



# New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services *Strategic Plan*

## MISSION STATEMENT

***To help sustain a high quality of life for all citizens by protecting and restoring the environment and public health in New Hampshire.***

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- We promote mutual respect and effective, straightforward communication.
- We provide timely and consistent responses to all customers.
- We provide meaningful opportunities for public participation in meeting our responsibilities.
- We consider quality of life, public health and safety, economic vitality and the concerns of our citizens while pursuing our responsibilities under the law.
- We strive for excellence in all of New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (NHDES)' operations, are committed to continuous improvement and consider innovative approaches.
- We are committed to scientifically and technically sound, cost-effective and environmentally appropriate solutions.
- We provide leadership on environmental and sustainability issues.
- We consider the long-term, cumulative and cross-media effects of our policies, programs and decisions.
- We foster environmental awareness and stewardship through education, outreach and assistance.
- We afford fair and equitable treatment of all individuals and groups in the implementation of federal and state environmental laws, rules, programs and policies and in the management of the agency.
- We maintain a work environment that attracts and retains the most dedicated and talented staff.

# ***NHDES Strategic Plan***

**Goal 1: NHDES and its partners address climate change through effective mitigation and adaptation strategies and efforts to foster the transition to a clean energy economy.**

- 1.1 NHDES will work in partnership with other state agencies to incorporate climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies into state operations.**
  - 1.1.1 NHDES will consider and integrate climate change mitigation and adaptation across all existing NHDES program areas.***
  - 1.1.2 NHDES will initiate and participate in a process to consider and integrate climate change mitigation and adaptation across all levels of New Hampshire state government operations.***
- 1.2 NHDES will work in partnership with state, regional, and national organizations to integrate and coordinate mitigation and adaptation efforts.**
  - 1.2.1 NHDES, in collaboration with its partners, will continue to provide long-term support to networks such as the NH Energy and Climate Collaborative and the Energy Efficiency and Sustainable Energy Board (RSA 125-O:5-a) to facilitate implementation of the New Hampshire Climate Action Plan.***
  - 1.2.2 NHDES will continue to take part in regional and national initiatives to advance the transition to a clean energy economy.***
  - 1.2.3 NHDES will continue to participate in regional and national initiatives to better prepare for the impacts of climate change.***
- 1.3 NHDES will monitor, inventory and report climate change emissions and impacts.**
  - 1.3.1 NHDES will work with state research universities and other institutions and organizations to track the changes in greenhouse gas emissions by New Hampshire sectors and sources, and to support periodic reporting to policy makers and the public.***
  - 1.3.2 NHDES will work with state research universities and other institutions and organizations to track the indicators and the impacts of climate change, and to support periodic reporting to policymakers and the public.***
- 1.4 NHDES will conduct comprehensive mitigation and adaptation education and outreach.**
  - 1.4.1 NHDES will work with partners to develop and implement a comprehensive education and outreach program to elevate awareness and understanding of climate change and to support individual- and institutional-level behavior change.***
  - 1.4.2 NHDES will collaborate with partners to provide information and technical assistance to communities and organizations that are seeking to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions.***
  - 1.4.3 NHDES will collaborate with partners to provide information and technical assistance to communities and organizations that are seeking to incorporate adaptation measures into their projects and plans.***

## **Goal 2: NHDES and its partners effectively protect New Hampshire's natural resources and high quality of life as the state grows.**

- 2.1 NHDES and its partners will strive for efficient land use and development patterns that reduce energy use, support sustainable use and conservation of natural resources and maintain a viable working landscape.**
  - 2.1.1 *NHDES, together with its partners, will encourage and support municipal efforts to adjust zoning, land use regulations, and infrastructure investments to give preference to infill development and redevelopment over “greenfield” development.***
  - 2.1.2 *NHDES, in partnership with other organizations, will increase public understanding of the environmental, social and economic benefits of efficient land use.***
  - 2.1.3 *NHDES will promote better development practices through integrated NHDES permitting and assistance programs, including coordinated NHDES reviews of redevelopment projects.***
  - 2.1.4 *NHDES will evaluate the effect of all NHDES Programs on land use and land development patterns (beginning with the NHDES Brownfields, Drinking Water, and Wastewater Programs) and modify policies and procedures to encourage efficient use of land and other best development practices.***
  - 2.1.5 *NHDES and its partner organizations will improve the integration of transportation, environmental and land-use planning.***
  - 2.1.6 *NHDES will enhance its capacity to collect and maintain geographically-referenced data (e.g., monitoring data and permit data) and conduct spatially-based analyses of land use, permitted activities and environmental quality (e.g., watershed analyses).***
- 2.2 NHDES and its partners will work to maintain natural resource functions and promote sustainable use of natural resources.**
  - 2.2.1 *NHDES and its partners will explore appropriate mechanisms, including market-based approaches, to encourage natural resource conservation, ensure sustainable use of natural resources, promote the use of less impacting alternatives and reduce the incremental conversion of farm and forest land to developed uses.***
  - 2.2.2 *NHDES, in cooperation with its partners, will promote and support local zoning and regulations, land conservation efforts and state policies and regulations that recognize and protect key natural resource functions.***
  - 2.2.3 *NHDES will assist the communities and other partners in the Great Bay watershed in the development and implementation of a comprehensive plan to meet regulatory requirements to reduce nutrient pollution and protect coastal and estuarine resources.***
  - 2.2.4 *NHDES will continue to implement its State Water Resources Plan through its programs and through open communication with stakeholders and the public about the state’s water resources management challenges.***
- 2.3 NHDES will promote source reduction, and the reuse and recycling of solid waste to optimize the efficient use of natural resources.**

- 2.3.1** *NHDES will identify and pursue promising opportunities, sectors and actions for the conservation of natural resources through waste reduction using life cycle analysis and other tools and approaches.*
- 2.3.2** *NHDES will identify and pursue promising opportunities for increasing waste reuse and recycling, and maximizing the resource and energy recovery of waste management operations.*
- 2.3.3** *NHDES will develop and implement social marketing and similar behavioral change strategies to minimize resource consumption and waste generation from human activities.*

**Goal 3: NHDES employs integrated pre-application, permitting, inspections, and enforcement approaches across all of its programs, and operates in a cooperative and integrated manner with its sister local, regional, state, and federal agencies.**

**3.1 NHDES will conduct unified and coordinated education and inreach/outreach.**

- 3.1.1** *NHDES will work with other organizations to develop and implement an outreach program for all NHDES partners, with multiple modules focused on NHDES programs, staff contacts, statutory requirements, specific issues related to integrated permitting, multi-media applications and compliance and enforcement programs.*
- 3.1.2** *NHDES will create an internal, interactive search program, supported by integrated databases, a NHDES staff directory, organizational charts, and decision trees, that allows for a coordinated, streamlined, and timely activation of NHDES staff and resources to provide services, investigate complaints, prepare permits, conduct inspections, and take enforcement actions in an integrated and consistent manner.*
- 3.1.3** *NHDES will create an external network of select contacts among agencies with which NHDES regularly interacts (e.g., DHHS, DOT, F&G, OSI, and DRED\*) to serve as a team in response to outside requests for assistance. Also, NHDES will establish, as feasible, formalized partnerships and Memoranda of Agreement with other state and federal agencies to enhance the coordination among agencies as a means of promoting efficiency in state government. \*Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), Department of Transportation (DOT), Fish and Game Department (F&G), Office of Strategic Initiatives (OSI), Department of Resources and Economic Development (DRED).*
- 3.1.4** *NHDES will expand its rulemaking outreach efforts to all internal and external customers through on-line information exchange and communication.*

**3.2 NHDES will conduct unified and coordinated pre-application assistance, licensing, permitting, and planning.**

- 3.2.1** *NHDES will assign project managers to complex or multi-disciplinary projects to facilitate meetings, promote coordinated reviews, and resolve internal issues (including potentially conflicting NHDES program requirements) to ensure smooth progression of project decisions and deliverables.*
- 3.2.2** *NHDES will review permit processes within the Land Resource Management Programs to identify areas where greater consistency and coordination can be achieved, and work to implement improvements.*
- 3.2.3** *NHDES will create an on-line project screening and inter-agency coordination tool or system to help permit applicants understand environmental regulations and permit program requirements.*
- 3.2.4** *NHDES will evaluate the feasibility of integrating and standardizing the various professional training and licensing programs that it administers.*

### **3.3 NHDES will conduct unified and coordinated inspections and enforcement.**

- 3.3.1 NHDES will have integrated and efficient inspection and enforcement processes and efficient appeals processes.**
- 3.3.2 NHDES will develop an enforcement database and associated electronic document management system to facilitate efficient cross-media and cross-program communications during all phases of the compliance assurance process (i.e., pre-inspection research, physical inspection visit, and post- inspection and enforcement activities).**
- 3.3.3 NHDES inspection and enforcement staff from all media regulatory programs will communicate regularly to ensure thorough and efficient cross-media and cross-program coordination and cooperation.**
- 3.3.4 NHDES will establish a web-based system that tracks permitting and enforcement trends. The reports will summarize key trends such as backlogs, average review timeframes, and seasonal versus annual trends.**

### **Goal 4: New Hampshire's environment has improved, and NHDES regularly reports environmental results in an understandable and transparent manner.**

#### **4.1 NHDES will develop well-defined environmental outcomes and indicators.**

- 4.1.1 NHDES will identify key environmental outcomes and indicators for use in documenting trends and in regular reporting, including "dashboard" reports and geographical representation.**

#### **4.2 NHDES will tie data collection, analyses and reporting to current environmental goals and objectives.**

- 4.2.1 NHDES will conduct an agency-wide inventory and review of current data collection and reporting practices to help identify data collection gaps and eliminate redundancies and non-value-added collection and reporting activities.**
- 4.2.2 NHDES will develop and implement an enhanced process to link NHDES goals and objectives, bureau-and program-level goals and objectives, work plan activities, and a set of relevant outcomes and environmental indicators.**

#### **4.3 NHDES will develop and use adequate means and clear documented methods for environmental monitoring.**

- 4.3.1 NHDES will determine what monitoring stations, locations, data sources, and data partners are necessary to adequately report on the agency's key outcomes and environmental indicators, and will develop a plan to establish and maintain sufficient monitoring stations at appropriate data collection sites.**
- 4.3.2 NHDES will train its staff and develop standard operating procedures to ensure that data collection (including geospatial parameters), results, reporting, and record-keeping adhere to appropriate data standards.**

#### **4.4 NHDES will regularly share environmental information and trend analyses internally, as well as with and among local, state, and federal agencies, outside organizations and the general public.**

- 4.4.1 NHDES will establish a process to regularly analyze data and present it in a meaningful format, including increased geographical representation and analysis.**

- 4.4.2 *NHDES will expand the Environmental Monitoring Database (EMD) to include data from all pertinent NHDES programs, and to have a greater web presence.*
- 4.4.3 *NHDES will establish a portal on its website to present “real-time” and up-to-date trend information on the state of New Hampshire’s environment and key agency outcomes, as well as to provide access to related data from outside agencies and organizations. Key environmental trends and agency outcomes will be regularly reported in NHDES reports, newsletters, press releases, and other public communications.*

**Goal 5: Environmental compliance is high in New Hampshire, supported by education, partnerships, environmental stewardship, and enforcement.**

- 5.1 **NHDES will strive to increase environmental knowledge and awareness and instill a stronger sense of environmental stewardship in the public at large.**
  - 5.1.1 *NHDES will establish a comprehensive, coordinated program of outreach to town officials to enable them to provide current, accurate information on state environmental requirements to their citizens.*
  - 5.1.2 *NHDES will establish a comprehensive, coordinated program of outreach to the younger/school-age population to foster an environmental ethic early in life.*
  - 5.1.3 *NHDES will establish a comprehensive, coordinated program of education for the general public to enhance understanding of the value of environmental protection and NHDES programs.*
- 5.2 **NHDES will optimize use of alternative compliance assurance mechanisms, models and approaches.**
  - 5.2.1 *NHDES will require permit holders to be more accountable by increasing the number of programs that require permit holders to certify compliance with their permits, and by ensuring that certification requirements are met.*
  - 5.2.2 *NHDES will establish greater accountability by regulated parties, including consultants, that do not hold formal NHDES permits.*
- 5.3 **NHDES will partner with colleges and universities to promote research in areas that will contribute to increased environmental compliance, possibly including social, as well as scientific and technical research.**
  - 5.3.1 *NHDES will ensure that the requirements of all regulatory programs are clear and unambiguous, and that the underlying policy reasons for those requirements are clearly explained.*
  - 5.3.2 *NHDES will ensure that its enforcement processes are efficient and effective by employing proven continuous improvement techniques.*
  - 5.3.3 *NHDES will ensure that inspections conducted by its programs are efficient and effective at identifying potential issues, including those in other programs.*
- 5.4 **NHDES will increase the knowledge of regulators and the regulated community, thereby reducing the need for enforcement, not just the amount of enforcement.**
  - 5.4.1 *NHDES, with its partners, will continue to provide on-going training for those who must comply with state environmental requirements in both the public and private sectors.*

**5.4.2** *NHDES will evaluate, and establish where necessary, formal education or training requirements for those NHDES programs that currently do not offer such continuing education opportunities for their constituents.*

**5.4.2** *NHDES will establish training programs for all staff in regulatory programs to ensure that they have a sound foundation in both substance and procedures.*

**5.5** **NHDES will encourage environmental behavior that is above and beyond minimum compliance.**

**5.5.1** *NHDES will maintain an array of programs to encourage “beyond compliance” behavior.*

**5.5.2** *NHDES will establish standard operating procedures for providing positive public recognition of outstanding and beyond compliance environmental practices and outcomes.*

**Goal 6: NHDES provides high-quality customer service.**

**6.1** **NHDES will provide prompt, knowledgeable, consistent, fair, and clear responses to inquiries from customers.**

**6.1.1** *NHDES will ensure that its “Customer Service Standards” policies and procedures are continuously improved, widely communicated, and fully adhered to by all staff.*

**6.1.2** *NHDES will provide consistent, effective, and customer-service oriented “live” front desk and phone access.*

**6.1.3** *NHDES will conduct mandatory customer service training for its employees on a regular and sustained basis.*

**6.2** **NHDES will ensure easy access to information and maintain a proactive approach to information dissemination.**

**6.2.1** *NHDES will improve, and increase as necessary, public forums and opportunities (including remote learning) for disseminating information on environmental issues.*

**6.2.2** *NHDES will continuously upload as much key content as possible to the NHDES website to better fulfill customer needs.*

**6.2.3** *NHDES’ website will include functionality to allow customers to conduct on-line credit card transactions such as purchasing documents, registering for courses, and paying license fees.*

**6.2.4** *NHDES will create a centralized, web-searchable document library to include such items as quality assurance project plans, rules, grant information, site-specific information, key correspondence, and photos.*

**6.2.5** *NHDES will enhance and expand its web-based One-Stop System to be as customer-friendly, comprehensive, and useful as possible.*

**6.3** **NHDES will ensure that it has the customer feedback information it needs to continuously improve customer service.**

**6.3.1** *NHDES will develop and implement effective methods for measuring customer satisfaction and providing customer feedback to its programs and leadership.*

**6.4 NHDES will place a high value on, and take pride in, providing top-notch customer service.**

*6.4.1 NHDES, as part of the annual employee performance review process, will regularly assess customer service expectations and performance for each of its employees.*

*6.4.2 NHDES will create and maintain an “Exemplary Customer Service Award Program” for NHDES employees.*

**6.5 NHDES will strive for a strong customer-centric, continuous improvement ethic that pervades all Department operations.**

*6.5.1 NHDES will conduct Lean training on a continuous basis, develop and implement Lean management system standard operating procedures, and continuously undertake Lean projects.*

*6.5.2 NHDES, as part of the annual employee performance review process, will regularly assess continuous process improvement expectations and performance for each of its employees.*

**Goal 7: NHDES is one of the most desirable employers in state government.**

**7.1 NHDES will encourage and support the career development of its employees.**

*7.1.1 NHDES will establish effective employee career ladder programs for advancing through technical, scientific, and administrative careers.*

*7.1.2 NHDES will have in place a formal orientation and integration program for newly-hired and newly-promoted employees to provide access to the information, systems, and tools necessary to ensure their success.*

*7.1.3 NHDES will advocate for the establishment of equity between the administrative classifications and the technical and scientific classifications with respect to career advancement potential and labor grade.*

*7.1.4 NHDES will develop opportunities for expanded intra- and inter-departmental staff cross-training and job-sharing to better serve the public, increase staff knowledge, and to enhance cooperation among related state agencies.*

**7.2 NHDES will support the professional needs and health and well-being of its employees.**

*7.2.1 NHDES will authorize flexible, alternative work schedules for eligible positions, allowing for variable start times, compressed work weeks, and telework options.*

*7.2.2 The NHDES facility, and the facilities of the other state agencies located along Hazen Drive, will be recognized as a distinct state campus, and will maintain and share resources such as auditoriums, meeting rooms, video-teleconferencing facilities, gym facilities, and a day-care facility.*

*7.2.3 NHDES will recognize the importance of work-life balance, and will value and acknowledge the voluntary activities of its employees.*

*7.2.4 NHDES will establish an Employee Wellness Program to provide educational initiatives and events focusing on healthy lifestyle choices, as well as to encourage and provide opportunities for increased physical activity.*

**7.3 NHDES will demonstrate that it has earned the public’s trust and the employees’ pride.**



- 7.3.1** *NHDES will continue to actively manage recognition of Department and individual professional achievements and the attainment of environmental milestones through official publications and communications across all media formats.*
- 7.3.2** *NHDES will encourage employee contributions to professional journals and conferences to further scientific, technical, and policy advancement.*
- 7.3.3** *NHDES will continually ensure that the most efficient, effective, and innovative workplace practices are employed by including evaluation and measurement of these efforts in individual job descriptions, performance reviews, and the NHDES Measures Tracking and Reporting System.*
- 7.4** **NHDES will be an environmental leader in all of its operations.**
  - 7.4.1** *NHDES, in partnership with the Department of Administrative Services and other pertinent agencies, will strive to reduce the cumulative environmental “footprint” of all of its operations through such measures as energy efficiency and water conservation, reuse and recycling, and continuous internal environmental education and outreach.*
  - 7.4.2** *NHDES will develop deeper partnerships with, and continue to provide leadership and assistance to, other state agencies to help them reduce their environmental footprints.*
  - 7.4.3** *NHDES’ written communications will be predominantly through the efficient use of electronic media and programs to minimize costs and natural resource consumption.*
  - 7.4.4** *NHDES will continue to use its financial leverage to help increase environmental awareness and stewardship in the marketplace through the informed procurement of environmentally-preferable goods and services.*
- 7.5** **NHDES will endeavor to recruit and retain the highest caliber and environmentally-committed staff.**
  - 7.5.1** *NHDES staff will complete surveys on a biennial basis to provide data to the Senior Leadership Team on employee satisfaction, process improvements, and strategic planning as a component of an ongoing engagement process.*
  - 7.5.2** *NHDES will continue to recognize and reward exceptional staff performance.*
  - 7.5.3** *NHDES will encourage staff to pursue career development and educational opportunities.*
- 7.6** **NHDES will employ practices that ensure institutional knowledge transfer for a stable, lasting and well-integrated organization.**
  - 7.6.1** *NHDES will develop and maintain a formal and comprehensive process for workforce analysis, planning, and development programs to meet the specific needs of the Department.*
  - 7.6.2** *NHDES will establish effective knowledge transfer procedures.*
  - 7.6.3** *NHDES will continually review and designate key programs and positions, and establish and support the mentoring programs necessary for continuity of service.*
  - 7.6.4** *NHDES will develop and periodically test a Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) to ensure that the agency can continue to carry out its mission-critical functions in the event of a major incident at its primary location.*