



Newsletter

Spring/Summer 2023

Message from the President



This was a busy winter for the Watershed Association. With Aaron Bailey's decision to accept the position of detective sergeant with the Camden Police Department, the Personnel Committee began the process of recruiting our new Executive Director/Lake Patrol. We had a good volume of responses to our recruitment ads, job postings on social media, and word-of-mouth, with resumes from many qualified candidates. After a series of interviews, we offered the combined Executive Director/Lake Patrol position to Tim Trumbauer. Luckily, he accepted.

Tim's background is a very good fit for our needs. He has experience as a staff member, a volunteer, and a board member with non-profits that focus primarily on water quality. He definitely hit the ground running when he started with us, jumping immediately into discussions concerning the water level issues that arose with the intense rain event

that occurred in early May. At the same time, Tim has helped to educate us on the hemlock woolly adelgid threatening our hemlock trees, worked with Sarah Marriner, our Treasurer, to develop the upcoming budget, met with the Town of Camden's consultants for the Megunticook River Citizen's Advisory Committee, helped to install the buoys, and recruited our summer watershed stewards who conduct courtesy boat inspections. Welcome, Tim!

We also owe Aaron Bailey a round of applause for the time he spent with us as our Executive Director/Lake Patrol, most especially as our Interim Director this winter. While working full time for the Camden Police Department, Aaron went above and beyond on his days off to ensure that the Association's needs were met. He conducted winter camp patrols, submitted funding requests to the Towns of Lincolnville and Camden and attended their Budget Committee meetings, installed buoys, and, yes, addled goose eggs. I spent a beautiful spring day with him helping with the egg addling (I wielded the defensive broom stick while Aaron did the actual addling), and I can tell you it was an experience. Aaron also helped to initiate Tim into the intricacies of running the Watershed Association. Thank you, Aaron, for taking such good care of us on top of everything else you were doing!

Enjoy this beautiful spring and the summer to come! Thanks, as always, for your membership and your support, and please check later in the newsletter for an update on our summer event schedule.

- Micki Colquhoun, President

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An Ode to Native Plants



Greetings, Watershedders! It's spring and you know what that means? It's time to plant! Nurseries wow you this time of year with all their fresh stock just ready for a new home. And you had all winter to contemplate What Makes a Better Buffer, the article in the fall newsletter, and are raring to load up on plants, especially natives, to built up that oh, so important zone at the edge of your waterway. Right?

Oh. I can see the eye rolls now. But it IS important. As a refresher, please read for the post on www.megunticook.org. Still not fired up? Well, to borrow a well-known phrase (my thanks to Nike), just do it. There has to be something about the watershed that is important enough for you to help out, to make one small step toward ensuring great water quality in the years to come. Here are some suggestions:

There is so much in the news about pollinator decline. So make that your goal - to help pollinators. Even a plant in a pot can feed a bee, if it has nectar or pollen or both. And when they visit they get dusted with pollen to transport to the next flower. Voila! Seeds can happen!
Do it for pollinators!

Maybe you love butterflies. I call them the Angelina Jolie and Brad Pitts of the garden. We want to attract them, we want to watch them. (They pollinate too but not on the A list for that) They bring beauty. That's fine. How to attract them - plant plants that their caterpillars eat! Yes! The happy caterpillars feed on specific plants -

the go-to example is the Monarch butterfly with its absolute need for milkweed to feed on, but there are so many others - so plant for them and they will come. **Do it for butterflies!**

How many people thrill to the sight of birds? And I am not in this case thinking of loons or eagles. I am thinking of Scarlet Tanagers, Baltimore Orioles, both of which used to nest in the trees on our property. I am thinking of Eastern Phoebes who love to build nests on the eaves of buildings. I am thinking of Tree Swallows which can be encouraged to nest in wooden nest boxes, that is if Black-capped Chickadees don't get there first. They need insects to feed their babies or else they disappear. (Which three are getting to be less frequently seen in the Watershed?) Native plants are not only best - they are essential. They Are Essential. Soft caterpillars are the food of choice for song birds and their young in our yards. Trees and shrubs especially are the star performers here. Add them to your yard. They grow surprisingly fast and start helping immediately. Birds are inadvertent cheerleaders for the natural world. They are out and about during the day. They are visible; many are colorful. And they sing! Oh, yes, **do it for the birds!**

What if your main interest is fishing? You can help in a big way as well. Fish need clear clean water to thrive and grow. They are big benefactors of planted buffers along the edge of the water. Buffer plants have deep roots and hold back runoff so much better than the wimpy skimpy roots of grass. When we get rains, it seems that now it just pours. And the buffer area is the gate keeper for all that water runoff that could have pollutants in it. Getting rid of lawn has an added benefit - less time for mowing, more time for fishing! There is another reason that buffer plants help fish: these edge plants can provide insect and berry food for fish as well. Furthermore helping protect the water quality of course is ideal for populations of the other fish food, smaller fish, insects, all that food web! So there is a win- win-win-win situation. **Do it for fish!**

It is hard for me to conceive of anyone who would not be willing to do something to help out this wildlife at a time when there is so much need. But if you really can't see your way to be inspired by this "pep talk" then what about you? What about your enjoyment of the environment? Swimming, paddle boarding, canoeing, fishing, all the fun things with power boats, all of these activities are dependent on water quality. And so much of water quality is dependent on our use of the land, and particularly the land right next to the water. Every year there is the chance for more development and cutting down of trees. Alas, there is now hemlock woolly adelgid in areas of the watershed, a pest that could be the death of hemlock trees that grow close to the water. What a loss in so many ways that could be. What additional erosion possibilities. And there is always the

issue of camp roads that are a never ending source of phosphorus that can cause algae blooms. It's not just about buffers any more; it's about keeping a good layering of vegetation on all properties. **So just do it for all of us!**

And now I will get back to tending the extra new plants for our buffer, adding them in to the ones new last fall. Yes, I am a serious, lifelong

Thanks to outgoing Executive Director Aaron Bailey for showing me around the watershed during my first few months here. This is a special place with amazing natural resources, amazing scenery, and an even more amazing community - I look forward to stewarding the organization and watershed with you all over the coming years!

It has been a busy few weeks getting up to speed - we completed our resident goose management program with more than 60 eggs removed or addled from 15 nests; we set out the channel markers and other buoys on the lake; we are in the process of hiring our summer Watershed Stewards to perform courtesy boat inspections for invasive species at the boat launches; and we're gearing up for a busy water quality monitoring season, including 7 new locations on the river between the East/West Dams and Camden Harbor.

2022 brought along another set of changes in the Watershed. Due to Aaron Bailey' resignation during the middle of our fiscal year, we ended up significantly ahead of what we had budgeted, largely due to the decrease in payroll expenses from November – April. Overall, the 2022/2023 year ended with a reported deficit of \$4,200, compared to a projected deficit of \$31,050.

Revenues generated from memberships and contributions have continued to decline over the years resulting in MWA operating with a continued deficit budget. In 2022/2023 year, we had total revenues of \$71,806 and our total expenses were \$75,989. Approximately 74% of expenses consist of payroll with 18% of payroll consisting of the Watershed Stewards' Program, which includes our Courtesy Boat Inspectors at the local boat launches. While this program is partially funded by a state grant to help reduce the spread of invasive plants the remaining cost is supported by MWA and the contributions that

we receive. gardener, it's true, but everyone including me needs inspiration to keep planting. In my case it's all the above, plus two dear little people named Keldan and Isla, my grandchildren. I do it for them too.

- Amy Campbell, is an MWA member who has spent part of every summer of her life on Megunticook Lake and always enjoys learning and sharing new things about life of all kinds in the watershed.

Executive Director/Lake Patrol Report

We are also working with the Town of Camden on recommendations to update the operational guidelines for the East and west Dams that control water levels in Megunticook Lake and Norton Pond - we will have more to share on those efforts as they evolve through the summer.

Lastly, our patrol boat has been in the shop, but hopefully by the time you receive this newsletter, we are back on the water with a new, more efficient, and cleaner motor, ready to resume patrols and promote safe recreation.

Thank you to all of our members and volunteers who make all this great work possible - see you out on the watershed!

Tim Trumbauer, Executive Director and Lake Patrol

\$\$ Treasurer's Report \$\$

As we work on the 2023/2024 budget, we are again looking at a deficit and will continue to work diligently on shrinking this deficit with various fundraising and ways to increase memberships.

Please remember membership dues and contributions are what sustain the watershed. Without this support we would be unable to do water quality monitoring, education, patrol, and various other activities that protect this resource for generations to come.

Please keep your eyes open for various opportunities to support the watershed, not only in contributions but various activities and events throughout the summer within the Watershed. Thank you!

- Sarah Marriner, Treasurer





Hemlock Woolly Adelgid

First, the bad news - hemlock woolly adelgid (HWA) has been found in the watershed. HWA is an invasive Asian beetle that feasts on the sap of hemlock trees. With no natural predators in this area, HWA populations can grow large enough to cause a decline in health and ultimately mortality in hemlock trees.

The somewhat good news is that our cold climate can help keep populations in check, and many of the local infestations are not well established, meaning it is a good time to intervene and help limit the damage so our stately hemlocks can survive. Infested hemlock populations are being successfully managed in other places in New England, so there is hope!

MWA Board President Micki Colquhoun and Executive Director Tim Trumbauer attended a workshop on HWA management, jointly hosted by Midcoast Conservancy and the Kennebec Estuary Land Trust. Tim has also spoken with Coleen Teerling, an entomologist and HWA expert with the Maine Forest Service. Here is some basic information on the biology of MWA and some simple ways to help prevent the spread.

Biology: HWA do not fly and are spread through wind or by attaching to people, vehicles, birds, etc. Spread is most prevalent during their "crawler stage" which is March through July.

Identification: HWA feed exclusively on hemlock and can be identified by a small, white woolly substance on the underside of



leaves (see above photo). Declining tree health can be an indicator of infestation. Infestations also commonly start along edges of hemlock stands.

Prevention and Management: There are some easy steps to take to help slow the spread of HWA. 1) Prune back hemlocks on driveways, sidewalks, paths, around propane tanks, or anywhere else where HWA could be picked up and spread. 2) Remove bird feeders from near hemlock trees so birds do not become a vector for spread. 3) Avoid doing work with heavy equipment near hemlocks during the active period (May - July). For heavily infested areas, there are also biological and chemical controls available.

If you think you have an infestation of HWA in the watershed, please email Tim - tim@megunticook.org. We would like to evaluate the extent of infestation in the watershed, and Tim can also provide more information on potential biological and chemical controls.

Save the Date

We have lots of fun events coming up this summer. Save the date and keep an eye out for emails with details on these and other events as summer planning continues!

Tuesday, July 4 | 4 PM

Norton Pond 4th of July Boat Parade

Sunday, July 16 | 3 PM

Free Concert on the Lake

Thursday, July 27 | 7 PM

Annual Meeting, Camp Bishopswood

Join us to conduct member business, hear a presentation on the health of the watershed, and learn about the Megunticook River Citizen's Advisory Committee.

Friday, August 4 | 5 PM

2nd Annual Poker Run

Monday, August 14 | 6 PM

Another Free Concert on the Lake!

Membership Matters!

From our Lake Patrol, to water quality monitoring, and invasive species prevention, your membership dues make our work possible! Please consider joining or renewing your membership at a generous level by returning the included yellow membership card or following the QR code or link below.

Already a member? Thank you - please share the card with a friend who would consider joining!

Not sure if you have paid your dues yet? Please email Tim@megunticook.org and he will let you know!

www.megunticook.org/donate/



THANK YOU!

Our mission is to protect, preserve, and restore the natural resources of the watershed to ensure a healthy ecosystem for the benefit and enjoyment of all.