



# Newsletter

Spring 2019

**From your President:** The Calendar says spring is here and there have been days when it almost seems possible! Hopefully it will continue to warm up and the watershed will come alive! Each day there are new signs of summer; the geese and Loons have returned and the trees are blooming. This year is 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Megunticook Watershed Association. The first organizational meeting was held on August 27, 1969 at the Legion Hall in Camden. I know we all have special memories of families times on the water as well as many stories! That said, I know we all want to maintain this valuable resource so it will be here for generations to come. It takes an involved community to achieve the goal of maintaining a healthy watershed ~ what happens within a watershed, whether natural, or caused by humans, effects the water quality and health of that watershed. Please join the MWA, and support important work of educating the community and fostering good stewardship.

We would like you to encourage your swimmers, kayakers, fishermen (and women!), and boaters to support MWA. Some of the things we have been doing over the years are: testing water quality weekly from June to October, checking boats for invasive plants, and educating the public about threats to the Watershed and what they can do to protect it. Our Watershed Stewards program trains area students about water quality problems and gives them the tools to combat these threats. Our Lake Warden patrols the watershed by boat, snowmobile, and foot for safety, installs and removes the navigation markers, and does property checks during storms. Our Executive Director stays up to date on watershed issues statewide by attending conferences and networking with other watershed associations. He also communicates with the public on the history of the watershed, its ecology, and how to protect our precious resource

Join us July 16<sup>th</sup> at 7pm for our annual business meeting at Bishopswood. We will also be planning a 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Party so stay tuned for details. We are always looking for volunteers - thank you for your support and hope to see on the water!

Please check us out on the web [www.megunticook.org](http://www.megunticook.org) On Facebook and Instagram #megunticookwatershed *Dody Urquia Tel. 207-829-8302 Email: urquiad@aol.com*

**Treasurer's Report:** Happy spring! We are happy to report we ended the year well within our budget and are in the black by approximately \$2,400. We kicked off a few fundraisers this past year including a Kayak Raffle and a Fundraising night at Flatbread pizza. The combined fundraisers gained us \$3,200. A big thank you goes to Maine Sport and Flat Bread Pizza for your support. This year's board members are currently working on new fundraising ideas so please stay tuned! Although we were able to end the year in the black we did see a decrease in overall memberships of approximately 11% from the previous year.

We ask everyone to help spread the word about the Megunticook Watershed Association and all the services that we provide. 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*

**Megunticook Watershed Assoc. Annual Meeting: July 16 at 7:00 PM**  
**Bishopswood Camp** (off of Rt. 105 Hope/Camden Road). We will have our business meeting and a discussion on the Browntail Moth infestation. The public is invited, not just members. Hope to see you all there!

**Sign Up Now for LakeSmart!**

The summer season is almost upon us and our LakeSmart volunteers are looking to help property owners protect the water quality in our watershed. LakeSmart is a program that offers **FREE** opportunities for homeowners to learn how to manage their home and yard to protect the water quality of our waters. The program is not regulatory, no one gets reported to the EPA, it's volunteers helping neighbors with practical, common sense, solutions to erosion problems.

The goal of LakeSmart is to change landscaping practices to more natural, water-friendly environments. The primary focus is to keep our waters clean by stabilizing eroding areas, reducing the use of chemicals, diverting rainwater into vegetated areas, and maintaining or planting trees, shrubs, and ground cover along the shoreland. Landscaping and managing your property in an environmentally friendly manner through LakeSmart is one way for you to help our watershed and have a low-maintenance, great-looking property.

Pristine waters add beauty, increase property value, and provide recreational opportunities throughout the seasons. Studies have shown that as water quality declines the value of shorefront property also decreases. Declining water quality can also affect the type and number of fish species and can hinder other recreational uses, as well as the local economy.

So, call or email Paul Leeper today to sign up for your free LakeSmart assessment, 592-8540 paul@megunticook.org. For more info go to www.megunticook.org

**Interested in Volunteering? Your MWA has plenty of opportunities including:**

- Courtesy Boat Inspectors**– Inspect boats and trailers for invasive plants.
  - LakeSmart Screeners**– Learn how to assess properties to reduce run-off and erosion. Learn which native plants to use in landscaping, how to make a rain garden, and how to divert driveway water to keep the gravel on the road and not in the lake, to name a few.
  - Partners-in-Monitoring**- Volunteer to take water samples to test for bacteria levels.
- For more information contact Paul Leeper 207-592-8540 Email: paul @megunticook.org*

<p><b>MWA Officers</b>  <b>President - Dody Urquia</b>          207-829-8302; urquiad@aol.com  <b>Vice President - Hillary Jackson</b>          207-236-2234; hillaryhope1@yahoo.com  <b>Secretary - Wendy Wickenden</b>          207-236-3745; wendyllynnwick@gmail.com  <b>Treasurer– Sarah Marriner</b>          207-596-9008; smarriner80@gmail.com</p>	<p><b>Interested in serving on the MWA Board of Directors, or helping out on a committee?</b>          please contact Paul Leeper or one of the Board officers. paul@megunticook.org</p>
<p><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; jtwitchell@knoxcountymaine.gov</p>	<p><b>Check us out at</b>  <i>www.megunticook.org , Facebook &amp; Instagram</i></p> <p><b>Please don't forget your dues!</b>          There is a <b>yellow dues card and envelope</b> included with this newsletter, for your 2019-2020 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.  <b>We need everyone's continued support!</b></p>

## ***Lake Warden's Spring 2017 Report :***

Hello to all; things are looking good around the Megunticook Watershed. The ice is gone, Monroe and Goodwin's crew is hard at work getting floats delivered and hooked up around the lake, and the boatyards are starting to deliver boats to their respective camps. Wildlife can be seen and heard all over the watershed with loons calling their haunting sounds, geese honking, and fish chasing bugs and minnows. Deer, herons, eagles, and ducks are all revealed to the keen observer. Go slow and look close.

The water level in the lake is up to spillway and the rain and showers are keeping it up. Even with the cool and rainy weather the mayflies are hatching most evenings, bringing the fish to the surface for the flyfishers. The bass guys are out but the bass fishing has been slow with the cold waters around. It should pickup when in warms

The cool and wet weather may be a blessing in disguise. The BROWNTAIL MOTH CATERPILLARS are getting active now. Maybe this cold and wet weather will cut their numbers down. Hopefully mother nature can help with this problem around the watershed. The islands on the south end of the lake, the Start Road area, and most all the oak trees around the watershed are infected with this pest. The caterpillars have very toxic the hairs that can blow in the wind so you may not even see the caterpillar and still get a rash. Worse yet, if you inhale the hairs and have respiratory issues. If you find them crawling on your house the best way to get rid of them is to vacuum them up with a Wet/Dry vac equipped with a HEPA filter filled with a few inches of soapy water.

Remember to get your boat's registration this spring and check your personal flotation devices are all in good shape, no rips or tears, and the belts and straps are serviceable

The water is very cold, in the lower 50's, so wear your life jacket. Hypothermia can shut your body down quickly at 50 degrees making it impossible to swim to shore, your lifejacket could save your life.

Looking forward to seeing you all out on the waters of the Megunticook Watershed this summer.

*Lake Warden Dale Dougherty, Tel. 207-390-0030 E-mail: lakewarden@megunticook.org*

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### ***Exec. Director Report:***

Hey folks, an update on the Browntail Moth infestation. The overwintering nests were easy to spot this winter in the oak trees around the watershed. The caterpillars are now becoming active and reports are in that they are being found on people's houses. The Maine Forest Service advises that the best way to get rid of them is to vacuum them up with a Wet/Dry vac, equipped with a HEPA filter, and filled with a few inches of soapy water. The MFS has just gone live with a Frequently Asked Questions page on their website: [https://www.maine.gov/dacf/mfs/forest\\_health/invasive\\_threats/browntail\\_moth\\_faqs.htm](https://www.maine.gov/dacf/mfs/forest_health/invasive_threats/browntail_moth_faqs.htm). I have added a link on our website under the Browntail Moth section.

Moving into summer I would like to hear from members about their experiences with this pest. Especially if you removed overwintering nests, or had arborists protect your trees. What worked? What didn't? Did you feel that what you did reduced the severity of the outbreak on your property? Who got rashes or had respiratory issues. What sections of the watershed had really bad infestations and where were they absent? We need to share knowledge about this critter to combat it moving forward.

We have volunteer opportunities available in our weekly bacteria testing (Partners-in-Monitoring) program as well as our Courtesy Boat Inspection and LakeSmart programs. If you would like to help out please contact me.

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

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## *The Particulars of Pickerelweed, *Pontederia cordata**

On this peculiarly cold day for mid- May, my inner eye is picturing summer on the lake, sunny and warm with a light breeze. As I pass Bishopswood, a shoreline densely rimmed with purple flowers comes into view. Ahh. This pickerelweed marsh scene is a pleasant sight to remember from a boat ride last August!

A pickerelweed marsh is also its own ecosystem as defined by the scientific community in the state: a designated “shallow water aquatic community”, with pickerelweed the dominant plant species, a so-called emergent plant that has its roots in the mud below the water but the leaves and flowers above. Other floating and even submerged plant species may also play a role. Probably many of you have passed the same spot or a similar one and pondered its benefits. Here are some of them:



1. It's very pretty. The flower, a purply-blue spike, occurs in mid- to late summer, and looks from afar like a haze of color as the plant can grow in large colonies, especially in more fertile shallows. (Please don't think that an excess of either P or N is better. Too much of either or any other pollutant is not a good thing, and pickerelweed can also be outcompeted by invasive aquatic plants such as Eurasian and variable milfoil.) Present along the edges of bodies of water from northern Canada to southern Florida and even through South America, pickerelweed prefers shallow still water.

2. It provides food for pollinators, aka important beneficial insects.

The individual flowers may be small but they are juicy with nectar. We saw numerous bumble bees and smaller native bees, possibly even a known pollinator of the plant, the eponymously named pickerelweed long-horned bee, *Melissodes apicatus*, or a bee in the sweat bee family, *Dufourea novaeangliae*, both of which collect pollen only from this plant. Hovering above were dragonflies, whose diversity in this habitat can be high, on the hunt for these smaller insects, an aerial ecosystem at work. Dragonflies not only lay their eggs along the stem, but also the nymphs crawl up the stem and out of the water when time comes to emerge as an adult.

3. It's a party for wildlife. Ducks such as mallards, wood ducks, black ducks, Canada geese and even American coots eat the seeds while deer and muskrat munch the foliage. Anyone for pickerelweed salad? The young leaves as well as the seeds are edible!

4. Plants offer benefits to a number of other animals: the leafy community often is home to several frog and turtle species which breed and feed among the foliage at or below the surface of the water.

5. It's a great habitat for aquatic organisms: Under the water, small fish are protected, and eggs of all kinds of critters are sheltered in the tangle of roots. Included in this bonanza could even be eggs of pickerel, a fish common in the watershed which otherwise have no connection to the plant other than in name. Larger fish patrol the edges of the tangle or hang out in the less dense areas and ambush their smaller prey. An underwater ecosystem in action.

6. The roots, which are adapted to low oxygen environments, are primed to suck up and store phosphorus and nitrogen and in doing so help preserve water quality. Pickerelweed is even planted intentionally as a water purifier in applications such as natural swimming pools. Fortunately the lake water is better than any pool for a dip and in part, we can thank these plants that grow profusely along the watery edges in the watershed.

When summer comes, plan your own aquatic safari to find areas of pickerelweed for yourself and sit observing quietly, admiringly, thankfully.

*Amy Campbell*