to an increase in our payroll expenses. This is largely due to our watershed stewards' program and the weather allowing us to be able to have all boat ramps staffed every weekend throughout the summer.

Membership has seen a slight increase over the past few years as we continue to work diligently to get the word out to those not only who use the watershed, but everyone in our local communities. Members support is crucial for us to be able to continue to educate and preserve our watershed.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I wish to thank everyone for their continued support of MWA. Please renew your MWA membership if you have not already done so. If you have not renewed your membership 2022-2023 cards are enclosed. Be sure to like us on Facebook to keep an eye out for upcoming events and current watershed photos

Sarah Marriner Treasurer