

Request for Data / Information: Notice Sent to Stakeholders on 7/19/05

Dear Interested Party:

The New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (DES) is in the process of preparing the 2006 surface water quality assessment as required by Sections 305(b) and 303(d) of the Clean Water Act. Section 305(b) requires each state to prepare a water quality inventory of its surface waters every two years. Section 303(d) requires states to prepare a list of impaired surface waters for which comprehensive water quality studies [i.e., Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) studies] must be prepared to help guide restoration efforts. This list, which is commonly called the "303(d) List", represents a subset of all impaired waters as some impaired waters do not require a TMDL study.

The purpose of this letter is to provide guidance for all those who would like to submit surface water quality or quantity data/information for consideration in the assessment. If you have data/information that you would like to submit, please read the attached guidance which includes a schedule, a description of the information needed, and various ways you can send your information to DES. A copy of the data submittal form is also attached for your use.

Thank you for your time. We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Ken Edwardson.
Water Quality Assessment Program
Watershed Management Bureau
NH Department of Environmental Services

***Guidance for Submittal of Surface Water Data /
Information
for Development of the 2006 Clean Water Act
Section 305(b) Water Quality Report and
Section 303(d) List of Impaired Waters***

The New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (DES) encourages anyone who has surface water data/information, to submit it to DES electronically at any time. The information you provide can help DES identify:

- waters that are meeting designated uses such as fishing or swimming (i.e., waters in good condition),
- waters that are not supporting their designated uses (i.e., impaired waters), and
- waters which require additional monitoring/investigation before a final assessment can be made.

Your information may be used to help prepare surface water quality assessments as required by Sections 305(b) and 303(d) of the Clean Water Act (CWA). Section 305(b) requires each state to prepare a water quality inventory of its surface waters every two years. Section 303(d) requires states to prepare a list of impaired surface waters for which comprehensive water quality studies [i.e., Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) studies] must be prepared to help guide restoration efforts. This list, which is commonly called the “303(d) List”, represents a subset of all impaired waters, as some impaired waters do not require a TMDL study. EPA guidance recommends that states provide for public comment on the 303(d) List.

DES is interested in all types of surface water quality or quantity data/information, regardless of whether it suggests that the waterbody is in good or poor condition. This guidance provides information on how and when surface water data/information can be submitted to DES for consideration in the 2006 and future water quality assessments.

New for the 2006 assessment and listing cycle, DES is requesting that all data be submitted electronically and in a format that may be easily loaded into the Environmental Monitoring Database (EMD). The EMD is a database developed by DES to store all types of environmental data and metadata (i.e., information on how it was collected), regardless of who collected it. DES encourages anyone with environmental data to submit it to DES for inclusion in the EMD. Once in the EMD the data can be analyzed and assessed more rapidly. Automating assessments as much as possible is necessary because of the large volume of data that must be analyzed. Consequently, data in the EMD stands a much better chance of being used to make water quality assessments. Other benefits of including your data in the EMD are provided below.

Benefits:

- The EMD is Web Enabled which means that you can direct people to the DES website to download your datasets at http://des.nh.gov/OneStop/Environmental_Monitoring_Query.aspx
- If you have grant reporting needs, DES can provide information on how often your data is queried from the EMD

- DES can work with your group to send your data to STORET if you so desire
- With the appropriate background data, DES will be able to use your data in the biennial 305(b)/303(d) report/list to Congress

To find out more about how to submit your data electronically for inclusion in the EMD, please contact DES at the email address provided below.

SCHEDULE

Surface water quality or quantity data/information is welcome and encouraged at any time. However, to be considered in the 2006 assessment, data should be submitted by the date shown below. Data/information submitted after the deadline date will be considered in future assessments. The public comment period for the 303(d) List is also presented in the following table.

| | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| August/September, 2005 | Initiate data submittal for inclusion to the NHDES, EMD. |
| October 1, 2005 | Deadline for submitting data for consideration in the 2006 assessment. If not received by this date, data/information will be considered in the next assessment and/or for future monitoring efforts. |
| January (date TBA), 2006* | Draft 303(d) list is available for public comment. |
| February or March (date TBA), 2006* | End of 303(d) List public comment period |
| April 1, 2006 | Final 303(d) List is produced and submitted to EPA. |

* A final schedule will be posted on the Watershed Management Bureau website at www.des.state.nh.us/wmb/swqa/.

WHAT TO SUBMIT

How data/information is used in the assessment depends largely on the quality and completeness of the submission. In general, scientifically sound and defensible evidence is needed to determine if a waterbody is meeting water quality standards or is impaired. Evidence that does not meet these criteria, however, is still useful as it provides a preliminary sense of water quality that can be used to guide future monitoring efforts/investigations designed to fill data gaps needed to make a final assessment.

For electronic data submittals the base information is the same as outlined below for paper submissions except that it is not necessary to fill out the paper form. The submitter is encouraged to start the electronic data submittal process in advance of the October 1st deadline so that your program, station, and metadata is in place when the sampling results are ready to be entered and your data will be in the database by the deadline date.

If you have surface water data/information and intend on submitting paper data, please complete the enclosed “Surface Water Data/Information Submittal Form” and submit it, along with any other supporting documentation, to DES. A copy of this form is available on our website at www.des.state.nh.us/wmb/swqa/.

As indicated on the form, submittals should include the following, if available:

- ✓ Contact Information:
 - Your name and organization
 - Mailing Address
 - E-mail
 - Phone number
- ✓ Name of Waterbody(s)
- ✓ Location Information Where Surface Water Data / Information Was Collected
 - City or Town
 - A description of, and a plan showing, the area of interest/concern, including sampling locations if applicable
 - Directions to the site
- ✓ Surface water quality or quantity data/information (including dates and time of collection, measurement results, pictures etc.)
- ✓ Summary of what you think the data or information indicates about water quality.
- ✓ Documentation of the quality assurance methods used in collecting, analyzing and reporting the data; Quality Assurance Project Plans (QAPPs), Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), etc.

If information is already provided in another document, please reference and submit a copy of the document. If possible, it is preferred that data be sent electronically (i.e., Excel spreadsheet, MS Word documents, ArcView shape files...).

HOW TO SEND DATA TO DES

For electronic submittals contact DES via the e-mail below at your earliest convenience. They will guide you through the process of how to submit your data for inclusion in the EMD. For paper submittals, please complete the “Surface Water Data/Information Submittal Form” available at www.des.state.nh.us/wmb/swqa/ and submit it, along with any supporting documentation, to DES by mail, fax or E-mail at the addresses shown below.

By mail: Water Quality Data
 New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services
 Watershed Management Bureau
 29 Hazen Drive
 P.O. Box 95
 Concord, New Hampshire 03302-0095

By fax: Water Quality Data
 603-271-7894

By E-mail: wqdata@des.state.nh.us or visit our website at
 www.des.state.nh.us/wmb/swqa/

QUESTIONS? Please call 603-271-2457