



Newsletter

Spring 2021

From your President:

Edgar Guest said “Spring’s greatest joy beyond a doubt is when it brings the children out”

I hope to focus on several items of interest that are of concern to the watershed population:

The dams have been repaired. Hopefully, the drought will lessen and the watershed will return to more consistent water levels. However, Maine has not recovered from last year’s drought. We had a light winter thus did not receive the amount of precipitation needed, so we are still approximately 5” below normal while heading into summer weather patterns. The below website provides current drought status for the state and Knox and Waldo County. <https://www.drought.gov/states/maine>

Brown Tail Moths – There is really nothing nice to say about the Brown Tail Moth (BTM) invasion. It is believed the large populations have something to do with weather. Cool, wet springs create a fungus that kills the caterpillar which didn’t happen last year. If we do not get the cool wet weather in May and June, the caterpillars will continue business as usual. We have heard many property owners around the watershed have addressed their BTM issues.

Ticks – another perennial favorite – The blacklegged tick is kind of a bad guy. It was noted while some types of ticks feed almost exclusively on one or a few specific animal species, the blacklegged tick tends to have a very broad menu. Vermont Agency of Agriculture Environmental Surveillance program director stated that longer shoulder season in April and October, when temperatures are not as reliably cold as they once were, give ticks a longer chance to mate and find a blood meal. Again, many property owners around the watershed have taken proactive measures to protect themselves.

The Annual Meeting will be back but, unfortunately, not at Bishopswood. Pandemic precautions will require a new venue. We will keep you informed.

The Megunticook Watershed Board wishes you all a safe and enjoyable summer.

Alright Spring Do Your Thing!

Jamie Weymouth, President, jamiweymouth@gmail.com

Treasurer’s Report: Happy spring!

We are happy to report we ended the year well within our budget and a net surplus of approximately \$16,500. This surplus is largely due to gains over the past year from one of our investment funds. We are happy to report memberships remained stable over the past year. With the easing of COVID restrictions the board is currently working on new fundraising ideas so please stay tuned!

We ask everyone to help spread the word about Megunticook Watershed Association and all the services that we provide as we will need everyone’s support to help us meet this year’s budget. 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. I hope everyone has a great summer and thank you for their continued support of Megunticook Watershed Association.

Sarah Marriner, Treasurer smarriner80@gmail.com

Lake Smart Report-

Many thanks to the folks who have committed their time and resources to successfully complete our LakeSmart process. Here are some of our participants from 2018 and 2019:

Jill & Joe Cooper	Commendation
Landis Gabel	Award
Betty & Scott Harris	Commendation
Thomas Rodman	Commendation
Karen Shoos & Victor Schmitt	Award
Lynn & Ivan Stancioff	Commendation
B Brescia & J Poillon	Award
B. Brescia Revocable Trust 2007	Award
David & Marjorie Miller	Award
Dorothy Laite Urquia	Commendation
Terri Njaa	Commendation
Nancy Graham	Commendation
Camp Bishopswood	Award
Alan & Lucinda White	Commendation

Lakes die a death from a thousand cuts

It takes all of us to maintain a healthy watershed. There is even more use of the lake, and development continues to add to the disturbance of previously stable and vegetated waterside margins. Whether you enjoy fishing, boating, rowing (kayaking or canoeing), swimming, water skiing, paddle-boarding, birding, or just looking at the lake, pond or river, you can be part of preserving water quality now and for generations to come.

The biggest problem for our waterways is **SOIL EROSION**. If you look closely you can see the pathways that soil erosion and polluted runoff take to get to lakes and streams. All runoff carries soil, oil, and chemicals (herbicides, pesticides, cleaners, solvents, etc.) used in and around our homes, businesses, farmlands, and lawns. Soil also contains PHOSPHORUS, a naturally occurring element in all dirt and a required nutrient for plants. When phosphorus or other chemicals get into lakes, however, they become pollutants.

We are gearing up for another LakeSmart program this summer. This program evaluates your property giving you simple, low tech, ways to prevent harmful runoff from entering the water. This protects the water quality and prevents ugly algae blooms. Please call or email me to get your property on the list for this summer!

Exec. Dir. Paul Leeper Tel. 207-592-8540 Email: paul@megunticook.org

MWA Officers

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Asst. Lake Warden- Justin Twitchell

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IMPORTANT!!!

Do we have your current e-mail address, mailing address and phone number?

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 the importance of having them current crucial. MWA does not sell or share its e-mail or mailing lists. **Forward all information to Paul Leeper: paul@megunticook.org or 207-592-8540. Thanks!**

Interested in serving on the MWA Board of Directors, or helping out on a committee?

please contact Paul Leeper or one of the Board officers. paul@megunticook.org

**Check us out at
www.megunticook.org and on Facebook/
Instagram**

Please don't forget your dues!

There is a **yellow dues card** and **envelope** included with this newsletter, it is for your 2021-2022 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!**

Lake Warden's Report: The Ice of winter is gone and the waters are warming. Ice-out occurred on March 27th. The water at the edge of the ice just before ice out was 36 degrees, early in May it had warmed to 54 degrees. The southern part of the state has been in an abnormally dry or yellow warning most of the spring. Even so the water levels in the watershed have held at a nice high state. The repaired dams are now working properly and hopefully the water will stay up all summer.



Fishing is good, nice Brown and Rainbow Trout are biting but no reports of brook trout. Spoke to an ice fisherman and he tells of catching a large Crappie on Norton Pond this past winter. This is an invasive fish so, if you catch one, please keep it. No catch and release for invasives! They are changing the lake and pond. The White Perch are disappearing from Norton Pond and the Crappie could be why.

We may have eagles nesting on an island on the lake. I have seen adults on the nest, but no sightings of the eaglets. The loons are getting ready to nest, guarding their territories. Rabbits are hopping all over the watershed. I have many little baby ones running around my camp up on Norton Pond.

Have you ever seen a Trout Lily? It's small with yellow flowers and a leaf that looks like the side of a trout.

A reminder- To camp owners, this is the last summer of foam (Styrofoam) being allowed on the waters in Camden. With the cost of lumber up about 300% according to the local news, building a new float is going to be far more expensive than a few years ago. The local float builders are very busy. If you need a new float get your order in soon or you may run out of time. The town will give warnings and fines if you don't remove the foam by next summer.

See you on the water! *Lake Warden and Camden Inland Harbormaster Dale Dougherty, Tel. 207-390-0030 E-mail: lakewarden@megunticook.org*



Exec. Director Report: I think all MWAers are hoping for a return to a more normal summer! Although, as I said last year, if you have to quarantine during a pandemic, this is the place to do it. Lots of folks must have agreed with me because inspections at the boat ramps increased 46% last summer!

Speaking of the MWA Watershed Stewards Program, we are looking to hire motivated high school or college students for the summer season. Pay is \$13.50/hr with both weekend and weekday shifts. Stewards are taught about the threats to our waters the tools used to combat these threats. Duties include: Courtesy Boat Inspections (CBI) to help stop the spread of invasive plants such as Eurasian milfoil; water quality monitoring including dissolved oxygen profiles, water clarity measurements, and phosphorus sampling. Stewards are taught to recognize the difference between native plants and invasive plants and will conduct invasive plant surveys in the lake and pond. If interested, Stewards can participate in our LakeSmart Program and the annual Loon Count.

On another note, the Town of Camden has received grants for their Megunticook River Restoration and Climate Resilience Project. I have been participating in the meetings and monitoring the progress. Among the objectives of this project is to "Maintain water levels in Megunticook Lake and the Seabright reservoir where it is critical for property values and recreational use" and "Restore safe, timely, and effective passage potential for native sea-run and resident fish". Currently I am reviewing the Draft Megunticook River Feasibility Report and will be sending my comments to the Town. More to come! *Exec. Dir. Paul Leeper Tel. 207-592-8540*

Email: paul@megunticook.org

Nature Notes with Amy

On this chilly May morning as I watch the fluffy flowers of the shadbush tree fluttering outside my window, I am hoping the cold and damp will kill lots of brown tail moth caterpillars. But my mind switches insects, gratefully, to those more pleasant to behold, even in their names that are Wind in the Willow-esque, insects that do something that humans like to do, and that is go swimming. So here are a few facts about water boatmen, backswimmers and whirligig beetles gleaned from some recent reading about beneficial insects, ones of which we have great need.

These three small insects, each about 1/2" long, are predators that eat other insects or small creatures in their watery habitat. Both their adult and their larval stages feed on such prey. All go through molts to become adults, but maybe not until the following year. Otherwise, they could also have multiple generations per growing season - or not. Lots of options. Water boatmen and backswimmers are in the true bug order and whirligigs are beetles, the only beetle that is found on the surface of water.

Water boatmen look for their prey mostly in the sediment at the bottom of shallow water. Short front legs scrabble around in the muckamuck, dredging up small tidbits of food such as algae, nematodes, and small insects, while their long oar-like rear legs are used for swimming. Since they don't have gills, they carry an air bubble under their wings from the surface to breathe. Yes, wings - they can also fly between lakes and ponds. And the males can sing to attract mates - well, make noise - with their sex organs. A loud noise. Plenty of info for that next cocktail party.

Backswimmers are like water boatmen only upside down, as their name implies, swimming belly-up, doing the backstroke. They have huge eyes which might help them see where they are going, backwards as it is. Resembling miniature rowboats with long hind legs, they swim close or at the surface of the water and also bring along a bubble as air supply either on their abdomen or under their wings. They exhibit the true



bug order's feeding mechanism: injecting a digestive enzyme into their prey with a piercing mouthpart, they then suck out the resulting liquefied innards. Despite their small size, they can catch small fish and tadpoles. Prey themselves for bigger fish, they can fly and, ouch, are known to bite.



Whirligig beetles are often found in quite large groups on the surface of the water, like bumper cars zipping around, frequently in circles. Their divided eyes - one set above the water, the other watching underneath - as well as specialized antennae perhaps with an echolocation feature held on the water surface helps them hunt insects, mostly ones fallen into the water. Of note is a foul odor they emit when threatened that helps protect them from hungry fish that learn quite quickly to avoid them. If threatened fiercely, they can dive. And they also can fly. This insect goes through a complete metamorphosis - the

larva is also a predator on aquatic insects, but the pupa is non-aquatic, attached to the shore or on vegetation above the water.

The references include some short videos, but even better, next time you are out on the water in a quiet cove with floating vegetation, maybe even swimming with a mask, take a look for these interesting insects. They are all part of the bird-eat-, fish-eat-, bug-eat-bug food web that helps the watershed stay alive and healthy, and that is a good thing. *Amy Campbell*

Good Garden Bugs, Mary M Gardiner, 2015

Aquatic Pests and Critters <https://extension.umaine.edu/home-and-garden-ipm/fact-sheets/aquatics/>

Water boatmen and backswimmers <https://uwm.edu/field-station/water-boatmen-backswimmers/>

Biomonitoring Macroinvertebrates <https://www.maine.gov/dep/water/monitoring/biomonitoring/sampling/bugs/truebugs.html>

The water boatman's singing penis <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VpWSH>

Water boatmen and backswimmers video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LqCW5RHD69U>

Water Boatmen for Kids <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W-BDPa7Vd-Q>

Whirligig Beetles <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RIbzOeNcaxE>

