

COMMISSIONER'S COLUMN

The Rivers Management Program celebrates 30 years and 19 designated rivers

In early July, Governor Chris Sununu will be signing Senate Bill 445, designating the Warner River as a New Hampshire protected river. The signing of this bill, which will make it the 19th river to join the Rivers Management and Protection Program (Rivers Program), proves that river management is as important to New Hampshire's residents now as it was 30 years ago when the program was created.

The effort that resulted in the Rivers Program was initiated in the mid-1980s by concerned citizens, like those along the Warner River, who recognized the need for clean water for both humans and wildlife. These citizens joined together to form the New Hampshire Rivers Campaign, now the New Hampshire Rivers Council, demanding that the State take action to ensure that rivers would be protected from pollution and the conflicting demands placed on them by water suppliers, hydropower, recreation, agriculture and others. On June 29, 1988, the New Hampshire legislature responded by creating the Rivers Management and Protection Program. The Rivers Program is a unique partnership between state government, citizens and municipalities that gives locals a voice in the management of the rivers that flow through their communities.



The Warner River at the former Davisville Dam in Warner, NH.

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Volunteers help keep our beaches clean

Throughout the summer, you'll find volunteers for the Blue Ocean Society for Marine Conservation cleaning up New Hampshire's beaches and recording what they find on data cards to help the Society learn about marine pollution in N.H. Last year volunteers collected a grand total of 74,651 pieces of trash that totaled 7,438 pounds.

"Many of the items that volunteers picked up can be hazardous to marine life through entanglement or ingestion," said Jen Kennedy, the Society's Executive Director. "Every piece of litter picked up on shore is one less piece that will impact the marine life in the Gulf of Maine."

Commonly found items in 2017 included cigarette butts (a whopping 33,030); rope (4,580 pieces); plastic bottle caps (4,334); plastic bags (4,161); and tiny trash—plastic, foam and glass pieces (7,721). Littered, forgotten or blown away plastic bottles, cans, Styrofoam cups and straws were also in the top-ten most collected. Past years' data indicate similar results, with cigarette butts being the Number 1 item picked up every year, and rope and bottle caps typically within the top three.

The data recorded at the cleanups are used to inform the public and policy makers. For example, the Society began a Skip the Straw campaign in cooperation with several other local organizations last year.

Volunteers also picked up 40 "Hooksett disks"—small white circular shaped mesh disks, approximately two inches in diameter, from the accidental spill of

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As the program's imminent addition, the Warner River designation will be the culmination of three years of tireless effort by community members along the river in Bradford, Warner, Sutton, Webster and Hopkinton to safeguard the wild brook trout they discovered living in the river and its tributaries. The designated river will begin on the West Branch Warner River in Bradford and flow under four historic covered bridges to its confluence with the Contoocook River in Hopkinton, adding 20 miles to the existing 990 miles of protected rivers throughout the state. The Warner River joins 18 other protected rivers or river segments, such as the Isinglass and Exeter rivers in the coastal region, the Saco, Ammonoosuc and Pemigewasset rivers flowing out of the White Mountains, and the mighty Merrimack and Connecticut rivers, which provide power, drinking water and recreation to New Hampshire's residents.

Local management of each designated river is achieved through the work of the local river advisory management committees (LACs) established for each river. Over 200 volunteer river champions represent their towns and serve as the voice of the river on the LACs. LAC members regularly monitor water quality, review river-front building plans, organize river cleanups, educate community residents about the river and spearhead river restoration projects. Examples of a few of these efforts include:

- The discovery of railroad ties dripping creosote into the Connecticut River in North Stratford and the advocacy that resulted in their replacement.

- Monitoring the chemical and biological integrity of the upper Merrimack River for 23 years, hosting annual Bug Nights where volunteers learn to assess river health by sorting and identifying macroinvertebrates collected in rock baskets deployed over the summer.
- Assistance with the restoration of 900 feet of Warren Brook in Alstead. The Cold River LAC organized 120 middle school students from five surrounding towns to plant 1,100 plants along the stream banks to protect the brook from erosion.

Residents along the Warner River will soon form a new LAC to develop a river corridor management plan, collect water quality data, prioritize culvert replacements to support fish passage and promote the river's excellent white water paddling.

LACs also partner with state agencies on many projects, especially the New Hampshire Stream Crossing Initiative, which identifies undersized culverts and bridges. LAC volunteers helped to assess stream crossings in multiple watersheds to determine which should be modified to enhance flood resiliency, improve fish passage, and protect both road infrastructure and stream geomorphology.

While the LACs work locally, the Rivers Management Advisory Committee advises on statewide river management issues, legislation and the nomination of new rivers into the program. In addition, it reviews proposed disposals of state-owned land adjacent to rivers. In one instance

the group advised the state to retain a tract of land along the Turkey River in Concord due to its importance as public access both to the river itself and because the property linked two parcels of conservation land used for recreation.

Finally, one of the most important components of the Rivers Program is the Instream Flow Program. The 2016 drought highlighted the critical need for this program, which has been implemented on the Lamprey and Souhegan rivers. Because of the processes established by the Instream Flow Program, towns in the Lamprey River watershed were able to respond to the drought and begin conserving water for drinking, wildlife and recreation long before most of the state acknowledged a drought was in progress. The program is now being expanded to all designated rivers.

The Rivers Program and its volunteers, donating approximately 18,000 hours per year, form the backbone of river protection in New Hampshire. Both existing LAC members and those of the soon-to-be-formed Warner River LAC will continue to strive to keep our rivers clean, healthy and accessible for the next 30 years and beyond. ■

Brownfields cleanup grants available

The NHDES Brownfields Program is making available \$400,000 for two or more Cleanup Grants (limited to \$200,000 per site). The grants will provide funding to conduct cleanup activities on properties where the redevelopment or reuse of the site is complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance or contami-

nant. The deadline for submitting applications is July 31, 2018. Information and applications are available at: <https://www.des.nh.gov/organization/divisions/waste/hwrp/sss/brownfields/rlf-grant.htm>.

Contact Michael McCluskey at michael.mccluskey@des.nh.gov or (603) 271-2183.

ENVIRONMENTAL NEWS

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29 Hazen Drive • Concord, NH 03301
(603) 271-3503
www.des.nh.gov
editor@des.nh.gov
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Conant High School takes top honors at 2018 NH Envirothon competition



NHDES Assistant Commissioner, Clark Freise, stands with the winners of the 2018 NH Envirothon from Conant High School: (left to right) Carly LaBrecque, Ellie Graff, Emily Chen, Delaney Hirsch and Anna Graff. They are now headed to the North American Envirothon.

The 2018 competition saw 20 high school teams and three middle school teams vie for the top prize at the New Hampshire Envirothon during daylong festivities on May 22, 2018, hosted by the New Hampshire Technical Institute in Concord, and sponsored once again by the New Hampshire Association of Conservation Districts.

Conant High School Team #2 from Jaffrey, New Hampshire emerged as the overall winner. Conant High School was also the top vote-getter in 2017. Its 2018 team members include Carly LaBrecque, Delaney Hirsch, Anna Graff, Emily Chen and Ellie Graff. Their advisor is Margie Clark-Kevan. Concord High School's Team #4 achieved second

place honors and Concord's Team #3 placed third, following stops at the Aquatics, Soils, Wildlife and Forestry sites. Teams also honed their presentation skills through the use of a PowerPoint presentation to a group of volunteer judges focusing on this year's theme of The Ecology of Pasturelands. Awards were bestowed on the winners by Clark Freise, Assistant Commissioner of NHDES. As the 2018 winners, Conant High School will now represent New Hampshire at the North American Competition to be held from July 22-28 at Idaho State University in Pocatello, Idaho. The official theme for the national competition is Western Rangeland Management: Balancing Diverse Views. For more information about the national event, see the National Conservation Foundation's Envirothon website at: <https://www.envirothon.org/>. For more information on the New Hampshire Envirothon, please visit: <http://nhenvirothon.org/>. ■

NHDES urges water conservation this summer

According to the U.S. Drought Monitor released on June 21, New Hampshire has been categorized as abnormally dry. The three-month Seasonal Drought Outlook reporting also predicts that a development of a drought is likely. Based on these forecasts, NHDES urges the public to be conservation-minded and limit outdoor water use.

Here are some ways to conserve water use this dry season:

- Limit outdoor watering to 7 PM-8 AM.
- Repair any dripping faucets or leaks.

- Take shorter showers.
- Use a dishwasher only when full or hand-wash dishes using a set amount of water to avoid running water.
- Avoid power washing, washing cars and washing down large surfaces such as driveways and sidewalks.

When a drought is on the horizon, it is the best time to take action to avoid adverse conditions in the future. NHDES has prepared a series of guidance documents about drought and water efficiency for the public, municipalities, and water utilities. For this information go to www.des.nh.gov and scroll down to Drought Management. ■



twitter.com/NHDES



Sara Johnson receives national award

The 2018 Small Business Environmental Assistance Program (SBEAP) Excellence Award was presented to Sara Johnson of NHDES' Planning, Prevention and Assistance Unit at the 2018 Annual SBEAP Training in the Washington, D.C. area. The award recognizes one SBEAP/SBO or individual who exemplifies outstanding performance in areas of compliance assistance, sustainability, advocacy, and collaboration at the national level. Sara was nominated by her peers and chosen as the recipient of the SBEAP/SBO award due to her exemplary performance as Chair and Vice-chair of the NSC, her leadership on multiple subcommittees for the NSC, and spearheading communications with partners, among other qualities. ■



Sherry Godlewski receives regional award

The Regional Adaptation Leadership Award (RALA) from the American Society of Adaption Professionals was presented to Sherry Godlewski at the 2018 Local Solutions: Eastern Climate Preparedness Conference. The RALA award recognizes leaders in the climate change adaptation field who work in a strategic, inclusive, and effective manner. Sherry has been at the NHDES for 17 years in multiple divisions and has exemplified leadership in her ability to bring various collaborators together and promote adaptation programs. Her position as Co-Chair on several environmental groups across the state, working to deliver educational materials and coordinate adaptation activities, further demonstrates her leadership abilities. ■



Stacey Herbold receives Governor's award

The Governor's Excellence in Energy Efficiency Award was presented to Stacey Herbold, the Manager of NHDES' Water Conservation and Water Use Program, at the 10th Annual State Energy Conference. Her work in encouraging efficient water use practices and developing educational campaigns has led to improved energy efficiency in New Hampshire. Stacey has also worked on other energy-saving initiatives such as the fall Pump it Up campaign hosted by the NHDES Green Team to improve tire pressure, thus increasing fuel efficiency. She also took the initiative to enable the recycling program to have a better understanding of waste and recycling of materials at the 29 Hazen Drive building. Stacey has shown excellence in multiple energy conservation efforts. ■



Dan Hrobak earns Lean “Black Belt” certification

On June 1, 2018, Daniel Hrobak became the first person at NHDES to formally graduate from the State of New Hampshire Lean Black Belt Certification Program. This significant accomplishment was the culmination of nine months of study that resulted in a Capstone project to better formalize the implementation of Lean within the agency. Daniel’s project entailed gaining the formal approval of NHDES senior leadership via a signed charter and an accompanying Lean roadmap to help strategically direct future Lean activities.

Lean, also known as continuous process improvement, is focused on eliminating wasteful practices such as waiting, redundant steps, and especially under-utilized talent. Ultimately, the purpose of Lean at NHDES is to improve our ability to protect the environment and human health in New Hampshire as effectively and efficiently as we can, while being mindful of limited financial and staff time resources.

As the department’s Lean Coordinator and new Black Belt graduate, Daniel is involved with improving NHDES’ operations in partnership with a growing cadre of Lean-trained staff, as well as working with his fellow New Hampshire



Black Belt and Lean Practitioners participating in the New Hampshire Lean Executive Committee (LEC). The goal of the voluntary LEC is to create more enterprise-wide Lean successes and improving operations across New Hampshire government.

To learn more about NHDES’ Lean efforts, visit: <https://www.des.nh.gov/organization/commissioner/lean/index.htm>. For more information on the state-wide Lean effort, go to: <http://lean.nh.gov>. ■

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millions of disks from the Hooksett Wastewater Treatment Facility in March 2011. Now there is a crowdsourcing map to report sightings of Hooksett disks at www.reportdisks.org and to learn through their story about how marine pollution travels—disks have now been found as far away as Italy.

“We are fortunate in New Hampshire to have people willing to volunteer their time and energy to help keep our coastal public access points clean and make our beaches more safe and enjoyable for all,” said New Hampshire Coastal Program Administrator Steven Couture.

The cleanups were funded by a federal grant through NOAA’s Office for Coastal Management under the Coastal Zone Management Act, in conjunction with the NHDES Coastal Program, as well as donations from local businesses and individuals.

Learn more about how to volunteer with the Society by calling (603) 431-0260 or visiting www.blueoceansociety.org. In addition, more cleanup and outdoor volunteer opportunities are posted

on <https://naturegroupie.org/>.

More cleanup data are available at: <http://cecf1.unh.edu/debris/getreports.cfm>. ■



Image credit: Mike Toepfer

Green Your Fleet! 2018

The Granite State Clean Cities Coalition's Green Your Fleet! was held on Friday, June 1. This year's workshop set records for attendance, number of vehicles exhibited and sponsorship support.

The coalition partnered with the NH Motor Speedway and NH Auto Dealers Association to hold the workshop on the Speedway infield. The event drew over 200 attendees, many of whom took the opportunity to Ride & Drive alternative fuel and advanced technology vehicles on the racetrack.

Opening remarks given by New Hampshire Senator David Watters, and keynote speaker Jamie Page Deaton, inspired the crowd. Panel presentations and afternoon breakout sessions on compelling topics like electric & autonomous vehicles, propane & compressed natural gas (CNG), and telematics rounded out the day.



Coalition stakeholders and area dealerships provided an impressive array of electric vehicles and exhibited the latest in alternative fuel trucks and buses. Over 20 sponsors set up exhibit tables and talked with attendees. This year's event crossed the finish line in first place! ■

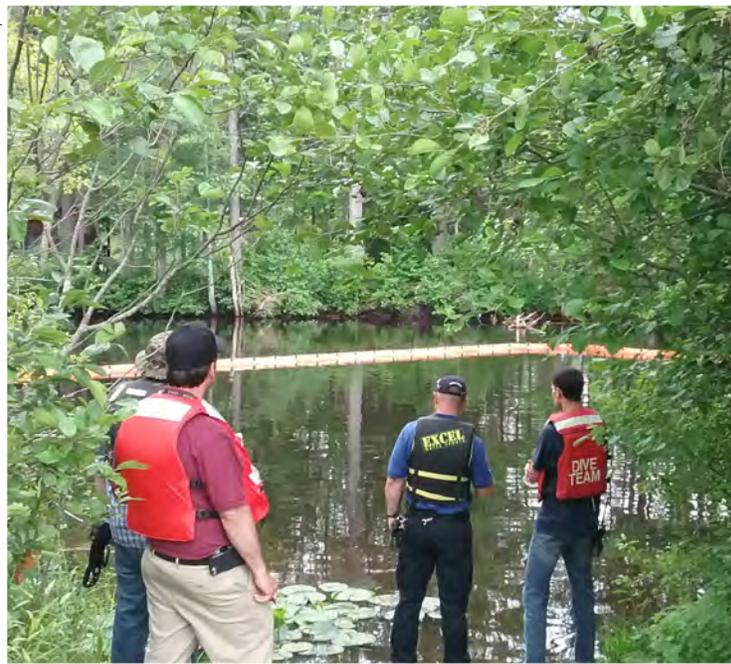
Interstate spill response drill

On June 21, 2018, the City of Somersworth, NH and the Town of Berwick, Maine hosted a joint emergency response training exercise designed to test each community's response to a chemical spill into the Salmon Falls River, which serves as a source of drinking water for both communities.

The exercise, funded in part by the Source Water Protection Program at NHDES, included 85 state and local responders including NHDES personnel serving as evaluators, observers and exercise organizers. Participants practiced deploying containment boom to protect drinking water intakes, conducting investigations and practicing communication protocols that are so important when time is a critical factor. Insights gathered during the exercise will be summarized in a final report to the participating agencies and communities highlighting actions to improve their response and better protect public water supplies.

Granite State Rural Water Association, Maine Rural Water Association, and York County Emergency Management Agency, along with the City of Somersworth and the Town of Berwick, sought funding from NHDES, the Maine Drinking Water Program, and New Hampshire Homeland Security and Emergency Management (HSEM) to conduct the exercise.

Small spills of oil, gas and other substances regularly occur in New Hampshire, but large spills into a river, lake or near a community well are infrequent and can cause a water sys-



tem to suspend treatment and distribution of potable drinking water, leaving customers without water for hours, days or even weeks. This exercise leaves local first responders better prepared to respond to a "source water" emergency and serves as a model for other states around the country working to protect drinking water across state and municipal boundaries. For more information about the exercise, please contact Andrew.Madison@des.nh.gov. ■

The push for a straw-free New Hampshire

More than 7% of the 1.5 million tons of debris found annually on beaches in the United States is made up of straws and stirrers. Over 2,300 straws were collected in New Hampshire beach cleanups in 2017 alone. National campaigns have sprung up over the last couple of years to educate people about this harmful pollution and educate them about simple alternatives.

Thanks to local campaigns by various restaurants, organizations and community members, plastic straw use in New Hampshire is on the decline.

For example, the Blue Ocean Society partnered with the Surfrider Foundation (New Hampshire Chapter) and Sustain-

able Seacoast for a “Skip the Straw” campaign, which pairs volunteers with restaurants to encourage them to switch to greener straw options. The organization has also teamed up with the “Straw-Free in the 603” campaign, spearheaded by a middle school STEM teacher and his students in Alton. Teacher Derek Pappaceno has started a Twitter hashtag to rally support online: **#StrawFreeinthe603**.

NHDES is also doing its part to recognize these initiatives through the Green Hospitality program. When evaluating businesses for recognition, the program considers the businesses’ straw policy as part of its criteria. The program also maintains a [Green Hospitality map](#) online that shows the locations of all recognized businesses, allowing consumers to make more environmentally conscious dining and lodging choices.

900 Degrees Neapolitan Pizzeria, which carries the Green Hospitality distinction at its Epping and Manchester locations, started a straw-by-request policy at its Portsmouth location, which opened in May. If customers ask for a straw, they will be given corn straws, which can go in the restaurant’s compost. They also offer wooden stirrers at the bar. Owner Priscilla Lane-Rondeau says she has now extended a similar policy to her other locations.

Throwback Brewery in North Hampton is a Green Hospitality business that transitioned to compostable paper straws over a year ago. “Given our commitment to sustainability and being kind to the earth, it was a no-brainer to transition over,” said Co-Founder and President Nicole Carrier. “In fact, I’m not quite sure why we ever had plastic straws in the first place.”

For more information on the Green Hospitality program, please visit: <https://www.des.nh.gov/organization/commissioner/p2au/pps/ppgh/index.htm>.

The “Straw Free in the 603” campaign is planning a community event (Aug. 1, 6-8 PM, Prospect Mountain High School) with Blue Ocean Society, where they will show the 30-minute documentary “Straws” and talk about straw pollution. For more details on the event, follow the hashtag on Twitter or send an email to dpappaceno@yahoo.com. ■

#ThisIsNH photo contest

Show why you love the environment and what you do to protect it. Take pictures of your favorite summit views, wildlife findings, bridges, and beach cleanups and submit them to our [online photo map](#)! Include your Twitter handle in the image description, or sign in using Google or Facebook for a chance to be recognized. Three finalists will be chosen and voted upon. The winner will have their photo represent NHDES as the new Twitter and **#ThisIsNH** cover photos, and will be featured in an up-coming issue of Environmental News! The contest will run from July 1-July 31. Stay tuned to Twitter [@NHDES](#) for voting and announcements. Share your summer fun with us at [arcg.is/2o8Ms5j](#)! ■



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NHDES air monitoring stations open their doors

The state of New Hampshire is increasingly encouraging the switch from gasoline-powered technology to electric technology. For example, Senate Bill 575, signed into law June 12, outlines electric vehicle charging station signage and regulations. The draft of the Volkswagen Mitigation Plan also proposes that a portion of the settlement funds will be used to expand the state's electric charging infrastructure as well.

Gasoline-powered equipment causes significant harm to the environment by emitting air pollutants that contribute to the formation of ground-level ozone. High ozone levels have significant health effects, causing shortness of breath, respiratory disease, lung damage and even premature death.

This summer, the NHDES Air Resources Division is on a campaign to show the public that these harmful emissions are not just coming from the cars on the road; they are in your yard, too. In fact, just one hour of gasoline-powered lawn equipment use – lawn mowing, weed whacking, etc. – produces pollution equivalent to that of driving 300 miles in a gasoline-powered car.

This July, NHDES will hold weekly open houses at its air monitoring stations, allowing visitors to learn about electric lawn equipment and electric vehicles, as well as the purpose of air quality monitoring in the state and the insight that collected data provide.

Visitors are invited to test equipment, including the Kobalt 80 Volt Cordless Electric Lawn Mower, and the Kobalt 80

Volt String Trimmer. NHDES employees will be available to answer any questions about the statewide air-monitoring network. Electric vehicles will also be available for visitors to view.

The events are **free** and require no registration.

For more information, contact the Air Resources Division at (603) 271-1370 or visit <https://www.des.nh.gov/organization/divisions/air/index.htm>. ■



Event Dates and Locations

July 11: Hazen Drive, Concord @10 AM-12 PM

July 18: Green Street, Laconia @10 AM-12 PM

July 25: Pierce Island, Portsmouth @10 AM-12 PM

August 1: Water Street, Keene @10 AM-12 PM