



Prepping your boat for summer

It is beginning to look a lot like boat season! After a long winter of being docked, there are steps boat owners should initiate to make sure their boats will not pollute the lakes they are on or the marinas at which they are being “dewinterized.”

When preparing for your initial launch this summer, remember to keep best management practices and requirements for maintenance and repair in mind. Hazardous chemicals, heavy metals and other chemicals harmful to aquatic environments can be left behind from many up-keep operations, such as sandblasting or boat washing. Some easy requirements to remember are: 1) maintenance activities must be done on impervious surfaces; 2) spill absorbents should always be available in the work area; and 3) signage at marinas should provide instruction on proper spill containment and prevention.

Antifreeze is a commonly used chemical that can have catastrophic effects on aquatic life. It is not necessary to winterize your boat with antifreeze, if all fluids are properly drained from your boat. If you must use antifreeze, it is a federal and state requirement that the antifreeze be properly drained and collected prior to the first launch. It is

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Commissioner's Column

Test your well water for known health risks

Scientists continue to examine all potential risks to drinking water

An alarm was recently sounded by the media, alerting us to the potential dangers related to trace amounts of pharmaceuticals and personal care products (PPCPs) in drinking water. While this announcement is certainly a reason for concern, it is not a reason for panic nor does it represent breaking news to the staff at DES. The attention that this announcement provides is a great reminder that we should all be concerned about the quality of our drinking water, especially if the water is provided by a private well. Although testing for PPCPs in private wells is not generally available, testing for contaminants, such as bacteria, arsenic, radioactivity and components of gasoline for which there are established health based standards, is readily available and affordable.

Over the last two years, DES has collaborated with other New England states, USGS and the EPA to study several aspects of PPCPs through an initiative spearheaded by the New England Interstate Water Pollution Control Commission. We will continue to collect the critical information and data needed before policies and standards on PPCPs are considered. Some of the areas of focus include: 1) occurrence of PPCPs in the environment; 2) the fate and transport of PPCPs in the environment; 3) human and ecological health effects associated with exposure to PPCPs; 4) approaches for managing and disposing of unused PPCPs; 5) effectiveness of wastewater and drinking water treatment technology in removing PPCPs from water; and 6) the viability of employing “green chemistry” techniques and life cycle analyses to develop PPCPs in the future that will not persist in the environment.

While the state and federal governments conduct the needed research to develop appropriate policies to manage PPCPs in drinking water, we should be conscious of the fact that all of us are responsible for them getting *into* the

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Update to statewide mercury freshwater fish consumption advisory: Stocked trout exemption

Fishing is a healthful activity and eating fish is a smart nutritional choice. The DES Environmental Health Program encourages people to enjoy fishing and eating fish from New Hampshire waters, especially stocked trout.

Since all fish contain some mercury, including fish caught in New Hampshire, it is recommended that people become familiar with fish consumption guidelines. Originally established in 1994, the statewide mercury fish advisory recommends that women of childbearing age and children under age seven limit their freshwater fish consumption to one meal per month; others can safely eat four meals per month.

Thanks to ongoing fish sampling efforts by New Hampshire Fish and Game and the DES Volunteer Lakes Assessment Program, we now have fish mercury concentration data for 1,500 fish from 150 water bodies. There is enough new data in the New Hampshire fish mercury database to prompt an update to the 2001 mercury fish consumption advisory.



Quinn Abrams proudly displays his catch of the day.

Analysis of the current New Hampshire fish database determined that the mercury concentrations in fish are usually well below the level used to set the statewide advisory.

The New Hampshire Fish and Game Department stocking program contributes over a million trout to New Hampshire waters each year. Stocked trout contains very little mercury. Based on the mercury concentrations in stocked trout species captured in New Hampshire waters, it is now recommended that stocked trout be exempt from the statewide advisory. Women of childbearing age and children can safely eat up to six meals of stocked trout each month; others can eat six meals per week. Because mercury bioaccumulates, fish that eat other fish and live long lives have

higher amounts of mercury. Perch fits into this category and based on sampling data, have been added to list for restricted consumption just like large specimens of bass and pickerel. The advisory specifically recommends no consumption of bass, pickerel or perch greater than 12 inches.

These recent updates and recommendations can be found in the recently released document "Technical Background for the 2008 Update to the New Hampshire Statewide Mercury Fish Consumption Advisory." The report presents the rationale for the statewide mercury fish consumption advisory, a re-evaluation of the waterbody-specific and length restriction advisories, and recommends the specific advisory for stocked trout. Copies are available on the DES website or by calling Pam Schnepfer at (603) 271-3994. ■

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illegal to discharge antifreeze, toxic or non-toxic, to surface waters. Contact your marina on ways to collect and dispose of this fluid properly.

Shrink-wrap is difficult to dispose of and generates a large volume of waste. Fortunately, some areas have begun shrink-wrap recycling programs for marinas, as companies are cropping up that will collect used shrink-wrap and recycle it. Contact your local marina for disposal options.

This is only a small listing of BMPs for preparing a boat for the summer season. For a full description, please go to www.des.nh.gov/nhppp/marinas_best_management.htm or contact Sara Johnson, DES, at sara.johnson@des.nh.gov. ■



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DES participates in EPA studies for EDB in groundwater

Ethylene dibromide (EDB) is a man-made chemical produced and used in the United States for more than 80 years. U.S. production of EDB peaked in 1974 at 332 million pounds per year, but has declined significantly due to increased government regulation and restriction of its use. EDB was used in leaded gasoline as part of an anti-knocking additive to improve horsepower and gas mileage, and as a pesticide to kill termites, nematodes and insects in fruit and grain. Today there is a concern for risk to public health by the ingestion of EDB in drinking water. DES has adopted a drinking water standard of 0.05 parts per billion (ppb).

Why is EDB present at gasoline station sites? Early gasoline formulations resulted in "knocking" when higher compression ratios were used by automakers to produce more horsepower in cars. The knocking problem resulted in lower fuel mileage and less power. Tetra ethyl lead (TEL) cured the knocking problem. EDB and 1,2-DCA were needed as part of the TEL anti-knock mixture to prevent engine fouling from lead and lead oxide. By the late 1920s, gasoline containing TEL and EDB dominated the US gasoline market.

EDB levels in gasoline peaked between 1942 and the mid-1970s. At its peak, typical leaded gasoline contained about 300 ppm of EDB. Because EDB content in gasoline is

linked to lead content, EDB levels declined following the phase out of lead in gasoline. The use of leaded gasoline containing TEL and EDB was finally banned in 1996 by the Clean Air Act Amendments. EDB is still present in aviation gasoline, racing fuels and leaded gasoline used in some developing countries.

The Association of State and Territorial Solid Waste Management Officials has encouraged more research on the occurrence of EDB at gas station sites and DES is actively participating in this effort. DES is currently collecting low level EDB detection limit data on its gas station sites and has participated in two national EPA studies.

EPA's Athens Laboratory study deals with the occurrence of EDB in leaded gasoline floating product at New Hampshire sites. Sampling of New Hampshire sites was completed in April 2008. DES also participated in EPA headquarters' national sampling effort on EDB in groundwater at gasoline station sites. Nineteen states participated and 802 samples were collected from 102 sites. More than half of the EDB detections were at concentrations below the detection limits typically seen at New Hampshire sites. After evaluating these and other studies, New Hampshire is now screening for EDB at all sites where releases of gasoline could have occurred prior to 1985 using low level detection limits of 50 part per trillion. Results are expected this spring and should help to better understand the presence and distribution of EDB at New Hampshire gasoline station sites and the potential public health risk. ■

More air quality advisories in the forecast?

Starting this summer, DES's air pollution forecasting and health advisories will reflect a revised national air quality standard for ozone. Because the standard is lower, we expect to see an increase in Air Quality Action Days. This, however, does not mean air quality in New Hampshire is getting worse. On the contrary, air quality on average is getting better almost everywhere in the state.

Effective this year New Hampshire and the rest of the nation will be better protected by a newly revised ozone health standard. As required by law, EPA recently reviewed the adequacy of the existing health-based National Ambient Air Quality Standard for ozone and revised it to better protect public health. To do this, EPA uses

panels of experts to review the latest scientific studies on the impacts of air pollution. It draws conclusions as to where the health standard thresholds should be set for the following purposes: (1) protecting sensitive populations, including the elderly, the very young, and those with impaired breathing issues such as asthma; (2) protecting the general population; and (3) protecting the environment, wildlife and the quality of human life. Cost and availability of pollution controls are not to be considered in setting these health standards; only health and environmental impacts can be considered. Meeting the standard is considered separately as part of an implementation rule.

The revised ozone standard lowers the limit for an 8-hour ozone exposure from 0.08 parts per million (ppm) to 0.075 ppm. Because the former standard did not use a third decimal place, rounding set the effective standard to 0.085 ppm and as a result, this new standard is 12 percent lower than the former.

A lot of hard work has been devoted to making our air cleaner, and we continue to learn how to better protect people's health. More information about the revised ozone standard can be found online at the DES Air Division webpage, www.des.nh.gov/ard_intro.htm. This is yet another step to protect the quality of life we expect in New Hampshire. ■

Why are boil water orders issued?

Delivering safe drinking water to the people of New Hampshire is an enormous task given to owners/operators of public water systems. This is accomplished in many ways and is verified by system inspections and testing of the water. A “public water system” is any entity that provides water to the public; this includes municipal drinking water systems as well as schools, restaurants, day cares, condominiums, and other commercial businesses.

Testing is conducted for a variety of man-made and naturally occurring contaminants. The frequency of this testing is based on the size of the system and the number of customers served. Public water systems are required to test their distribution system for the presence of bacteria on a scheduled basis and DES reviews the test results to ensure consumers are drinking water that meets all applicable standards. The detection of acute contaminants, such as fecal coliforms (including *E. coli*), necessitate prompt action by DES and the owner/operator to protect public health.



Boil water orders may be issued to public water systems for two reasons: the actual presence of acute microbiological pathogens in a drinking water sample as noted above, or a physical disruption to the water distribution system which would significantly increase the possibility of bacterial contamination. For example, if a major water main breaks, electrical power is lost, or water floods the pump house, the possibility exists that pathogens could enter the system.

If there is a distinct threat to the integrity of the distribution system, DES or the owner may require a boil water order be put in place. If fecal coliform or *E. coli* is present in a sample, a boil water order is mandated by DES. The owner/operator of the system is immediately notified by DES, and DES assists the owner in getting the word out. The system is required to notify the public as soon as possible, but no later than 24 hours after learning of the actual or potential threat to their health. The boil water order must instruct consumers to boil their drinking water, or switch to an alternative source, until further notice.

When a boil water order is issued, DES may visit the system to help the owner/operator investigate the possible causes of contamination to prevent a reoccurrence. Boil water orders are lifted only after two sets of samples are free of total coliform bacteria.

While many environmental conditions can cause system disruptions, proper sampling and proper maintenance and upkeep of the water supply system are critical to ensure a clean, safe drinking water supply.

In addition to technical assistance, DES provides educational materials such as fact sheets and other mechanisms to assist public water systems that are experiencing boil water orders. In addition, DES has worked with most system owners to include these notification procedures within their emergency plan, if applicable, to ensure a prompt and complete notification process.

For all current drinking water advisories, please go to the DES home page at www.des.nh.gov; for fact sheets and more information on drinking water, please go to www.des.nh.gov/dwgb/. ■

Protected instream flows for the Souhegan River

DES approved the establishment of protected instream flows for the Souhegan Designated River on April 1, 2008. The Souhegan River Instream Flow project is the first study to recommend protected instream flow values under the Rivers Management and Protection Act.

The Souhegan Designated River comprises 32 miles beginning in New Ipswich and continuing to the confluence with the Merrimack River in Merrimack. These protected instream flows apply to the Souhegan Designated River, to water users in the watershed that are required to be registered with the state, and to dam owners in the watershed with impoundments greater than 10 acres.

“Establishing the Protected Flows on the Souhegan River signals a vital step toward protecting New Hampshire’s riverine resources for their many uses,” said DES Commissioner Tom Burack. “New Hampshire’s approach has been unique in describing instream flows that protect the range and variability of stream flow to maintain its natural condition. This process will move forward with the continued support and involvement of the many stakeholders who have assisted in this program.”

The Souhegan River Protected Instream Flow Report details the methods and results used to identify the Protected Instream Flows for the Souhegan Designated River. Copies of the report are available at the public libraries in New Ipswich, Milford and Merrimack and the DES File Review room in Concord. The entire report is also online at www.des.nh.gov/rivers/instream/souhegan/study.html. For more information about the report, please call Wayne Ives, instream flow specialist, at (603) 271-3548. ■

N.H. groups receive prestigious EPA Environmental Awards

EPA presented its 2008 Environmental Merit Awards on Earth Day, recognizing significant contributions to environmental awareness and problem solving throughout New England. New Hampshire awardees included two winners of particular interest to DES.

The “Local, State or Federal Governmental Environmental Merit Award” went to the **NH Volunteer Lake Assessment Program**. Two volunteers began the New Hampshire Volunteer Lake Assessment Program in 1985 to play a role in protecting one lake. By 2007, the organization was enlisting more than 500 volunteers to protect some 175 lakes and ponds. The

organizations make it possible for state biologists to assess long-term quality of the state’s lakes and to help residents and visitors play a part in protecting water quality in the lakes they use. By sampling water regularly, volunteer monitors help create data and a history of the water quality that is critical for protecting and improving these bodies of water. Before the NH Volunteer Lake Assessment Program, 50 lakes and ponds were sampled every 15 to 20 years, making it impossible to determine long-term trends. More than 20 years of data has let the state and local lake associations develop long-term water quality trends, identify pollution sources and

put in place ordinances and management systems to protect the state’s water and its future.

The “Business, Industry and Professional Organizations Environmental Merit Award” went to the **New Hampshire Water and Wastewater Agency Response Networks (WARN)** [see *Environmental News*, March/April 2008 issue]. New England has recently faced flooding that threatened the safety of our water supplies. The New England State Water and Wastewater Response Networks involve utilities, associations and states establishing mutual aid programs in each state. These programs will allow groups to exchange information and work together when an emergency hits. Based on lessons learned, the federal government recognizes timely responses must happen first at the local and state levels. Utilities helping utilities in mutual aid is clearly the most expeditious way to deal with water emergencies. In Maine, when Bethel lost its water supply in a landslide, Auburn’s Water District came to its aid with staff and tractors to build a temporary impoundment. This case study will now be played out throughout New England as mutual aid programs start up in each state. No other part of the country took on the challenge of simultaneously establishing response networks in all states. Because of this progress, New England was designated a national pilot to develop the first Inter-State WARN.

The merit awards, given out since 1970, honor individuals and groups who have shown particular ingenuity and commitment in their efforts to preserve the region’s environment. This year’s competition drew approximately 77 nominations from across New England. For more information on EPA’s Environmental Merit Awards, please see epa.gov/ne/ra/ema/index.html. ■

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drinking water. Whether it is prescription drugs, over-the-counter medications, make-up, soap or sunscreen, some of it goes down the drain and, unless treated, out into the environment. Published research has identified select instances where compounds from PPCPs in water have likely impacts on ecological health. DES strongly supports studies by federal agencies and other national organizations to further evaluate the relationship between the occurrence of PPCPs at trace levels in the environment and human and ecological health impacts.

The reality of the situation is that we can no longer have the attitude of “flush it and forget it.” DES has developed a fact sheet that provides guidance on the proper disposal methods for unwanted medicines (www.des.nh.gov/factsheets/sw/sw-33.htm). Your medicine should never be disposed of in a wastewater system unless the label specifically states to do so. DES is studying unused medicine disposal practices in New Hampshire and will make recommendations on new outreach initiatives or programs that may be implemented to improve our management of these materials.

Finally, there are naturally occurring contaminants in the environment that are known to have impacts on health. Proper siting and construction of wells are paramount to prevent contamination from having impacts on a groundwater drinking water source. Protecting water resources by properly managing substances that can contaminate water is another important measure that needs to be consistently implemented. Although DES requires regular testing of public water sources to ensure drinking water meets current water quality standards, there is no such requirement for private well owners. Accordingly, DES strongly encourages homeowners to have water quality tests completed on a regular basis. To learn more about testing your well, please visit www.des.nh.gov/pdf/well_testing.pdf.

Tom Burack, *Commissioner*

New natural resource guide presented for Ossipee Watershed

By Tara Schroeder, Program Director
Green Mountain Conservation Group

Professional Planner Steve Whitman, the Ossipee Watershed Coalition (OWC), and the Green Mountain Conservation Group (GMCG) staff made several presentations in November and December 2007 to introduce the new "Natural Resource Planning Guide for the Ossipee Watershed," a document that includes background information on everything from air quality to wildlife habitat, on-line resources, GIS maps, and model ordinances for the towns of Effingham, Freedom, Madison, Ossipee, Sandwich and Tamworth. The GMCG is very grateful to DES for providing the majority of funding for this project through a Watershed Assistance Grant.

The guide has been a project of the Green Mountain Conservation Group



Steve Whitman, John Shipman and Blair Folts display the new Natural Resource Guide and GIS maps.

and Ossipee Watershed Coalition for the past three years, requiring hundreds of hours of volunteer work, community meetings, workshops, professional planning advice, and contributions from many organizations such as the DES, Fish and Game, The Nature Conservancy, the Forest Society, UNH Cooperative Extension, and others. Although the guide covers

the six primary towns of the Ossipee watershed, the concepts, ordinances and planning recommendations can readily be applied to any town, watershed or region looking to balance growth with the protection of shared resources.

At recent presentations, the contents of the guide, including GIS maps, model ordinances and natural resource information, were introduced, as well as how municipal officials can use the guide as a tool in their town. A copy of the guide was given to each town's planning board and CDs to the selectmen and conservation commissions. The entire document is now available online at www.gmcg.org; this is the first watershed-wide natural resource guide produced in New Hampshire.

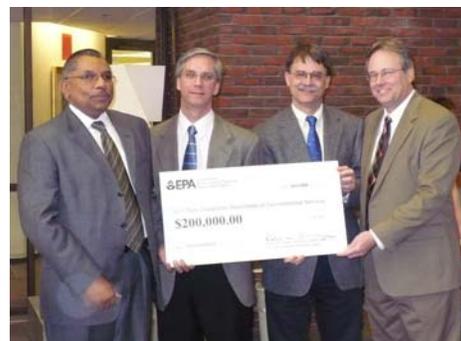
Locally, planning boards have responded enthusiastically to the guide, stating that the information will assist with master plan updates and that it has already been useful in creating and updating natural resource chapters. Some towns have already begun dialogue with local land use boards across town boundaries, holding joint meetings with planning boards and conservation commissions, as well as selectmen, at these presentations.

This spring the project will continue with Ossipee Watershed Coalition meetings, a presentation to the towns of the new GIS maps created by Katie Callahan of Fish and Game, an update of the six-town ordinance rating matrix and a regional meeting in late May. ■

DES events in photos



Commissioner Burack, center, recently signed a Partnership Agreement with the New Hampshire Association of Regional Planning Commissions. For information, go to www.des.nh.gov/partnersprogram/index.html.



In April, DES received a \$200,000 grant from EPA for DES's statewide Petroleum Assessment Program. From left to right: Jim O'Brien, EPA; Mike Wimsatt, DES Waste Division Director; Gary Lynn, DES Oil Remediation and Contamination Bureau (grant writer); and Keith DuBois, DES Brownfields Coordinator.

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New pumpout boat will help protect state's waters

DES has a new vessel patrolling the coastal waters. The nation's first self-contained aluminum pumpout boat is on the lookout for boats that need their sewage pumped and protecting the health of New Hampshire's coastal waters.

While not a glamorous ship, this boat is essential to protecting New



New pumpout boat and DES crew.

Hampshire's coastal waters from sewage discharges from recreational boats. Larger recreational boats have onboard toilet systems, many of which do not treat wastes before discharge. Untreated sewage contains millions of bacterial cells including pathogenic bacteria. Sewage also contains nutrients that fertilize aquatic plants and algae. The pumpout boat removes wastes from boats and transports them via a 400-gallon holding tank to an onshore treatment plant. During the 2007 season alone, the DES pumpout program serviced 327 boats and removed 10,671 gallons of boat sewage.

This new vessel replaces a fiberglass pumpout boat that has been operating in New Hampshire's coastal waters since 2002. The older boat has removed in excess of 25,000 gallons of sewage from recreational boats from the Piscataqua River to Hampton Harbor, but the heavy pounding of the seas on the hull has taken its toll.

A grant awarded by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service supplied the funds for this boat. The Clean Vessel Act Program at DES received the funds and worked with the operators of the pumpout boat to design the ultimate boat sewage pumping vessel. A more rugged design was necessary to produce a vessel that could withstand the open ocean and the harsh currents of the Piscataqua River. Silverships, an Alabama ship builder, was awarded the bid to produce a boat that could

both handle the rough seas and carry a heavy load to its final destination.

The new vessel will help to keep our coastal waters clean and safe for recreational activities like swimming and shellfish harvesting. Dedication of the new vessel will be held this spring at the Port Authority facility in Portsmouth.

Watch for the new pumpout boat when you're out on the water. And, to request service, call the boat operator's cell phone at (603) 670-5130. To learn more about the New Hampshire Clean Vessel Act Program, visit www.des.nh.gov/wmb/cva. ■

Wetlands Program Improvement Initiative

Dating back to 1967, New Hampshire's wetland laws were among the first passed in the nation. Because of that forethought, the amount of wetlands lost in the state is around 10 percent since colonial times, in comparison to the national average of about 50 percent. DES regulates all impacts to wetlands and processes about 2,500 permit applications per year. In 2007, the Legislative Budget Assistant conducted a performance audit of the Wetlands and Alteration of Terrain (AOT) programs. This audit revealed that, while these programs are successful in writing high quality permits, the time frames, tracking, and adherence to common procedures should be improved. In response to this audit and other department-wide strategic planning interests, Commissioner Tom Burack began a Wetlands Program Improvement Initiative (WPPI) in September 2007. The purpose of that initiative is two-fold: first, to identify short-term responses to the audit findings and, second, to envision the future of the program. The ultimate goal of the WPPI is to create a 21st Century wetlands regulatory process.

All of the audit findings have been addressed in some manner since its release. Some of these changes include improved data management and tracking, reduction of application backlogs, proposed statute and rule changes, and modifications of internal processes. In particular, House Bill 1471 would change the "deemed approved" status and better align some of the statutory time frames.

Beyond the response to the audit, DES is looking at the future. Ted Diers of DES was asked to coordinate this initiative. Between October 2007 and February 2008, he met with numerous groups, such as the trade associations, environmental and conservation groups, municipal and public officials, as well as dozens of individuals from the regulated community. He also received many unsolicited emails and phone calls. Other meetings occurred with DES staff, the Wetlands Council, DOT staff and legislators. In all, through this initiative we have heard from or met with over 150 people. We have also perused many docu-

WPPI, continued on page 8

Discover *Wild* NH Day a success!

Gov. Lynch, right, pledges a commitment to be greener at the DES booth on Discover Wild NH Day. Below, many people visited our booth; DES staff volunteers pose. Thank you all for a successful day!



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ments created through similar improvement efforts over the past 20 years and, to a lesser extent, work being conducted in other states.

Most of the issues that have been identified fall broadly into the following categories: consistency; time-frames; customer service; employee satisfaction; docks; and compliance.

Based on what has been expressed by stakeholders and in previous improvement efforts, a number of concepts for program improvement are described below. Some of the policy suggestions cover areas such as classification of wetlands, docks and shoreline structures, and indirect impacts, e.g., water quality and wildlife. Other suggestions are more procedural in nature, such as integrated permitting, expanded permits by rule or other general permits, increased use of third party professionals, changing the appeals process, and how best to regulate public infrastructure projects. Finally, a number of suggestions deal with the management of the wetlands process, including customer service, staffing, compliance, data management, and training.

DES has begun the process of winnowing these concept options down to a manageable number and expects to seek public input on how best to turn these concepts into real improvements. This process is expected to last through at least December 2008. Notice of public input sessions will be made throughout the year. Anyone with constructive and creative thoughts on how to improve DES wetlands conservation and regulation is encouraged to contact Ted Diers at ted.diers@des.nh.gov. ■



Friday, May 16 BIKE/WALK TO WORK DAY 2008



May 16 is Bike/Walk to Work Day! Welcome Spring by commuting by bike or on foot. Bicycling and walking to work are great ways to stay in shape and arrive at work alert, energized, and ready to tackle whatever challenge comes your way!

FOR MORE INFORMATION or route information, contact Jerry Moore, DOT Bike-Pedestrian Program, (603) 271-3320 or JMoore2@dot.state.nh.us.



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