NEW HAMPSHIRE WATER RESOURCES PRIMER

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CONTENTS

List of Acronyms ................................................................. xv

Executive Summary ......................................................... xvi

Chapter 1 Introduction and Overview ............................... 1-1
1.1 Purpose ............................................................................... 1-2
1.2 Introduction ......................................................................... 1-2
1.3 Primer Organization ......................................................... 1-3
1.4 Underlying Challenges ..................................................... 1-4
   Challenge 1: Landscape Change and Increased Demand for Water Related to Economic and Population Growth .......................................................... 1-4
   Challenge 2: Climate Change .................................................. 1-6
   Challenge 3: Aging and Inadequate Water Infrastructure ............. 1-8
   Challenge 4: Information Needs ........................................... 1-10
1.5 New Hampshire Water at a Glance: Occurrence, Impairment, Uses, Infrastructure and Law ..................................... 1-12
   1.5.1 Water Occurrence ....................................................... 1-12
   1.5.2 Water Quality Assessment .......................................... 1-14
   1.5.3 Water Use .................................................................... 1-18
   1.5.4 Water Infrastructure .................................................. 1-18
   1.5.5 Water Law ................................................................. 1-22
1.6 Summary ........................................................................... 1-24

References ........................................................................... 1-27

Chapter 2 Rivers and Streams .............................................. 2-1
Overview ............................................................................... 2-2
2.1 Occurrence and Significance ............................................. 2-2
   2.1.1 Connecticut River Watershed ...................................... 2-2
   2.1.2 Merrimack River Watershed ....................................... 2-2
   2.1.3 Androscoggin River Watershed .................................. 2-3
   2.1.4 Piscataqua River (Coastal) Watershed ......................... 2-3
   2.1.5 Saco River Watershed .............................................. 2-4
2.2 Issues ............................................................................................................... 2-4
  2.2.1 Many Rivers and Streams Fail to Meet Water Quality Standards ............... 2-4
  2.2.2 Lack of Adequate Data .................................................................................. 2-6
  2.2.3 Inconsistent Land Use Regulations ............................................................... 2-6
  2.2.4 Disturbance of Natural Vegetated Riparian Buffers ................................. 2-7
  2.2.5 Maintaining Natural Flow Conditions ......................................................... 2-8
  2.2.6 Fragmentation of Stream Networks by Road Crossings ............................. 2-8

2.3 Current Management and Protection .......................................................... 2-9
  2.3.1 Biomonitoring Program ............................................................................. 2-9
  2.3.2 Exotic Species Program ............................................................................. 2-9
  2.3.3 Rivers Management and Protection Program ............................................. 2-9
  2.3.4 Instream Flow Protection Pilot Program .................................................... 2-10
  2.3.5 Water Quality Assessments ...................................................................... 2-10
  2.3.6 Total Maximum Daily Load Program ....................................................... 2-11
  2.3.7 Water Quality Certification ....................................................................... 2-11
  2.3.8 Volunteer River Assessment Program ....................................................... 2-11
  2.3.9 Watershed Assistance ................................................................................ 2-12
  2.3.10 River Protection Groups ......................................................................... 2-12

2.4 Stakeholder Recommendations .................................................................. 2-13
  2.4.1 Protect Riparian Areas .............................................................................. 2-13
  2.4.2 Increase Collection of Physical, Chemical and Biological Data ................. 2-13
  2.4.3 Reduce the Impacts of Land Use Change .................................................. 2-13
  2.4.4 Continue to Develop and Implement Instream Flow Protection ............... 2-14

References ........................................................................................................... 2-14

Chapter 3 Lakes and Ponds .............................................................................. 3-1

Overview ............................................................................................................ 3-2

3.1 Occurrence and Significance ...................................................................... 3-3
  3.1.1 The Lakes and Ponds of New Hampshire Are Valuable Economic and Ecological Resources ........................................................................... 3-3
  3.1.2 Water Quality Is Generally Good, but Salt Is Becoming a Problem .......... 3-4

3.2 Issues ............................................................................................................ 3-6
  3.2.1 Landscape Change Threatens Water Quality ............................................. 3-6
  3.2.2 Toxic Algae (Cyanobacteria) Blooms Are Occurring with Greater Frequency, Causing Concern for Public Health ............................................. 3-7
3.2.3 The Carrying Capacity of New Hampshire’s Lakes and Ponds Has Not Been Evaluated ............................................................ 3-7
3.2.4 More Data Is Needed to Detect Trends .................................................................................................................. 3-8
3.2.5 Exotic Aquatic Species Are a Growing Threat .......................................................................................................... 3-8

3.3 Current Management and Protection ................................................. 3-10
  3.3.1 Exotic Species Programs ........................................................................................................................................ 3-10
  3.3.2 Lakes Management and Protection Program ........................................................................................................... 3-11
  3.3.3 The Sustainability Initiative ......................................................................................................................................... 3-11
  3.3.4 The DES Volunteer Lake Assessment Program and the UNH Lakes Lay Monitoring Program .................................................. 3-12
  3.3.5 Water Quality Surveys and Assessments .................................................................................................................. 3-12
  3.3.6 Mercury in Fish Program ........................................................................................................................................ 3-13
  3.3.7 Public Beach Inspection Program ............................................................................................................................ 3-14
  3.3.8 Boat Inspection Program and Clean Vessel Act ....................................................................................................... 3-14
  3.3.9 Lake Associations and Protection Groups ............................................................................................................. 3-14

3.4 Stakeholder Recommendations ...................................................... 3-15
  3.4.1 Improve Coordination of Water Quality Programs .................................................................................................. 3-15
  3.4.2 Determine Carrying Capacity and Provide Adequate Public Access ........................................................................... 3-15
  3.4.3 Continue New Initiatives to Prevent and Control Invasive Aquatic Species ............................................................... 3-16

References ........................................................................................................ 3-17

Chapter 4 Groundwater .............................................................................. 4-1

Overview ........................................................................................................ 4-2

4.1 Occurrence and Significance ............................................................. 4-2
  4.1.1 Occurrence ................................................................................................................................................................. 4-2
  4.1.2 Quality ........................................................................................................................................................................ 4-4
  4.1.3 Significance ................................................................................................................................................................. 4-5

4.2 Issues ......................................................................................................... 4-6
  4.2.1 Groundwater – Unseen and Not Well Understood by Many .......................................................................................... 4-6
  4.2.2 Landscape Change Affects Both Groundwater Quantity and Quality ........................................................................... 4-6
  4.2.3 Data Limits Groundwater Protection Efforts ............................................................................................................. 4-9

4.3 Current Management and Protection ................................................ 4-10
  4.3.1 Quality-Based Regulations and Programs .................................................................................................................. 4-10
  4.3.2 Quantity-Based Regulations and Programs ............................................................................................................. 4-11
4.4 Stakeholder Recommendations ................................................................. 4-14
  4.4.1 Improved Monitoring to Support Protection .......................................... 4-14
  4.4.2 Increased Municipal Land Use Controls to Protect Groundwater Quality and Quantity ........................................................................................................... 4-14
  4.4.3 Increased Public Education and Awareness ........................................... 4-15

References ...................................................................................................... 4-16

Chapter 5 Wetlands ....................................................................................... 5-1
Overview ........................................................................................................ 5-2

5.1 Occurrence and Significance ................................................................... 5-2
  5.1.1 Wetlands Occurrence ........................................................................... 5-2
  5.1.2 Wetlands Significance ......................................................................... 5-4

5.2 Issues ........................................................................................................ 5-7
  5.2.1 Wetlands Are Threatened by Landscape Change, Fragmentation and Indirect Impacts ................................................................. 5-7
  5.2.2 State Wetland Permitting Load Strains DES’s Ability to Provide Effective Protection and Customer Service .................................................. 5-8

5.3 Current Management and Protection ....................................................... 5-8
  5.3.1 State Management and Protection ......................................................... 5-8
  5.3.2 Federal Management and Protection .................................................... 5-12
  5.3.3 Local and Regional Protection ............................................................. 5-13

5.4 Stakeholder Recommendations ............................................................... 5-13
  5.4.1 Improve Wetland Permitting to Increase Efficacy and Stakeholder Satisfaction .................................................. 5-13
  5.4.2 Increase and Improve Local Involvement ............................................. 5-15

References ...................................................................................................... 5-16

Chapter 6 Coastal and Estuarine Waters .................................................... 6-1
Overview ........................................................................................................ 6-2

6.1 Occurrence and Significance ................................................................... 6-2
  6.1.1 Great Bay Estuary ............................................................................... 6-2
  6.1.2 Hampton-Seabrook Harbor ................................................................. 6-4
  6.1.3 The Ocean Coast Line ....................................................................... 6-4

6.2 Issues ........................................................................................................ 6-4
  6.2.1 Climate Change Expected to Hit the Coast Hard .................................. 6-4
  6.2.2 Growth in Water Demand ................................................................. 6-5
6.2.3 Land Use Development Activities Threaten Sensitive Estuaries ........................................ 6-6
6.2.4 Bacterial Contamination from Wet Weather Sources Continues to Impact Coastal Resources .................................................................................................................................. 6-9
6.2.5 Head-of-Tide Dams Harm Fish Populations ........................................................................ 6-10
6.2.6 Boat Access and Moorings Present Ecological and Water Quality Issues ....................... 6-10

6.3 Current Management and Protection ................................................................................. 6-12

6.3.1 New Hampshire Coastal Program .................................................................................... 6-12
6.3.2 Coastal Nonpoint Pollution Control Program .................................................................... 6-12
6.3.3 Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program ......................................................... 6-12
6.3.4 Public Beach Program ...................................................................................................... 6-13
6.3.5 Dredge Management Task Force ...................................................................................... 6-13
6.3.6 Natural Resources Outreach Coalition ............................................................................... 6-13
6.3.7 New Hampshire Estuaries Project .................................................................................... 6-13
6.3.8 Great Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve ............................................................. 6-13
6.3.9 Great Bay Resource Protection Partnership ...................................................................... 6-14
6.3.10 New Hampshire Corporate Wetlands Restoration Partnership ...................................... 6-14
6.3.11 Volunteer Programs ........................................................................................................ 6-14
6.3.12 No Discharge Program .................................................................................................... 6-14
6.3.13 Land Conservation Plan for New Hampshire’s Coastal Watersheds ............................... 6-14

6.4 Stakeholder Recommendations .......................................................................................... 6-16

6.4.1 Develop a Strategy to Adapt to the Impacts of Climate Change ...................................... 6-16
6.4.2 Reduce Nutrient and Sediment Loads to the Estuaries ................................................... 6-16
6.4.3 Limit Boat Moorings ........................................................................................................ 6-16
6.4.4 Make Removal of Head-of-Tide Dams a Priority ............................................................ 6-16
6.4.5 Expand Shellfish Resources and Harvesting Opportunities Through Improved Management of Estuarine Areas .................................................................................. 6-17
6.4.6 Support Land Conservation and Stormwater Best Management Practices to Help Reverse Trends in Coastal and Estuarine Degradation ..................................................... 6-17

References .................................................................................................................................. 6-18

Chapter 7 Water Use and Conservation .............................................................................. 7-1

Overview .................................................................................................................................... 7-2

7.1 Description and Significance .............................................................................................. 7-2

7.1.1 Water Use ......................................................................................................................... 7-2
7.1.2 Water Conservation ......................................................................................................... 7-3
7.2 Issues ...............................................................................................................7-7

7.2.1 Residential Development Patterns and Lawn Watering Lead to Water Supply Restrictions in Many Areas of the State ..............................................................7-7
7.2.2 Climate Change ...........................................................................................................7-8
7.2.3 Aging Water Systems Increase Water Losses ..............................................................7-8
7.2.4 Lack of Public Understanding of Finite Water Resources ........................................7-8
7.2.5 Conservation Investments: Lack of Long-Term Thinking ..........................................7-8
7.2.6 Conservation Rates: A Difficult Sell ............................................................................7-8

7.3 Current Management and Protection ........................................................................7-9

7.3.1 Water Use Registration and Reporting ........................................................................7-9
7.3.2 Water Conservation ..................................................................................................... 7-9

7.4 Stakeholder Recommendations ..............................................................................7-11

7.4.1 Improve Per Capita Water Efficiency ........................................................................7-11
7.4.2 Provide Incentives for Community Water Systems ...................................................7-11
7.4.3 Continue Water Use Registration and Reporting Requirements, Fully Enforced and Implemented ..............................................................................................................7-12
7.4.4 Develop Innovative Water Resource Projects ........................................................... 7-12

References ...........................................................................................................7-13

Chapter 8 Drinking Water .........................................................................................8-1

Overview ...............................................................................................................8-2

8.1 Description and Significance ....................................................................................8-2

8.1.1 Drinking Water Is Critical to Health and Quality of Life ............................................8-2
8.1.2 New Hampshire Water Supply: Where Do We Get Our Drinking Water and How Is It Tested? ..............................................................................................................8-3
8.1.3 Drinking Water Uses and Statistics ........................................................................8-5
8.1.4 Estimates of Naturally Occurring Contaminants in New Hampshire Well Water ....8-6
8.1.5 Water Supply System Components and Costs .............................................................8-7
8.1.6 Multiple Barrier Approach to Safe Drinking Water .....................................................8-7

8.2 Issues ...............................................................................................................8-9

8.2.1 Private Well Users at Risk .........................................................................................8-9
8.2.2 New Hampshire Has a High Proportion of Struggling Small Community Systems ...8-9
8.2.3 Aging Water Supply Infrastructure Is Widespread: Funding Insufficient ..............8-10
8.2.4 Population Pressures and the Purity Paradox ............................................................8-11
8.2.5 Climate Change May Have Implications for Public Health and Infrastructure ......8-11
8.2.6 Water Supply Policies May Help or Hinder Smart Growth ...................................... 8-12

8.3 Current Management and Protection ......................................................................8-12
  8.3.1 Public Drinking Water Program ........................................................................8-12
  8.3.2 Private Well Initiative .......................................................................................8-13
  8.3.3 Water Well Construction and Driller Licensing .................................................8-13
  8.3.4 Local Source Water Protection and Private Well Testing Ordinances ...............8-13

8.4 Stakeholder Recommendations ............................................................................8-14
  8.4.1 Increase Private Well Protection .......................................................................8-14
  8.4.2 Improve Capacity of Small Systems .................................................................8-14
  8.4.3 Maintain and Upgrade Drinking Water Infrastructure .......................................8-14
  8.4.4 Improve Local Protection Efforts .......................................................................8-14
  8.4.5 Track Emerging Contaminants .........................................................................8-15
  8.4.6 Water System Security and Interconnection ....................................................8-15
  8.4.7 Prepare for Climate Change ............................................................................8-15

References ..................................................................................................................8-16

Chapter 9 Wastewater .................................................................................................9-1

Overview .....................................................................................................................9-2

9.1 Description and Significance ................................................................................9-2
  9.1.1 Onsite (Decentralized) Wastewater Management ...........................................9-3
  9.1.2 Centralized Wastewater Treatment Facilities ..................................................9-4
  9.1.3 Combined Sewer Overflows ............................................................................9-7
  9.1.4 Illicit Discharges ..............................................................................................9-8

9.2 Issues ....................................................................................................................9-9
  9.2.1 Facilities Approaching Design Capacity Due to Population Growth .................9-9
  9.2.2 Aging Infrastructure: Need for Upgrades Far Exceeds Funds ...........................9-9
  9.2.3 New Requirements for Centralized Wastewater Treatment Facilities .............9-10
  9.2.4 Landscape Change: Reliance on Single-Family Onsite Systems Promotes Sprawl. 9-11
  9.2.5 Nutrient Loading Is a Concern with Onsite Systems .......................................9-12
  9.2.6 Septage Disposal ............................................................................................9-12

9.3 Current Management and Protection ....................................................................9-13
  9.3.1 Centralized Wastewater ...................................................................................9-13
  9.3.2 Decentralized Systems .....................................................................................9-15
  9.3.3 Illicit Discharge Investigations .........................................................................9-16
Chapter 10 Stormwater .................................................. 10-1
Overview .............................................................................. 10-2
10.1 Description and Significance ......................................................... 10-2
10.2 Issues .................................................................................. 10-3
   10.2.1 Conventional Stormwater Management Practices Are Harmful to Water Resources ........................................... 10-3
   10.2.2 Existing Stormwater Infrastructure Is Inadequate .......................................................... 10-6
   10.2.3 Municipalities Have Inadequate Funding and Regulatory Mechanisms to Improve Stormwater Management .................................................. 10-6
10.3 Current Management and Protection .......................................... 10-8
   10.3.1 National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System ............................................. 10-8
   10.3.2 Section 401 Water Quality Certification Program and Antidegradation ................. 10-9
   10.3.3 Alteration of Terrain Program ........................................................................ 10-10
   10.3.4 Shoreland Protection Program ....................................................................... 10-10
   10.3.5 Local Stormwater Programs ........................................................................ 10-11
   10.3.6 Technical Assistance Programs ...................................................................... 10-11
10.4 Stakeholder Recommendations .............................................. 10-12
   10.4.1 Encourage and Facilitate the Local Adoption of State Stormwater Management Standards ........................................................................ 10-12
   10.4.2 Encourage Low Impact Development and Compact Development .................. 10-13
   10.4.3 Upgrade Stormwater Infrastructure .................................................................. 10-15
   10.4.4 Implement Stormwater Utilities ...................................................................... 10-15
References ................................................................................ 10-16
Chapter 11 Dams

Overview

11.1 Description and Significance

11.1.1 Dam Classifications

11.1.2 Dam Ownership

11.1.3 Benefits and Purposes of Dams

11.2 Issues

11.2.1 Dam Failures and the Increased Risk from Downstream Development, Climate Change, and Lack of Dam Maintenance

11.2.2 Dams Can Have a Negative Ecological Impact

11.2.3 Lack of Awareness of Dam Hazards and Problems

11.3 Current Management and Protection

11.3.1 Ongoing and Recently Passed Legislation

11.3.2 DES Programs

11.3.3 Non-DES Programs

11.4 Stakeholder Recommendations

11.4.1 Improve Dam Maintenance

11.4.2 Remove Unnecessary Dams

11.4.3 Increase Public Awareness

References

Chapter 12 Floods and Droughts

Overview

12.1 Description and Significance

12.1.1 Flood Background

12.1.2 Adverse Impacts of Floods

12.1.3 Drought Background

12.1.4 The Occurrence of Water in the Environment and New Hampshire’s Susceptibility to Drought

12.1.5 Adverse Impacts Associated with Drought

12.2 Issues

12.2.1 Floods and Droughts are Likely to Become More Frequent and More Severe

12.2.2 Inadequate Mapping of Floodplains

12.2.3 The Drought Management Plan Is Outdated

References
12.2.4 Prevention and Mitigation Strategies for Water Supplies Adversely Affected by Drought Are Lacking

12.3 Current Management and Protection

12.3.1 Floods

12.3.2 Drought

12.4 Stakeholder Recommendations

12.4.1 Develop Improved Mapping Programs for Floods

12.4.2 Increase the Number of Stream Gages to Better Predict Flooding

12.4.3 Develop and Implement Disaster Prevention for Floods

12.4.4 Revise the Drought Management Plan

12.4.5 Establish Prevention and Mitigation Strategies for Water Supplies Adversely Affected by Drought

References

Appendices

Appendix A Confronting Climate Change in the U.S. Northeast (Executive Summary)

Appendix B Flood Commission Report: Implementation Table of Identified Needs

Appendix C Water Resource Projects, Studies and Initiatives Matrix

Appendix D Summary of Statutory and Regulatory Authorities
# List of Acronyms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BMP</td>
<td>Best management practices</td>
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<tr>
<td>CSO</td>
<td>Combined sewer overflow</td>
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<td>CWA</td>
<td>Clean Water Act (federal)</td>
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<td>Community water systems</td>
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<td>New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Department of Public Works</td>
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<td>U.S. Environmental Protection Agency</td>
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<td>New Hampshire House Bill</td>
</tr>
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<td>LAC</td>
<td>Local advisory committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>LID</td>
<td>Low impact development</td>
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<tr>
<td>MCL</td>
<td>Maximum contaminant level</td>
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<td>MTBE</td>
<td>Methyl tertiary-Butyl Ether</td>
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<td>NFIP</td>
<td>National Flood Insurance Program</td>
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<td>NHDES</td>
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The water running through, over and by New Hampshire has shaped the state’s history and will influence its future. Over the last decade New Hampshire has been the fastest growing New England state, and there are another 260,000 new residents anticipated between 2005 and 2030. Hundreds of thousands of visitors come to New Hampshire each year to enjoy the state’s beautiful lakes, rivers and coast in the summer and its ski areas, snowmobile trails and ice-fishing spots in the winter. Whether it is needed for drinking, manufacturing, recreating, waste assimilation or ecosystem health, water is a cornerstone of New Hampshire’s beauty and prosperity, and wise management and protection of water resources is critical to New Hampshire’s economy, public health and environment.

The Water Resources Primer was developed to inform policy makers and citizens about the state’s water resources and the challenges faced in sustainably managing them. It was developed as part of an initiative to develop a statewide, comprehensive water plan, spearheaded by the Legislature’s Statutory Water Resources Committee. The New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services is the lead author, although the document was significantly influenced and improved by the contributions of many volunteer stakeholders and experts.

This is the first document that contains all of the water related topics of importance to New Hampshire policy makers. It is meant to provide the reader with an understanding of the complex and interrelated nature of water resources and water resource issues. It is also formatted to provide topic specific chapters that can be used to understand particular subjects.

The first chapter of the primer describes four underlying challenges that are critical to understanding and effectively managing water resources. First, land development activities driven by economic and population growth can have profound impacts on water quality, water availability, and water-based recreational opportunities. Second, climate change, which is already bringing increasingly frequent extreme weather events to New Hampshire, is expected to exacerbate water quality, affect water availability, test our readiness to deal with droughts and flooding, and to overwhelm the existing stormwater infrastructure in many places. Third, as is the case nationwide, New Hampshire’s infrastructure for water supply, wastewater treatment, stormwater, and water storage (dams) is sorely in need of maintenance, upgrade, or replacement, but no funding mechanism is in place to provide all of the needed money. Fourth, in order to inform the effective management of our water resources, we need to address critical data needs including expanding our efforts to gauge stream flows, monitor groundwater levels, gather water quality data, monitor the occurrence and spread of invasive species, and map flood-prone areas.

The first chapter also provides, in the section called “New Hampshire Water at a Glance,” pertinent facts and statistics about the state’s water resources, water use, water infrastructure and water law. The remaining chapters are topic specific and include: Rivers; Lakes and Ponds;
Groundwater; Wetlands; Coastal and Estuarine Waters; Water Use and Conservation; Drinking Water; Wastewater; Stormwater; Dams; and Floods and Droughts. Each of these chapters provides information about the topic, related issues and current management efforts. Each of these chapters also provides a few key stakeholder recommendations. Most, but not all, of those recommendations can be grouped into the following areas:

- Improve knowledge – data characterization and evaluation
- Increase water use efficiency
- Improve land use patterns – directing development
- Improve stormwater management
- Adapt to climate change
- Address infrastructure needs
- Improve integration of protection programs
- Shift towards watershed/regional vs. municipal planning and regulation
- Increase emergency preparedness

New Hampshire is fortunate to have an abundance of high quality water resources. With nearly 17,000 miles of rivers and streams, 1,000 lakes and large ponds, 238 miles of ocean and estuarine coastline, and potable groundwater throughout the state, New Hampshire is relatively water rich. The foldout graphic in Chapter 1 depicts the connectivity between New Hampshire’s waters and how both water quality and quantity are influenced by what occurs on the landscape.

Making sound policy decisions regarding water resources and ensuring that there is enough good quality water for the many users that depend on this resource are not small tasks. They are, however, essential to sustaining New Hampshire’s special quality of life. The Water Resources Primer has been developed and is intended to support this worthy goal.

Note Regarding Citation of Sources
The primer uses a format for citation of information sources that is commonly used in technical literature. Citations take the form of “(Author(s), year).” For the complete citation, please refer to the list of references at the end of the chapter. When a chapter cites more than one source published in the same year by a given author or team of authors, the year is followed by a letter, e.g., “(Author, 2008a),” to enable the reader to distinguish among sources. The editors of the primer have decided to err on the side of providing more citations rather than too few, in order to address potential questions about the authoritativeness of the information.