



Wetlands: Who Needs Them? or “Return of the Silent Spring?”

Shaun Bennett



Nobody is more eager for spring to arrive than me. I need longer, warmer days and wildlife to help me recover from winter’s dark discomforts. But what if spring arrived and some of the wildlife didn’t? A spring peeper-less spring? No toads or green frogs calling? Spotted salamanders absent?

These critters and many other living things depend on wetlands for a place to breed. It’s essential to their survival which, with world-wide declines and disappearances of amphibians, is not going well. Wetlands provide pools of standing water that are often gone by summer, leaving the area looking much like the surrounding non-wetlands. The annual drying of wetland pools prevents fish from becoming established. Fish would eat the amphibian’s eggs. Bad news for the next generation. No more spring peeper calls in that area. And perhaps more significant, a substantial part of the ecosystem’s “web” of inter-related plants and animals would be lost. On the other hand, wetlands that remain wet year round can be crucial to survival of fish.

Wetlands also provide important non-biological “services,” for example by soaking up excess rainwater, reducing the probability of floods, and then contributing to streams by gradually releasing water in dryer times.

Virtually all states have laws and regulations to protect wetlands with obvious good reason. But, in many cases, the rules related to the immediately adjacent zones are left to local control -- a critical responsibility for town governments.

Wetlands do not exist independent of their surroundings. Things that happen near wetlands can affect or even destroy them. This is why good environmental

management by local authorities establishes adequate buffers and setbacks next to wetlands. There are a multitude of ways nearby activity can affect a wetland. For example, spillage or slow leaching from a stored chemical, whether it be something toxic like an herbicide or leaking fuel or something more benign like salt for de-icing, can kill everything in a wetland. Alteration of topography by excavation or construction could cause a wetland to drain or to hold water for a period shorter than wildlife needs for breeding. Paving or even creating a surface like a gravel driveway in a buffer zone can prevent water from percolating into the soil and reaching a wetland. Activity such as use of heavy equipment on a buffer as part of construction taking place on land beyond the buffer can drastically affect vegetation and even drainage.

If a buffer is wide enough, it can greatly reduce these negative effects. Narrow buffers don’t help much. A good wetland protection regulation establishes a buffer large enough to provide real protection, and then creates a mechanism for providing exceptions or variances, if it is important to override these protections.

Even though wetlands play a crucial role in overall environmental health, some might say that there are many of them and that damage or destruction of a few here and there is of little significance in the big picture. Possibly, but as a country, **the US has already lost a third of its wetlands** to this kind of reasoning. There is the story of the guy removing rivets from a passenger plane who, when asked what he was doing, explained, “These things are great. I can get a couple of dollars for each one.” But, when asked about the effect of rivet removal on the airplane and possible consequences for the passengers, said, “Don’t worry about it. I’ve taken out dozens and dozens already, and the plane flies just fine.”

[Editor’s Note: We thank Shaun for another of his wonderful nature articles. This one is particularly timely, as newer members of the ZBA and the Planning Board are working hard to reduce wetland protective measures in the Wetlands Conservation District, our town’s upland review buffer. More information to follow...]

Richmond's 10 Hand Tool Makers

Ruth Blais Thompson
(Richmond Resident 1964 – 1989)

This past Christmas, a friend of mine, Ricky Fadden, who is in the antique and collectibles business and once lived in Richmond as a young boy, gifted me the book, *Instruments of Change*, New Hampshire hand tools and their makers 1800 -1900. There were only 1500 copies printed. He knows I love local history and research and, when he gave me the book, it sent me down another one of my rabbit holes (as my husband calls it).

Within a short read, it became clear that in the mid 1800's, about 150 years ago, Richmond was a key maker of hand tools in Cheshire County. Keene had 23 toolmakers, Swanzey five, Winchester three, Marlborough four, Fitzwilliam one and Richmond had 10!

Richmond Toolmakers:

- Nathan Aldrich - Scythe snaths
- Reuben Bourn - Scythe snaths
- James Buffum - Scythe snaths
- Cyrus Garnsey - Scythe snaths
- William Garnsey - Scythe snaths
- Luke Harris - Scythe snaths
- Hewes Mill - Hoes, scythes
- Enos Holbrook - Scythes, hoes
- Robert Swan - Scythe snaths
- Nelson Thayer - Edge tools; axes and drawknives

Perhaps it was known in the county as the town of Scythe snaths? I read in the *New England Gazetteer*, circa 1839, that the soil in Richmond was favored for growing rye, wheat and Indian corn. The townspeople must have clearly needed tools to manage the crops and, therefore, had to create their own. I do know what a "scythe" is because we found one in my father-in-law's barn. But, I did not know what "snath" meant. I soon learned that the scythe is the steel blade, and the handle is the snath. I wondered how they made the steel blade? Perhaps they enlisted the partnership of one or more of the 20 Blacksmiths who also had shops in Richmond at the time. Not only were there 20 blacksmiths and 10 hand tool makers, but also 17 saw-mills in various parts of the town all propelled by water power.

The scythe was a main agricultural tool used in the 1800s to cut grains and hay. The wooden handle, or snath, was about 67 inches long and often straight, but, sometimes, would have an S curve to ergonomically fit the tool into both hands, and have either one or two short handles at right angles to the snath to use as hand grips. Some men would wear a pouch tied around their waist which would hold a whetstone used to sharpen the blade.

I remember picking up the scythe we'd uncovered in the barn and I could barely hold it up because it was so heavy. I can't imagine using it as a tool for hours swinging it back and forth to cut hay. The people who worked this land before us must have worked so physically hard, day after day, just to stay alive. The 10 Richmond toolmakers must have also sold their tools, as well as used them for their own needs. These toolmakers are cross-referenced and appear in William Bassett's *The History of Richmond, Cheshire County, New Hampshire (from its First Settlement, to 1882)*, as do the 20 Blacksmiths and 17 Sawmills by name and location in the town. If you haven't yet checked out this book, I think you will find some great stories and town history to enjoy reading this winter. [Editor's Note: Hardcovers of Bassett's 1884 book were printed in 1975 by the Richmond Historical Society and may be purchased at the town library.]



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A Pungent Memory Karen O'Brien



Horseradish Field in Collinsville, IL

Horseradish has always been something with which I've been familiar. Having been raised in a Lithuanian-Polish household, this herb was a frequent visitor to our table, though I considered it smelly and too spicy as a child. I could never understand its allure to my parents, grandparents, and other relatives. Horseradish appeared whenever we had kielbasa (a smoked sausage), roast pork, and even the special beef roast my mother would make on certain Sundays. Easter Sunday

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was not complete without hard boiled eggs, cold kielbasa, and horseradish, all blessed by the neighborhood priest. No way was I ever getting close to sampling that pungent and eye-watering sauce, and I was a kid who tried everything. My grandmother disdained the store-bought horseradish as inferior. A trip to Water Street, an ethnic area of Worcester at the time, was the only place to procure this root.

I was curious, however, when this brown, knobby thing appeared in our home. My father, who was designated as the grater of all troublesome roots and tubers, was assigned the task of processing the horseradish. He had strong fingers and hands, and no food processor was ever involved in his toil, just a simple box grater. It was no doubt my mother who thought it best that he accomplish this task in the depths of our basement, though at the time I could not understand why this would be. He always grated the potatoes and onions for kugelis (a potato casserole) at the kitchen table. Why was he being banished to the cellar? I had to find out.

I followed my father down the stairs and into the back room of the basement, where my dad had his workshop and where the oil tanks and burners loomed. There was an old wood burning stove of sorts, left over from before the home had been converted to oil heat. We could not use the stove anymore, since the flues had been closed. Setting down a large, ceramic bowl onto the cement blocks of the stove, my dad set about scraping and grating the horseradish, turning that ugly brown root into a creamy white paste. I



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patiently waited as he worked his magic, watching him sweat and breathe heavily as he did so. When he was done, he asked if I would take the bowl up to the second floor to my grandmother, who was waiting to “put up” the condiment into small jars. Ever the helpful, dutiful daughter, I eagerly agreed. Big mistake!

I grabbed the big bowl and hugged it close to my chest, holding it tightly with two arms wrapped around it, careful not to spill a drop. By the time I reached the first floor, I was crying and wheezing from the fumes emanating from the container. My arms were straining with the effort of trying to hold onto the bowl and not drop it, for surely I would be punished if I did so. I tried not to breathe, or cry into the horseradish.

I felt sure that I would never be the same after such an ordeal. Would I ever be able to breathe without remembering the noxious fumes that had swirled about my head? I really wasn't sure why my family would inflict such misery on me. I staggered into my grandmother's kitchen, and she took the bowl from me. I flew down to my room, swearing I would never, ever look at horseradish again.

Though this incident is clearly imprinted on my psyche over 60 years later, I'm happy to report that, as an adult, I like horseradish and use it even more frequently than my folks did. Its pungent aroma reminds me of family and my Eastern European heritage and connects me to my ancestors in a positive way. I've even designated a small corner of my garden to its cultivation, and enjoy it for the bracing, healthful herb that it is. And

I've never, ever, tried to grate it in my home, preferring to accomplish that task outside where the breezes will whisk away the stinging memories of that long ago time.

Ways to Use Horseradish:

- Add a little to your Bloody Mary or even tomato juice to add some zing;
- Slip some into scrambled eggs and/or breakfast sausage;
- Excellent when added to coleslaw, potato salad, or cooked beans;
- A spoonful added to cooking stock adds a delightful flavor - or use in soups;
- The addition of horseradish to hollandaise sauce increases its flavor – great on salmon or asparagus;
- One of the most important ingredients in Fire Cider;
- To alleviate colds, combine sliced ginger and grated horseradish in honey – let sit, then use a spoonful in tea or straight up for colds and stuffy noses;
- Rub into sore muscles or aching joints.



Horseradish in bud



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A Friend On
Granite Hill Road

From a friend on Athol Road

Valentine's Slice & Bake Cinnamon Heart Shortbread Cookies

Terri O'Rorke



Ingredients

- 1 cup butter, softened
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- ½ cup confectioners' sugar
- ½ cup heart-shaped cinnamon candies, ground into a fine powder
- ¼ cup cornstarch
- 1 ¾ cups all-purpose flour, divided

Directions

- Beat butter in a large bowl with a hand mixer until fluffy; add vanilla extract, confectioners' sugar, ground cinnamon candies, and cornstarch and mix with hand mixer until combined.
- Incorporate flour ¼ cup at a time, mixing with your hands until all flour is used and dough comes together.
- Divide dough into halves; roll each into an 8-inch cylinder. Wrap each cylinder in waxed paper and freeze until firm, at least 1 hour to overnight.

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U.S. Supreme Court Justice Hugo Black

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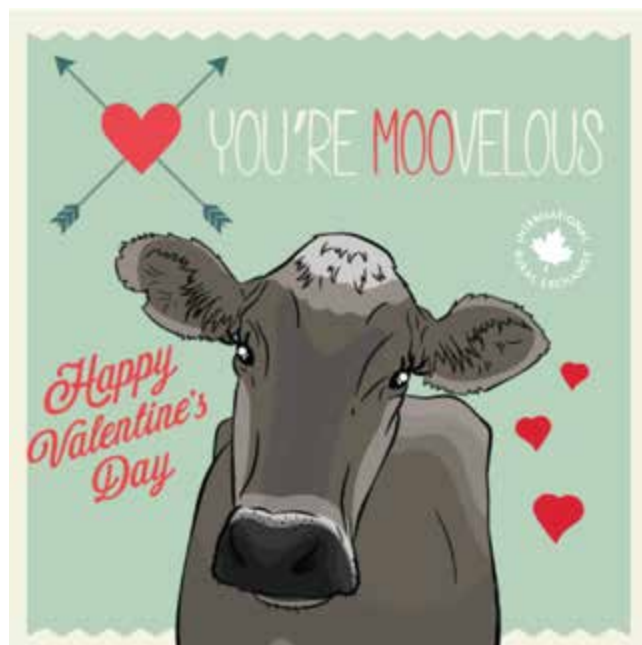
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- Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Remove dough from freezer and let thaw just until slightly softened.
- Cut dough into 1/4-inch slices and arrange onto baking sheets.
- Bake until firm along the edges but not yet browned, about 10 mins. Cool cookies on racks for 5 mins. before moving to a rack to cool completely.
- Optional - half the cookie can be dipped in melted milk or white chocolate.

Makes about 60 cookies. Happy Valentine's Day, Richmond!



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[Editor's Note: We thank Terri O'Rorke for allowing us to reprint this excerpt from her January 10, 2024 article, "Primary Status". Richmond was key to the history of the NH Primary, something we first learned from Pam Bielunis' press release submission on Pages 3-5 of our December 2023 edition.]

Excerpt from "Primary Status" by Terri O'Rorke

Seeking to add an amendment to the state's constitution, the NH State Senate voted 23-0 on March 30, 2023 approving an amendment enabling NH's primary will continue to be held first during a presidential election. The amendment would add the following language to the state constitution: "The secretary of state shall ensure that the presidential primary election be held seven or more days immediately preceding the date on which any other state shall hold a similar election." Unfortunately, this amendment has not gone any further in the House.

NH state senators have recently placed on a "fast track" to approval an amendment to the state's constitution meant to safeguard the future of the status of NH's presidential primary. On Jan. 9, 2023, the Senate Election Law Committee approved an amendment to preserve the state law requiring NH to hold the first in the nation presidential primary by adding it to the state's constitution.

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What is needed now is for the NH House to vote and approve, by at least 60%, the proposed amendment. If approved, the amendment will then appear on the ballot in Nov. for voters to have the final decision.

Whether you approve or oppose this proposed amendment to the state constitution but would like to express this sentiment to your representatives, you can reach them here: <http://tinyurl.com/3s3dbedv>



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Excerpt from NH Fish and Game Press Release: “New Laws for Tree Stands and Game Cameras become Effective January 1”

Concord, NH – Law changes governing the installation of tree stands and game cameras in New Hampshire will go into effect on January 1, 2024. **Below is a summary of the changes to RSA 207:36-a, regarding the use of tree stands, observation blinds, and pit blinds:**

- All tree stands or observation blinds must be labeled with the name and contact information of their owner in a clearly visible manner. Name and contact information shall include either name and address or name and phone number.
- A portable or temporary tree stand or observation blind may be used April 25 through June 1 and August 1 through December 31 of a calendar year. All stands and blinds must be removed from the property by June 1, unless allowed by permission from the landowner or designee.
- All permanent tree stands or observation blinds require landowner permission.

Below is a summary of the changes to RSA 207:1 and RSA 207:63 regarding the use of game cameras:

- All game cameras placed on private property, or on state-owned or state-managed property, must be labeled with the name and contact information of their owner in a manner visible while mounted. Name and contact information shall include either name and address or name and phone number.
- No game cameras may be placed on private property without permission of the property owner unless the property owner has posted signage on the property allowing the placement of such cameras. Any such signs must be of durable material with words describing the allowable activity, such as “Game Cameras Allowed,” printed in block letters no less than 2 inches in height, and include the name and contact information of the property owner.
- A game camera placed on state-owned or state-managed lands, or on municipally owned property, shall be exempt from requiring landowner permission.
- “Game camera” means any device capable of recording, storing, and/or transmitting photographic or video data for any purpose.
- A person using a game camera to assist with hunting may not harvest any animal viewed within the same calendar day of remotely viewing that animal from a game camera.

[Editor’s Note: to view the full text of this press release from NH Fish and Game, please visit: *New Laws for Tree Stands and Game Cameras Become Effective January 1 – NH Fish and Game Department* (<https://nhfishgame.com/2023/12/27/new-laws-for-tree-stands-and-game-cameras-become-effective-january-1/>)]



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Library News Wendy O'Brien

Library Calendar for February

Wednesdays: 10 AM: Storytime

Saturdays: 10 AM - Noon: Drop-in Knitting Circle

Saturday, Feb. 3rd, 11 AM - 2 PM: Take Your Child to the Library Day

Wednesday, Feb. 7th, 11 AM: Richmond Reminisces

Thursday, Feb. 15th, 6 PM @ Vets' Hall: Ella Fitzgerald with Nanette Perrotte

Tuesday, Feb. 20th, 6 PM: Book Club, *A Deep Presence*, Robert Goodby/Rescreening of "Bearer of the Morning" Documentary



Take Your Child to the Library Day

On the first Saturday in February, thousands of libraries across the world celebrate Take Your Child to the Library Day, the perfect time to discover some library magic. Drop-in on our celebration in our Children's Room on Saturday, February 3rd, anytime between 10 AM – 2 PM. We hope you will stop in for a visit, enjoy the activities, get a library card (they're free!), and explore all the wonders that the RPL has to offer your whole family.

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Ella Fitzgerald: the Queen of Swing

In honor of Black History Month, we are pleased to welcome jazz vocalist, educator, and entrepreneur Nanette Perrotte on Thursday, February 15th, at 6 PM at the Veterans' Hall. Nanette will present a multi-media presentation on Ella Fitzgerald, a young woman who against impossible odds achieved fame as a jazz singer by the age of seventeen. At that young age, she found herself at the heart of the Harlem Renaissance and American jazz. She would go on to perform around the world for another 58 years. Through singing Ella's signature songs and telling her story, Nanette highlights the social history of the height of the jazz era. "It Don't Mean a Thing (if it ain't got that swing)," "It's Only a Paper Moon," and "Azure" are some of the classic American songbook pieces that will be sung and sung along with!

New Titles

Upside Down, Danielle Steele

Fragile Designs, Colleen Coble

Yellow Face, R. F. Kuang (2023 Goodreads Best Fiction Winner)

Weyward, Emilia Hart (2023 Goodreads Best Historical Fiction Winner)

The Corsican Shadow, Dirk Cussler



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Mewsings from Gracie Cat

Bonnie McCarthy

Apparently, my last stroll over the warm, flat thing that Bonnie uses to memorialize my Mewsings resulted in an unintended mishap. Thanks to Brown Computer Solutions in Keene, there is no permanent damage. I now know the warm, flat thing is called a computer and is something very touchy, literally and figuratively. We both recommend the Brown crew highly as technicians and family support personnel. Bonnie also wants to thank our neighbor, Pam Bielunis, for retyping and submitting my January Mewsings to the *Rooster* in a timely fashion. Thankfully, I have found a new favorite chair and don't hang out on Bonnie's desk as often as I did before the totally-not-my-fault mishap. On the other hand, my new favorite chair is also her favorite chair; the one she always uses out of the three others she could use to make my life easier. Anyway, this would present another stare-down, except Bonnie just gently picks me up, thanks me for keeping her seat warm and puts me on her lap. Sometimes, I stay for some admiration and sometimes, I leave to conduct important cat business.

Although I am a very picky eater, I try to make sure Bonnie is rarely in the kitchen alone. I like to supervise her food preparation from afar and sniff everything before she eats it, despite the fact that I would not touch any of it with my tongue even if she begged me. I also supervise her cleanup activities. The running water fascinates me. I watch closely as she washes the dishes, utensils and pans before she puts them in the dish

drainer. Then, I check to make sure they are properly placed. The room I never let Bonnie enter alone is the sandbox room, which she calls the bathroom. I have yet to figure out why she calls it that, because it does not have a place to take a bath. All it has is a small rain room where she stands and gets wet. After she turns off the rain, I like to go inside and lick the rain puddles.



Bonnie has this thing she wears on her left wrist that gives off a couple of beeps every so often. She checks it out, gets up from her chair and starts to head for the hall for a walk. I watched her do this once and, the next time she got up, I followed her. She picked up my favorite string toy and dragged it behind her so I could chase it. What fun! Now, it is a ritual. When I hear the beep with my acute feline ears, I get up and give her a soft meow to remind her that it is time to

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walk. I have trained her to not only drag the string on the floor, but to pull it over chairs, door knobs and her seldom used exercise bike, which is actually more of a coat hanger. I have a basket full of toys which I keep in our daytime room. If I am careful to jump on it instead of just pawing at it, the toys scatter beautifully. I am including a picture of me and my toys. Please notice the string on the right, because that is my favorite toy among all that have been given to me by Bonnie and my many fans. At night, I like to carry a few of them into our bedroom for nocturnal playtime. Sometimes, I leave some in our bed in case she wakes up and wants to play with me. Unfortunately, this may be a lost cause.

By now, I have completely taken over my new human and our house. It was grace that embraced our lives when Bonnie and I found each other. *[Editor's Note: We thank Gracie (and maybe even Bonnie!) for reminding us of the heartwarming rewards of pet adoption.]*



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Email – therichmondrooster@gmail.com

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Town Administration

Selectmen: William Daniels, Doug Bersaw,
Andrew Wallace

Selectmen Meeting at Town Hall – Mon. 5:30 P.M.
Public is welcome to attend. Please call 239-4232 for an appointment if you have an item for the agenda.

Town Administrator: Susan Harrington
Administrative Assistant: Jennifer Thompson

Mon. 9 AM – Noon, 3 PM – 5:30 PM
Wed. 9 AM – 1 PM
Thurs. 9 AM – Noon

*For town business outside of the above hours,
please call 239-4232 for a Monday evening appointment.*

Town Clerk: Karen O'Brien

Deputy Town Clerk: Cheryl Brake

Tues. 12:30 PM - 4:30 PM
Wed. 9 AM - Noon & 1 PM - 4 PM
Thur. 8 AM - Noon

*For Tues. appointments (5 PM, 5:30 PM, 6 PM),
call 239-6202 or email the clerk.*

Tax Collector: Steve Boscarino

Deputy Tax Collector: Mary Rogers

Mon. 6 PM – 8 PM, Wed. 9 AM – Noon

Planning Board: Held at Taylor/VanBrocklin Bldg.
1st & 3rd Tuesdays of the month - 7:00 PM

Transfer Station and Recycling Facility: 239-8136

Tues. 8 AM – 4 PM, Thurs. 8 AM – 7 PM
Sat. 8 AM – 5 PM

Town Library: Wendy O'Brien, Librarian, 239-6164.

Tues. 3 PM – 7 PM, Wed. 9 AM – Noon
Thurs. 3 PM – 7 PM, Sat. 10 AM – 2 PM

Police (Non Emergency): 355-2000

Fire/Rescue (Non Emergency): 239-4466

Fire Warden:

Fire Permit: Buzz Shaw, 239-4238

Selectmen – 239-4232

Town Clerk – 239-6202

Tax Collector – 239-6106

Road Agent: Elton "Buddy" Blood, II – 400-3629

Building Maint.: Pam Bielunis

Zoning Compliance Officer: Richard Drew

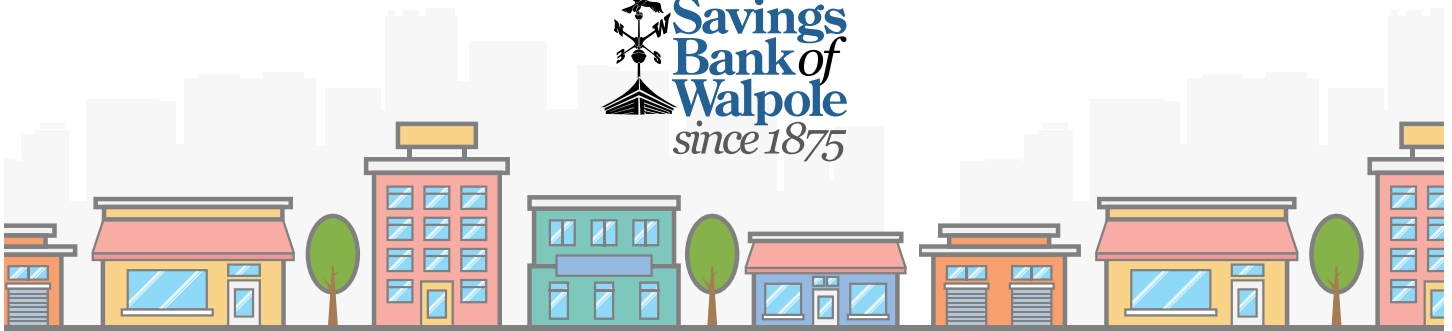
[Phone number area codes are 603, unless otherwise noted.]

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