

One Water

Joint Newsletter - May 2021

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May 2021



Message from The President

Brian McGuire, *MWUA President*

It appears the worst of the pandemic may be behind us. I am sure there are lessons learned that we will all be able to share at some point. It certainly has caused us to adjust the ways we previously conducted business. While the impact has been negative, in some ways there have been adjustments made that are positive.

When the pandemic first hit, we decided at MWUA that we could ride out the worst and after a couple months business would return to normal. After two months we knew our former view was incorrect. Two months quickly became 18 months. I am pleased that the Board of Directors and staff was able to transition and develop plans that not only helped the association to survive but thrive. Although reserves were quickly depleted, plans were developed to replace the revenue we lost from cancelled in-person events that the association depended on. We looked and discussed what alternatives were available to us to replace the lost revenue. We settled on investing our staff time and resources into developing a more robust approach to training. We reached out to a couple people that understood training, especially within the water and wastewater profession. We reached out to Tom and Thomas Bahun from Tom's Water Solutions. We formed a partnership that has been mutually beneficial to both organizations. The immediate return on investment was not good. Unfortunately, many utilities had developed and maintained our original thought, "the pandemic will pass sooner than later." Our training offerings were not well received. In part because most utilities were taking a wait and see attitude which impacted any sense of urgency. The secondary part was that all classes were being offered virtually. Not something any of us knew much about or cared to learn. The first few classes had few attendees. In fact, we had to cancel a couple of scheduled classes because we had few to no registrants. But then something happened, the end of pandemic became more than a couple of months in duration. The investment in setting up classes virtually through equipment purchases, investing in high quality content classes, and developing a marketing campaign began to be recognized by our members.

One of our first classes was understanding and using the platform Zoom so attendees could maximize the virtual training offerings. Now we are all Zoom experts! Ok maybe not experts but we understand much better than we did. And now? More than likely virtual training is here to stay. At the very least it will become a hybrid format because of how efficient virtual training has become.

The second positive experience from the current Pandemic is the incredible support we received from many of our members and partners. Membership displayed patience and support as we navigated the virtual training process by signing up for classes. Thank you!

Our partners AE Hodsdon, Machias Savings Bank, Team EJ Prescott, The Maine Drinking Water Program, Toms Water Solutions, Adriana Bellerose, Towers Marketing Group, North View Digital/Mike Hersom and Wright-Pierce all supported us through financial contributions or services that not only kept us viable during the darkest days of the pandemic but allowed us to invest in the training program we described above. Without the training program we developed I'm not sure we would still be in business. Albert Hodsdon has personally contributed over \$70,000! An incredible demonstration of generosity that we will never forget. Thank you for your incredible support and undying loyalty to Maine Water Utilities Association.

Lastly, I would like to recognize the members of the Board, the chairs of our committees and our committee members. Decision we made did not come without risk. We decided despite the risk "we needed to go big or go home." There is never a guarantee when decisions involve risk. Your Board, committee chairs and committee members along with staff all committed to embrace that risk and see it all the way through to completion, no matter the outcome. The result is that the future of Maine Water Utilities is as strong as its ever been.

I have been on many boards over my professional life but never have I been prouder to be part of an organization than Maine Water Utilities Association, or to be its president. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to serve you!

What Do the **Colors Mean?**



Green

Content from MeWEA



Blue

Content from MWUA



Blue/Green

Content that applies to MWUA & MeWEA

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Message from MeWEA President

I hope you're all enjoying the content of our second MeWEA/MWUA Newsletter. I'm sure most of you are aware that there has been a lot of talk about money for water, wastewater, and stormwater infrastructure coming out of Washington and Augusta. There is a lot of information to sort through, and I won't try to do that here. Details are still not well defined, but once they are we will be sure that the information is disseminated. Recently, we had the opportunity to meet with Congresswomen Pingree's Policy Director Lisa Pahel, and Senator Susan Collins to discuss some topics that are important to our industry here in Maine. Those topics included Funding of drinking water, and clean water projects, regulatory challenges such as PFAS and lead/copper rule, and workforce development with an emphasis on our aging workforce and hiring of veterans.

I know the last year has been difficult on all of us. With vaccines becoming more available and restrictions being slowly lifted we can all hopefully start getting back to some semblance of normalcy. To that end MeWEA is moving forward with plans to host an in person fall convention this year at Sunday River Ski Resort on Thursday September 16th and Friday the 17th. We will also have the annual golf tournament on Wednesday, September 15th, so keep an eye out for more details. Even more exciting is that we will have Travis Mills at the conference for a special session on Thursday morning.

There is one individual I would like to give a shout out to. Tim Wade of Greater Augusta Utility District accepted the position of MeWEA's Second Vice President last fall without the knowledge that he would also be taking on the role of Government Affairs Committee Chair. He graciously accepted the task and has done an outstanding job. Providing many written testimonies as well as appearing in-person at public hearings. Putting in late nights reviewing bills and making sure nothing gets by us that needs our attention or input. Tim is one of many cogs that keep the machine going so if you see him take a moment to thank him for his hard work.

I thank you all again for all the work you put in day in and day out to keep Maine's waters clean. As much as it may feel like what we do is overlooked and underappreciated, clean water is enjoyed and used by all. Enjoy the rest of the newsletter.



- Phil Tucker
MeWEA President

Help Us, Help You

Have you joined one of our many training programs recently? If not, it's never been a better time! With training ranging from admin-focused topics to management to operations/maintenance and safety, we truly have something for everyone.

You can even enjoy the sessions in many different formats: online live Zoom, on-demand anytime / anywhere, and, coming soon, in-person again.



Don't forget MWUA is a member-driven association unique to Maine, meaning we don't have a national organization – so, we are here for you and only you! This allows us to work directly with you to deliver the best training and other content to help you at work every day. But, we still want to hear from you!

We are extremely happy with the positive feedback we have received so far from water and wastewater professionals across Maine. We love it when you call with training requests, scheduling and location suggestions, and more. With your input, we can continue to remain the leaders in training.

Help us help you! Give us a call or shoot us a message to let us know what you'd like to see in the future.

With that in mind, we'd love to see you in some of our upcoming sessions that you definitely don't want to miss. Also, because of our partnership with Tom's Water Solutions LLC, we can **bring training directly to you** and hold half-day, full-day, or multi-day sessions at your facility on a variety of topics, including:

- CPR/First Aid/AED
- OSHA/DOL Health & Safety – bloodborne pathogens, confined space, action plans/fire extinguishers, trenching safety, fall protection, hazard communication, lab safety, chemical hygiene, lockout/tagout, PPE, traffic control, work zone safety, etc.
- Water/Wastewater Certification Preparatory Training (all levels)
- Emergency planning, response, tabletop exercises, etc.
- And many, many more!

Also check the following links for more and new classes:

[JETCC Remote Learning Catalog](#)

[NEIWPC- JETCC Remote Learning Catalog](#)

[MWUA Sponsored Training](#)



Upcoming Trainings 2021

June 17, 2021	PUC Chapter 65 Building Block Series: Piggyback & Nonconforming Services - W 2.0 TCH
June 22, 2021	Water Main Breaks! - W 1.5 TCH
June 24, 2021	WW Sampling & Epidemiology (Before COVID) - WW 3.0 TCH
July 20, 2021	HDPE Training Series: HDPE for the First-Time User - W/WW 1.5 TCH
August 2, 2021	Water Treatment & Distribution for Beginners Series - Basic Math Day 1 - W 3.0 TCH
August 3, 2021	Water Treatment & Distribution for Beginners Series - Basic Math Day 2 - W 3.0 TCH
August 9, 2021	Water Treatment & Distribution for Beginners Series - Water Systems, Biological & Chemical Characteristics - W 3.0 TCH
August 11, 2021	Water Treatment & Distribution for Beginners Series - Hydraulics & Electrical Basics - W 3.0 TCH
August 17, 2021	Water Treatment & Distribution for Beginners Series - Water Sources & Treatment Part 1 - W 3.0 TCH
August 19, 2021	Water Treatment & Distribution for Beginners Series - Treatment Part 2 & Distribution Part 1 - W 3.0 TCH
August 24, 2021	HDPE Training Series: Demo Day - W/WW 4.0 TCH
August 25, 2021	Water Treatment & Distribution for Beginners Series - Part 2 & Pumping Systems - W 3.0 TCH
August 26, 2021	PUC Chapter Building Block Series: Condos & Mobile Home Parks - W 2.0 TCH
August 27, 2021	Water Treatment & Distribution for Beginners Series - Safety, Security & Compliance - EPA Safe Drinking Water Act Part 1 - W 3.0 TCH
Sept. 2, 2021	Water Treatment & Distribution for Beginners Series - EPA Safe Drinking Water Act Part 2 , Management & Exam Tips/Tricks - W 3.0 TCH

KEY ACRONYMS

ww - Technical Credit Hours (TCH) qualifying for wastewater credit hours approved by Maine DEP

W - TCH qualify for water credit hours approved by Board of Licensed Water System Operators (BLWSO)



Job Openings

- Town of Falmouth
 - Town of Falmouth
 - City of Lewiston
 - Saco WRRD
 - Portland Water District
 - Portland Water District
 - NEIWPC
 - LAWPCA
 - Maine Water, Saco
 - Maine Water, Skowhegan
 - Maine Water, Rockport
 - Boothbay Harbor Sewer District
 - Scarborough Sanitary District
 - Kennebunk Sewer District
 - Maine Water, Rockport
- [Wastewater Superintendent](#)
 - [Assistant Operator](#)
 - [Water and Sewer Workers](#)
 - [Mechanic II](#)
 - [Water System Operator](#)
 - [Safety Specialist](#)
 - [Environmental Engineer \(NY\)](#)
 - [Mechanic](#)
 - [Field Service Representative](#)
 - [Field Service Representative](#)
 - [Field Service Representative](#)
 - [Collection System Technician](#)
 - [Collection Laborer/Operator](#)
 - [Instrumentation Technician](#)
 - [Plant Operator](#)

MWUA Legislative Update

The first year of any new session is usually quite busy. The first year of the 130th Legislature has been no exception. Our Legislative Committee for Maine Water Utilities Association has spent countless hours preparing both verbal and written testimony for many bills that will impact our memberships either in a positive or negative way. Here is a summary of bills that you should be aware of:

LD-32 "An Act Regarding Remote Participation in Public Proceedings." This bill authorizes municipal, county, and school boards to adopt a policy allowing members of the governance body to participate remotely in public hearings/meetings. MWUA submitted testimony in support. This bill continues to work its way through the legislative process.

LD-129 Resolve- "To protect Consumers of Public Drinking Water by Establishing Maximum Contaminant Levels for Certain Substances and Contaminants." This resolve is to adopt measures to protect consumers of public drinking water in Maine from potential health impacts associated with perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances known as PFAS. MWUA testified in support of this bill. It continues to work its way through the legislative process.

LD-164 "An Act to Establish Maximum Contaminant Levels Under the State's Drinking Water Rule." This bill amends the law authorizing the adoption of state drinking water rules by the Commissioner of Health and Human Services to require that those rules establish a maximum contaminant level equivalent to 20 nanograms per liter for the following substances, perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances. MWUA testified as opposed to this bill. It continues to work its way through the legislative process.

LD-206 Resolve "Regarding Legislative Review of Portions of Chapter 234: Lead Testing in Schools Drinking Water Rule." (A major substantive rule of the Department of Health and Human Services.) This resolve provided for legislative review of portions of Chapter 234. MWUA is monitoring this bill. It continues to work its way through the legislative process.

LD-245 "An Act Regarding Rural Water Districts" This bill allows a trustee to be appointed on a temporary basis to fill a vacancy on the board of trustees of a water district if a vacancy occurs on the board. MWUA is monitoring this bill. It continues to work its way through the legislative process.

LD-251 "An Act Regarding Public Utility Assessments, Fees, and Penalties" This bill requires the PUC and Public Advocates Office in calculating assessments charged to public utilities to apportion the assessment within each category.

(cont'd on next page)

Upcoming Main Events

Upcoming events scheduled over the next few months are below.

August 12, 2021
MWUA/MeWEA Summer Outing,
Brunswick Landing (Former Naval Air Station)



MWUA Legislative Update (cont'd)

MWUA has no position on this bill, but we continue to monitor. The EUT Committee will continue to collect data. It appears no change to the current provision will be enacted before 2023. It continues to work its way through the legislative process.

LD-311 "An Act to Require Third-Party Certification for Persons Undertaking Corrosion Prevention and Mitigation Projects for Public Water Supply and Wastewater Infrastructure and Bridges." This bill requires the adoption of rules by the Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Transportation governing projects costing \$50,000 or more consisting of corrosion prevention and mitigation for bridges, public water supply infrastructure and public wastewater infrastructure. MWUA testified in opposition. Water and Wastewater may be exempted from the language. It continues to work its way through the legislative process.

LD-363 "An Act Regarding the Statute of Limitations for Injuries or Harm resulting from Perfluoroalkyl and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances." This bill provides that an action arising out of harm or injury caused by PFOA or PFOS must be commenced within 6 years after the plaintiff discovers or should have discovered such harm or injury. MWUA testified Neither for nor Against. It continues to work its way through the legislative process.

LD-469 "An Act to Ensure Safety Across Maine's Construction Industry." This bill requires a contractor or subcontractor with a public works contract with the State

of \$50,000 or more to certify all craft workers who will be on site have taken a safety training program. MWUA provided testimony jointly with MeWEA in opposition. It continues to work its way through the legislative process.



LD-489 "Resolution Proposing to amend the Constitution of Maine to establish a Right to a Healthy Environment." This resolution proposes to amend the Maine Constitution to grant the people of the State a right to a clean healthy environment and to preservation of the natural, cultural, recreational, scenic, and healthful qualities of the environment. MWUA provided testimony in opposition. We continue to monitor this bill. It continues to work its way through the legislative process.

LD-553 "An Act to End At-Will Employment" This bill prohibits an employer from terminating the employment of an employee without cause. The bill specifies that an employer may terminate for cause only after applying a 3-step progressive discipline policy and providing notice of termination in accordance with certain requirements. MWUA testified in opposition. We continue to monitor this bill as it continues to work its way through the legislative process.

LD-668 "An Act to Ensure Public Accountability While Implementing A Practical Approach to Public Participation." This bill clarifies when members of public bodies may participate remotely in public proceedings of those bodies. It prohibits a body subject to the Freedom of Access Act from allowing its members to participate in its public proceedings through telephonic, video, electronic or similar means. MWUA testified in opposition. It continues to work its way through the legislative process.



LD-677 "An Act to Improve Public Sector Labor Relations by Amending the Laws Governing Arbitration Under Certain Public Employees Relations Laws." This law would require a neutral 3rd arbitrator. MWUA opposed the bill. It continues to work its way through the legislative process.

LD-757 "An Act Concerning Large-Scale Water Extraction." This bill amends the State's laws concerning contracts and agreements for large scale extraction and transportation of water by requiring any such agreement to be approved by a vote of the legislative body of each municipality and township located within the watershed. MWUA testified in opposition. MWUA has also formed a subcommittee to deal with this issue as it continues to work its way through the legislative process.

LD-960 "An Act to Require Reporting of Perfluoroalkyl and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances, PFAS in products and of discharges of Firefighting Foam Containing PFAS." This bill requires manufacturers of products with intentionally added PFOA or PFOS substances to report the presence of those substances in the product and report to DEP beginning in 2023. MWUA testified in support of this bill. It continues to work its way through the legislative process.

LD-1388 "An Act to Require Testing of Public Drinking Water Supplies for Toxic PFOA and PFOS Substances and to Establish a Maximum Contaminant Levels." This bill requires each community water system and noncommunity water system to send samples of water provided by its system to an approved lab to be tested for PFOA and PFOS on or before 12-31-22. MWUA testified in opposition. It continues to work its way through the legislative process.

In addition to these bills there are other less significant bills we are also monitoring.

Please [reach out to us](#) if you would like to have more information on MWUA actions in regard to legislative action MWUA is taking in your behalf

MeWUA

Government Affairs Update



Nationally, President Biden's American Jobs plans looks to infuse \$2 trillion into our infrastructure systems with \$111 billion dollars directed to water, wastewater and stormwater systems over the next 10 years including \$56 billion for general projects and \$10 billion for PFAS cleanup.

Locally, the 130th Legislature's regular session has adjourned, passing the biennial budget early and only requiring a simple majority instead of the more usual 2/3 vote. The vote was cast along party lines. Despite the adjournment, the legislative committee work will continue through the end of April, when the Legislature will be called back for a supplemental budget vote.

The MeWEA GAC continues to work on several wastewater related bills. We have submitted testimony on more than a dozen bills this session and have been closely monitoring many more. Below are the bills we have testified on since the last newsletter:

- 311 - Corrosion Control certification - oppose
- 363 and 627 PFAS Statute of Limitations - NFNA
- 500 - DigSafe - NFNA
- 771 - WW operator Certification - NFNA
- 469 - OSHA 10 requirement - oppose - Joint w/ MWUA
- 553 - At Will Employment - oppose - Joint w/ MWUA
- 960 - PFAS Notification requirements - support
- 780 - Hazardous sites clean up - NFNA

Hot off the presses - LD 1388 similar to LD 164 (opposed) with 20ppt MCL set but allowing DHHS to set a more restrictive limit. Would also require treatment of any system testing over the limit. MeWEA prefers the intent of LD 129 (NFNA) which requires an MCL set by DHHS based on scientific evidence.

We are always welcoming new committee members or assistance with testimony or legislative communication. I encourage you to become familiar with your legislators and encourage them to become familiar with you. Develop these connections as they could benefit you, our association, and our communities when bills arise that require our input. If you have any bills of concern or interest in joining the committee, please reach out to me at twade@gaud.ws.

SUMMER OUTING & Golf Tournament

With in-person events being approved by the Governor we are excited that after a one-year hiatus the summer outing is currently being planned. To add to the excitement, we are pleased to also announce that Maine Water Utilities and Maine Water Environment Association will be co-sponsoring this year's event. Below are a couple of significant changes to this year's event.

We are moving the event from Thomas Point Beach to Brunswick Landing (Former Naval Air Station).

We decided to transition to a pig roast. We will also provide chicken, steaks, hot dogs, bratwurst, and veggie-burgers for those that do not want pork.

We'd like to bring additional interactive demonstrations by attending vendors and consultants to enhance the event. If you are a vendor or consultant that would like to be an active participant, please [reach out to us](#). In addition to the tapping contest, we are exploring introducing a competition called hydrant hysteria and potentially a corn hole competition. We will be also offering a minimum of two training classes that will offer joint DEP/BLWSO TCHs.

We've also decided to separate the Summer Outing and Annual Golf Tournament. The golf tournament will be moved to a later date. We hope you will be able to join us in person at the summer outing at our new location and with our new menu and events!



Waters up? Now is your chance to find out! The Maine Water Utilities Association and Maine Water Environment Association are pleased to bring you a first of its kind unique podcast learning experience that is completely free! You can earn free TCHs simply by listening in. The first episode of the Water's up? will air Live at **Noon on June 1, 2021**. Join host Rob Pontau as he discusses PFAS and COVID with two experts; Mike Abbott, Associate Director at the Maine CDC Division of Environmental and Community Health, and Brian Kavanah, Director Bureau of Water Quality at the Maine DEP.

Special guest appearance by Maine's beloved Dr. Nirav Shah!

Be sure to tune in for the live show so you can participate in the chat! If you can't make the live show, watch at a later date and subscribe to the page anyway. We need 100 subscribers to get our custom URL! You can [find it all here](#)

MWUA Mobile App

Information at your fingertips

Maine Water Utilities Association now has a mobile app. Why did we decide to develop a mobile app? The world and how it collects information is speeding up. Many need the information they require in real-time. Our membership is no different. Our vision for our mobile app is to use this to keep you up to date with breaking news such as cybersecurity breaches. We also envision using the app for training updates and legislative pushes. There are occasions when we need membership support or help in support of our efforts to support or fight a certain bill that suddenly needs our immediate attention. The downside of employing any app is the constant pings that come from the incessant pushes from many mobile apps. It is MWUA's hope that any push you receive from our mobile app will be deemed to be very important to you. Our plan is to be most judicious in the use of any push you receive. If you decide to utilize the app, please forward any suggestions you may have on features you would like to see added for your use and benefit.



We hope you find this additional membership tool useful and that it helps you stay connected.

You can download the app from the Apple or Google Store. Upon entering the store, enter Maine Water Utilities in the search box and follow the download instructions.

EPA Revised Lead and Copper Rule

Please follow this hyperlink to EPA's latest information on the current status of the lead and copper rule.

<https://www.epa.gov/ground-water-and-drinking-water/revised-lead-and-copper-rule>



MWUA's Enhanced Water Blog

Promote Water Education And Ongoing SEO

MWUA is pleased to announce we will be enhancing our current blog to provide you with up-to-date news and information within the waterworks industry. Our aim is to increase general awareness to engage the public in a way that provokes thought around subjects and matter related to water. We share material directly related to MWUA and the State of Maine, while also promoting education on water topics we feel are invaluable to our audience.

To view the blog, visit <https://mwua.org/blog/community/>.

Serving as a resource to our current and future members has always been a top priority for our organization. With the addition of an enhanced blog, we believe it will contribute as more than just a resource, but as a tool to drive people to our website who are searching for relevant topics. Blogs are an excellent way to do just that through utilizing search engine optimization, or SEO. For example, the main website will always serve as the primary source of organizational information, while a blog optimized for the search engines will help them find the main site in the first place.

In the coming months, we will introduce you to blogs based on water education and other various topics we feel necessary to share. In the meantime, read some of our previous blogs that highlight the recent 95th Annual Conference & Tradeshows and how water utilities in Maine persevered through the outbreak of Covid-19. Stay tuned for more!

Clean Water Week Poster Contest

The deadline for the 2021 Clean Water Week Poster Contest was March and even though many schools haven't returned to school full time, we still received 300 entries from students all across Maine. The entries will be narrowed down to the top 10 in each age group for voting, and the winning students will receive a \$100 prize and be featured along with the runner up posters in our 2022 calendar.



Olivia Zadakis, Runner up, 2020 Poster Contest

The top posters will be displayed on the MeWEA Facebook page and will be open to all for voting. Be sure to check it out and show the students your support. "Like" a poster to cast your vote. Thank you to the students, teachers, parents, and all the volunteers that make this event possible.

PFAS Regulatory & Legislative Activity Updates

Jeff McBurnie, MeWEA RMC Chair

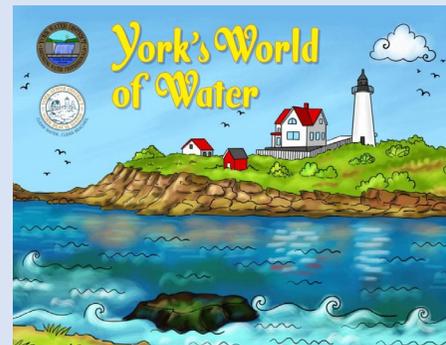
PFAS regulation and legislation are either evolving very rapidly or very slowly, depending on your individual perspective. If you are an impacted or potentially impacted party, things can't go too fast. If you are a regulated or soon-to-be regulated entity, you want thoughtful and methodical actions taken based on good science and good policy.

The Residuals Management Committee, working in support of the Government Affairs Committee (GAC), is tracking regulation and legislation that may impact our membership as it relates to PFAS. Through the GAC, testimony and input are being provided to our regulators and legislators to help guide them in their decision-making processes.

Currently the Maine Departments of Environmental Protection; Agriculture, Conservation, & Forestry; and Health and Human Services and the Center for Disease Control are actively pursuing work to evaluate the extent and the impact of contamination from PFAS. This includes sampling and analysis of a wide range of materials (soil, water, milk, animal feed, biosolids, etc.), refinement of risk assessment models, and development of rules and regulations to reduce or eliminate similar situations in the future.

Currently the Maine State Legislature, primarily through its Environment and Natural Resources and Energy and Utilities Joint Standing Committees, is crafting and refining several pieces of legislation related to PFAS. There are three bills related to establishing Drinking Water MCLs for PFAS (LD 129, LD 164, and LD 1388). MeWEA is neither for nor against (NFNA) LD 129 which establishes a process for establishing MCLs based on the best available science; MeWEA opposes the other two bills, as they seek to immediately set MCLs without a comprehensive review and stakeholder input process.

We have also weighed in on LD 780 (NFNA) which seeks to classify certain chemicals as hazardous substances for the purpose of enabling the DEP to remediate uncontrolled hazardous substances sites; earlier, we were concerned about potential utility liability, but amended language provided an exemption to publicly owned treatment works from consideration as a potentially liable party (PLP). Finally, MeWEA is in support of LD 960 which will require the reporting by manufacturers of the intentional use of PFAS compounds in their final (as presented for sale and distribution) products. This bill also will require the reporting of all discharges of aqueous film-forming foam within 24 hours of those discharges.



The York Water and Sewer Districts created a coloring book titled, "York's World of Water" that was designed with K-1 in mind. We invite anyone to use it as they see fit. Follow this link to download the coloring book: <https://www.mewea.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/YorksWorldofWater.pdf>

Students at the local Village Elementary School had a blast filling these pages with color!



2020 MWUA Awards Recipients

Maine Water Utilities Association members may be wondering what happened to the presentation of our annual awards that are normally given out at our Annual Conference. The awards program is alive and well. There were many nominations for award by many of our members peers. The MWUA Board of Directors decided that the awards are a very important event that needs to be done in person. The awards recipients have been selected for 2020. It is the BOD hope that we can schedule the presentation of awards as soon as possible at our next face to face event.

We are very proud of our award recipients. They represent not only those that the awards are named after but also a long line of former recipients. We look forward to announcing the award recipients soon!

MeWEA will continue to monitor these and other bills, and keep you apprised of any changes in status and how these bills may impact you, our members.

What's New at

Everett J. Prescott, Inc. (EJP) is a highly successful, family-owned business that originally opened in Gardiner, Maine in 1955. Since then, EJP has not stopped growing. Now, there are several locations across the United States, myriad products and services, and even a few inventions under their belt. Team EJP takes great pride in providing the community with reliable, high-quality products and services, accompanied by a knowledgeable staff that is available to assist with any waterworks project.

Even still, Team EJP noticed that something was missing... and the brainstorming began. From that, a new division was born. A division that would better serve our customers; one that would specialize in quality takeoffs, estimating, bidding, and project management.

CONTACT US



Call 207-582-1851, or visit us online at www.ejprescott.com

Introducing the SEP Division

Leading the dedicated division is Joe Hersom, Division Manager. Joe is extremely excited to be leading the team of talented, honest, and resourceful individuals. The team has already assisted numerous customers and proven to be a major asset to the Prescott companies.

Joe and his team are most proud of their ability to work together towards a common goal while building relationships and providing excellent assistance to customers during the challenging project bidding cycle. Team SEP continues to strengthen and grow as they collaborate amongst teammates through shared experiences, amplifying the collective wealth of knowledge and skillsets.

Team SEP brings a previously untapped value to the project bidding cycle. Whether that be through professional project materials take offs, assistance in project design and specifications, or project management, SEP brings VALUE to our customers that is unrivaled in our industry.

Everett J. Prescott, Inc. has offered high-quality products and services for over 65 years. To accompany our products and services, we also have a 24-hour emergency service line with service technicians ready to go when you need them. For more information, visit www.ejprescott.com or call 1-800-EJP-24HR



- 24-hour emergency services
- Large main tapping
- Service tapping
- Valve inspections
- HDPE butt fusion
- Line locating
- Leak locating and leak surveying
- Sewer line deflection testing
- Sewer camera inspections
- Sewer line air testing
- Sewer leak locating
- Manhole vacuum testing
- Waterline pressure testing
- Chlorination & dechlorination
- Live water main camera inspection
- Meter and backflow testing
- Meter installs and change outs
- Hydrant repairs
- Hydrant maintenance program
- GIS – services
- And many more



MWUA's June Bi-Monthly Meeting



MWUA's June Bi-monthly membership meeting has been scheduled to be a hybrid meeting. What is a hybrid meeting? It's both an in person and virtual meeting. It is the best of both worlds. If you're like me, you may prefer to attend in person. If you are practicing being cautious, we have the virtual option available via Zoom. Either way we hope you join us.

The meeting will be held at the Elks Club, Registration is available on our website MWUA.org. We will be following our regular bi-monthly format with the following exception. After our regulatory and legislative update, we will be presenting The MWUA 2020 Awards! The MWUA Board of Directors felt this was a great time to recognize our deserving recipients in person. Our technical session will explore Solar Power:

- What do you look for when exploring all the different offers out there?
- Should Solar Power be a serious consideration for alternative power?
- Are the savings real?

We will than look at some case studies of a few solar installations and the real results from those installations.

We will end the bi-monthly meeting with a lunch that will consist of prime rib and haddock with all the fixings.

If you decide you would like to come up the day before we have secured a block of rooms at both Shiretown and Ivey's Motor Lodge. We have also planned a social gathering on Wednesday evening at the Elks Club. We will provide burgers, dogs, beer, live music, bowling, foosball and maybe even a little karaoke.

We're excited to see all that decide to attend in person.

Link to register: <https://mwua.memberclicks.net/june-20121-bi-monthly>



America's First Water District

in the 21st Century – Commitment & COVID-19

During and prior to the 1880's, there wasn't a reliable water source for the residents of Waterville and its surrounding communities. Consequently, some innovators knew this and began selling water from springs for profit. The quality and availability of this water was uncertain.

Harvey Doane Eaton, a young local attorney, envisioned a water source for Waterville. Due to laws, a single municipality could not develop its own water supply. Therefore, Eaton proposed the formation of a "water district" which would be able to deliver dependable water to several municipalities lawfully.

Thanks to the creativity and diligence of Eaton and several of his prominent friends, the Kennebec Water District was incorporated on March 17, 1899. The district served Waterville and Fairfield Village, but also distributed water to Winslow and Benton. History had been made! Kennebec Water District was the first water district in America!



The Kennebec Water District (KWD) currently serves five communities: Waterville, Winslow, Fairfield, Vassalboro and Benton. They also wholesale water to Maine Water Company in Oakland. The district provides an average of one billion gallons of water yearly. KWD's mission statement is "To provide high quality water to our customers and communities for the protection of public health and safety".



The KWD is a quasi-municipal entity that operates a state-of-the-art treatment plant and four pumping stations among other assets. There are three water storage facilities that have an aggregate water storage capacity of 124.9 million gallons. Its raw water source is China Lake, and it has 32 square miles of protected watershed lands. With 172 miles of main, they supply an average of 3 million gallons of water per day. With a workforce of 27 people, the KWD is able to supply water to a population of 22,500. It also provides water to 634 hydrants in keeping with its mission statement.

First Water District (cont'd)

China Lake has been the KWD's water source since 1905. This lake covers an area of 6.1 square miles, holding approximately 31.7 billion gallons of fresh water. The KWD's intake is located in the West Basin of China Lake. The West Basin has been owned and managed by the KWD for more than 100 years which enables the KWD to protect multiple communities' water source.

One of the KWD's greatest resources is its staff. According to Roger Crouse, General Manager, "The KWD team is a group of hardworking, dedicated employees. The best word to describe our staff would be 'committed.' The staff are committed to a job well done." These principles are why the KWD is able to continually and reliably provide their customers with safe drinking water. The team is comprised of 27 employees who bring a variety of experience. As a result, the KWD team strives to enhance one another's knowledge and skills. Quoting Roger Crouse, "Continuous improvement is one of our core values." Remarkably, the cumulative tenure of the employees is 259 years.

Similarly, community engagement is an important ingredient to any successful public utility. Accordingly, the management of the KWD seeks to maintain and develop good relationships with the leaders in the community. They accomplish this through involvement with town/city managers, fire chiefs, public work directors, even the local Rotary Club. They also joined the Mid-Maine Chamber of Commerce. These relationships not only help to create awareness but can be of great assistance if a crisis should occur.

Another key ingredient of the KWD's core values is customer service. They developed a definition of exemplary customer service in 2018. In 2019, they established their mission statement and core values. Their vision statement was introduced in 2020. In keeping with their continuous improvement philosophy, they modernized their website to gain a better social media presence. A new customer portal was initiated in February 2021, thus allowing the consumer to pay water bills, receive notifications and track water consumption trends easily. Lastly, they redesigned their water bill to make it more understandable for their customers. These additions enabled the KWD staff to provide enhanced customer service.



When COVID-19 upset the water industry, country, and larger world in 2020, the KWD preemptively responded to growing concern across the country. In keeping with their strong customer service and engagement philosophies, they included information about the pandemic for the public on their website.

This included a statement to assuage the public's fears: "The safety of your drinking water remains unchanged. Drinking water is not a known source of the virus that causes COVID-19. Additionally, our state-of-the-art treatment system ensured that your tap water is safe to drink."

The pandemic has affected all aspects of our lives in considerable ways. At the KWD, this includes its employees and the broader public. Safety is of great importance to the district and its staff. The need to continually distribute safe water to consumers, in accordance with their mission statement, is a necessity. This would be impossible without a healthy workforce. The well-being of their staff has been achieved by physical distancing, donning of masks, and allowing some employees to work from home. The staff has been based out of three separate locations to further distancing guidelines. However, a by-product of these efforts to stay healthy, compounded by staff being based out of three separate locations, was a decrease in staff connection across the District. Even so, KWD's management team made great strides to overcome these hardships. Critically, they worked together to adhere to guidance and mandates, and they sought input from staff and local partners/utilities. Ultimately, the recent administering of the COVID-19 vaccine kicked off the beginning of a return to normalcy in everyone's daily lives. For the district, it is clear – "Get vaccinated!" The KWD looks forward to maintaining business as usual in the coming months.

The development and growth of the KWD has been significant considering its origination in 1899. Their staff loyalty, continuous improvement, and customer dedication are just a few reasons why they deserve acknowledgement. Providing quality water at a reasonable rate to consumers and communities is essential to protect public health and safety. The Kennebec Water District's dedication to its mission statement, its personnel, and the future is to be highly commended. Additionally, many thanks to Roger Crouse, General Manager, for providing information and pictures, helping to bring this publication to you and the water world!

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Wastewater Treatment Plant Tour

Kennebec
Sanitary
Treatment
District

In the past, I've always loved to take a drive to meet with staff from our featured facility, tour the site and take lots of pictures. I would have especially appreciated it this quarter as I am quite familiar with the Waterville area, having grown up only a few towns away in Clinton. As a kid, going to "town" meant a drive to Waterville for groceries, errands and appointments. Alas, my "tour" of Kennebec Sanitary Treatment District (KSTD) was completely virtual, but it was still great to meet with and get to know some of the hard workers at KSTD, nonetheless.

KSTD serves 6 communities in the greater Waterville area including: Waterville, Winslow, Fairfield, Benton, Oakland and Vassalboro. The WWTP is a 12.7 MGD activated sludge plant, with average flows around 5-6 mgd, but can see over 50 MGD during wet weather. The collection system consists of nearly 12 miles of sewer interceptors and 3 main pumping stations. The original plant was designed by Camp Dresser & McKee (CDM), and there was a major upgrade back in 1999 designed by Wright-Pierce, but similar to many other plants in the state, there is still plenty of original equipment at the WWTP.



Back (L to R) – Lynn Woodard, Peter Sherwood
Bottom (L to R) – Nick Champagne, Carl Leathers

Speaking of original equipment, Pete Sherwood has been at the WWTP for almost 45 years and was part of the crew that started up the plant back in 1976. Pete's co-workers, Lynn Woodard and Carl Leathers, started not long after and have each worked at the WWTP for about 40 years. Nick Champagne, the new Superintendent, has been with the District for about a year taking over for longtime Superintendent Tim LeVasseur in January 2020.

Planning for KSTD's WWTP started shortly after the Clean Water Act was passed, and the District was incorporated in 1971. The plant is situated at the end of Water Street in Waterville, at the confluence of the Kennebec River and Messalonskee Stream. The plant is surrounded by an earthen berm that protects a 20 some-odd acre "bowl" around the facility. During construction the contractor used an 8" pipe routed through the berm to dewater the site. That pipe was capped at the end of construction and the plant was started up in September of 1976 according to Pete. Lynn, Carl and Pete report that the plant ran great for the next 10 years or so before catastrophe hit...

A late March storm in 1987 causes the Kennebec River to rise with an unprecedented 7-8' of rainfall combined with several inches of snow-melt water running off still frozen ground. The entire Kennebec River Basin was severely impacted by what experts later called a 500-yr flood event.

In the early morning on April 1, 1987, KSTD got the call that the Wyman dam was going to open and that they should be expecting a rise of at least 6-feet in the Kennebec River downstream.

This was no April Fool's Joke! Within hours, the water had risen well beyond 6-feet, and that dewatering pipe that was so neatly plugged up at the end of construction - the rising waters burst right through it and started to fill up the 20-acre bowl where KSTD's WWTP is located.

As the waters rose, one stubborn District employee made several attempts to save the plant from the waters. Oil floatation booms were attached to the surrounding fence - but those just floated away. A second smaller earthen berm was constructed around the fence - but that was soon breached too. And finally, plastic poly was attached to the outside of the chain link fence - but Mother Nature laughed in their faces, poked some holes in the plastic and flooded the place anyway.



As the water continued to climb, CMP turned off electricity to the majority of the Waterville area. Lynn, Carl and Pete recall that the Mayor of Waterville at the time, Thomas Nale, tried to call the plant to find out if the crew was still alive and to tell them to leave, but that he couldn't get through - the phones after-all, weren't on with emergency generator power. Eventually, Mayor Nale made contact with the WWTP crew, confirmed they hadn't yet drowned, and told them to get the heck out of there. The crew didn't have a boat onsite and certainly didn't want to swim! With their motor vehicles useless on flooded streets, this presented a real problem. Luckily, one creative employee realized their payloader would still run, and was tall enough to avoid the bulk of the flood waters - so the crew piled into the bucket of that loader and drove away. This was the first time the WWTP was left unmanned since it started up in 1976.

After the rain stopped, but before the flood waters receded, Lynne, Carl and Pete recall watching the river and seeing whole houses and the majority of stock from nearby McCormack Building Supply floating on by. They also recall rowing around the WWTP site in a rowboat.

When the flood water receded, area where the berm had washed out, looked like "the surface of the moon". The majority of the plant, and most of its equipment had been inundated by the flood waters.

(cont'd on next page)

Wastewater Treatment Plant Tour

(cont'd)

Staff recall hosing the mud out MCC buckets and electrical panels. They brought in two ovens and half a dozen salamander heaters to start the process of drying things out. Even though the plant was offline, it certainly wasn't a vacation, and after 6-long weeks of cleaning up, the crew started to bring the plant back online... only to have every single motor fail - there was still mud in the windings!

After replacing all the motors at the WWTP, finally, FINALLY, the plant was back up and running, and Pete, Lynn and Carl could rest a little easier.

What Lynn, Pete and Carl experienced at KSTD that spring 34 years ago was just one short story of many people who lived up and down the Kennebec River basin. But I'm sure it hits home for many wastewater operators all over the state, who could relate to a similar scary and bizarre experience. Now of course, it's easy to look back and smile or laugh about the "Flood of '87", and to enjoy telling the absurd details to someone like me who doesn't remember it. In my defense - I did experience it, but, I was still in diapers! Photo evidence below.



That flood aside, in my discussions with Nick, Carl, Pete and Lynn at KSTD, I can certainly see their commitment to the District, and the pride in their work contributing to cleaner water in the Kennebec.

Growing up in the 80's and 90's, I never got to see the level of pollution prior to the Clean Water Act first-hand. I always find it amazing, and a little surreal to hear stories

about the pollution that existed in many rivers around the state prior to the many treatment plants being constructed and brought online. Looking at the pristine water in the Kennebec today - with folk swimming, kayaking and fishing in its waters, it's worth remembering just how far we've come. □

- *The last log drive on the Kennebec took place in the spring of 1976, just 6-months later the KSTD's WWTP was online, ushering in a whole new era for water quality in the Kennebec.*
- *The WWTP was built on the old Waterville City dump, and it took 1 whole year to excavate the site before building construction could begin.*
- *LAWPCA is considered KSTD's sister facility, it was designed by the same Engineering firm - CDM with very similar equipment and processes.*

Fun Facts about KSD (cont'd)

- In 2018 through an agreement with ReVision Energy, a 600kW solar generation system was installed on the western bank of KSTD property adjacent to the WWTP. The system is owned by ReVision and power is sold back to KSTD at an agreed upon rate. To date the solar system has generated about 2.5 million kWh.
- During its first few months online, a few kinks had to be worked out at the plant. A district employee (who shall remain nameless) was trying to figure out how to operate their primary sludge system. At his wits end, he opened a valve turned on a pump and finally got everything working. That employee proceeded downstairs, and within a few minutes, green slimy primary sludge was pouring through the ceiling right on his boss's head! Apparently, the Contractor hadn't fully sealed the pipe penetration between the tank above and the floor below. When that employee saw what was happening, he snuck back upstairs, quickly re-closed the valve and turned off the pump to stop the sludge flow and hoping no one would be the wiser... In the end, that employee spent plenty of time atoning for that mistake cleaning up all the sludge!
- The plant, located on a dead-end road, made the local news when a police chase ended at their front gate. The young suspect was driving erratically southbound on I95, but wouldn't pull over despite several attempt by police. The driver decided to try to evade police, taking the Waterville exit and heading toward Water Street. Quite by accident, the suspect ended up on the dead-end section of Water Street at the front gate of the WWTP with nowhere to go! Police sirens interrupted a staff meeting, and WWTP staff witnessed the arrest with over 20 police officers present.

Call to Action!



Maine Water Environment Association is run by a great group of volunteers and has been for over 50 years. In those 50 years, we have been able to grow as an organization, and contribute to some outstanding accomplishments.

(cont'd on next page)

Call to Action (cont'd)

Major items to progress the clean water industry, completed by MeWEA volunteers, include the following:

- We developed a stronger working relationship with Maine DEP.
- We developed a committee for stormwater professionals within the clean water industry.
- We created a young professionals committee for opportunity to grow within the industry.
- We developed legislative outreach to increase state and federal funding for clean water infrastructure, improve operator training, and develop framework for sustainable funding.
- We had legislative input to minimize unfunded mandates and unscientific legislation.
- We have provided general training seminars and conferences, and coordinated with JETCC to create additional training for managers.
- We assisted with hands-on competitions for an Operations Challenge team

We are also in need of some additional help to keep things running smoothly so that we can continue to provide all of these valuable services to the Maine wastewater and stormwater community. Your contribution would be valuable!

We would love a helping hand! Plus, there are plenty of personal benefits to volunteering.

- Opportunity to meet, work with and become friends with a GREAT group of people;
- Learn new skills;
- Great resume builder; and
- Help to facilitate the change that YOU want!

Time commitment levels are totally up to you. We will only take what you are willing to give. Many hands make light work...

You should discuss work with your employer to see if committee work is compensated, you might be surprised! Currently the Executive Committee has two vacant slots that need filling. Both the Personal Advancement Committee (PAC) and Convention Chair positions are open.

If you are interested in learning more, but don't know where to start please contact Phil Tucker at ptucker@yorksewerdistrict.org.

NOMINATIONS ARE OPEN!

NEWEA Operator Example

As the NEWEA Director representing the Maine Water Environment Association, one of my duties is organizing an operator exchange between MeWEA and one of the other State Associations. In 2019, we partnered with Vermont. The program for 2020 with Rhode Island was cancelled due to, what else, COVID. We are anxiously anticipating a return to 'normal' in 2021 and will be teaming up with Connecticut to provide an educational experience for a selected operator from each State's WEA. The expectation is for the chosen candidate to spend one day touring facilities in the host State and then attending the State Annual Conference for one to two days. There is no cost to the operator or the employer; the only requirement is that the operator prepare a short report on their activities and how they benefitted from the experience for publication in the State Association's newsletter. CT's Annual Conference is held in September, similar to MeWEA. We are hoping that most of the population will have been vaccinated by then and operators will be allowed to travel and participate in large group functions.

I am currently seeking out candidates to be nominated, so that the MeWEA Executive Committee can select the 2021 'Winner'. Nominations can come from an employer or be a self-nomination. If you self-nominate, please make sure that you have cleared it with your employer, as individual utility policies are constantly changing and may not allow for participation. Nominations, with some details regarding the candidate, can be sent to me at jeff.mcburnie@casella.com. Nominations will be accepted until June 16, 2021. Should a candidate be selected, and the program is once again cancelled, the candidate experience would be carried over to the following year. Timing may be different as not all State Associations hold their Annual Conferences in September.

What I've Learned from COVID-19



Rob Pontau, Brunswick Sewer District

Nearly a year has passed since I wrote my article for the MeWEA newsletter regarding how the Brunswick Sewer District and I have dealt with the pandemic. While much of what I wrote in that article holds true and the policies and practices are still in place, it is interesting to look back at how naive I was. Like a greenhorn on a crab boat, I had no idea the beating we were about to take. Two weeks to flatten the curve turned into no school and remote work throughout the entire summer. More than a year later and only recently has life begun to resemble some sort of normalcy. My kids are in school five days per week, high school sports are happening, our office is mostly staffed, operations are in full swing (with modifications) and each day seems a little more like 2019.

(cont'd on next page) 28

What I've Learned from COVID-19 (cont'd)



Written by: Rob Pontau, Brunswick Sewer District

For me personally, 2020 ended up being a pretty good year. As I noted in my last article "I am going to use this opportunity, this gift, to make improvements both personally and professionally. I will not be returning to normal." My two daughters are fast approaching that age where they move out of the house, hopefully, and onto better things. I know my time with them is running short and I need to capitalize on what opportunities I have left. Last summer was truly a blessing. Without sports, dance, and the mad rush that is our usual summer, I spent countless hours with them. We hiked, camped, swam, biked, camped, tubed, water skied, went to the beach, camped and did I mention, we went camping? I spent nearly 40 nights in my RV last summer alone! Sure, I missed a couple concerts and barbecues, but we found ways to make it work. A few times we just camped in our friends' yards. What a great way to be close, but not too close. Summer of 2021 is fast approaching, and

I can already see it is going to be busier and more hectic. I will love every minute of it, but I will miss the relaxed pace of 2020. Looking back at 2020 from a professional sense, it is really not all that different than my personal perspective. The Brunswick Sewer District is running like the great operation it has been since its inception in 1947. We treated all 790 million gallons of waste we received. We removed about 2,200 cubic yards of solids that would have otherwise ended up in the Androscoggin River. We received and treated more than 2.7 million gallons of septic waste. We shot more video footage, cleaned more lines, fixed more manholes, and issued more permits than ever before. We did all of this while meeting the demands of COVID and the CDC's associated protocols. Regardless of the demands put on us by outside forces, we continued to uphold our mission and serve our customers the best way possible.

(cont'd on next page)

So, what have I learned since my last article submission a year ago?

1. Zoom fatigue is real. Zoom, Meets, Teams and other virtual meeting platforms are great tools. They make us more efficient, reduce travel time and expenses, and allow us to communicate safely with a near in-person presence. I'm a huge fan, but there is a downside. It's so easy to schedule a meeting that we tend to schedule too many. Would you have 10 in person meetings a day? Probably not. Don't schedule more than a few virtual meetings in a day. After a few, you'll lose concentration and productivity will suffer.

2. Virtual conferences and classes work. I attended both the MeWEA and MWUA virtual conferences last fall. I also helped with a few JETCC classes. It's certainly not the same as seeing everyone in person. There is a loss of camaraderie and networking, but the Whova app and other experiences around both events helped to bridge the gap. I'm not a big proponent of webcasts and other virtual seminars, but when you add a local feel with people you know, it becomes enjoyable. The chat rooms and other events around the MWUA conference enriched the entire program. I even visited all the virtual booths. It was great to check them out without having to listen to a sales pitch and pretend to be interested. How many business cards do you throw away as soon as you leave a booth at a regular conference? Be honest.

3. People love wipes! When I first arrived on the wastewater scene, wipes were the big issue. The problem never went away, but it was mitigated for the time being. That changed drastically this past year. The BSD used to have maybe 1 plug up in our entire 80-mile system each year, maybe. This year we've had about a dozen. Pumps are clogging, lines are clogging, and septic waste is full of wipes. We are getting hit from all sides. It's probably time to launch another public education campaign.



How I will remember 2020

4. I am more productive. I said it. Working from home is more productive. Not all jobs are conducive to working from home, but those who can, should. I have a short 12-mile commute. With traffic it's about 45 minutes per day travelling. I used to travel to the office about 200 times per year. That's 150 hours of travelling. Cutting the number of trips in half

gives me, an average person, about 10 more days of productivity per year! It's time to end whataboutism, envy and proverbial thinking. It may not work for all jobs, or for all personalities. But for those who want to and can, working from home is the most productive way to work. I don't want to get political here, but it probably is better for the planet and our bank accounts. In 2019 I drove 19,000 miles. In 2020 I drove 12,000. Imagine if everyone could cut out 1/3 of their travel miles.

(cont'd on next page)

Visit Us Online!

Make sure to check MWUA and MeWEA regularly. We continually post up to date and relevant information on events and topics that change daily.



Visit [MeWEA.org](https://www.me-wea.org)



Visit [MWUA.org](https://www.mwua.org)



What I've Learned from COVID-19

5. Find a balance. I enjoy working from home and I know I'm more productive, but I do struggle to find a balance. The 4-10 workweek of 2019 no longer exists. I work when there is a demand. I may work on Saturday, but if I do, I'll try to go golfing on Tuesday. I try to maximize my time in the good weather. I cherish the flexibility that I have, but it's important to find a balance between work and leisure. It's also necessary to occasionally go to the office. I oversee 15 employees. Unfortunately, most of their work cannot be done remotely. It's important for them to see me and know I'm there to support them. Sometimes I go into the office for no other purpose than to say hi to them. I have less work output on those days, but it is still productive, just in a different way.

This pandemic forced us to make swift changes in the way we work, live, and recreate. A rapid change was forced upon all our lives. It's been more than a year now, so we should be getting used to it. As I noted last year at this time, there is an urgency to return to "normal." I get it. Change is hard. Rather than focus on the negatives and a rush to return, look back at all the improvements made in the past year. MeWEA meetings are easy to attend and are just as, if not more, productive. Does it make sense to spend half a Friday every month for an in-person meeting? Maybe. How about a hybrid model where we alternate between in-person and virtual? I haven't been sick. At all. Not even a cold. How is that a bad thing?

Living in a reformatted world isn't without its challenges. The District's IT costs have nearly doubled this year. Our waste stream is significantly more contaminated with wipes. Offering in-person and remote options takes more time and effort up front. There is an awkwardness among us as we try to judge whether to shake hands, go for the fist bump, or just nod. Everyone's comfort level is different.

Although I've learned a lot in the past year, the closing statement from my 2020 article still rings true, so I'll end by repeating it.



"I believe we should take the good from the past and combine it with what we have learned from the pandemic to develop a new normal. A normal that is clean and safe, yet fun and desirable. A normal where work output soars, yet there is more personal time and enjoyment. A normal where we stop rushing and we learn to enjoy all that is around us, yet we can achieve more than we thought possible by utilizing technology and the tools that we have. The world has changed. I have changed. The District has changed. Rather than rush back to the way things were, I am going to use this opportunity, this gift, to make improvements both personally and professionally. I will not be returning to normal. Of course, I never was "normal" to begin with."



In Summary...

Below is a summary of some of the main topics in this issue:

Waters Up Podcast – The first episode of the Water's up? will air Live at **Noon on June 1, 2021**. Join host Rob Pontau as he discusses PFAS and COVID with two experts; Mike Abbott, Associate Director at the Maine CDC Division of Environmental and Community Health, and Brian Kavanah, Director Bureau of Water Quality at the Maine DEP..

Upcoming Trainings – Check out our [list of trainings](#) from June-September.

Summer Outing & Golf Tournament – A few things have changed including location, dates and activities. [Check it out here](#).

MWUA has a Mobile App – Download the mobile app for training updates, legislative pushes and breaking news.

2020 MWUA Award Recipients – Congratulations may be in order. Read more on [page 16](#)

MWUA June Meeting – the meeting will be a hybrid event (virtual and in-person). See all the details on [page 19](#)

Nominate an MeWEA operator – nominations are open! Learn how you can nominate someone on [page 22](#).

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