



# Friends of Green River Reservoir

Fall 2022  
Newsletter

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# Update on the Dam

BY MICHAEL J. WICKENDEN

In July, Morrisville Water and Light (MWL) announced that Scott Johnstone is their new General Manager (GM). MWL's website states that, "Johnstone is a civil engineer with a strong leadership and managerial background. He previously served as Secretary of the Agency of Natural Resources, Director of Public Works for Burlington, Executive Director of the Vermont Energy Investment Corporation and more recently the New England Energy Market Leader for VHB."

The MWL 2022 Summer Newsletter contained a "Green River Hydro Update" that describes MWL and their new GM's priorities. It states that "Importantly, MWL and all concerned parties greatly value the Green River Reservoir, the experience it provides visitors, the wildlife it sustains and the wonderful state park it houses. All agree that the reservoir should remain." It goes on to note that MWL is, "actively working with the State and other parties to find the best way to preserve this unique and special place for people to enjoy for generations to come."

The FGRR Board is encouraged by MWL's choice for General Manager and their increased focus on collaboration and reservoir preservation. The following paragraphs describe ongoing regulatory issues that look to play-out in the next two years.

In early September, the FGRR Board reviewed a copy of FERC correspondence to

MWL concerning MWL outstanding activities and regulatory obligations relating to the GRR Dam. The Board is actively reaching out to MWL's administration to gain a better understanding of the content of some of MWL's referenced filings, and their plans to address "technical report" FERC established deadlines.

On September 29, Vermont's Agency of Natural Resources (ANR) formally posted a "Request For Proposal" (RFP) to explore short- and long-term benefits and costs of State ownership of the Green River Reservoir dam and dike. The closing date to submit a bid is October 26, and the estimated dollar value is \$350,000. More RFP details are available at <https://www.vermontbusinessregistry.com/>.

In a separate communication to the FGRR, Stephaine Brackin, the Communication Coordinator for the ANR, states that, "The goal [of the State's \$350,000 investment] is to be able to present more information to the legislature in calendar year 2024. (It will take some time for the final report to be finalized)." In addition, she states, "According to DEC (Department of Environmental Conservation), through the upcoming RFP, we are striving to coordinate with MWL to complete work to help satisfy both of our objectives."



PHOTO: RON KELLEY



# Common Loon Update 2022

BY RON KELLEY

## Friends of Green River Reservoir, Inc.

— FALL 2022 —

PO Box 359, Hyde Park, VT 05655

FGRRVT.org

Email: webmaster@fgrrvt.org

Editor: Sally Laughlin

Design: Brian P. Graphic Arts

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

Sally Laughlin, President (802-355-2511)

Milford Cushman, Vice President  
(802-888-3362)

Emma Marvin, Secretary (802-888-9339)

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Eric Nuse (802-730-8111)

Tom Rogers (802-503-9764)

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Honorary Director: Bill Bartlett

This was a very successful year for loon production on the reservoir. The Loon Island (NW) and Access Bay (AB) loons nested in late June and produced two chicks each that survived into September, bringing the total chick count to four. This is a big improvement over last year when no chicks were produced and ties the previous high of four chicks in 2019 and 2020. The Merganser Inlet pair eventually nested in late June but their nest suffered predation, probably from racoons. The Southern loon pair began construction of a nest in the SW cove in mid-June but abandoned it for unknown reasons and never laid any eggs. According to 30 years of loon research by Walter Piper in Wisconsin, the male loon's knowledge of the nest site improves the chances of nest success. It makes sense that the two oldest nesting pairs (NW and AB) tend to be the most successful reproducers. Sheila Goss and I both observed that one of the two Access Bay chicks was very independent and could usually be found a fair distance from its sibling and the two adults in late summer. Eric Hanson said that this was the third report he had received of one chick of

two being off away from the adults so it does occasionally happen.

The Zack Woods loons hatched one chick but an adult loon was found dead there in early July and the chick died shortly after that. It is unknown if the dead loon was one of the mated pair.

During the statewide Vermont Center for Ecostudies sponsored Loon Watch Day on July 16, board members counted thirteen adult loons on the reservoir, plus the four chicks. This compares with just 9 adults counted last year and a high of 17 counted in 2020.

STATEWIDE The Vermont Center for Ecostudies VT Loon Conservation program reports 105 nests—a record number—with a nearly 75% successful hatching rate. Nests: 29 failed & 7 re-nesting attempts (4 of which were successful). A total of 112 chicks were produced from 81 nests. VCE is unsure of causes of failure and is working with Tufts to look at potential toxicology issues. VCE received a grant from oil spill remediation funds, which will be used for rafts and potentially for the lead buy-back program.



RON KELLEY





# Summary of the 2022 Annual Meeting of the Friends of Green River Reservoir

The meeting was held by Zoom again this year, with both Board Members and Members attending. Called to order at 7 pm on Thursday 28 July 2022.

Members of the Board then introduced themselves, and indicated which projects they have each been working on this past year. Members then talked about their connections to the Reservoir.

**Bylaws Amendment:** The Notice was published in the Spring 2022 Newsletter which went to all members: Annual Meeting by Zoom: Proposed change to Bylaws: increase the number of Board members to 13 (from 11). **The FGRR Board of Directors proposes to the Annual Meeting of the FGRR Membership this change in our Bylaws: Article IV Board of Directors, Section 4.1. Term The affairs of the Corporation shall be managed by a Board of Directors, of not less than 5 or more than 13 Directors**

President Sally Laughlin introduced the possibility of amending the FGRR by-laws, to permit up to 13 board members (up from the current 11 members). **Milford Cushman made a motion to accept the revised by-laws, which was seconded by Eric Nuse. The vote for this was unanimous.** The board can now include up to 13 members.

The nominating committee then presented its slate of board members, up for re-election in 2022. Terri Gregory, Eric Nuse, and Michael Wickenden are proposed for another 3-year term, which they have each accepted to serve. With no other names brought forth, Milford made a motion that we accept this slate of nominees. Lisa seconded the motion, and the vote was unanimously in favor of their election to another three-year term.

The Board elects the officers – that vote will take place at the August meeting. It is proposed that the same officers continue for another year.

Sally then gave special recognition and thanks to Liz Lackey, the expert birder who yearly does the two surveys, with Terri Gregory giving logistical support, for the GRR site for the Forest Bird Monitoring project, a Vermont Center for Ecostudies survey that is one of the longest running surveys of forest birds in the US.

Liz then discussed the monitoring project, and its findings this year. This past June had been colder than average, so some of the birds normally seen were not as active that month. All the birds they have seen in the past are still present. She could hear the Green Herons and Canada Geese down in Scofield Pond, where they breed. In the forest, they noted the presence of the Eastern Wood-Pewee and the Great Crested Flycatcher. We asked Liz if she would do a summary for the newsletter, after the 2023 Surveys.

Mike Wickenden then discussed the dam re-licensing situation. He mentioned some interesting historical deeds he had discovered in the Hyde Park town clerk's office, which are important notes in the history of the dam and reservoir area. In 1943, the dam, reservoir and the land around it were sold to Morrisville Water and Light for \$848,000. He then discussed seven important points/questions about the relicensing. See the FGRR website for full information.

Tom Rogers then discussed the Spring webinar on the dam situation, hosted by FGRR and the Vermont Nature Conservancy. Over 160 folks attended the zoom panel discussion which featured a slate of distinguished experts. There was good media cov-

erage, and the seminar updated the public, and offered suggestions for how we can move forward. The panel discussion is available on the FGRR Website.

Milford then briefed the meeting on the board's meeting with park staff, held each year in June. In 2022 we also had a chance to meet Chad Ummel, the new regional assistant operations manager. No new animal resistant lockers have been funded for this year, but funds have been requested for 2023. It was noted that the park staff recently was a great assistance to rescue crews in the search for a missing/deceased person on the reservoir. Heavy equipment has to be brought in to move the boulders at the access area, so that the emergency crews' boats could access the water.

Milford then presented updates on projects:

- a. Working with the Town of Hyde Park Zoning, to ensure that a recent permit application on the west side of the reservoir is in compliance with our viewshed protection protections that exist.
- b. Upgrade the ADA boardwalk; elliptical piers are being tested this fall to see if they can better deal with the thaw/freeze cycle the boardwalk encounters. It will be at least 100k to rebuild the boardwalk, and the state is working with Milford on this project.
- c. Studies and plans in place to make at least 3 campsites ADA compliant; sites 10/11, 4, and 21 are those being considered.

*(The full minutes and the revised by-laws will be posted on our website before the next Annual Meeting)*



2022 SEASON REVIEW

# This Past Summer at the Park

BY ROSS BRYANT, GRRSP MANAGER

The 2022 season was another fun and busy one at Green River Reservoir State Park. This has been my 10<sup>th</sup> year at the park and my 7<sup>th</sup> year as park manager. The staff and I consider it an honor to be able to work in this magical setting. We are proud of the work we do to ensure that our guests and staff members have an exceptional experience.

## TRAGIC INCIDENT AT GRRSP LAST SUMMER

Among the many campers and paddlers who found joy and beauty at Green River Reservoir, there was one incident that was marked by tragedy this summer. A 22-year-old man from New Windsor, NY, named Joshua Hwang, went missing in late July while camping with friends at the reservoir. His body was ultimately recovered from the water two days later by Vermont State Police dive teams. In addition to Vermont State Police, several organizations participated in the search for Hwang, including Stowe Mountain Rescue, Colchester Technical Rescue, and Vermont State Game Wardens. The staff at Green River Reservoir and the Vermont State Parks were tireless in their efforts to aid in the search, quickly closing the park to visitors and providing food, shelter, and assistance to search crews. They even altered the boat ramp to accommodate the large trailers that search and rescue boats require. The search teams were grateful for the accommodations made by the staff and the many visitors to the park during the search.

We must check camp sites 1,300 times after visitors check out, which involved approximately 1,400 miles of paddling. We also checked the five camp sites and the day use areas in Zack Woods daily. This year we were able to spend several hours a day there, since we had an additional staff member this season. Our guests leave very little trash behind for us to clean up and for this we say *thank you!*

Projects this summer included work on the ADA path, repairs to the composting toilets at the camp sites, and the removal of hazard trees at the camp sites. Our staff also picks up roadside trash from the park entrance to Zack Woods Road.

The staff provided services to approximately 19,000 guest this summer. Many are returning friends and also there were many first-time visitors. It humbles us to greet

guests who we first met as children and now return with their children.

As most of you are aware, we had a tragic incident that involved the drowning of a young man from New York. Throughout the 2-day search and recovery operation, our staff coordinated with law enforcement and search and rescue personnel and assisted in the process.

A large variety of wildlife was encountered by guests and staff this season. These encounters included deer, beavers, otters, loons and their chicks, eagles, hawks, turtles, coyotes, bears and racoons (far too many).

The staff would like to thank The Friends of Green River Reservoir for their support over the years and for the great lunch they bring us every year. We also want to thank all our guests and the Vermont State Parks staff for all the support we receive from them.





# The Hummingbird Clearwing Moth

BY RON KELLEY

The Hummingbird Clearwing moths are both a joy to watch and a challenge to photograph. I have tried several times in the past to get a decent picture of one, with no success. They flit about so quickly from one flower to another that as soon as I tried to focus, they would be on to the next flower before I could capture them. Last summer, I finally had my opportunity when sitting outdoors in a chair with my camera set on a fast shutter speed to photograph hummingbirds that were visiting a patch of beebalm that we have on some property near the reservoir. This *Hemaris thysbe* flew in for some nectar and I was ready for it. There are four species of hummingbird moths in North America but the Hummingbird Clearwing, *Hemaris thysbe* and the Snowberry Clearwing, *Hemaris diffinis*, are the most common. The hummingbird clearwing is more common in the east, while the snowberry clearwing is more common in the west. They are called clearwings because they lose patches of scales from their wings.

The hummingbird clearwing has a thorax that is olive to golden-brown dorsally and yellow ventrally. The abdomen is dark burgundy with light olive to golden patches. The wings have reddish-brown borders. But there is a lot of individual color variation. The snowberry clearwing is yellow and black and more closely resembles a large bee than a hummingbird. It is sometimes called a bumblebee moth. The biggest difference is that the hummingbird moth has yellow or pale colored legs and no banding on the side of the thorax, while the bumblebee moth has black banding and black legs. These moths lay pale green eggs on the underside of favored host plants such as Viburnum, honeysuckle, blueberry and rose family plants. Mature larvae are yellowish green or sometimes brownish. As with all larvae in the family Sphingidae, they have a well-developed anal horn. This far north, there is just one generation a year, overwintering as a pupa inside a lightly spun cocoon in the leaf litter.

To me, the most interesting thing about the hummingbird moth is its evolution. This strange resemblance between an insect and a bird is a product of convergent evolution, whereby two creatures from different Orders develop similar structures that perform the same function. This is a survival mechanism, since most moths are not daytime flyers and thus these moths are more vulnerable to predators. These moths flap their wings almost as fast as a hummingbird and make a similar humming sound. Their legs are so tiny that it is difficult to spot them, especially when hovering or flapping. The antennae are also small and difficult to see and the tip of their abdomen opens like a fan, giving it a feather-like appearance. Their proboscis is soft and curled and only extends when needed. All these adaptations are enough to fool most predators. Indeed, it is enough to fool many humans, who often mistake it for a small species of hummingbird!







## IN HONOR OF BILL BARTLETT

**B**ill Bartlett, 77 years old, died peacefully at home on August 20, 2022. While he knew that his neurological disease would eventually win, he fought it full on for many years with his determined commitment and vigor. He died with the grace, integrity and peace with which he lived his life.

Bill's commitment to keeping Vermont waters clean was much of his life's work. He was the head of the Water Resources Board for many years during which it helped establish and implement many of the clean water regulations that safeguard swimming, fishing, boating, and biological integrity in Vermont's rivers and lakes. Upon retirement, Bill continued his clean water campaigning as "Citizen Bartlett", the man who generously

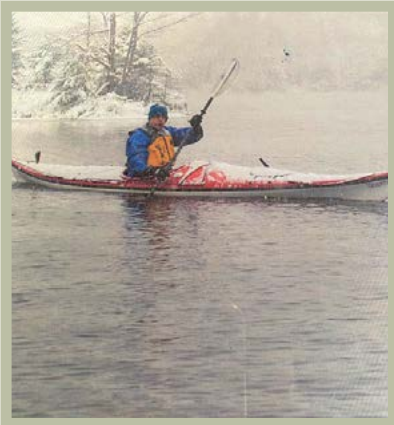
gave of his volunteer time to testify before many legislative committees to educate, inform and suggest to members ways to keep our precious resource of water, clean and pure. He was respected for his knowledge and his integrity, notably by those who didn't agree with his positions. He was also a valued sounding board and mentor for many in the community of clean water advocates.

In the mid 1990's, Bill was a founding member of The Friends of Green River Reservoir and for almost 50 years paddled those waters and camped on those islands with fervent reverence for the beauty of its wilderness-like qualities. During the last few years of his life, friends would take him out for a paddle and a picnic.

Bill graduated from the University of Vermont, where he met Susan, his future wife. He served 2 terms in Vietnam and then returned to Vermont, graduate school at UVM and marriage to Susan. He had a Masters in Geography and loved maps. Surprisingly, to Susan and his paddling and skiing friends, with the exception of up and down, he had no sense of direction.

Bill loved to garden and over the many years at their home, the property has become a delightful, quiet place with many bird and insect friendly plants and trees.

In Bill's memory, please consider donating to any of the following organizations: Conservation Law Foundation, Vermont Natural Resource Council, Vermonters For A Clean Environment and the Friends of Green River Reservoir.



### Bill's Leadership and Legacy

BILL BARTLETT absolutely loved the serene, long northerly arm of the Green River Reservoir. He'd solo paddle his kayak there in the early morning or at dusk to catch glimpses of otter, moose, loons and bald eagles. In a canoe, he and his paddling companion would appreciate the wilderness-like qualities of the place that he would come to recognize needed to be preserved for current and future generations. The Green River Dam was built in 1947 to create Green River Reservoir. Until the early 1990s, a limited number of people paddled, fished and camped there. By 1994, uncontrolled and unregulated visitor use threatened the essential environmental qualities and experiences that drew people

to the reservoir. Bill was instrumental in the formation of the Friends of Green River Reservoir and in the local and statewide efforts which created Green River Reservoir State Park. We are profoundly grateful for Bill's love of and commitment to water quality and wilderness-like experiences. His leadership and legacy will live on, providing a place of sanctuary for wildlife and people seeking a natural refuge.

– *Milford Cushman, cofounder of FGRR*



# Bill Bartlett's Passion for Water Quality

BY ANTHONY IARRAPINO,

who gave these remarks at Bill's Memorial

I am one of many who had the good fortune to share a passion with Bill Bartlett and to work alongside him as that passion burned brightly to the end of his days on this aqueous planet that is our home. The passion we shared was one for clean water advocacy. Bill's passion was rooted in a deeply held belief that our health, safety, and happiness depends on our collective ability to make abundant clean water accessible to all.

When I first encountered Bill, he had taken on the moniker of "Citizen Bartlett" to remind everyone that he no longer worked for the Vermont Water Resources Board and thus no longer wielded any official authority. I was a new staff attorney at Conservation Law Foundation joining in the ongoing effort to realize the promise of the federal Clean Water Act in an ailing Lake Champlain and in the many rivers and streams that feed into it. Bill welcomed me into the community of clean water advocates, making his encyclopedic institutional knowledge, diplomatic instincts, deep connections, intellectual sparring abilities, and strategic insights available to me and my colleagues without expectation of praise or credit.

Bill's decision to rebrand himself as "Citizen Bartlett" was savvy. His valiant volunteerism was a reminder to all who encountered him that the status of citizenship confers both

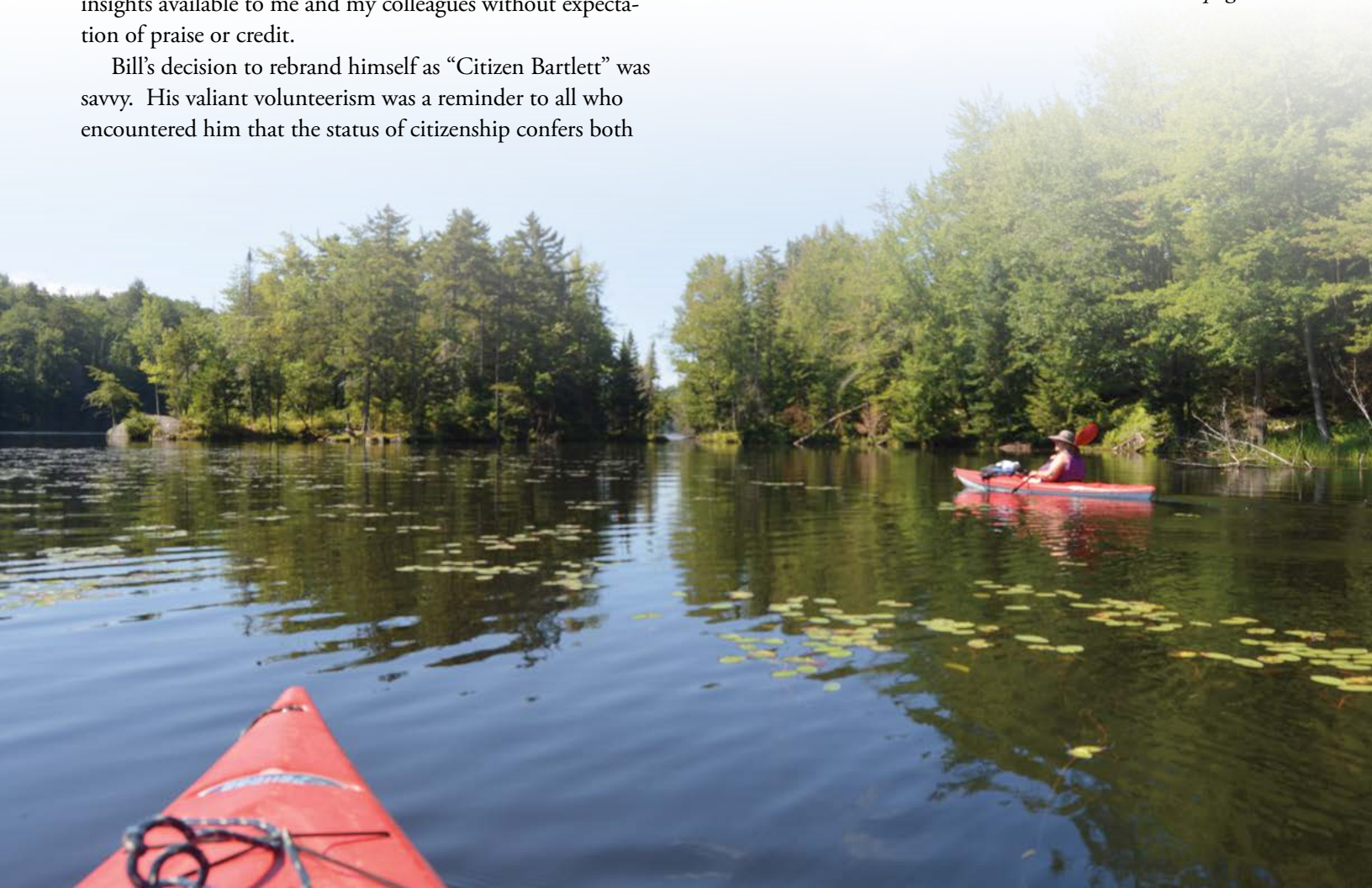
a right and responsibility to have a say in protecting clean water that is on par with any arising from a paid, appointed, or even elected position.

But if I spend too much more time talking about Bill himself, he might forever haunt me from the next realm for missing this opportunity to lecture you all about the need to see through implementation of the Anti-Degradation Policy of Vermont's Water Quality Standards. It is an idea he cherished and championed; one as idealistic as it is indispensable.

So, I will channel Bill as I do my best to distill the wonkiness out of this water quality policy, hopefully illustrating why it mattered so much to Bill and why he wanted it to matter so much to all of us.

The Clean Water Act, which turns 50 this year, was built to achieve the national objective that all waters, everywhere shall be safe for drinking, swimming, fishing, boating, and the support of aquatic biota. Achieving that objective requires a policy of ensuring that we do not allow ourselves

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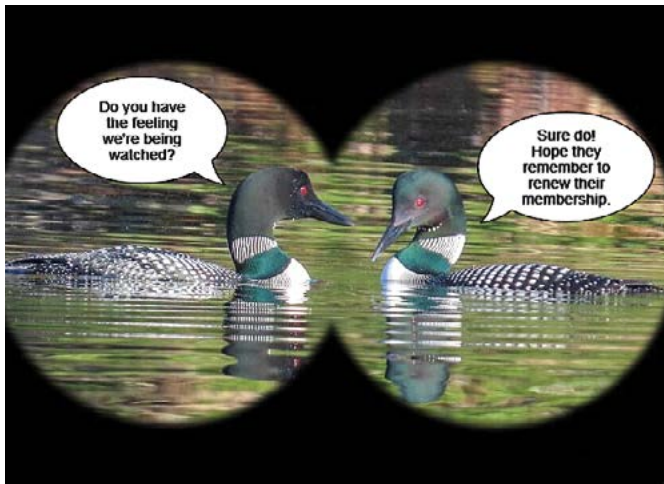


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to degrade the quality of the healthy waters we still have while we work simultaneously to rehabilitate those we've already degraded. Ergo the "Anti-Deg" policy as Bill and other Clean Water Act acolytes affectionately referred to it in shorthand.

Anti-Deg is an official and enforceable government policy that says we should inventory all our waters, identify which beneficial uses they can support or have supported at any time since the law's passage in 1972, and then ensure that our permitting processes do not allow the high level of water quality supporting those uses to be diminished by existing or new sources of pollution.

In essence, if water in a river, stream, or lake is clean enough to provide public water supplies, to boat on, to swim in, and to support healthy populations of fish and other creatures that we can catch or just simply enjoy for their contributions to a balanced and miraculous ecosystem, then we better make damn sure that we keep it that way. Keep it



## MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS

*Memberships run for one year  
from the month that you join.*

Volunteers send electronic reminders on the month of your renewal date, followed by a snail mail notice if you do not renew in response to the email reminder. Renewing online immediately saves time, energy, and stamps—we thank those that renew on the first notice. Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions about your membership status.

**Thank you for your continued support!**

**Sheila Goss, Board member,  
Chair Membership Committee**

that way for those of us now living and for generations yet to come.

It's a challenge for society, and those who regulate it through laws designed to safeguard water as a public trust resource, to find ways for a growing population to live on the land without compromising the water quality that makes that land livable and lovable in the first place.

I have no doubt that Bill would be among the first to admit that, too often, our actions continue to fall woefully short of the Anti-Deg ambition that remains enshrined in our federal and state clean water laws. Even after all the hard-won progress made in no small part resulting from Bill's leadership, his frustration with the slow pace of that progress did not dim Bill's belief in the rightness of the cause. Nor did it derail his drive to convince you of it, no matter how challenging it became for him to communicate with the clarity of thought he still possessed but could no longer easily convey for the last several years.

In his final years, Bill grudgingly accepted—with great assistance from Susan and many friends and family who loved and supported him—that there is no anti-degradation policy to govern the human mind and body. What Bill would never accept, however, is any abandonment of Anti-Deg as a cornerstone of government policy that centers clean water as the sustaining force of human life on this planet.

Bill will also be remembered as a founder and stalwart of the Friends of the Green River Reservoir. As you have already heard from others who were with him at the time, Bill was a driving force behind the creation of the State Park that's preserved Green River's wilderness-like character and wildlife habitat for more than 20 years. Conrad Motyka, former commissioner of the Department of Parks and Recreation, was among those who worked hand and glove with Bill, Susan, and many others, some here today, on that effort years ago. I had the chance to speak with Conrad earlier this week as he wanted to send his greetings to all and his regrets that he was not well enough to travel here today to pay tribute to Bill in person.

Bill did me the great honor of recommending me as legal counsel to the Friends of Green River Reservoir, an incredibly dedicated group of volunteers who are fighting to preserve that crown jewel of our invaluable state park system.

In this dark hour for our country and our world, when the accelerating climate crisis unleashes countless reminders of our growing self-inflicted peril, it's hard not to despair at the loss of one of the happiest warriors the clean water cause ever knew. But Bill would surely have none of that sad sentiment.

He's left us with the gift of his indefatigable example. The best way we can mourn and celebrate him is to put our shoulder to the wheel and work on in his footsteps.