

West Gardiner Comprehensive Planning Committee

Water Resources/Natural Resources/Agricultural and Forest Resources

May 16, 2023, 5:30 to 6:30

Present: Erin Small, Joan Anastasio, Mike Wing, Fred Merrill, Doug Rooks

Discussion:

Water quality, septic regulations and forestry were the main topics. Mike interviewed Casey Peacock whose title is Plumbing Code Officer and who stated that he is “a facilitator, not an enforcer”. He only interacts with the Select Board when a property abuts water. He approves soil test designs and copies of plans sent to the state and maintains records in the town office. He inspects interior plumbing installation for new construction and new bathrooms. Currently there are no known cess pools in the town. The one known previously by him has been replaced.

Doug has been looking into finding forestry information in a format applicable to the town and not just the county. He will be counting a district forester that he knows to try to obtain some more specific information. He said the information is available, but no longer is it centralized in one department or office.

Joan had printed various maps of water bodies showing the water testing sites. Water samples are collected between August 10th to September 10th each year when water quality would be at its worst. Collection is done mostly by volunteer organizations such as Lake Stewards of Maine, Friends of the Cobbossee Watershed & Cobbosseecontee Lake Association and is forwarded to the state for testing. Within the town borders there is one testing station in Cobbossee Lake, one in Horseshoe Pond and one in Upper Pleasant Pond. The testing results are published on the DEP website. Most sites show an increase in phosphorus, alkalinity, color and chlorophyll. Discussed was the potential causes being increased home building in the watershed and the corresponding increased use of fertilizers. Also contributing is the spreading of beef manure which is high in phosphorus on fields bordering the streams.

Next Meeting tbd

Joan Anastasio, Secretar