



Newsletter

SPRING 2022

From your President

What a winter this was for skating in the watershed! The combination of low temperatures and not much snow brought everyone out to enjoy smooth ice under sunny skies. There was one February Sunday where the Bog Bridge landing and Route 105 were as packed up as a weekend day in August. By mid-March, though, we were all ready for warmer temperatures and safer pavements. Congratulations to our Ice-Out Contest winners, Gretchen Mitchell and Brad Singer, who happen to be my neighbors on either side. Time for me to buy a lottery ticket!

Your association board and staff have been working diligently on our two-pronged mission of clean water and safe recreation. Our director, Aaron Bailey, has been working with Dale Dougherty on installing the markers that keep us off the rocks. They've also been hunting sitting geese, with the goal of adding the nesting eggs to keep the goose population on the watershed down. I went out with Aaron in the boat one early spring day and was amazed when he pointed out a goose on a nest that was otherwise totally invisible to me. Adding those eggs is not an altogether risk-free operations, as it involves managing to persuade the sometimes hostile goose to leave the nest, turning the eggs, and then getting the heck out of there while you can.

We all miss our former director, Paul Leeper, and his years of expertise, but we're lucky that he's still available for consultation, and that Lake Warden Dale will wait until September to retire. In the meantime, Aaron is bringing a fresh perspective to the newly combined job of executive director/lake warden. He put together a highly successful raffle in late winter with the donation of a wheeled fuel tank from Port Harbor Marine and has other ideas percolating.

Now that the pandemic restrictions have eased, we would very much like to resume our free, no-obligation, and no-bad-consequences reviews of shorefront properties under the Lake Smart Program. Your property may or may not qualify for designation as a Lake Smart Property, but regardless, you can learn a lot about ways to protect the health of your shore and of our watershed. It's always good to know more! Please contact Aaron Bailey at (207) 522-8794 to set up a time for our volunteers to meet with you.

On another note, we are hoping to expand our membership in two ways. If you have a multi-generational watershed property, please consider encouraging memberships from (or even gifting a membership on behalf of) the upcoming generation. Second, given the wide usage of the watershed by a diverse range of our midcoast neighbors, we would very much like to encourage memberships of those who actively use our lakes and rivers, whether or not they own property on the watershed. If you have friends who enjoy the use of Megunticook waters, please invite them to join the Association. The more input and participation we have from those who love and value our lakes and rivers, the better able we will be to keep them clean and safe.

Hope to see you at the **Annual Meeting, to be held this year at Bishopswood on July 12th at 7 pm.** In the meantime, happy spring and best wishes for a really wonderful summer!

Micki Colquhoun
Board President
mickicol@aol.com

In Loving Memory of Marty Martens

When Martha "Marty" Martens moved with her family from a fancy Connecticut suburban town to Maine in 1972, she and her husband George, ("Buzz"), were looking to live a more wholesome, less demanding keep-up-with-your-neighbors life. They found that new life on the shores of Megunticook Lake where the Martens family bought a house that became the family's anchor for the next two decades. Their view out of their ceiling-to-floor glass windows opened out onto a magnificent panorama of Maiden Cliffs, and from the dock, they could view islands and coves around the shores of the lake. At this special place, Marty presided over afternoon family gatherings which involved Sunday boat trips out on the Lake and cocktails on their dock. In winter Marty would skate on the ice and cross country ski over the frozen landscape. The Spanish have a word, "querencia," which means a special place of the heart. Megunticook Lake was Marty's querencia. Marty passed away on February 22nd, but she never tired of presiding over the check-in table at the annual meeting of the Megunticook Lake Association, where she remained a life-long member, proudly donning her Megunticook Lake Association cap to greet old friends and new at Bishopswood.

Philip Conkling and Paige Parker



Lake Warden's Report



The water is warming and the fish are biting. This is a great time of year to catch some big trout on the Megunticook Watershed. Try trolling on the surface with streamers and wobblers near shore and in coves with sunshine on them. Water temp is key; a few degrees can make a big difference. The lake temp. is about 45 degrees

The Megunticook river was stocked with 400 Brook trout in April 10 inches long and Norton pond received 150 Brown trout 13 inches long.

The water level was low just after ice out, but spring rains have filled the Pond and Lake to flow over the spillway.. The Lake and Pond look better then they are at the upper end of the water levels. This also makes the boating a little safer with the rock and ledges deeper and less chance of being hit with your boat and motor.

Please remember to get your boat registration updated with the bright orange sticker this year. Check all your safety gear. PFD's (lifejacket) they must be in good shape; No rips or tears or holes on the covering and all straps and zippers working. When you launch at the busy ramps, have everything ready and quickly launch your boat. Don't pull up to the ramp and begin to get ready and load your boat. This should be done out of the way of the ramp.

Forty five degree water is very cold and dangerous and hurts when you put your hands in it. Wear your PFD; it 's the only thing that can save your life. Have a float plan and let someone know when and where you will be boating.

Summer is coming; see you all on the waters of Megunticook Watershed. Thanks for your time reading this. Dale Dougherty lakewarden@megunticook.org

Lampies Like It Damp by Amy Campbell

Lampies? I made that up, shorter and sweeter than Lampyrids which is a more official term for these insects, derived from their entomological family name, Lampyridae. Going back further, that word is derived from ancient Greek for glow worm. But probably not as fun a name as lightning bugs or fireflies. They do like damp habitats, ones with leaf duff and downed logs and undisturbed untidy areas that offer protection for times they aren't enchanting us with their flashing. And they are like little lamps.

Lightning bugs are insects that undergo complete metamorphosis - starting with an egg, they progress to larva, then pupa and finally adult. There are a couple of things you can say about all firefly larvae. First of all, they are all bioluminescent. What a surprise. Particularly on rainy nights and in wet habitats they prefer, they glow a warning: Don't eat me! I am poisonous! yes, some lightning bugs adults are poisonous too and can even be fatal to some things that want to eat them. Secondly, they are all predators. Less than an inch long even when full size, they feast on worms, slugs and snails, so they are very garden-friendly. Hopefully they will eat jumping worms. They can spend the winter as larvae or pupae and then emerge as adults in time to flash dance across the landscape. Most do not eat as adults, concentrating their efforts on mating.

Very possibly their numbers are decreasing so you can help them by keeping leaves on the ground and encouraging wild areas of your property. Sounds like they would probably like a good thick buffer of vegetation at the edge of a lake or pond, so helping them would also help the water quality and vice versa. Please don't use insecticides that kill them outright, and minimize the use of outside lighting when they are flying. Light pollution is thought to be one of the major threats to their survival. They need to see those flashing lights from their companions! Here are some more details to ponder about these remarkable insects that delight a child and reignite the child in the adult as you watch their light show on summer evenings coming up. There are over 2,000 species of lampies, insects in the beetle order, (not flies, not bugs) with more than 200 found in North America and still not all found or described. Closer to home, Maine has at least and probably more than 18 species in several genera. Oddly, one common species is frequently seen during the day even early in the spring. Named the Winter Firefly, this species is "daytime dark," non-luminescent firefly, and even though it can glow as a larva, pupa and even as an egg, it only glows as an adult for a few short hours. These insects emerge from their wintering places at the base of trees or from behind pieces of bark early in the spring. Often seen on buildings, sometimes even mating, these are not the ones that are flickering away above fields in the early summer.

As part of the anatomy of their abdomens, adult males in flashing species have "lanterns," the correct name for the organ that emits light. This seemingly magical bioluminescence is the result of an efficient chemical reaction that produces so-called cool light, no heat being generated as a byproduct. For males, flashing is related to finding a mate. Interestingly, different species have different colored flashes: yellow, green or orangish. The timing of sequential flashes is temperature-dependent. Their flashing pattern is precise and the interval between flashes important in the signaling to females. But if you catch one and it starts flashing faster, it has switched gears to warning about its unpalatability. For their part, the female's answering flash has an important timing interval as well so males can home in on their species-mates. This is the case in one species common in Maine, the Common Eastern Firefly, also known as Big Dipper Firefly, perhaps because of the scoop-shape pattern made by their flashes. At a temperature of at least 77 degrees the female lights up about two seconds after the male's flash. This interval tells the male he has found a potential mate!

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Treasurer's Report

April showers bring may flowers, or so they say. 2021 brought along some changes to the Watershed. We said goodbye to Executive Director Paul Leeper at the end of 2021, we wish him a happy retirement! To make the transition as seamless as possible we hired on Aaron Bailey as the new Executive Director/Lake Warden in September. As a result of the transition period, we ended the year with a greater deficit of \$21,300 than the original 2021/2022 budgeted deficit of \$15,335. Membership dues and contributions are what sustain the Watershed, without everyone's support we would be unable to do the testing, education, patrol and various other activities that protect this resource for generations to come. While memberships have remained steady over the past few years we are continuously looking to expand and grow our membership so we can expand our coverage within the watershed. Please help us spread the word.

I hope everyone has a great summer and thank you for their continued support of Megunticook Watershed Association. Stay Safe and Healthy!
Sarah Marriner- Treasurer
sarahm@vikinglumber.com

Interested in serving on the MWA Board of Directors, or helping out on a committee? please contact Aaron Bailey or one of the Board officers. aaron@megunticook.org

Mind Your P's by Amy Campbell

When talking about soil or dirt in a watershed, both words start with the letter P. P is the chemical symbol for phosphorus, an abundant element in the earth's crust, found in rocks, and as most people know it's one of the big three in fertilizers - N, P, K. It's necessary for life of all kinds. Phosphorus is an important ingredient of DNA - you can't get more essential for life than that - and it's also a component of many proteins including enzymes on which biochemical reactions depend. It's all-important in the creation of energy required for those reactions, including even typing these words! Phosphorus is found naturally at low levels in all lakes. In fact, it is the limiting factor of life in a body of water. If a freshwater system runs out of phosphorus, no life can exist at all. But at low levels, phosphorus permits the growth of plants, fish, and other organisms that then, as they die, return the phosphorus to the water. As rainwater washes dirt or soil into the water, more phosphorus becomes available to stimulate plant growth. In excess, it causes too much growth, especially that of algae. Sometimes such out-of-control growth of algae turns the water green and can even be toxic, obviously not good for any aspect of a lake. As plants and algae and fish die, their decomposition uses oxygen, and when there is an algae bloom, for instance, the oxygen level, especially in the deep water where the remains settle, is depleted. Again, not good for the lake, especially not for cold water fish such as trout or salmon. Once the level of phosphorus goes up, really nothing can easily (or inexpensively) reduce it. Therefore it's important to keep ever more phosphorus from getting into the lake. Besides being found in soil and dirt, other sources of phosphorus that might play a role near a body of water are fertilizers, septic waste, dog and even goose poop, soaps and detergents, and pesticides. All can be standing by just waiting for that big rainstorm. In the Megunticook watershed, phosphorus levels have been monitored regularly for 45 years. Megunticook Lake's total phosphorus levels fluctuate somewhat without showing any trend. Last year's phosphorus level was 6ppm, characteristic of an oligotrophic lake with clear water and a low level of nutrients. Norton's Pond measured 13ppm, a higher, more productive trophic level called mesotrophic. More phosphorus in the pond might relate to greater shoreline development, less acreage and the large marshy area that feeds into the pond. In neither lake nor pond is there an imminent threat of an algae bloom, but deep water phosphorus levels which are higher are a cause for concern since they could be used by algae should they leave the sediments at the bottom. So, what to do? The phrase used probably too often sums it up: lakes die a death of a thousand cuts. This can be translated into meaning every person can have an which can help or hurt. For ideas for keeping phosphorus out of the watershed, please review our very handy lake handbook, talk with a LakeSmart evaluator, or go to the Knox and Lincoln Soil and Water Conservation website (<http://knoxlincoln.org>) for plenty of information. Thanks to Paul Leeper for clarifying some points and checking for errors. Many internet sites, especially lakesofmaine.org and lakestewardsofmaine.org were helpful in providing information.



Executive Director's Report

Happy Spring!

It was a busy winter gearing up for this summer in and around the watershed. I have been digging through the extensive MWA files and materials since taking over last fall to get myself up to speed. Both Paul and Dale have been a tremendous help answering all the questions that I have had to bounce off them.

We had a very successful winter fundraiser thanks to Port Harbor Marine as we raised over \$1500.00 towards the MWA Stewardship Program with their donation of a portable gas tank aimed to minimize spillage and to help keep gasoline out of the watershed.

Ice out came early this year and was called on March 26th at 3:30 by Lake Warden Dale Dougherty. First place went to Gretchen Mitchell while second place went to Brad Singer.

Dale and I are wrapping up this year's Canadian Goose management program. After obtaining our Federal permit, we have located twenty two nests in the watershed with a total of one hundred and fourteen eggs so far. One egg was left untouched to hatch in the nest. Two eggs were added and left in each nest while the remaining eggs were removed.

We have once again submitted and received a grant from the Maine Department of Environmental Protection to help offset some of the costs of our Student Watershed Stewards Program. This program hires area students to staff the boat ramps to inspect boats and trailers for plant fragments, educate boaters on the risks from invasive plants, and teach people to self-inspect their boating gear. They will also be trained on how to identify invasive plants and will conduct in-water surveys around the boat ramps. If you know of any students interested in a part time summer job, please send them my way.

A big thank you to Kate Killoran for helping one again to coordinate our volunteer Partners in Monitoring program. This group takes water samples during our weekly bacteria testing to ensure our water remain safe for swimming and other activities. These weekly bacteria test result will once again be posted on our website at www.megunticook.org.

A quick reminder that as of this November, the Town of Camden will be banning the use of unencapsulated Polystyrene (blue styrofoam) from all dock floats and buoys on Camden's lakes, rivers, harbors and coastal waters. The full town ordinance can be found on our website as well as the Town of Camden's

We will no doubt experience yet another busy summer out on the watershed. Please be safe in whatever forms of recreating you all decide to participate.

We are pleased to announce that Ian Stewart, Executive Director of Coastal Mountain Land Trust, will be the speaker at our annual meeting this year.

ANNUAL MEETING

July 12, 2022 7pm

Bishopswood

Promoting Education and Preservation

Adult females of some species resemble their larval form and can't fly. They remain on the ground signaling by glowing or flashing and wait for the males to find them. However there are some tricksters who flash a come hither pattern to males who are then eaten when they arrive for a date. One result of this meal is that the female can repurpose the poison to protect herself and her eggs from predation, in the same way that monarch caterpillars use the chemicals in milkweed.

Very possibly their numbers are decreasing so you can help them by keeping leaves on the ground and encouraging wild areas of your property. Sounds like they would probably like a good thick buffer of vegetation at the edge of a lake or pond, so helping them would also be helping the water quality and vice versa. Please don't use insecticides that kill them outright, and minimize the use of outside lighting when they are flying. Light pollution is thought to be one of the major threats to their survival. While it seems obvious that lights would interfere with lighting bugs' communication, scientists have devised experiments to test this theory and found that fireflies are attracted to LED lights and stay in the lit areas instead of looking for mates. That means less fireflies going forward. If everyone would try to change some of their landscaping habits to be more friendly to these fascinating insects, their populations might grow and thrive. Many people are reporting seeing fewer or even no fireflies at all. To rearrange and adapt lines of a poem by Rebecca Elson with apologies: in future times, if all there are, are meadows, from them I hope we won't have to infer the presence of fireflies; rather I hope they will still be here to thrill us all. *

Thanks to Dana Michaud, Maine Entomological Society and Charlie Armstrong, U of ME Extension Insect ID Lab for information both interesting and amusing, and as summer approaches, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's poem, The Song of Hiawatha, whose evocative stanza about summer and fireflies is here below for your reading enjoyment.

At the door on summer evenings
Sat the little Hiawatha;
Heard the whispering of the pine-trees,
Heard the lapping of the water,
Sounds of music, words of wonder;
"Minne-wawa!" said the pine-trees,
"Mudway-aushka!" said the water.
Saw the firefly, Wah-wah-taysee,
Flitting through the dusk of evening,
With the twinkle of its candle
Lighting up the brakes and bushes,
And he sang the song of children,
Sang the song Nokomis taught him:

Please don't forget your dues! There is a yellow dues card and envelope included with this newsletter, it is for your 2022-2023 dues. Please send in your membership check today. If you are not a member please consider joining and/or making a donation at this time. We need everyone's continued support!

Important!

We need current e-mail addresses, mailing addresses, and phone numbers for all members. We have a number of old addresses, e-mails, and phone numbers. Emergency notices and seasonal updates are sent by e-mail making current information crucial to have. MWA does not sell or share its e-mail or mailing lists. Please send updated information to Aaron Bailey. aaron@megunticook.org or 207-522-8794. Thanks!

MWA Board Members

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