



# Newsletter

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Fall 2016

## *From your President:*

The very dry summer changed into an autumn bursting with color in and around the Megunticook watershed! Lake Warden Dale has been busy preparing for the winter months removing buoys and navigational aids. Paul has been helping spread awareness about water quality and its importance through a presentation at Merryspring on October 18th. LakeSmart, led by Ed Libby and joined by Leslie Devoe and Dottie Hokkanen had a very successful summer. They are welcoming inquiries about LakeSmart and would love to help you improve your property. This is a completely volunteer inspection and comes with a full report along with recommendations for improvements. Every little bit helps! If anyone is interested in volunteering for MWA please let us know! Which brings me to my semi-annual **thank you** to all of the members of the MWA, the courtesy boat inspectors, and all of the volunteers working together to help protect our watershed. Have a great autumn and a wonderful winter!

*Maureen Flanagan, President 207-785-2153 Email- maureen@vikinglumber.com*

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## *Lake Warden's Report:*

Hello, fall has been great with mostly warm temperatures, some wind, but very little cold. What a great help warm days and light winds are when I am hauling out the navigation buoys. All of the buoys on the lake are now hauled and stored. Please use extra caution if you go out on the lake this fall; there are no buoys and the water level is about 3 feet below full pool. The Bog Bridge and Rte. 52 boat ramps are still usable (barely) for shallow draft boats. Rte. 52 is the best hope for larger vessels. Looking around on the lake it looks like most of the boats and floats are gone. But Norton Pond still has quite a few floats in the water. I have heard the Monroe and Goodwin float guys are still hoping for the water to rise to move them to Bog Bridge for hauling. Otherwise they will have to store them up in Lincolnville.

The fishing has been very good with some nice ones being caught. Most anglers are fishing down deep, but a streamer fly fished on top in about 20 feet of water is starting to get the fish to bite. Hunting pressure has been light with only a few duck hunters around. Deer hunting season began Saturday October 29th so if you are going out in woods and fields please remember to wear your HUNTER ORANGE

Please take care outside, especially on the water, it's getting colder; hypothermia can attack very quickly.

*Lake Warden Dale Dougherty 207-390-0030 Email: lakewarden@megunticook.org*

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***Treasurer's Report:***

**Membership & Contributions are UP!**

As we reach the half-way mark of our fiscal year which began May 1, 2016, we are showing an increase in our total income as a result of increased contributions and memberships. At the present time we have 262 members over last year's membership of 252.

There has been an increase in wages and payroll taxes with the increase in our Lake Patrol presence and the watershed stewards at the boat ramps this summer. As always we continue to look for ways to reduce overall expenses including equipment expenses.

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 2016-2017 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 smarriner80@gmail.com*

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***Partners in Monitoring Bacteria Sampling Results:***

**Swimming Advisories Decline for 2nd Year**

I would like to thank our many volunteers for assisting in this important monitoring. As you know, it was very dry this past summer, which contributed to generally low bacteria numbers at our 7 sample sites. Overall, 13% of the samples were above the EPA 1 day threshold, down from 20% in 2015 and 25% in 2014. Norton Pond samples declined from 35% in 2015 to 25% in 2016.

The data can be found at [www.megunticook.com/water-testing-swimming-advisories/](http://www.megunticook.com/water-testing-swimming-advisories/). Let's hope the trend line continues down next summer! Again, thanks to all you volunteers.

<p><b>MWA Officers</b> <b>President - Maureen Flanagan</b> 207-785-2153; maureen@vikinglumber.com <b>1st Vice President - Dody Urquia</b> 207-829-8302; urquiad@aol.com <b>Secretary - Wendy Wickenden</b> 207-236-3745; wendyllynnwick@gmail.com <b>Treasurer - Sarah Marriner</b> 207-596-9008; smarriner80@gmail.com <b>MWA Staff</b> <b>Exec. Director - Paul Leeper</b> 207-592-8540; paul@megunticook.org <b>Lake Warden - Dale Dougherty</b> 207-390-0030; lakewarden@megunticook.org <b>Asst. Lake Warden - Justin Twitchell</b> 207-975-1721</p>	<p><b>Don't forget your dues!</b> If there is a <b>yellow dues card</b> and <b>envelope</b> included with this newsletter our records show you are not a current member. Please consider joining and/or making a donation at this time. <b>We need your continued support.</b></p> <p><i>Did you know? In 2016 Maine IF&amp;W biologists put a GPS transmitter on a Great Blue Heron in Palmyra. The transmitter stopped working at the end of the summer. It turned back on Oct.20. The bird was in Haiti! For more info see pg 4 &amp; <a href="http://www.maine.gov/wordpress/ifwheron/tracking-project/">http://www.maine.gov/wordpress/ifwheron/tracking-project/</a></i></p>
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**Watershed Stewards Program:**

The Student Watershed Program continues to grow. In now our 3rd year. Area students are trained to conduct Courtesy Boat Inspections (CBI), Invasive Plant Patrols (IPP), and conduct water quality monitoring. This past summer we had 5 students in the program and increased coverage at all of our boatramps (see table). The Stewards put in over 600 hours (up from 430 in 2015) and inspected almost 1400 boats during the summer (up from 1135 last year). 70% of our ramp users come from right around the area.

The Stewards learned to identify invasive plants like Eurasian milfoil and then searched for invasives in the Rt. 52 and Bog Bridge area. Thankfully none were found. The students also collected bi-weekly dissolved oxygen and water clarity data at our 3 long-term sample sites on the lake and pond. The data is being worked up now and will be posted to the website later this fall.

Just a note, the kids usually don't start until late June and go back to school in late August. We continue to need volunteers to help out with boatramp inspections during the "shoulder" times. I will be putting out a call for volunteers in the spring!

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

2016			
Ramp	Inspections	%	
Bog	931	67%	
Rt 52	273	20%	
Breeze	181	13%	
<b>Totals</b>	<b>1385</b>	<b>100%</b>	
Ramp	Hours	%	Insp/Hr
Bog	315.6	52%	2.9
Rt 52	156.9	26%	1.7
Breeze	132.3	22%	1.4
<b>Totals</b>	<b>604.8</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>2.3</b>
Locals?	Local	Total	%
Bog	672	931	72%
Rt 52	169	273	62%
Breeze	135	181	75%
<b>Local %</b>	<b>976</b>	<b>1385</b>	<b>70%</b>

**LakeSmart Program:**

**CALLING ALL CAMPOWNERS-SIGN UP TODAY!**

Kudos to Megunticook Watershed volunteer Coordinator Ed Libby and volunteer Evaluators Leslie Devoe and Dottie Hokkanen for all their hard work! Our LakeSmart Program just completed it's 2nd year and we want to grow the program exponentially in 2017!

What's LakeSmart you ask? LakeSmart, the flagship program of the Maine Lakes Society, is one of the most effective lake protection programs available today. It recognizes waterfront homeowners who use natural landscaping strategies to protect the health of their lake. It's voluntary, and non-regulatory; folks are educated about ways to reduce run-off to the lake, pond and river. It's hard to believe one person's lawn or eroding camp road could be a threat to something as large and enduring as a lake or pond. But when added to a shoreline full of similar sites, it can. All stormwater that gets into a lake carries nutrients. Over time, the cumulative impact can be thousands of pounds of pollutants. The result, "death by a thousand cuts," means algae blooms, fish kills, and the loss of water clarity and spawning habitat. One tiny rivulet from one rainstorm may not seem like much, but when multiplied across a lake watershed and added up over decades, eroded soil can turn a lake into a smelly, pea green mess.

LakeSmart's now-familiar blue and white Award signs get posted at shorefront and roadside. They say, "A friend of the lake lives here." So call or email me now to sign up for an evaluation next season. Rumor has it that one lucky enrollee will get a spiffy MWA hat as a gift!

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

In the wetland, the misty wetland, the heron hunts, day and night. Probably not as catchy as song lyrics as those about the mighty jungle and the sleeping lion, and the heron's voice itself is anything but melodic, but a great blue heron standing stock still at the edge of a lake or pond completes a scene of quiet beauty.

Maine is not a state with too many commonly seen heron species. The great blue heron, the largest and frequently the most typically spotted of all herons in many places, is a notable visitor to the watershed especially as the summer progresses and more shallow shoreline is revealed.

With a height of nearly four feet and, when flying, a wingspan of six feet, this is a large bird but often you have to really be looking carefully because its gray and white plumage can blend in well with the colors along the water's edge. And of course, it rarely moves when it's fishing, and then to rapidly strike at prey with its long, pointy bill. This weapons-grade appendage has been clocked at 90 miles per hour! In the air, it coils its long neck back toward its body but with legs and feet outstretched and slow, lumbering flight, it is readily distinguished between other large birds such as ospreys and eagles and also sandhill cranes which do live in parts of Maine.



On the lake, a hunting heron can be spotted on the bog side of aptly-named Bog Bridge, especially in late summer when they disperse from their breeding areas. You are not likely to hear its raspy croaking call which is typically heard more on their breeding grounds, a communal rookery on an island or other isolated watery environment. ( To hear recordings please go to [https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Great\\_Blue\\_Heron/sounds](https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Great_Blue_Heron/sounds)) What are they hunting? Almost anything, from frogs to fish, from snakes to small birds, from mice to mayflies. Larger fish can actually be impaled on the beak before being subdued by shaking and then swallowed. Their exceptional eyesight permits hunting even in darkness, something that has been noted by volunteers for the on-going initiative tracking individuals using transmitters. You can follow these Maine birds in their southward migration as well as see some great photos at this Facebook site <https://www.facebook.com/maineheron/>

Usually not thought to be a bird species of concern, in Maine recently they are in the sights and talons - of bald eagles. Especially at the breeding colonies, the appearance of an eagle can mean the end of the colony. The herons leave and in many cases do not come back. Eagles' traditional food sources - fish, primarily ocean fish - are in decline, so the birds are feeding on alternate prey. Alas, great blue herons are on that growing list.

Keep your eye out for herons late into the fall when they still might haunt the quiet gray waters that are not ice-bound. Leaves may be down, emergent vegetation brown, and the wetland is otherwise in winter mode. It's always nice to be reminded of our summer residents and look forward to returning green and blue seasons by the lake!

For more information: <http://freepressonline.com/Content/Birding-with-Don-Reimer/Birding-with-Don-Reimer/Article/Birding-with-Don-Reimer-Herons-and-Egrets-/68/100/47718>  
[https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Great\\_Blue\\_Heron/lifehistory](https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Great_Blue_Heron/lifehistory)  
<http://georgesoutdoornews.bangordailynews.com/2016/06/29/conservation/bald-eagles-arekilling-maines-great-blue-herons/>  
<http://www.maine.gov/wordpress/ifwheron/tracking-project/>