

THE MONITOR



The Newsletter of
the Newfound Lake
Region Association

SPRING 2023

Moving Outside: Science and Students Beyond the Classroom

School is in session, but third graders at Danbury Elementary School (DES) aren't in the classroom today. With warm sunshine overhead and several feet of snow on the ground, they are outside hunting for animal tracks with "Ms. Mirka." With handmade track viewers, they scan the snow, crowing with excitement over every suspicious divot as they imagine lumbering bears and herds of deer passing through their playground.

Several times a month, NLRA Education and Outreach Manager Dr. Mirka Zapletal draws from her background in teaching, her love of science, and her work in conservation to collaborate with DES teacher Deirdre Conway, bringing hands-on ecology to Deirdre's third graders.

Research shows that time outside in nature is good for us on many levels. It lowers stress hormones, improves moods, and strengthens immune systems. Students who spend time in nature can focus longer, test better, and even have healthier peer relationships. It also provides the foundation for conservation by forging a strong, meaningful connection to the local environment.

"First-hand experience with science and conservation is so powerful," says Mirka. "When you do the work yourself and experience interconnected relation-



Danbury Elementary third graders worked with NLRA this school year, exploring their local environment to engage with science and conservation.

ships in your ecosystem, you start to see how you belong in the space. Every one of these students is engaged in very real scientific exploration that helps them think about their roles as both scientists and community members."

Bringing Science Outside

Conservation begins with the understanding that there is value in the natural world and we all have a place in it. For DES third graders, NLRA is building that relationship through field ecology. They

have examined and diagramed their local food webs, identified animal tracks, and even embarked on a multi-year project studying tree growth. After Mirka's lessons in local biodiversity, Deirdre saw her class viewing the world with new knowledge and appreciation.

"Students often report that they have seen specific wildlife at home or tracks in the snow," she explains. "Out at recess, I have been taken by the hand to go over to the edge of the woods to look at squirrel

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Spring has clearly arrived after a short and unusual winter. The December 23 storm taught us the impact of stormwater on Newfound Lake, but also showed how resilient it is. The NLRA doesn't wait for bad things to happen, however. This winter has seen events for groups ranging from elementary school students to older adults, helping us all understand our watershed. And it's that understanding that will lead us all to better care for our lake. One of the things that most excites me about our

Grey Rocks project is how it will expand our educational abilities to ensure that care and protection in the future. We're creating new opportunities all the time, so please join us throughout this spring and summer!

Edward McNierney

Edward McNierney
NLRA President



Grey Rocks Forest Inventory

After paddling up the Cocker mouth River, Plymouth State University student Bryce Foss beaches his canoe in a remote section of Grey Rocks Conservation Area. Armed with a surveying tape measure, guidebook, and a pocket full of aluminum tree tags, he dodges through the undergrowth to the base of a massive, multi-trunked silver maple. He loops the survey tape tight around the foremost trunk and hammers in a tag, marking the maple as #016. Measuring each of the tree's ten trunks, he calls out their diameters to volunteer Tom McShane, standing by with clipboard in hand—silver maple #016 measures just shy of seven feet in diameter.

Grey Rocks is home to one of New Hampshire's rarest forest types, the imperiled silver maple floodplain forest. This diverse plant community has evolved to cope with seasonal flooding brought by the river. Silver maples send their roots deep into nutrient rich soils, stabilizing stream banks and acting as a keystone species on which hundreds of other plants and animals depend. Regionally, the richness of floodplain soils has led to many of these important forests being converted to agriculture, while others are diminished by development or permanently flooded by the construction of dams.

With NLRA's Conservation Program Manager Paul Pellissier, Bryce and Tom continue systematically, recording the size, species, and location of trees in each of the three forest types found at Grey Rocks. This is the property's first forest inventory. Along with the silver maple floodplain forest, they measure, mark, and record their way through red maple-red oak transitional forest and early successional grey birch forest. Their work provides the basis to monitor the health of the forests at Grey Rocks, which provide habitat for over 400 species of plants, animals, and fungi.

Forest inventories are more than an assessment of current forest health. They also inform our understanding of how forests



Members of the Newfound community joined NLRA in learning more about the forest types at Grey Rocks and how each forest functions.

change over time and provide insight into the interconnected role trees play in the ecosystem, from supporting wildlife to protecting water quality. As part of his senior practicum project, Bryce established five long-term forest inventory plots at Grey Rocks that will be regularly remeasured, telling the story of each forest type as it responds to future flooding, droughts, and ongoing restoration efforts at the property.

Working with NLRA Education and Outreach Manager Dr. Mirka Zapletal,

Bryce expanded on his forest research by leading community programming centered around the important functions that forests perform. He inventoried trees on school grounds with third graders at the Danbury Elementary School, led a guided walk through each forest type of Grey Rocks, and measured Bristol's urban trees with the Tapply-Thompson Community Center's after school program. This outreach work connects people of all ages to the study of trees, fostering understanding and a sense of stewardship for Newfound's natural resources.

Grey Rocks is a dynamic, ever-evolving ecosystem. Bryce's inventory plots provide deeper insight into its past, present, and future. With 88% of the Newfound Lake Watershed covered by trees, his work also translates into a greater understanding of the larger watershed. Healthy forests keep water clean. Establishing long-term monitoring of the forests of Grey Rocks helps us ensure a healthy lake and watershed into the future. Explore the forest ecosystems of Grey Rocks by following one of the established trails. Find a trail map at the on-site kiosk or visit NewfoundLake.org/GreyRocks to learn more.



PSU student Bryce Foss worked with NLRA staff and volunteers to establish five long-term forest inventory plots across Grey Rocks Conservation Area.

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



It's a treat for me to get out in the field. In March I led a winter tree identification walk at Grey Rocks, connecting with community members as we inspected the lenticels of grey birches and the vibrant buds of red maples. The dormant winter landscape holds a special beauty, and, when you look closely, you can see its incredible potential for growth. This time spent in the forests and along the trails of Grey Rocks with people who share my love for this space inspires my enthusiasm for what is in store.

NLRA is continuing to shape Grey Rocks to serve the needs of the Newfound community. As part of the next phase of growth, we're

designing a conservation center and property improvements that enhance and support all of our important work: water quality monitoring, invasive plant management, stormwater protection, land conservation, and, of course, all our educational programs.

The upcoming seasons are bursting with potential, and I look forward to working with you to advance our vision of a healthy watershed and vibrant community for the future.

Rebecca Hanson

Rebecca Hanson
NLRA Executive Director



The Newfound Lake Region Association's mission is to protect Newfound Lake and its watershed. The Association – through education, programs, and collaboration – promotes conservation and preservation of the region's natural, social, and economic resources.

Officers – President: Ed McNierney; Treasurer: Jim Fitts; Secretary: Val Scarborough

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Staff – Executive Director: Rebecca Hanson; Conservation Program Manager: Paul Pellissier; Development and Communications Manager: Audrey West; Education and Outreach Manager: Mirka Zapletal; Relationship Strategy Coordinator: Mario Capozzoli

Monitor Design & Layout: Carolyn Isaak

Newfound Lake Region Association

10 N. Main St., Unit 1, Bristol, NH 03222 (603) 744-8689 NewfoundLake.org, info@NewfoundLake.org

In Memory: Les Mills



Les Mills, former NLRA trustee, exceptional volunteer, and valued community member passed away in November. There is not a part of Grey Rocks Conservation Area that hasn't been shaped by Les. If you've walked a trail at Grey Rocks, enjoyed the scenery from a viewing platform, watched pollinators in our garden beds, or launched a boat from the kayak launch, you've benefited from his dedicated work as a steward of the property. Les has made Grey Rocks what it is today, and we will forever be grateful for his contributions.

Every part of Grey Rocks Conservation Area has been shaped by Les.

Three Cheers for Volunteers

What an amazing year for volunteerism in the Newfound Watershed! Volunteers support our mission to protect Newfound on every front – from boots-on-the-ground conservation work to administrative support and organizational leadership. Do you know any of our volunteers? Please thank them for their valuable service to the watershed!

2022 Volunteers

Mika Austin
Karen Bemis
Jen Berry
Dick Beyer
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Karen Boyd
Joe Boyer
Bill Brady
Vin Broderick
Rain Burns
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Jeff Turcotte
George Tuthill
Jen Tuthill
Martha Twombly
Greg Wagner
Ken Weidman

2022 VOLUNTEER IMPACT



The State of the Lake: *Water Quality Update*

Newfound Lake continues to have excellent water quality. In 2022 we observed lower pollutant levels and high water quality. This is likely in part due to several dry summers in recent years, without major storms during the summer monitoring season. Summer rains, especially severe storms, increase stormwater flow, which brings sediment, nutrients, and other pollutants to the lake.

Newfound's water quality is measured on a weekly basis mid-May through September at seven long-term lake monitoring sites. NLRA also measures tributary

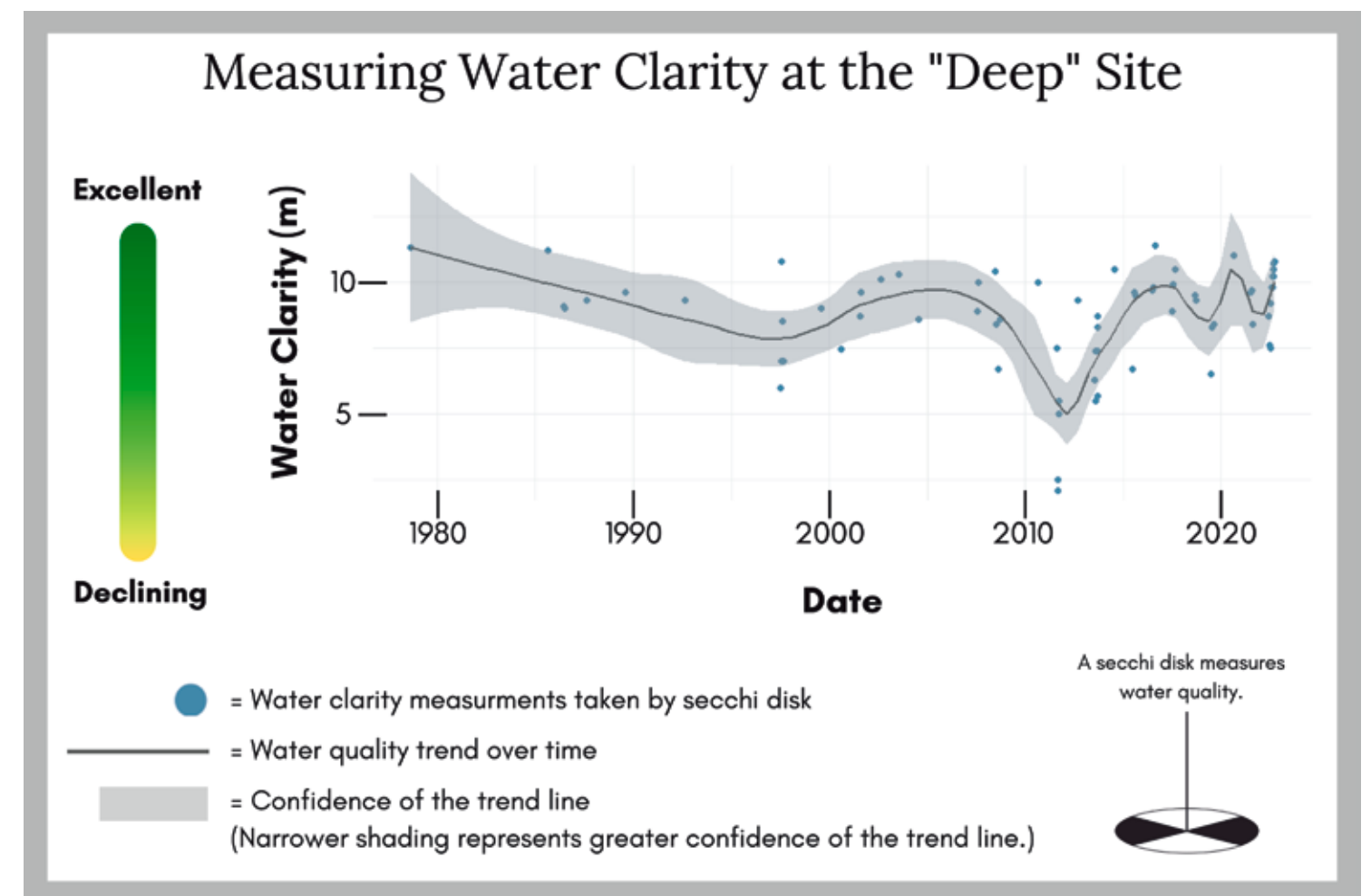
health at 35 sites. Beginning in 2022, we added winter testing for chloride pollution to monitor the effect of winter salt use on watershed health.

Long Term Trends

Newfound's deepest point best represents long-term, lake-wide trends in water quality. Measurements at the "deep site" show declining water quality from the mid-1980s through the late 1990s, including a 4-meter (12-foot) decrease in average summer water clarity (see chart below). While it is difficult to directly attribute changing water quality

in lake systems to specific environmental impacts, the connection between increasing development and declining water quality is well documented in scientific literature. Throughout the early 2000s data show a period of recovery, bringing water quality back to levels we observed in the 1980s, before being impacted by major storms like Tropical Storm Irene in 2011.

For a deeper dive into the health of Newfound Lake, including current conditions at each lake monitoring site, visit NewfoundLake.org/water-quality.



Water clarity is measured by lowering a black and white secchi disk into the water and recording the depth at which it can no longer be seen. High water clarity is an indicator of a clean, healthy lake. Sediment, algae, and plankton in the water column – all signs of nutrient pollution – cause water clarity to decline. Measurements of water clarity have averaged over 7 meters (25 feet) over the past 37 years, with the deepest measurement almost 11 meters (36 feet)!

Planned Giving is For Everyone!

A planned gift is any major gift made as part of a donor's overall financial or estate planning. Whether you are 18 or 88, making a planned gift to NLRA is an easy way to turn your values into an impactful legacy. It is also one of the most effective ways you can support our growing conservation efforts.

A planned gift that is simple to execute: Beneficiary designation — Naming NLRA as the beneficiary of a retirement account, donor-advised fund, life insurance policy, or bank or brokerage account is a convenient way to plan a future gift and see potential estate and/or income tax savings. The best part? It can take as little as five minutes through your financial account's online portal.

The most popular planned gift: Bequests — A bequest in your will or trust costs you nothing now, but secures the long-range protection of everything you love about Newfound as a contribution to our endowed funds. A bequest

of \$2,500 generates \$100 annually in perpetuity; a gift of \$10,000 generates \$400 annually! Your contribution is poised to make a huge difference for years to come.

More ways to give: You can make a planned gift of assets such as stock and appreciated securities, through your donor-advised fund or family foundation, and more. Visit NewfoundLake.org/planned-giving to review planned giving methods and benefits.

Ready to make a planned gift? Use this information to designate a planned gift to NLRA.

Legal name: Newfound Lake Region Association
Address: 10 N Main St., Unit 1, Bristol, NH 03222
Federal tax ID#: 02-0398396

NLRA is a recognized 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.

Have you already made a planned gift? We want to thank you! Please notify us of your intentions by emailing Audrey@NewfoundLake.org.

The Clear Water Society

Clear Water Society members have committed to the future of Newfound by making a planned gift to NLRA. We thank them for their influential approach to conservation.

Jennifer and Tom Berry
Dick and Linda Beyer
Pete and Beth (Huntley) Cole
Margaret Depopolo
Kelly Dunn
Rebecca Hanson
Angeline Harger
Chris Keppelman and Jim Mulroy
Roger LaFontaine
Bud and Jinga Moore
Rob and Laura Moore
Daniel Paradis
Leslie Sanderson
Val Scarborough
Andrew and Maura Veilleux
Audrey West



Clear Water Society Portrait

by Roger and Carol LaFontaine

We came to Newfound Lake in October of 1983 and instantly fell in love with the lake and the land and charm of the Hillside Inn. What a gorgeous property! The day we passed papers and moved in, in January of 1984, the temperature was 29 degrees below zero. We had to use ice scrapers on an uninsulated picture window, and we still loved it!

Since that day, when there were no lights on the hillsides, we have appreciated the stillness of the hills surrounding the lake. For many years we were here only on weekends, enjoying the lake in summer, foliage in the autumn, snow in winter, and daffodils in the spring.

One summer at the Hebron Fair we recognized Phil and Betsy Twombly from time spent in Bedford, MA. Their enthusiasm for the preservation of the lake, including the Audubon properties Paradise Point and Ash Cottage, was contagious. There is a



Roger and Carol have been active supporters of NLRA for over 25 years. They are part of the Shore to Shore Society, the Leadership Circle, and, in 2022, they joined NLRA's Clear Water Society by committing a planned gift.

reason they received the Founders Award from NLRA in 2008. When we retired we became dedicated to all groups interested in the preservation and protection of our surroundings. It is a pleasure and a privilege to be able to support these groups. Please join us!

Over the years our family members have become aware of the benefits of the protected land around the lake—land

conserved by summer camps, NLRA, NH Audubon, Wellington State Park, and more. Not many lakes have so much protected land. Our sons have joined us in supporting NLRA, Camp Mayhew, and NH Audubon. Encourage your families to not only visit, but support the protection of our lake. You can start by gifting them NLRA memberships so that they will also receive information from NLRA. Planned gifts, large to small, can be a family incentive.

By actively communicating your interest to family, friends, and neighbors, you are cultivating that which protects our watershed. Trees are natural air conditioning, and carbon filters and water is the breath of life.

BE A SCIENTIST



Community science experiments invite individuals to help researchers answer big questions about the world. NLRA is working with the Milkweed Adaptation Research and Education Network (MAREN) and community members to understand how animals depend on milkweed in different regions and seasons.

This research will contribute to scientific understanding of how to restore struggling plant and animal communities, like milkweed and monarch butterflies.

Sometimes answering science questions takes the larger community. Please join us!

Help NLRA monitor milkweed and the insects that munch on it by joining us in June at Grey Rocks Conservation Area: June 5, 9, 12, 16, and 19, 1-2:30pm. To learn more and sign up, email Education and Outreach Manager Mirka Zapletal: Mirka@NewfoundLake.org

BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE

Grey Rocks Conservation Area

NLRA has transformed Grey Rocks Conservation Area from a marina to a popular public recreation area offering trails, a boat launch, scenic views, and wildlife habitat. Grey Rocks is also where NLRA runs the majority of our growing educational programs and is our lake access point for critical conservation work.

Our Vision

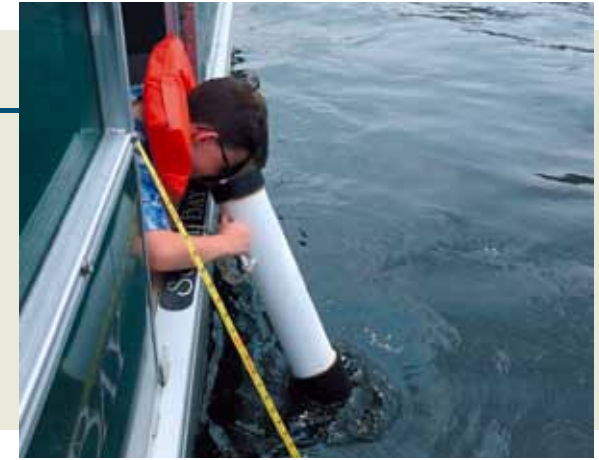
We envision a center for conservation at Grey Rocks to serve the growing needs of the watershed, the community, and NLRA: a hub for innovative watershed science, a community gathering place for collaboration, an educational space for schools and visitors to increase access to and understanding of our natural resources, and an example of sustainable development. It will showcase leadership in watershed conservation, provide a physical space for the community to interact with our natural environment, and ultimately advance the protection of Newfound Lake and its watershed.



The Need

The conservation needs of Newfound are growing. Climate change and increasing development have exacerbated decades-old challenges and spurred new, emerging threats: stormwater pollution, toxic cyanobacteria, and invasive aquatic species.

We can manage and mitigate these threats, but our success is determined by the actions and support of our community. We must increase understanding and stewardship of our land and water.



The Challenge

The lack of an adequate facility at Grey Rocks limits community participation and conservation efforts on every front. We have no space that allows for fully accessible exhibits and programming, scientific study, volunteer training, or community gatherings. We manage Grey Rocks remotely, missing opportunities to connect with visitors and delaying conservation work on the property, on the lake, and throughout the watershed.



The Solution

NLRA addresses each challenge Newfound faces on multiple levels, from boots-on-the-ground conservation action to community-wide education and outreach. A year-round conservation center at Grey Rocks will be the physical space we need to broaden the scope of our current work and react swiftly to new threats. It will unify the Newfound community behind our vision of a healthy watershed and promote a culture of environmental awareness and stewardship, ensuring a clean and healthy Newfound into the future.



GET INVOLVED!

Help shape the future of Grey Rocks and local conservation by completing our community survey.

NewfoundLake.org/community-survey

Further questions can be directed to Executive Director Rebecca Hanson: Rebecca@NewfoundLake.org





THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTERS

We are grateful for your support of our work to protect Newfound's clean, clear water and green forested hills. Thank you!

Bold blue text indicates Shore to Shore Society members, our longest-giving donors, who have included NLRA in their charitable giving for 15 years or more. *Italicized green text* indicates our newest members, who made their first gift to NLRA in 2022.

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Newfound Country Store
Newfound Lake Inn

Annual Message from the Treasurer

by Jim Fitts, Treasurer

The Association continues to be in a very strong financial position. Our audited fiscal year end of 9/30/2022 once again had an unqualified opinion (the best available) and showed net positive results of \$337,209, principally from contributions to a new endowment fund created in honor of departing president Rob Moore. This fund, along with the rest of the endowment, contributes 4% annually to support our operations. While we are very fortunate to have this endowment, it doesn't replace the annual support we need from contributors, as the endowment covers just 12% of our annual budget. The careful attention to how we use your contributions means that continuing to support NLRA to protect Newfound Lake is a great investment!

Even though 2022 was a difficult year

in the financial markets and the endowment did lose value, as of 12/31/2022 your Association had \$1,935,310 in total assets, including cash, investments and land, and only \$3,309 in liabilities. We changed our fiscal year end so have started a new accounting year as of January 1st, and are very well positioned for what's ahead. NLRA is growing and expanding its programing as you've seen in the regular newsletters we produce. This will continue in 2023 as major new initiatives are announced. This future is exciting and will benefit all our members and every resident and visitor who enjoys the lake and surrounding area. Thank you for all you do in support of this work and keeping NLRA an increasingly important voice in the careful stewardship of our lake.



Thanks to the generous support of the Newfound community, NLRA continues to be in a very strong financial position.

OUR SUPPORTERS Continued from previous page

- Sandybeach of Newfound
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Shear Definition
Squam Lakes Association
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Stone Gate Acres Association
Whittemore Improvement Association
Whittemore Shores Condo Association
- \$250-\$499
Clubhouse Maintenance Association
Red Fox Village Property Owners Inc.
Bridgewater Hills Assoc.
- \$100-\$249
Camelot Acres Residents Assoc.
Camp Greenwood Estates
Don Gerry Condos

- Newfound Boat Club Unit
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Shackett's Landing
Spruce Woodlands
Wagon Wheel Condo Association
Westview Estates Association
- Towns
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Town of Bristol
Town of Alexandria
Town of Bridgewater
Town of Groton

- Note:
If you notice an error or omission, please submit a correction to: Audrey West, (603) 744-8689, Audrey@NewfoundLake.org.
- Corrections from our recognition of 2021 supporters:
- \$500-\$999
Miles and Gerry Nogelo
- \$1-\$99
Paul and Sue DeBassio

MOVING OUTSIDE

Cont'd from p. 1

tracks or bird prints by my students." Deirdre sees her students gathering data about the ecosystem, developing their skills of observation, and becoming experts in their environments.

For NLRA, partnering with Danbury Elementary is an opportunity to foster the next generation of environmental stewards; for DES, it's a chance to expand the experience of students. There was broad support for a DES partnership with NLRA. "They provide our students with a new perspective and lens into the world," says principal Norma Ross.

The concepts students practice with Mirka enhance and build upon their classroom learning. When they create a graph of tree growth or compare the relative areas of two paw prints, when they ask questions about what they see and weigh the value of different answers, students apply academic skills in new ways and realize the value of math, language, and critical thinking across subjects and in their everyday lives.

Scientist, Conservationist, Community Member

Mirka remembers the exact moment she realized she could be a scientist. "I was an adult volunteering on a conservation project and one of the lead researchers sent me out to track an animal on my own. As I collected that data point, I realized that scientists weren't different people, they were people with different training and experiences. With training, I could be a scientist too."

The collaboration between NLRA and DES also helps students recognize that science and conservation are open to them. "I hope teaching the students a love of nature at a young age will turn into many careers in conservation, biology, or the environmental sciences and the like," said Deirdre. From fueling exciting careers to cultivating well-informed community members, fostering environmental literacy is a lifelong investment in the ecosystems of our backyards



Connecting with local schools is part of NLRA's initiative to increase environmental literacy.

and beyond. It supports the long-term conservation of the Newfound area and prepares students for the many ways they will influence the world around them.

Stewards of the Future

The Newfound Watershed faces serious challenges. Part of gaining a sense for the local ecosystem is the realization that there are threats to its sustainability. "This education has clued students in to climate awareness and the environmental changes they can now begin to identify," says DES Principal Ross. Newfound's clean, clear water and green forests depend on the

next generation, and NLRA is planting the seed. If today's third graders grow up knowing that Newfound's natural resources are worth protecting, and that they have the tools to do the job, we are that much closer to realizing our vision of a healthy, resilient watershed far into the future.

NLRA offers ecology and watershed science programs to schools, daycare centers, summer camps, community groups, and more. To request a program or learn about more ways to engage with environmental education in the Newfound Watershed visit NewfoundLake.org or email Mirka Zapletal: Mirka@NewfoundLake.org



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