

ARRA Update Issue

Commissioner's Column

DES and the Recovery Act

The Department of Environmental Services has received over \$63.8 million in American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funds from the Environmental Protection Agency, most of which will be passed through as grants and loans to New Hampshire communities for various purposes. Specifically, these funds will provide resources to:



- Upgrade municipal wastewater and public drinking water supply systems (\$57.5 million in ARRA funds, which leverages \$115 million in total investment) by construction of about 100 environmental infrastructure projects).
- Reduce diesel emissions from public and private vehicle fleets, including improvements to public transportation and school buses and highway construction equipment (\$1.73 million of ARRA funds, which leverages over \$2.9 million in total investment for 19 projects).
- Clean up sites with hazardous waste and petroleum contamination (\$3 million for about 20 site cleanups).
- Remove the Winnicut River Dam to provide improved fish passage and overall environmental improvements on New Hampshire's Seacoast (\$500,000).
- Implement watershed planning projects by providing resources to each of New Hampshire's regional planning agencies (\$235,000).

The ARRA funds are serving as a catalyst to accomplish two important goals: improve our environment and create jobs to help accelerate economic recovery. DES is pleased to have been provided the opportunity to implement these important and diverse programs using ARRA funds that will have such beneficial results for New Hampshire.

Tom Burack, *Commissioner*



The removal of the Winnicut River Dam in Greenland is being made possible in part by federal stimulus funding received through NOAA.

Winnicut Dam removal begins

The NH Coastal Program at DES was recently awarded \$500,000 in stimulus funding for the Winnicut River Dam Removal Project in Greenland. This project was one of 50 proposals selected by National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration out of a national pool of 814 proposals to receive American Recovery and Reinvestment Act stimulus funds. Removal of the dam, which is estimated to cost a total of \$1.1 million, began in August.

The NH Coastal Program project will remove the Winnicut River Dam and install a fish passage structure under an upstream bridge, reopening passage to more than 39 miles of habitat for migratory fish like river herring, smelt and American eel.

"Once restored, the Winnicut will be the only coastal river in New Hampshire to have adequate upstream and downstream passage for migratory fish. This project will benefit not only the environment, but will also create jobs,

Winnicut, *continued on page 2*

Winnicut

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showing that sustainability and economic stimulus can occur simultaneously," said Restoration Coordinator Kevin Lucey of the Coastal Program.

Beginning in the mid-1600s, a dam was constructed and maintained on the Winnicut river primarily in support of mills that operated along it. The current dam was constructed in 1957 and marked the first barrier created for non-industrial purposes. This dam was erected in conjunction with a Canadian step-weir fish ladder with the intention of enhancing waterfowl habitat and assisting fish migration. But it soon proved to be detrimental to significant migratory fish.

In addition to reopening the passageway, the dam's removal will help to recover some of the 5,500 feet of riverine habitat lost through the creation of the impoundment, and restore 21,000 square feet of intertidal habitat, including 6,500 square feet of salt marsh. The project will also serve to strengthen the connection between salt and fresh water in the lower reaches of the Winnicut.



The Winnicut River Dam is owned by the NH Fish and Game Department. Additional funding entities for this project include: NH Charitable Foundation, NH Mooseplate Grant Program, Coastal Conservation Association, and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service.

A dedication event celebrating both the start of the dam removal process and the cooperative partnership that is so vital to the project's success will be held this fall. ■

at www.des.nh.gov
click on
the icon
for more ARRA info



State receives \$1.3 million ARRA funds to help clean up UST leaks

In an effort to protect people where they live, work and play, EPA provided \$1,286,000 to DES under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 to assess and clean up underground petroleum storage tank leaks. The greatest potential hazard from a leaking underground storage tank is that the petroleum or other hazardous substances seep into the soil and contaminate groundwater, the source of drinking water for nearly one-third of all Americans.

"DES intends to use the leaking underground storage tank stimulus money to clean up contaminated properties, remove out of service underground storage tanks and expedite brownfields redevelopment projects. The state is being given a wonderful opportunity to put hard working New Hampshire citizens back to work while achieving environmental progress and objectives," noted Tom Burack, DES Commissioner.

This money is part of \$197 million appropriated under the Recovery Act to address shovel-ready sites nationwide contaminated by petroleum from leaking underground storage tanks. The funds will be used for overseeing assessment and cleanup of leaks from underground storage tanks or directly paying for assessment and cleanup of leaks from federally regulated tanks where the responsible party is unknown, unwilling or unable to finance the cleanup, or the cleanup is an emergency response.

"The Recovery Act is providing nearly \$10 million across New England to speed up the important work of assessing and cleaning up underground storage tank leaks," said Ira W. Leighton, acting regional administrator of EPA's New England office. "This is an investment with real dividends: healthy communities, a clean environment and good-paying jobs."

For more information on the ARRA and the environment in New Hampshire, please go to www.des.nh.gov and click on the NH Recovery icon. ■

Wes Ripple receives nat'l EPA recognition

Wes Ripple was recently honored with the "2008 National 104(g) Program's Wastewater Operator Trainer's On-Site Technical Assistance Award" by EPA. Ripple received the award for his outstanding efforts in helping the Bristol wastewater treatment facility attain first place in the "Most Improved Plant Category" that was part of the 2008 EPA National Operations and Maintenance Excellence Awards Program. EPA values the outstanding work of Ripple and the entire Operations Section of the DES Wastewater Engineering Bureau for continually providing essential on-site technical assistance to wastewater treatment plants throughout New Hampshire. ■

ENVIRONMENTAL NEWS



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ARM funds help preserve habitats

The DES Wetlands Bureau has announced the Merrimack River Watershed Site Selection Committee's recommendations for four projects to receive a total of \$631,000 in grants through the DES Aquatic Resource Mitigation Fund. The selected projects are the Stewart Property in Frankestown, the Clay Pond Headwaters Protection Plan (Hooksett), the Concord Regional Solid Waste/Resource Recovery Center site in Canterbury, and the Nesenkeag Brook Headwaters Project in Londonderry. The projects will provide wetland restoration, stream improvements and land preservation totaling 1,080 acres of habitat with high conservation value. The projects are subject to approval by the Governor and Council. For more information, please see "ARM" on the A to Z List at www.des.nh.gov. ■

DES receives sizeable Recovery funds for Brownfields projects

DES is one of 13 New England groups selected by EPA to receive additional Brownfields Grants for contaminated land cleanup. Nearly \$9.5 million in grant funding was awarded to the 13 groups to provide loans and sub-grants to help carry out cleanup activities, redevelopment projects, and create jobs for local residents living near brownfields sites. Funding for these grants is supported by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009.

DES received one of the largest shares of the Recovery Act funds—\$1.8 million—which will support as many as nine shovel-ready hazardous substances cleanup projects that have been identified by the state. These projects are expected to create over 300 new jobs as well as substantial public and private investment. The funding is in addition to the \$2.8 million in ARRA and EPA brownfields general program funding grants that DES received from EPA in June.

EPA made its selections based on the organizations' previously demonstrated ability to assist their communities through effective brownfields redevelopment loans. Revolving loan funds are generally used to provide low or no interest loans for brownfields cleanups.

Brownfields are sites where expansion, redevelopment, or reuse may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant. In 2002, the Small Business Liability Relief and Brownfields Revitalization Act (Brownfields Law) was passed. The Brownfields Law expanded the definition of what is considered a brownfield, so communities may now also focus on mine-scarred lands or sites contaminated by petroleum or the manufacture and distribution of illegal drugs. EPA's Brownfields Program encourages redevelopment of America's estimated 450,000 abandoned and contaminated waste sites.

For more information on EPA brownfields cleanup revolving loan fund pilots, grants and other brownfields activities under the Recovery Act, see www.epa.gov/brownfields/eparecovery/index.htm. For New Hampshire's brownfields program, please see "Brownfields" under the A to Z List on www.des.nh.gov. ■

Partnership encourages school "clean air zones"

With the start of a new school year, it's a good time to think about keeping the air quality in and around schools clean and healthy. One way to do that is to reduce vehicle idling by establishing "Clean Air Zones." A Clean Air Zone means that all drivers – bus drivers, parents and delivery drivers – should turn off engines as soon as they arrive in the schoolyard, especially when waiting for passengers to board.

Exhaust fumes from idling vehicles have been linked to asthma and lung cancer. Children are more susceptible to exhaust pollution because their lungs are still developing and they breathe at a faster rate than adults. Diesel exhaust from school buses is particularly harmful and can accumulate on and around buses, posing an increased health risk. Idling vehicles in schoolyards can also pollute the air inside school buildings, posing a health risk to children and teachers throughout the day.

The NH Partners for Healthy Schools (NHPHS) is a partnership of several state-wide organizations, including DES, advocating for better, healthier environments in schools, including indoor and outdoor air quality. NHPHS stresses to school officials that a proactive approach to managing school air quality will not only have a significant positive impact on a child's health and learning ability, but will save time and money by minimizing absenteeism, crisis intervention, breakdowns, energy use and liability. NHPHS encourages school officials to establish Clean Air Zones as an easy, cost effective way to improve air quality in and around their schools. For more information about the NHPHS and its services, please visit www.nhhealthyschoolenvironments.org or contact Jessica Morton at (603) 271-3911 or jessica.morton@des.nh.gov. ■

Renewable energy projects update

By Brian Quiros, Legal Unit intern

Did you know that New Hampshire currently has three alternative energy projects in operation? The Lempster Wind Farm is a 24 megawatt wind farm owned by Iberdrola Renewables. The Northern Woods Power project at Schiller Station in Portsmouth is a 50 MW biomass operation owned by PSNH. The third is the University of New Hampshire's "EcoLine" project, which burns landfill gas to create electricity. What are the latest updates on other alternative energy projects? Despite the state's abundant potential for renewable energy, there are very few pending projects in the state.

The largest pending project now is the 99 MW wind farm proposed by Granite Reliable Power in Coos County. The New Hampshire Site Evaluation Committee conditionally granted the required certificate in mid-July for Granite to proceed with the project. The wind farm will consist of 33 turbines, each with

a capacity to generate 3 MW of electricity.



The other two pending projects in the state are biomass facilities. Biomass facilities burn "waste-wood" to generate electricity. This wood is usually made up of tree crowns, branches, low quality wood, or anything that is traditionally "wasted" in forestry operations.

The wood arrives in the form of wood chips from forests that are managed and harvested using sustainable practices. Neither of these projects' applicants has filed paperwork with the Site Evaluation Committee, and both are in the preliminary stages of development. These two projects are a 29 MW facility in Berlin planned by Clean Power Development, and the other is a 65 MW facility planned by Laidlaw Energy Group, also in Berlin.

Currently, there are no new hydro-electric projects proposed in the state, nor has there been a large solar power proposal. There also are no projects pending that propose the use of geothermal resources.

There are two impediments to further growth of alternative energy in New Hampshire: the current recession and limited transmission capacity, particularly in the North Country. Put very simply, the wires that move electricity across the state can only carry just so much electricity before they can't transport any more. Imagine trying to "push" more water through a small hose and you get an idea of the problem. Thus, despite abundant resources, commercial interest, and popular and political support, large scale alternative energy projects in the state will be limited by the ability to transport the electricity from source to user.

For more information from DES on alternative energy and on the state's Site Evaluation Committee, please choose "Energy" from the A to Z List on www.des.nh.gov. ■

According to the US Energy Information Administration, the state has average/above average solar resources for photovoltaic systems. The state recently changed the tax laws to promote non-commercial renewable energy. Homeowners may qualify for a rebate up to \$6,000 from the state if the solar or wind system meets the specified standards. For more information about this fund, please go to the Public Utilities Commission website at <http://www.puc.nh.gov/>.

RGGI grants help to fund nine projects

In July, the PUC's Sustainable Energy Division announced the selection of nine proposals to receive grant funding from proceeds generated as part of the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative. The grants will support projects that promote energy efficiency and reduce greenhouse gas emissions in New Hampshire. A total of \$5.4 million was awarded to public and private entities for projects ranging from training for building professionals to promote green building standards, to measuring energy performance in public K-12 schools and recommending strategies for improvements. The biggest ticket item (\$2 million for one year), awarded to the New Hampshire Business Finance Authority, establishes a revolving loan fund to help businesses finance energy efficiency improvements. For the complete list of selected proposals, visit the PUC website at www.puc.nh.gov/ and look under Sustainable Energy, or contact Jack Ruderman, Director, at (603) 271-6012 or jack.ruderman@puc.nh.gov. ■

NHGS expands groundwater monitoring network

by David Wunsch, State Geologist, and Lee Wilder, NHGS Outreach Coordinator

The New Hampshire Geological Survey is installing monitoring wells to create an ambient bedrock monitoring well network to augment the current network of shallow wells that monitor surficial aquifer consisting largely of sand and gravel. Ambient, or unstressed, wells reveal natural conditions with minimal influence from pumped wells or known contamination sites. Characterizing ambient groundwater conditions is important for drought management and determining background levels of natural contaminants. In addition, the ambient bedrock wells can be used to monitor any effects of climate change on a statewide water levels, which may be important in the future.

The NHGS project includes installing two bedrock wells at each site to create a well nest that will allow the state to monitor the shallow and deep bedrock flow systems, which will provide data that will help hydrogeologists address several questions related to groundwater recharge and chemistry. NHGS staff used a geographic information system to combine geologic formations with well yield and location statistics derived from the state's Water Well Inventory database to determine the most prolific rock formations that comprise the overall bedrock aquifer. They then matched state conservation or park lands with the geology to locate prospective sites for well installation.

NHGS has installed wells in state parks or conservation lands through a memorandum of agreement with the Department of Resources and Economic Development to maintain long-term access to the wells, and find areas that are minimally impacted by human activities to approximate a

natural condition. Installing the wells on state land will also help protect the state's investment in this infrastructure. NHGS also had to consider access in the winter and proximity to the present driving loop that staff drive to collect water levels from the current well network. Currently, NHGS staff travel approximately 1,000 miles per month collecting water level measurements around the state. The addition of digital data loggers will allow data from some wells to be accessed remotely, saving time and money.

To date, the available funds have allowed for nine bedrock wells to be completed around the state. These wells were constructed by a New Hampshire licensed water well contractor selected by a state competitive bid and grading process. Each well was logged using a down-hole video camera that allowed NHGS to identify and record the location of water-producing fractures, and other geologic observations.

In addition to the ambient well network, the state also needs a stressed well network to see the effect of water use and pumping in regions that are widely using groundwater supplies. This will allow water managers to monitor the long-term impacts, if any, on ground water in areas that are "stressed" by society's needs. DES recently hosted a meeting of the SB 155 Ground Water Commission's Data

Needs Subcommittee to gather input from groundwater scientists from state agencies, consultants, and academia to enhance data collection and monitoring of the state's groundwater. ■

Wunsch named to national post

Dr. David Wunsch, State Geologist, was recently elected president of the Association of American State Geologists at its annual meeting in Utah. The AASG, founded in 1908, represents the chief executives of the geologic bureaus of all 50 states and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. Collectively, the state geological surveys' budgets total exceed \$230 million, and they employ approximately 2,000 earth scientists and engineers who provide geological information that assists their respective states, as well as the nation as a whole, meet its energy, water, and mineral commodity needs through cooperative projects with the U.S. departments of Energy and Interior. "The members of AASG look forward to continued cooperative efforts with federal partners as we work together to help the nation meet its ever changing energy, mineral, and water needs, and prepare and plan to address natural hazards that impact the quality of our lives," said Wunsch. More information about AASG can be found at www.stategeologists.org/ or contact David Wunsch, AASG president, (603) 271-6482, david.wunsch@des.nh.gov. ■

Governor Names Joanne Morin OEP Director

Gov. John Lynch recently named Joanne Morin, who served as the DES Climate and Energy Program Manager, to serve as director of the Office of Energy and Planning. Morin has taken over for Amy Ignatius, who was recently appointed by Gov. Lynch to the Public Utilities Commission.

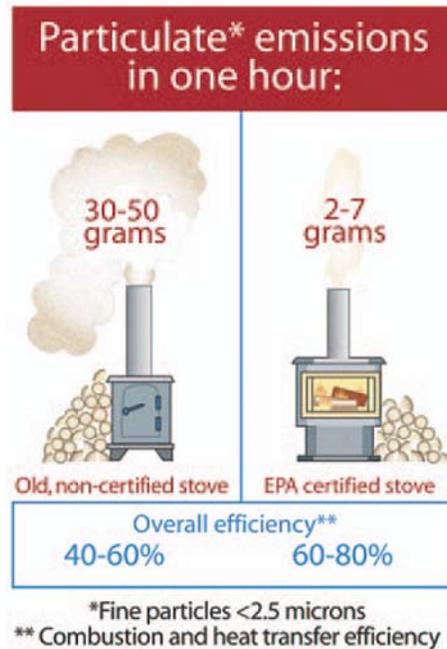
"Joanne Morin brings a wealth of policy expertise, management skill and leadership ability necessary to ensure that the Office of Energy and Planning will continue working effectively to help address these challenges," Gov. Lynch said.

Congratulations, Joanne! ■

Burn clean – Best practices for burning wood at home

Just by changing the way you burn wood in your woodstove, you can save money, reduce air pollution and protect your health! Here are a few simple tips to make your fire burn cleaner and more efficiently and minimize fuel costs. If you heat your home with a woodstove, use these tips to help keep the air cleaner and healthier to breathe!

- Choose the right firewood. Hardwoods like oak, maple, beech and hickory are best. Pine should be avoided because it is a softwood and has a high moisture content. Never burn trash or treated wood, which can emit toxic air pollutants. Burning these materials is a violation of state law.
- Season all firewood. Burn only wood that has been cut, split, and seasoned for at least six months. It can take up to a year for the moisture content of cordwood to drop to about 20 percent. Dry hardwoods produce longer lasting fires.
- Begin with a quick, hot start. Never use gasoline, kerosene or



charcoal starter to light a fire. Use plain paper and kindling to start a small fire and add logs one at a time. Always burn small hot fires. Don't let fires smolder. Choking the fire and closing the damper will create excess smoke and air pollution.

- Check the smoke coming from the

chimney. Once the fire is burning, there should be little or no smoke coming from the chimney. Black smoke can indicate a creosote buildup.

- Remove ashes from the stove. Fires burn hottest and cleanest with good air flow. When cleaning out ashes, use a metal container and never place them near combustible materials.
- Keep your chimney clean. Burning green or unseasoned firewood can cause a buildup of creosote, a highly-flammable crusty deposit that sticks to the inside of your chimney and can cause chimney fires. Information about chimney fires and creosote is found at www.csia.org. Have the chimney inspected and cleaned annually.
- Choose the right size stove. Be sure it is properly installed and check to see if all gaskets and seals are tight.
- Upgrade to an EPA-certified woodstove or other clean burning technology. A wide variety of woodstoves are manufactured today. All new stoves are tested and certified to meet certain emission standards. New stoves require less wood to produce the same amount of heat because they are designed for more complete combustion. New stoves also require less maintenance. By replacing an older stove with a new EPA certified stove, consumers can help reduce air pollution without sacrificing heat and comfort. Choosing the most fuel efficient heating device can save a significant percentage in fuel costs, and prevents localized air pollution and tons of greenhouse gas emissions over the life of the stove!

For more information, see "Heating with Wood" at <http://extension.unh.edu/Energy/WoodHeat.html>. ■

Enter the Radon Poster Contest!

DES is participating in the National Radon Poster Contest to raise awareness about radon and to encourage people to test for radon in their homes. Children ages nine to 14 are eligible. They can be enrolled in a public, private or home school – or through a sponsoring club, such as an art, computer or science club, scouting organization, or 4-H club.

The winning state poster will be entered into the national contest. The national winner, a parent and a teacher (or sponsoring organization's representative) will win an all-expenses paid trip to Washington, DC. The deadline to enter is October 15, 2009.

For more information about radon and the Radon Poster Contest, contact Owen David at (603) 271-6845 or go to www.des.nh.gov and look for "radon" on the A to Z List. ■

Water quality further protected through new legislation

More than a dozen bills were enacted this legislative session that further protect our state's precious water resources. The subject matters range from dams to rivers, and from source water land conservation to the creation of a new watershed alliance. Below are brief synopses of the key bills.

HB 45, Chapter 227, expands the eligibility for water supply land conservation grants to future sources of public drinking water to be identified by DES as favorable or high-yielding areas not constrained by existing development. It also broadens the definition of grantees to include non-profit land trust organizations.

Three bills specifically concern the Rivers Management and Protection Program. HB 58, Chapter 45, and HB 452, Chapter 208, add designated segments of the Cochecho River and of the Ammonoosuc River, respectively, as protected under RMPP. HB 102, Chapter 201, clarifies certain provisions of the RMPP, the membership on advisory committees, and the funding of programs. Of these bills, HB 452 and HB 102 also concern instream flow; HB 102 extends certain reporting dates for the instream flow pilot program and HB 452 provides for consideration of riparian rights in the establishment of protected instream flows. In addition, HB 102 legislatively establishes the New Hampshire Volunteer Rivers Assessment Program within DES, and HB 452 provides an exemption from terrain alteration permitting requirements for certain trail construction operations.

HB 290, Chapter 181, establishes procedures enabling a municipality to adopt a fluvial erosion hazard ordinance. As part of these procedures, the bill requires municipalities to submit to DES a map of all proposed fluvial erosion hazard zones and receive DES's comments prior to adopting any



A quiet fall scene photographed by Mark Stevens, DES Dam Bureau.

ordinances. DES's comments, if any, are advisory only.

Of those bills related to dams, HB 502, Chapter 187, modifies the definition of "dam" to exclude certain ponds and small dams from the requirement to pay dam registration fees, and SB 28, Chapter 31, exempts dams classified by DES as non-menace dams from the annual dam registration fee. SB 28 also requires notification to owners of dams and the DES Dam Bureau of downstream development.

SB 65-FN, Chapter 303, amends the statute governing the Wetlands Bureau's Aquatic Resource Compensation Mitigation Fund, which now allows DES to accept in lieu payments for the restoration or creation of wetlands and the preservation of upland areas adjacent to wetlands, streams, rivers, and their riparian habitats. The bill also establishes a committee to study the administrative fee percentage for such in lieu payments.

Lastly, SB 168-FN, Chapter 220, established the Southeast Watershed Alliance (SWA), which set up an organizational framework for the forty-two New Hampshire coastal watershed communities to come together to address water quality issues. This Alliance will provide a way for communities to work together on sustainable and cost-effective solutions to water quality in the face of increased future regulatory requirements. The more people at the table, the more minds to come up with creative solutions to reducing pollutant loads. An information meeting open to all will be held on September 29 at the Nottingham Town Hall at 6:30 p.m.

For the complete text of a bill, please visit the General Court website at www.gencourt.state.nh.us/ie/. ■



Assistant Commissioner Mike Walls and summer intern Henry Yan on a recent dam inspection. Photo by Mark Stevens.

Environmental Public Health Tracking Program launches web-based data tool

The NH Environmental Public Health Tracking Program, a cooperative program between the Department of Health and Human Services and DES, recently launched the Environmental Health Data Integration Network. EHDIN is a unique web-based tool that allows users to simultaneously view information on environmental hazards and their health outcomes, such as air pollution and asthma or arsenic and bladder cancer in New Hampshire. The data will improve understanding of such hazards and lead to actions that can prevent chronic illnesses.

“Environmental hazards are one factor in the overall health equation. Environmental and health data will be available for the public to use in conjunction with consideration of how certain lifestyle issues, genetics, and other risk factors play a role in certain health outcomes,” said DES Commissioner Tom Burack. “The launch of the new Environmental Health and Data Integration Network provides a new tool to help make existing data more accessible.”

EHDIN allows users to create maps, graphs and charts of state and county level health outcome data for asthma, heart attack hospitalizations, and cancers, together with environmental

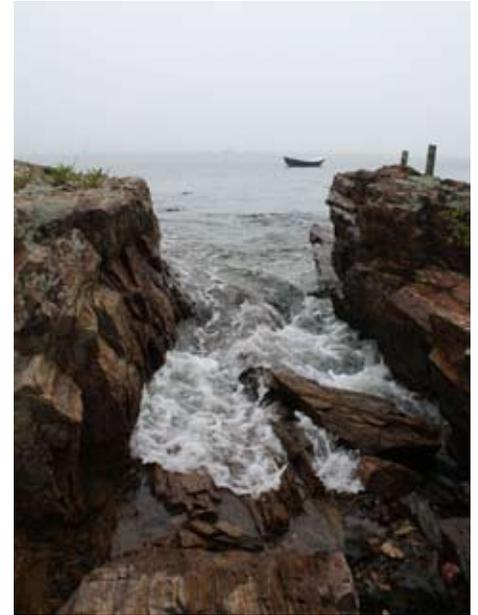
data such as air pollution (ozone and particulate matter 2.5), and several contaminants in public drinking water (arsenic, disinfection by-products, and nitrates/nitrites). Data about birth and reproductive outcomes, birth defects, childhood lead poisoning and radon will be available in the future.

“In the face of challenging issues such as increasing cancer rates and growing health care costs, tracking and understanding the impact of environmental conditions is a top priority,” said Dr. Jose Montero, director of Public Health at DHHS. “The Environmental Health Data Integration Network is a major step forward in web-based surveillance.”

New Hampshire is one of 16 grantees that receive funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to build tracking networks and conduct pilot projects in order to improve our knowledge of potential links between environmental hazards and health effects.

To access EHDIN, go to www.nh.gov/epht, and click on the EHDIN

logo. Type “public” in the User ID; no password is necessary. For more information about the program, please contact Laura Holmes, DHHS, at LHolmes@dhhs.state.nh.us or (603) 271-1604, or Matthew Cahillane, program manager, (603) 271-4072. ■



A foggy day on the coast. Photo by Amy Samson, DES Legal Unit.



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