



Memphremagog Watershed Association

Spring Edition 2014

www.memphremagogwatershedassociation.com

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President's Letter

Spring 2014 brings both positive developments and a continued concern. On the positive side, the Shoreland Protection Bill has been passed by the legislature and awaits the Governor's signature. While there may not be universal agreement among shoreland property owners that this is good news, there is no doubt that it is good news for Vermont's lakes and for the future generations who will use and enjoy Vermont's waters. It is also good news for Vermont in that we have caught up with our New England neighbors in protecting shorelands. In August, MWA will be hosting its second annual watershed workshop. In order to understand, live with, and comply with the new regulations in the bill, the workshop will focus primarily on the Shoreland Protection Act and what it means for property owners.

Also on the positive side, MWA, contracting with Stone Environmental Inc. of Montpelier, will begin a study of stormwater systems in the watershed. Please see the article about our Ecosystem Restoration Program grant and Illicit Discharge, Detection, and Elimination (IDDE) study. We hope this study will be our first step in addressing contamination and pollution from stormwater run-off in the watershed.

Of continued concern is the possibility that at some time in the not too distant future, oil/tar sands from Canada may be transported through the watershed via the existing Portland Pipeline. Given the corrosive nature of oil/tar sands, any accident and/or spill of oil/tar sands would be potentially catastrophic and do irreparable environmental damage to our watershed. In order to shed light on this critical and timely issue, MWA will be holding a public discussion on the topic in July. Again, please see the enclosed article.

As MWA begins its seventh summer season we also have some fun events planned, including canoe/kayak paddles at Eagle Point and on the Upper Clyde River, a cruise on the lake, as well as a bog walk at Willoughby Lake. As always, MWA volunteers will be patrolling Lake Memphremagog for aquatic invasive species and monitoring for cyanobacteria (blue green algae). We'll also be out planting, trimming, tending buffers, and providing volunteer stewardship at the Eagle Point WMA. For details and up-dates on programs and events please see us on Facebook or on our new website: memphremagogwatershedassociation.com. We hope to see you this summer!

Don Hendrich, President

Watersheds United Vermont

By Ann Ingerson

A new organization is starting up in Vermont that will help local watershed organizations be more effective by working together, sharing information, and gaining access to technical and financial resources. Watersheds United Vermont (WUV) has been several years in the making, as representatives of local watershed groups have met together over several years to talk about their challenges and how a state-wide network might support their work. Members of the new organization promote healthy waterways through education, water monitoring, and restoration projects such as planting tree buffers or controlling invasive species.

Severe storms like hurricane Irene create stresses for both river systems and volunteer networks, and unfortunately it seems that climate change could make those events the new normal. In addition, stubborn water quality problems—that stem from practices spread across the landscape rather than single wastewater pipes—are raising public awareness that Vermont's streams and rivers are not as healthy as we might wish.

We hope that WUV creates strength in numbers by sharing lessons and resources among groups. Although WUV is just getting off the ground, thanks to funding by Ben and Jerry's, the Lintilhac Foundation, and Vermont Community Foundation, we already have some ideas about how we can help.

- Provide a statewide email network and website that will help groups communicate with each other and keep track of reports, training opportunities, state policies, and grant deadlines.
- Sponsor statewide meetings where groups can learn from each other.
- Help link groups with partners who can help with funding, technical expertise, or other assistance.

Memphremagog Watershed Association is a member of WUV. For more information, visit WUV's website at watershedsunitedvt.org or contact Ann Ingerson, Program Coordinator, watershedsunited@gmail.com.



Images of Sebago (Maine) lakescaping projects from the Portland Water District (pwd.org).

Lakescaping on the shores of Memphremagog

Lakescaping is a new term for the practice of restoring buffers along lakeshores by planting native perennials, shrubs, and trees. This summer the Memphremagog Watershed Association will collaborate with the Federation of Vermont Lakes and Ponds to create a plan for lakescaping Newport's Railroad Square. If approved by the City Council, this project will serve as a demonstration of lake-friendly practices. Our work is inspired by similar projects already underway on the shores of Maine's Sebago Lake (see image above). The design phase is funded by a grant from Vermont's Ecosystem Restoration Program.

Rain Barrels for Sale

Look for MWA at the Farmers Market on Saturdays

MWA to Conduct Stormwater Study

MWA has received an Ecosystem Restoration grant from Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation to conduct a study of stormwater systems in five municipalities in the Memphremagog watershed. They include Newport City, Derby, Orleans, Barton, and Brighton. The study is referred to as an Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination (IDDE). Recently, the stormwater systems in the municipalities have been mapped by the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation. Using those maps, the IDDE study will be primarily looking for undetected cross connections between waste water and stormwater systems from either municipal infrastructure or private residences. Such cross connections are “illicit discharges”. The goal is to eliminate illicit discharges from stormwater systems that may pose a public health risk and contribute to phosphorus pollution entering Lake Memphremagog. This will protect the State’s water quality and support MWA’s mission to clean up and re-naturalize lakes and rivers to protect local habitats and restore water quality.

MWA will be contracting with Stone Environmental Inc. of Montpelier to conduct the actual field work and study beginning later this spring. In the study, stormwater outfalls will be evaluated during dry weather to determine if there is water flowing. For those outfalls that have a flow, water quality tests will be performed to determine if the source of water is wastewater or from natural sources such as groundwater. Based on those assessments, advanced investigations may be performed in order to locate and identify the source of contamination. Many of the identified illicit discharges are anticipated to require low cost solutions, and if more costly infrastructure projects are needed to resolve discharges identified through the study, MWA will be working with the municipalities to secure funding. The grant will be completed by May of 2015. MWA is appreciative of the support shown by town officials and select boards for the study and for their cooperation in working to improve water quality in the watershed.



Eagle Point paddle Summer 2013

MWA Projects Committee Report

The chairmanship of the Projects Committee passed from Don Hendrich to Bill Round at the beginning of the year. The committee met on several occasions since then preparing for the warm weather projects planned for this season. Efforts will include watershed water sampling activities, support for Eagle Point maintenance/improvement activities, VIP (Vermont Invasive Patroller) training, support for maintenance of the Northern Forest Canoe Trail, riparian buffer maintenance, some on-the-water social activities and several projects to enhance the MWA brand name and increase public knowledge of MWA efforts. We are also planning on a presence at the Newport Farmer’s Market.

We are always looking for additional volunteers to help in the effort to maintain and improve our watershed. Watch for activity schedules in this newsletter, on the website or on our facebook page. The “Beer 4 Buffers” social event is scheduled for the 3rd of August, VIP Training on the 20th of June and the water sampling dates are: 16 June, 14 July, 11 August, 8 September, 6 October (TBD, if needed)

Bill Round, Chairman

MWA Coming Events

Saturday, June 21st 9– 11 AM

Eagle Point Paddle

Participants must have their own boat and PFD.

Limit 12 boats. Registration required.

Contact Don Hendrich at

dbhendrich@yahoo.com

Tuesday, June 24th 7PM

Annual Public and Informational Meeting

Keynote Speaker: Ethan Swift

VT Dept of Environmental Conservation

Topic: Progress in Watershed Tactical Planning

Location: Eastside Restaurant

Cheese, Fruit and Dessert Buffet

Tuesday, July 15 7 PM

Panel Discussion –Open to the Public

Topic: Crude Oil Transport through the NEK

(See attached article)

Hebard State Office Bldg- Conference Rm 250

Friday, July 25th 9 AM-1 PM

Upper Clyde River Paddle with NorthWoods

Free for MWA members

\$10 p/p for non-members-canoes/PFD's Inc

Registration required. Capacity 20 persons.

Contact NorthWoods at

maria@northwoodscenter.org.

When registering please indicate if bringing own boat.

Sunday, August 3 4-6 PM

Beer for Buffers Cruise \$15 pp

Appetizers and Libations provided

Registration information to follow

Friday, August 8 9:30-3 PM

Watershed Workshop

Eastside Restaurant

Shoreland Legislation - Morning Workshop

Lunch provided

Afternoon Group Sessions

For Lake Associations and invited guests.

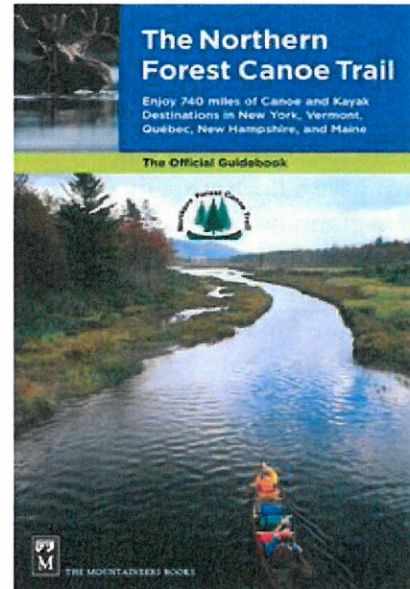
August TBA Willoughby Bog Walk

Lester Bill Preserve

TBA Septic Social

MWA Scholarship Awards

This year MWA is awarding \$500 scholarships to 3 high school graduates in our watershed. Watch for graduation news to learn who they are and what their college/career plans are.



Northern Forest Canoe Trail is a 740 mile inland paddling trail tracing historic travel routes across New York, Vermont, Quebec, New Hampshire and Maine. NFCT connects people to the Trail's natural environment, human heritage and contemporary communities by stewarding, promoting and providing access to canoe and kayak experiences along this route. The Eagle Point primitive campsite (accessible only by water) is a special stop on this trail.

Crude Oil Transport

As many of our members know by now, in early March the Canadian government approved reversal of a pipeline to allow transport of crude oil from Alberta to Quebec. Enbridge plans to send 300,000 barrels of crude through this pipeline to Montreal. Since the ultimate destination is refineries on the Atlantic coast, watershed associations across our region are concerned about the risk of crude oil spills during transport—whether by pipeline, truck, or rail.

To develop a better understanding of potential effects on our watershed, MWA will hold a panel discussion on Tuesday, July 15th, at 7:00 p.m. in Room 250 of the Hebard State Building. Panelists will include representatives from the University of New Hampshire, National Wildlife Federation, 350.org, and VNRC. This event is free and open to the public.

Memphremagog Watershed Association

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