

Maine Water Environment NEWS

1-800-452-8786



November 2015 • Fall

A Publication of the Maine Water Environment Association

President's Corner – On The Outside Looking In

By Tom Connolly, Mewea President



Our timeless and timely fearless leader, Tom Connolly

To the best of my knowledge, no one ever grew up wanting to be a wastewater system operator. More likely aspirations for most youngsters run along the lines of cowboy, cop, fireman or astronaut. Yet here we are -- doing exactly what we never intended to do, operating wastewater systems. We are the de facto front line troops protecting Maine's rivers, lakes and bays from the everyday pollutants that find their way down local drainpipes. From Kittery to Fort Kent and everywhere in between we go about our daily work unheralded, mostly unnoticed, but certainly not unappreciated. We occupy various niches within our profession: shift operators, lab techs, maintenance mechanics, electricians, composting operators, collection system operators, chief operators, superintendents, engineers and Mewea Board members. Wait, what????

What in the name of wastewater is a Mewea Board member? What in heavens name do they know about wastewater? Where are they, what do they do and why do we even need them, especially since we may have never even heard of them? Well you may not know it, but Mewea, the Maine Water Environment Association (nee Maine Waste Water Control Association) is us! We are Mewea. People from your plant or a neighboring facility, everyday people who just so happen to work in the wastewater industry. Volunteers, the same people who also never grew up dreaming of one day operating a wastewater system, lord knows we never contemplated being a member of a volunteer board that works for the betterment of the industry!

How did I, an operator who had worked at various treatment plants large and small in various capacities come to this destination, current Mewea President? Certainly it was not anything I aspired to. Like most good things, it came about from a negative experience and frustration. Yes, it was baby wipes, the scourge of pump stations nationwide! Right here in beautiful downtown Yarmouth Maine, bucolic countryside, riverfront and ocean, quaint village: day after day, night after night, pumps were clogged and wet wells were backing up. We tried knocking on doors of suspected wipe flushers. We approached the chamber of commerce looking for ideas to approach businesses with. We tried code enforcement. Still the scoundrels persisted! Finally, fed up with the never ending influx of these mother's saviors and operators nightmares, I did the unthinkable. I, a regular, non-descript operator turned superintendent, approached our local legislative representative and asked for help, political help. As it turned out, she was a member of the Environment and Natural Resources Committee in the Legislature and was interested in drafting legislation to outlaw these indestructible cloths. Unknown to me, Mewea had a Government Affairs Committee that routinely monitored upcom-

Cont'd on page 2

2015 Officers

President

Tom Connolly
Yarmouth, Maine

First Vice President

Scott Firmin
Portland Water District

Second Vice President

Matt Timberlake
Ted Berry Company

Immediate Past President

Aubrey Strause
Verdant Water, PLLC

Secretary/Treasurer

Al Jellison
Dedham, ME (retired)

NEWEA State Director

Peter Goodwin
York, ME

*For a complete Board Listing, please visit the Mewea website at:

www.mewea.org

Upcoming Executive Committee Meeting Dates:

Dec. 18 Monthly Meeting -
Maine Municipal Association
- Augusta

Jan. 15 Monthly Meeting -
Maine Municipal Association
- Augusta

President's Message cont'd

ing legislation that may affect wastewater systems. In what seemed like the blink of an eye, a contingent of M_EWEA volunteers appeared to assist and ultimately guide the proposed legislation to an agreement with INDA, the national organization that includes members like Kimberly-Clark and other large manufacturers of wipes. That was over four years ago. Today, the wipes initiative is a national effort of manufacturers and wastewater systems working collaboratively to find a final solution to the pump clogging issues caused by wipes. It is a national effort that was started here in Maine under M_EWEA's guidance.

I am an anomaly as an officer of M_EWEA. From second vice president, first vice president, currently president and soon to be past president, I came from "the outside." I had never been on a M_EWEA committee, never been a volunteer for any of their functions. The usual route to being a M_EWEA president is to become involved in committee work, learn the ropes and then, if interested, volunteer as an officer who is elected by the entire M_EWEA membership at the annual Fall Conference. Perhaps it was my initiative to do something about those damn wipes that caught M_EWEA's eye and identified me as a potential volunteer. Like the others involved in the operation of M_EWEA, I have a "day job." I am the superintendent of a small wastewater system in Yarmouth. I have an outstanding group of operators who work with me. I am able to volunteer time for M_EWEA and be away from my job due to the support of my employer and the folks I work with. I do not fit the misconception that only large wastewater systems or consulting firms can spare employees to become involved with M_EWEA. Small system operators can, and should, become involved in M_EWEA. There are committees for every niche in the industry: Lab, Residuals, Safety, Pre-Treatment, Storm Water, Public Relations, Membership, Communications, Young Professionals, Collection Systems, Operators Challenge, and more! These are the groups of volunteers who keep abreast of industry changes, regulatory changes and innovations that improve our ability to do our jobs. These are ordinary people who devote a few hours a year to serving the M_EWEA members in the wastewater industry. Got an operational problem? Give us a call, chances are we or someone we know has experienced the same issue and

can help solve your issue. Got a question, or a suggestion? Give us a call; we'll help with the resolution. Although we do not travel from plant to plant, we are always available to help out fellow operators. In the age of electronic communication, we are at your fingertips, literally. We are your elected representatives. Use us as a resource. Consider volunteering, you

already belong to M_EWEA. Why not share your time and talents? We are all in this together! 🌊

For more information call me at:
207-846-2415

Or e-mail me at:
tconnolly@yarmouth.me.us

Have You Hugged Your Sludge Today?

After more than 30 years of mostly positive experience with sludge recycling through biosolids, I find it intriguing that there can still be significant resistance to and distrust of the practice. While it is clear that we have a decent understanding of what happens to biosolids when they are properly used in agronomic or other land utilization programs, the science is still incomplete. Can that be the reason for this lack of widespread acceptance? Perhaps to a small degree, but I suspect the problem is really more fundamental than that. To my way of thinking, I don't think we show our sludges enough love. Let me (try to) explain.

I'll start out with an analogy that I took from a leadership training program I went through a few years back. I'm generally not a big fan of the soft (social) sciences, but this concept resonated with me. The discussion was on how to be a successful leader by developing a strong team. In this model, you could have two types of workers – transactional employees and committed followers. Transactional employees were those that were just going through the motions, doing just enough to keep themselves employed and able to pick up the check on Friday. Committed followers, on the other hand, were fully engaged in their work, understanding their roles and how their successes and failures could impact the team's or company's success. I think we can have similar relationships with the sludges and biosolids we generate and/or manage.

What is your ultimate goal when dealing with solids produced at your WWTF? Just to see it go away? Is your final thought as the truck rolls down the driveway, "Thank goodness, now I'm done with it?" If so, you have a transactional relationship with your sludge.

On the other hand, if you have a genuine interest in not only where it is going but also what is going to happen to it, then

you may be a committed follower or, in this case, a biosolids advocate. Are you satisfied that your material is going to a good home, that it will be treated well, and that one day it will do something useful and positive? Then you've gone beyond the transaction, have done your homework, and can (and will) speak passionately about nutrient and organic matter recycling through biosolids land application.

Another way to look at it is that it is like sending your kid to camp (or perhaps even military school). You send it away, it gets whipped into shape, stays out of trouble, and comes home to set the world on fire. Having had a son attend the Boy Scout National Jamboree in Virginia in the peak of summer, the analogy is not completely spot on, as 2 to 3 weeks of laundry did not make his homecoming 100% enjoyable to his parents. Still, this helps me get to my final point. If we are going to be true biosolids advocates and cheerleaders, we have to welcome our biosolids back into our communities. If you're going to talk the talk, you need to walk the walk. How do we make sure that happens?

First, bring your biosolids back to your community and put them to work for you. Work closely with your biosolids service provider (or your own compost group) and/or your community leaders to identify 'send back' opportunities and appropriate community projects. Advocate for the use of your biosolids products in community project specifications (parks & rec, DOT, etc.). Finally promote the positive outcomes of your reuse projects, by collecting and posting pictures (maybe next to your family pictures) of these projects in community buildings, newsletters, and any other venues that might support this.

For years, we in the biosolids industry have tried to fly under the radar. This may have been the easiest course of action, but clearly it has not advanced the under-

Cont'd on page 4

ON MY SOAPBOX:

What's Around the Next Bend of the River?

By Mac Richardson, Newsletter Editor

Note: The opinions, positions, and views expressed in any "On My Soapbox" feature are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the opinions, positions or views of the Maine Water Environment Association.

If you are reading this, I have to presume that you are pretty familiar with the amazing improvement that has come to the waters of the United States in the last 40 or 50 years. The horror stories of the past are just that: in the past. The Androscoggin River no longer belches putrid paint peeling fumes, the Cuyahoga no longer catches fire, and dead fish no longer regularly populate the Charles, the Connecticut and countless other New England Rivers.

I was giving some thought to these facts as I was floating down the length of the Presumpscot recently. For the first half of the trip, one could be excused if they wondered if they had just been transported to the Allagash (talk about a lovely river! But I digress). The river banks appeared wild and the water was clear as a bell. Below Mallison Falls, the river banks seem just as wild but the nature of the water is greatly changed – instead of clear the water is turbid. The friend I was canoeing with wanted to know why. Although the Maine River Guide published by the Appalachian Mountain Club suggests the change is a result of discharges from sewage treatment plants, clearly this is not the case, as there are no additional sewage treatment discharges (other than the tiny RSU 14 school outfall on the Pleasant River quite a few miles upstream) until after Sacarappa Falls another 10 or so miles downstream. So what is the reason for the change? I have to say that two factors stand out: muddy, erodible stream banks and runoff – sometimes polluted from trash and litter or carrying sediment from ditches and neglected drainage ways. Both of these are nonpoint issues that will require a change in thinking and a new approach if we are to make further improvements in our rivers (and lakes).

As a first step, maybe we should try and help curb the litter that seems to plague the intersection of our waters and roads, parking lots and trails. While I fail to understand why a whole lot of people seem to think that it is harder to carry an empty beverage container out than it is to carry a full one in, a few well-placed trash cans maintained by local clubs, towns and nonprofits might help a lot.

Second, we need to get serious about slowing down and cleaning up the precipitation we remove from our streets and parking lots. How often did I see the end of a culvert punctuated by a mini canyon caused by eroding water? How many lawns, fairways, and ball fields are fertilized only with an eye to how green the grass is and not to how green the stream is? The time is now for action on those pesky, diverse sources of pollution generally considered to be nonpoint source pollution.

I am not suggesting that those of us maintaining treatment plants and responsible for the old "end-of-pipe" can relax. What I am suggesting is that we need to help focus some energy on a whole new "out of sight, out of mind" location – the water's edge. How many people have no idea what the river near them looks like, how beautiful it really is, or what the access point looks like? Does your treatment plant provide access to the river you dis-

charge into? If not could you, should you provide that access? In general our waters are exceptionally pretty, life-renewing spots to be cherished. While a little piece of me fights to keep the secret to myself, I realize that encouraging a strong relationship between our citizens and our rivers has enormous potential to improve both. This point is rarely more clear than when paddling in one of the regular "After Hours Paddle" events on the Androscoggin River in Lewiston/Auburn. With near-universal acclaim and wonder, participants remarked on how clean the river and the surroundings are. Yet relatively few people venture on to the river on any given day. Is it possible that part of our jobs as water quality professionals needs to be introducing the public to what our waters have to offer? Once people see what they have been missing, perhaps they will be more willing to pack that beer can out with them and to support stream bank erosion control measures. At a minimum, check it out, you will be glad you did! 🌊

Pretreatment Coordinators meet in Chelmsford, Mass

By Vivian Matkivich, LAWPCA

The New England Regional Pretreatment Coordinators Association (NERPCA) annual Workshop was held in Chelmsford, MA on October 28 and 29. The full agenda attracted over 100 registrants from all over New England. Highlights included two presentations by Cynthia Finely, Director of Regulatory Affairs for the National Association of Clean Water Agencies (NACWA). On day one, Ms. Finely focused on the difficulties of handling wipes in sewer systems, and the coordinated efforts many clean water professional associations and POTW operators are making to address the problem at the national level. Day 2 covered NACWA's role as a stakeholder and commenter on the Dental Amalgam Rule that, if adopted by the EPA, would make nearly all dental offices subject to regulation under the Pretreatment Program. While most presentations covered case studies from local and State pretreat-

ment coordinators, we were treated to a look at the Program from the other side of the permit. Sarah White of Uni First gave a glimpse into how industrial laundries handle issues such as representative sampling points, highly variable flows and waste management. There were some lively and informational exchanges in the break-out roundtable discussions on several topics affecting local programs. These discussions were allowed to continue in the first meet and greet session held by NERPCA which was voted a great success by all those that attended. While there was a lot to do and take in over the two days of workshops, including networking and visiting vendor booths, Jay Pimpare made sure we had time to play our annual game of Pretreatment Jeopardy (Treasurer Stephanie Rochefort walked away with the \$100 prize). 🌊

Young Professional Committee Events

By Michael Guethle, Acorn Engineering, Inc.

Thank you to everyone who came out for our fall events! Greenfest was a great time and allowed us to network with many different organizations in the Portland area, and we got two connections from local colleges. At the Fall Conference, we were able to award this year's scholarship, raise money for next year's scholarship, and host an event to connect many of the conference attendees with a group of vendors participating in our raffle. Below are some additional events we're participating in throughout the rest of fall & the beginning of winter:

-November 19: There is an event at Maine Beer Company in Freeport from 6-7:30 that will involve a discussion with 5 Maine-based green business leaders. It's being put on by the National Resources Council of Maine's Rising Leaders organization, a group with a similar goal as MEWEA's YPC: Instilling a network for the benefit of career opportunities in the environment for Maine's young people.

-December 3: Bell-ringing for the Salvation Army at Maine Mall, Food Court entrance: 5pm-8pm. Please message mguethle@acorn-engineering.com if you would like to join!

-December 9: Meeting, Acorn Engineering office at 58 Danforth Street in Portland, @ 12:00.

-January 9: Ice Skating event: Location TBD; we'll be inviting new members and families out for an afternoon of drinking hot cocoa, getting to know one another, and laughing at me each time I fall on the ice.

As always, the YP Committee is looking for members to join in our activities and help to plan events! We like to joke that our membership is open to everyone, and that **you don't need to be young (or professional) to join!** Our mission statement is simple: Get Maine's talented youth involved with careers that protect our great waterways.

If you have any questions about joining the committee or attending any of our other events, feel free to contact me at mguethle@acorn-engineering.com and we will get you on our mailing list for future events.

Free Money!!

By Aubrey Strause, Verdant Water

Now that we have your attention, we just wanted to remind you that MEWEA's Personnel Advancement Committee continues to offer an Operator Scholarship!

An individual selected for a MEWEA scholarship must be an active member of the Association. Recipients will be reimbursed for up to 85% of the total cost of tuition, materials, registration and other related costs, up to a maximum of \$250.00 per request. Please note that funds cannot be disbursed until the recipient has provided proof that the course or training has been completed (and/or passed, if it's graded).

Eligible training programs can include JETCC classes, technical college courses, and similar offerings. Visit www.mewea.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/Operator-Scholarship.pdf to learn more about the scholarship program, eligibility requirements, and to download an application.

SRF Climate Adaptation Plan Funding Incentive

By Brain Kavanah, Maine DEP

The Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) is administered by the Department of Environmental Protection and the Maine Municipal Bond Bank and provides low interest subsidized loans for the construction of publicly owned wastewater treatment works and for implementation of nonpoint source management programs that help protect or improve water quality.

Starting with the CWSRF Federal fiscal year 2015, Intended Use Plan (IUP), the Department will provide an incentive to encourage municipalities and wastewater districts to develop a Climate Adaptation Plan (CAP) for their wastewater treatment system. The intent of the CAP is for loan recipients to assess the vulnerability of the wastewater treatment system to climate change and to develop a plan for system resiliency.

The CAP should identify hazards associated with climate change, evaluate the impacts on critical assets, identify adaptation practices, and present recommendations that build resiliency to these assets. Some impacts to critical assets will develop slowly over time (such as sea level rise, air and water temperature changes, precipitation intensity and frequency, etc.) and other impacts may happen suddenly (such as storms, tidal surges, ice jams, etc.).

Annually the Department solicits project requests from the owners of municipal wastewater treatment facilities to fund CAPs. The amount of the incentive provided will be established annually during the development of the IUP and is dependent on the allotment of federal funds for the CWSRF program. This fiscal year the amount has been set at \$20,000 per borrower for the development of these plans. Requests for this year's CAP funding were solicited in September. In all the Department received eight requests totaling \$160,000 in principal forgiveness from communities wishing to participate in this program's opportunity. Although this is a greater amount of principal forgiveness than the Department initially set aside for the program this year, the SRF will be able to meet the full demand should all of the borrowers proceed with CAPs. More information about the Clean Water State Revolving Fund can be found by visiting the SRF website.



Have You Hugged Your Sludge Today? cont'd

standing and acceptance of our practices that the history of use and level of scientific effort suggests it should have. As a sludge generator, you never really lose ownership of the product; that is never truer than when something goes wrong. For that reason alone, we need to be more proactive in our promotion of biosolids. Sing their praises and support your words with actions by using biosolids locally. In that way, a problem is perceived as it should be, an exception, not the norm.

MEWEA Annual Convention Soared to the Summit

By Stacey Thompson

The 49th Fall Conference was a great success. The MEWEA executive committee and Maine Municipal Association (MMA) work hard every year to bring great sessions, vendors and networking to the conference. This year, a huge “thank you” is due to Sunday River for being a great host and making sure the ins and outs of having a conference went smoothly. The Young Professionals committee once again sponsored a raffle contest with gifts being donated by various vendors. It has become a great way to interact with vendors and find out more about their products and services. Thank you to all who participated!

The Personal Advancement Committee did an excellent job providing 28 technical sessions, ranging from legislative topics to ultraviolet upgrades at the Portland Water District (PWD). It is amazing to see the willingness with which people share their experiences with others in the industry. Thank you to all presenters for taking time out of your busy schedules and keeping us all eager to learn.

Paul Butler (Principal of Bangor High) and Cary James (Bangor High Science Department Chair) were the keynote speakers

during the luncheon on Thursday. They shared their experience in trying to get students more involved in wastewater programs through the Bangor High School system and in conjunction with the Bangor Wastewater Treatment Plant. It is great to see young students and teachers show enthusiasm for the Wastewater Industry.

Some of this year’s award winners were:

Charles Perry Collections Systems Award: Phil Pickering from the Ogunquit Sewer District

Roger Gagne Award for long term service to MEWEA: Gilles St. Pierre from the Presque Isle Sewer District and Travis Peaslee from LAWPCA.

President’s Service Award: Al Jellison (retired) City of Bangor and Travis Peaslee, LAWPCA

DEP Certificate of Achievement: City of Biddeford Wastewater Division of Public Works.

Thank you for all the hard work everyone put into the 2015 Fall Convention. This wouldn’t happen without members from MEWEA and MMA and their continuing support. Planning has begun for the 50th Anniversary of MEWEA to be celebrated at the 2016 Fall Convention to be held at Sugarloaf, USA. Mark your calendars for September 14-16, 2016! 🌐



Congratulations to the 2015 Management Candidate School Graduates. Matt Bubar— where is your shirt?



Alex Buechner receives DEP award for the Biddeford Treatment Plant.



Bangor High Principal Paul Butler delivered a key note during Thursday’s lunch about getting the next generation interested in environmental work.



Riley Cobb from the Saco Water Resource Recovery Department receives a the young professionals scholarship for higher education.



Suite: Judy Bruenjes may not sing about the DMR-QA, but Dick Darling never carried a tune either!



Appetizers during the Meet and Greet on Thursday were delicious!



Product demos from knowledgeable vendors add to the convention learning opportunities – thanks Vendors!

Here Comes a Salesperson

By Gene Weeks (BAU/HOPKINS)

Editor's Note: Gene Weeks, a regular contributor to this newsletter over the last few years, submitted this article about what it's like to do his job as a salesman. His article is insightful, outlining the goals salespeople have and providing perspective on this challenging role. We hope you find it useful- maybe you'll even think differently about salespeople and the vendors they work for.

I sell water treatment and wastewater treatment equipment. As part of my job, I need to go to as many of the treatment plants as I can. Below, I try to answer some of the questions you may have as you see me- or another salesperson- approach your facility.

1. Why is the salesperson coming to my treatment plant?

Is it to bother you when you are trying to work? No, it is not. I believe that I (and many of my colleagues and competitors) have something positive to offer you that can benefit both of us. If I can get a few minutes of your time, I will let you know what it is that I sell. It is possible that I sell something that you are looking for at the time. If I don't, I do have something to offer that you will need in the future. I may be able to add to your knowledge of new products or technologies. My feeling is that I am a knowledgeable person who sells products that work. You need to have a list of "go to" people that you can contact when you need something. I think that I should be on that list and if I am, it will benefit both of us.

2. What does the salesperson want to get out of a meeting with me?

First, I want to get on your "go to" list if possible. I also want to know who else I should talk to in your plant or in your town. I will ask you about your plans for what you would like to change, or fix, or upgrade. If you are working with an engineer, I will ask you which firm and who is the Project Engineer. Again I am working on the assumption that I have something to offer to anyone whose name you give me.

3. Does the salesperson just want to make a quick sale?

No. My company, and many others, sells products in two main ways. First, we will quote our equipment to contractors on large bid projects like treatment plant upgrades. Second, we will sell

our products to treatment plants directly. These direct sales can be small items like calibration columns or larger items even as big as sludge presses. We are happy to quote anything we can regardless of size.

4. I only buy through the "Book" people, so why won't other salespeople leave me alone?

Frankly, I am sometimes frustrated to hear that a facility only buys through the "Book" person. You may have assumed that my prices are higher than the "Book". In fact, my prices are lower than the "Book" in most cases, and so are many of my competitor's prices.

I also am available to answer questions and solve problems, which the "Book" person may not be. How did I get all this information to help you with your problems? Every day, I spend my time visiting other treatment plants in my territory. You can bet that if I don't have an answer to your problem for you, I will know someone else who does. I have a long list of "go-to guys".

5. Does the salesperson have an appointment?

Maybe! I try to make 1-3 appointments per day. This is not always possible. Let me give you a hypothetical example from a salesman's point of view. Let's say that I have an appointment with Treatment Plant A at 10 am. You are at Treatment Plant B, which is 10 miles away. I call you and ask if you can see me either before or after my 10 am appointment. If you say "Yes" that's great, and we will pick a time. However, chances are good that you are already booked at these times that are convenient for me. Therefore you tell me that you are sorry, you can't see me, and now I can't go to your plant. However, if I don't call you first, I may still be able to stop at your plant. When I get there, you may be right there and have a few minutes to talk, or maybe I can talk to someone else in your plant. At the very least, if I don't know you, I can probably get your contact information. My chance of a positive outcome is at least fairly good if I make a "cold call", maybe better than if I call first. It is almost impossible to make a full day of appointments that does not leave me with a lot of waiting between appointment times. Therefore most days I am making some "cold calls". If you can't see me - that's fine just tell me so. If you only have 5 minutes, say so and I will make it quick.

6. But we have a "Salespeople by Appointment Only Sign"- why do they stop anyway?

I usually pay attention to that sign and respect it. In fact, if I know you, and I know you are serious about the sign, I have already made an appointment. However, if I don't know you, what I do know is that at least half of the operators that have such a sign don't pay attention to it. So there is a good chance that I will go past the sign and see what happens. If you are sticking to the words on the sign, just tell me so. I would ask that you not be upset with me if I go past the sign. My job is to go past the sign. Just give me your card and make an appointment when I call or e-mail you another day.

7. Why does the salesperson keep calling even after they gave me their price?

If I have quoted you something, I will need to follow up. I will try to do this in person if I can. If you are going to place an order with me, I want to expedite that if I can. If you have ordered from someone else, I want to find out what you ordered and from whom so I can do a better job the next time.

I believe that I am part of the team of people who work every day to improve and sustain our environment. 🌊

Gene Weeks is a Sales Engineer for BAU/Hopkins selling water and wastewater treatment equipment. Gene has been involved in the industry for over 20 years. He lives in Buxton, ME.

MEWEA E-Mail Database

All current members of MEWEA should receive periodic e-mails, which may include the most recent newsletter, conference and training announcements, or regulatory updates. If you haven't received any e-mails from the organization recently, you may wish to update your information in the distribution list by sending your current e-mail address to Joan Kiszely at jkiszely@memun.org. Don't miss out on the exciting networking and educational opportunities MEWEA provides! 🌊

Why is the Maine Water Environment Association Important to Treatment Plant Operators

By Mac Richardson, Newsletter Editor

If you are reading this newsletter, then this bit of verbiage is probably like the proverbial preaching to the choir, but here goes anyway. What does Maine Water Environment Association do for me, or for my facility? A recent discussion at the October MeWEA Executive Committee meeting centered on this question – particularly as it relates to our smaller facilities. The Executive C is aware that from time to time this question is raised, particularly in light of the good efforts of the Maine Rural Water Association (MRWA)'s federally-funded circuit rider program and the operational assistance provided by DEP. As a matter of fact, MeWEA supports JETCC in many ways including as a major sponsor of the North Country Convention (held every other year in the County) and collaborates with the Maine Water Utilities Association to support their Annual Conference and has often worked side by side with MRWA on policy, regulatory and other matters. So here are a few thoughts to chew on and possibly share with other folks.

As a volunteer organization, MeWEA offers a unique opportunity for personal and professional growth in that you can have an impact and shape what the organization does and what direction it pursues. To use another old saying: “you get what you put into it.” MeWEA has dedicated a great deal of time and effort to bring the concerns of wastewater treatment people to decision makers in State Government, our elected Federal Representatives, DEP and EPA, and the general public. The effort that countless MeWEA volunteers have brought forth year after year has established credibility with decision makers that would be hard to reproduce if lost. In these cases the concerns of small facilities are always included whether people from those facilities are able to testify in Augusta or meet with representatives in Washington, or not. The public relations efforts into which MeWEA puts a great deal of effort, such as the Clean Water Week poster contest and tours of facilities, similarly benefit all facilities without regard to size.

Our association is also forging ties and alliances with diverse groups working to improve our waters such as clambers groups, collection system operations and, now, stormwater professionals.

While there may be a perception that MeWEA is tilted in favor of the large facilities-the reality is that many of the larger facilities are more readily able to let their employees take the time needed to serve on committees, including the Executive Committee – this association is looking out for the best interest of all operators and environmental professionals and organizations across Maine.

A huge (but often unrecognized) benefit of participation in our association is the personal relationships that can be developed between people working at a wide range of employers. Getting to know consultants, product representatives (sales people), regulators, educators, other operators, lab and maintenance people in a pretty relaxed setting – whether at a conference or at an event like the increasing popular Ski Day or the Portland Greenfest – is really valuable, but hard to put a price on. (What isn't hard to put a price on is the ski ticket available through MeWEA this year –\$39 for Sunday River on Saturday and Sunday if you participate in ski day on Friday!)

The Maine Water Environment Association also keeps you up-to-date with what is happening at the regional and national levels as a result of our collaboration with NEWEA, WEF and NEBRA. What about biosolids? Whether your facility uses a private service or has kept management in-house, every wastewater professional should know that biosolids are a significant portion of the work we do and the cost to provide a clean environment to our citizens. Odor issues and restrictions on use of biosolids – if allowed to drift away from rational, scientific rules and management and into the realm of fear and NIBYism – will cost us all in ways that go beyond just the dollar cost of disposal.

Are there ways that MeWEA can serve you better? You can make it happen. Volunteering to serve on a committee or attending events are two good ways to make your needs known, and you can always call the President or any member of the Executive C. Frankly, being an active member of the association is both rewarding and provides significant benefits to your employer. The Maine Water Environment Association will remain the premier state association in New England for people protecting the water environment as long as you make it so! 🌊

Maine Water Environment NEWS is a quarterly publication of the Maine Water Environment Association. (Publication months: Feb, May, Aug, Nov) Comments on the content in this publication should be addressed to: MeWEA, 60 Community Drive, Augusta, ME 04330.

Website: www.mewea.org

Editorial Staff: Mac Richardson, LAWPCA, P.O. Box 1928, Lewiston, ME 04241-1928 Phone: (207) 782-0917 email: crichardson@lawpca.org

M_EWEA Stormwater Committee – Another Useful Implement in the “Clean Water Toolbox”

By Zach Henderson, Woodard & Curran, and Fred Dillon, South Portland

Changing the name of a well-established and venerable organization is a big decision. Since the late 1960s, the Maine WasteWater Control Association had worked diligently to become widely recognized as the premier group representing the interests of clean water professionals throughout the State. Given this long and highly successful history,

potential concerns about using a different moniker to identify the organization and all of its impressive accomplishments were understandable. Now that the MWWCA has become the Maine Water Environment Association, the community of clean water professionals encompassed by the new name has grown significantly in recognition that we’re all striving to attain the

same (or very similar) water resource protection goals. Furthermore, since we’re all trying to protect the same water resources it makes sense for us to coordinate our efforts and work together as efficiently and effectively as possible.

Following deliberations by the Executive Committee M_EWEA members at the 2015 Spring Conference approved the establishment of a new Stormwater Committee. This action acknowledged the numerous and diverse facets to water resource protection while also providing a crucial statewide platform for stormwater professionals who previously had been working together on only an ad-hoc basis. Following the creation of the M_EWEA Stormwater Committee, representatives from the four separate clusters of communities requiring state stormwater permits* and other organizations interested in stormwater management are now meeting on a regular basis to discuss and prioritize issues of common concern. Not surprisingly, many stormwater management issues overlap neatly with those of municipal wastewater treatment facilities, sewerage collection system operations and water utilities. Most stormwater-regulated communities in Maine also have municipal wastewater treatment plants and will benefit greatly from using a more integrated approach to meet their water resource protection requirements.

The M_EWEA Stormwater Committee is another important implement in the “Clean Water Toolbox” to help accomplish the overarching goals of permit compliance, drainage system asset management and water resource protection and improvement. For more information about the committee please contact co-chairs Zach Henderson at: zhenderson@woodardcurran.com or Fred Dillon at: fdillon@southportland.org

* These four clusters consist of municipalities located in the **urbanized areas** of York, Cumberland, Androscoggin and Penobscot Counties. There are **30 communities regulated under the NPDES Phase II Program** for small Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4s).

Laboratory Committee is Seeking a New Chairperson

By June Mooney, Greater Augusta Utility District

As the Chairperson for the M_EWEA Laboratory Committee for quite a few years, it has been a privilege to work with so many talented and dedicated people. As time goes by we all see changes in our work schedules and duties. The time has come for me to step aside and offer the position of Chairperson to the membership and give someone else the opportunity to serve.

The Laboratory Committee is completing

a project to update the Standard Operating Procedures Manual template, and I intend to continue with that project until it is complete. It wouldn’t be fair to leave it for a newcomer. That will, also, allow the new chairperson a bit of mentoring into their new position.

If you are interested in being Chairperson for the Laboratory Committee contact the M_EWEA president for 2016 Scott Firmin at sfirmin@pwd.org.



M_EWEA and NEWEA were once again proud to be represented at this year’s WEF tech by our Own Force Maine Team.

Students Investigate Water Quality at AVEC Androscoggin River Day

By Brandy McFadden, Edward Little High School

On a chilly October morning nearly thirty students from Edward Little, Lewiston, Lisbon, Oak Hill and Leavitt High schools arrived at the Durham Boat launch for some hands on investigation of water quality. Five stations were set up where groups of 5 to 8 students would spend 20 to 25 minutes before moving on to the next station. Station one, biotic/abiotic factors and invasive species inventory, had students walking the river bank looking at both living things and nonliving things including trash and manmade impacts. Station two, pH, Temperature and Conductivity, involved more discussion of how these factors affect the water environment and what pH and conductivity measure and how all three factors interact. Station three, Turbidity riparian zone and invasive plant survey, had students collect river water and measure turbidity as well as observe the percent of plant cover along the river bank and look at the angle of the river bank. Station four, dissolved oxygen, used a D.O. titration procedure to show students how laboratory procedures are done while the impact of dissolved oxygen on the water biosphere was discussed. Station five, macroinvertebrates, students investigated the contents of bags spiked with leaves and other debris that had been placed in the river two weeks prior to the river day. Students were

required to group the organisms found into “good” (mayfly larvae, caddisfly larvae, stone fly larvae and gilled snails) “fair” (crayfish, beetles dragonfly larvae, crane fly larvae, damselfly larvae and scuds) and “poor” (Midge fly larvae, black fly larvae, leeches, aquatic worms, and lung snails). After recording and categorizing the bags, students had a little time to see what macroinvertebrates they could find along the river bank. Brandy McFadden, Jeff Stern, Paula Drouin, Mac Richardson, Lynne Richard, and Deb Charest helped run stations and facilitated discussions with the

students. AVEC is an enrichment program for select high school students in Androscoggin Valley High Schools that focuses on 4 core areas: Math/Science, Contemporary Issues, Arts and Creative Writing. The Math/Science AVEC has a different project focus each year, the 2015-2016 course will focus on Stormwater and Non-point Source Pollution. The goal of this course is to engage students in learning about the importance of stormwater management and mitigation as well as to have students produce an educational product to distribute during their last meeting. ●



Students work at hands on measurement of Androscoggin River Water turbidity.



Lynne Richard from the Lake Auburn Watershed Protection Commission and Deb Charest from the Androscoggin Land Trust explain the role of macroinvertebrates to students.



Using Site Specific Criteria on the Androscoggin River

By Bill Taylor, Pierce Atwood

In 2012 Maine DEP used the relatively new tool DETOX to determine permit limits for all municipal, commercial and industrial dischargers on the Androscoggin River. These limits were the result of allocating allowable levels of metals in the receiving water based upon default or “gold book” in stream water quality criteria between dischargers and reserving 10% of the total loading to “background” and 15 % to “future growth”. This was a change from the previous practice that had allowed the 75% unreserved loading to be applied to each discharger. The permit limits for metals thus allocated were incorporated into the MEPDES permits for the Verso mill in Jay and the Catalyst mill in Rumford. Although the mills had more than 10 years of acceptable toxicity tests, neither mill could ensure compliance with the new limits for copper, cadmium and aluminum. After determining that the met-

als are predominately naturally occurring in the wood used as their raw material, and that existing technologies were not feasible to meet the proposed limits, it became apparent that a different approach was needed. Upon investigation it was determined that the use of state wide default values for ambient water were likely inappropriate for the Androscoggin River and the mills embarked upon a three year project to determine the appropriate limits that reflect actual conditions in the receiving water .

Adjustments to Water Quality Criteria for effluent limits based upon Site Specific Criteria have been made in New England since the early 1980s in New England and on at least two instances in Maine more recently. The result of the study is that the default (non-site specific) criteria were approximately three times lower than those

resulting from site specific testing. This would in turn allow the mills and other discharges to meet the resulting permit limits based upon the site specific criteria. Maine DEP is supportive of this approach and has sent the proposed new criteria on to EPA for approval. It should be emphasized that the new criteria remain significantly conservative and will not result in any increase in discharge of metals by any discharger. It is hoped that this study will make the use of similar and, hopefully streamlined, determinations more readily accomplished. Integral Consulting of Portland was responsible for the field work and analysis of the results. ●



At some undisclosed location on an unknown date, these Maine Department of Environmental Protection Retirees got together to share some food, fun and stories. Those stories could go the other way too!

Mark Your Calendars!

Maine Water Environment Association

is proud to announce their:

2016 EVENTS!

February 9-10 Maine Water Utilities Association & Maine Water Environment Association Joint Conference—Holiday Inn By The Bay, Portland

March 3 Legislative Breakfast—Senator Inn, Augusta

March 25 Ski Day—Sunday River, Newry

April 15 MWEA Spring Conference—Hilton Garden Inn, Bangor

June 6-10 Maine Clean Water Week

September 14-16 MWEA Fall Convention—Sugarloaf, Carrabassett Valley

**Educational Sessions – Keynote Speakers – Meet & Greets
Business Meeting Award Presentations – Networking – Operator Credits
Exhibitor Opportunities and the Annual Golf Tournament
are held during the Fall Convention**

Exhibitor Information Packets for the Fall Convention will be available in June 2016.



Please visit the MWEA website at www.mewea.org or contact the Affiliate Office at 1-800-452-8786 to register or with any questions you may have.

Don't miss these important events as we look forward to seeing you there!



**MAINE WATER ENVIRONMENT ASSOCIATION
LOCAL GOVERNMENT CENTER
60 COMMUNITY DR
AUGUSTA ME 04330**

Maine Water Environment **NEWS**

Fall 2015 ISSUE

please circulate and share with your colleagues



www.mewea.org