

News from the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services



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DES Awards Grants to Protect Land Near Drinking Water Sources

Concord, NH — Subject to approval by the Governor and Council, the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services will be awarding over \$1 million in water supply land grants this spring. These grants will be awarded to municipalities that wish to protect drinking water by conserving the land around its source.

“Protecting the land surrounding water supply sources will help ensure an adequate supply of clean drinking water in quantities sufficient for present and future needs of communities throughout New Hampshire,” says Tom Burack, DES Commissioner.

DES’s Water Supply Land Matching Grant Program was established by the N.H. Legislature in 2000 to help communities protect their drinking water.

Municipalities will use the grant awards to purchase property and conservation easements on land totaling over 700 acres. “Conservation easements are legal agreements that protect the land in perpetuity from activities, such as hazardous material handling and storage, which may threaten drinking water,” explains Holly Green, DES’s Water Supply Land Grant Coordinator.

The following projects will be funded by these grants:

Wakefield will acquire 108 acres of land and conservation easements on 100 acres of land in the wellhead protection area of the two wells that serve the Sanbornville Water Department. The land being acquired includes a former gravel pit just over 200 feet from one of the wells. This project will help protect land very close to Wakefield’s municipal wells and will halt gravel excavation and its inherent risks in close proximity to the wells.

Lee will use its grant to purchase land and conservation easements totalling 184 acres, a portion of which, including a former gravel pit that is within the wellhead protection area for the Lee Five Corners well and only 189 feet from the well site. All of the land being protected is within the source water protection area for the Oyster River intake for the UNH/Durham water system, which serves a combined population of 12,000.

Walpole will acquire 59 acres of flood plain forest and farmland along the Connecticut River. The property is adjacent to the “River Well” of the Walpole Water Department and the boundary of the property being protected is 309 feet from the well site.

Rochester will purchase 38 acres on a pristine pond draining directly into the Berry River and the Rochester Reservoir, a drinking water supply for 17,000 people.

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Windham will purchase 84 acres abutting roughly 600 acres of already protected conservation land. This land is within the wellhead protection areas of several community wells and within the source water protection area of the Salem Water Department's Arlington Mill Reservoir, which serves a population of 18,000.

Brentwood will use its grant to protect land along the Exeter River above the drinking water intake for the Exeter Water Department, which serves a population of 11,000.

Since the inception of the Water Supply Land Grant Program in 2000, over \$5 million has been awarded to municipalities. This has leveraged over \$20 million in additional public and private funds and has permanently protected over 3,800 acres of critical water supply lands.

More information about water supply land grants and application forms can be found at the DES website www.des.nh.gov/dwspp/acqui.htm or by contacting Holly Green at (603) 271-3114 or hgreen@des.state.nh.us.

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