



The Municipal EcoLink

An e-bulletin from the NH Department of Environmental Services

August 2020

The Municipal EcoLink is a monthly e-bulletin designed to inform you of the latest environmental ideas, trends, grants, rules and more from the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (NHDES). We respectfully request that the following is electronically distributed or otherwise made available to your municipal committees, councils and boards. Please feel free to post it on your municipal website as well. You may read past issues at [The Municipal EcoLink](#).

NHDES Response to COVID-19

The coronavirus pandemic has caused many of us to do business differently. NHDES has set up a [COVID-19 webpage](#) as a clearinghouse for information related to any changes in NHDES program activity. NHDES will do its best to communicate any changes directly with our program customers and stakeholders, however please check this webpage regularly, as we will update information as necessary.

Drought Information

NHDES has advised public water systems to carefully track supplies and implement outdoor water use restrictions as needed. NHDES is advising municipalities in drought areas to consider imposing lawn watering restrictions, as authorized by RSA 41:11-d, to ensure the community is able to continue to meet essential needs as conditions worsen. To prepare your community for the impacts of drought, see [Drought Guidance for Municipalities](#) and [Guidance on Adopting Lawn Watering Restrictions](#).

Back to School... Is Your School AHERA Compliant?

As students and faculty return to school, make sure your schools' Asbestos Management Plans are up-to-date and in compliance with the Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA), 40 CFR 763, Subpart E. The purpose of AHERA is to ensure that local educational agencies (LEAs) safely manage asbestos-containing building materials (ACBM) found in schools, to ensure students, faculty and the general public are not exposed to asbestos. This brochure outlines the [responsibilities of all public, non-profit private, and charter schools](#) in the State of New Hampshire regarding AHERA. NHDES urges all schools to provide a safe and healthy educational environment. For more information, contact the [NHDES Asbestos Management Program](#) at (603) 271-4555.

2020 Funding for Drinking Water Infrastructure Projects

The New Hampshire Drinking Water and Groundwater Advisory Commission (Commission) has allocated up to \$30.9 million from the Drinking Water and Groundwater Trust Fund for loans and grants for the Special Projects Assistance Program, which targets drinking water infrastructure projects addressing contamination, time critical needs, economic hardship or associated with an extension of a public water system, and the Annual Drinking Water Construction Project Assistance Program (Annual Round). Special Project Assistance Program funding and special project applications can be submitted at any time and are reviewed on a case-by-case basis. The Annual Round funding applications are due on September 10. Eligible applicants and projects are defined in the [Rules for Construction Projects](#) and include engineering and/or construction for drinking water related infrastructure projects including but not limited to contamination, growth and drinking water improvements. Funding decisions for the Annual Round are anticipated to be completed by late fall. More information is available at [on the Commission website](#).

Public Comment Period for NCES Landfill Expansion Extended

NHDES is extending the public comment period for a permit application for expansion of the North Country Environmental Services, Inc. (NCES) landfill, also known as the Casella landfill, located in Bethlehem, NH. The public comment period closes Friday, September 18, 2020, at 4 pm. For details, see the notice on the [Solid Waste webpage](#).

Grants to Protect Water Supply Lands Presentation, September 9

On Wednesday, September 9, at 12 PM there will be a presentation on "Grants to Protect Water Supply Lands" with Sandy Crystall, Principal Planner, NHDES. The New Hampshire Drinking Water and Groundwater Trust Fund (DWGTF) and NHDES hold annual grant rounds to consider applications for the permanent protection of undeveloped water supply lands, including wellhead protection areas, hydrologic areas of concern for surface water supplies, and land that is likely to benefit future public water supply sources. Among the eligible applicants are municipalities, land trusts and public water systems. Learn more about this opportunity to protect your town's drinking water and valuable lands. [Registration Information](#).

Got Safe Drinking Water Presentation, September 23

On Wednesday, September 23, at 12 PM there will be a presentation “Got Safe Drinking Water?” with Pierce Rigrod, Source Water Protection Manager, NHDES. NHDES’ Source Water Protection Program will present an overview of the standard approaches to local source water protection and the role of Conservation Commissions. This virtual event will discuss information available to evaluate local drinking water threats and review key portions of NHDES’ Model Groundwater Protection Ordinance, science based-buffers that effectively protect surface water used as a source of drinking water, and model regulatory language to limit water use during drought. [Registration Information](#).

NHDES Solid Waste Operator Training Program

The NHDES Solid Waste Operator Training Program has resumed training using remote online tools. The SWOT Coordinator will continue to send emails to operators and permittees with up-to-date information. Please make sure that those who operate your solid waste facility have provided an email to the SWOT Coordinator at SWOT@des.nh.gov and that they are maintaining their certification. As classes are announced, they will be added to the [SWOT Calendar](#). If you have questions, please reach out to Tara Mae Albert at Tara.Albert@des.nh.gov or (603) 271-3713.

The NHDES website is getting a makeover

Coming soon! The NHDES website will be getting a fresh new look, complete with an update to the navigation system. All the information you need and want will still be there but will be organized in a much more intuitive way, based on environmental topics. There will also be a keyword searchable document library that will put all NHDES fact sheets, reports, guidance documents, outreach materials and more at your fingertips. The site will be fully mobile-ready, making accessing the information you need even easier. Keep an eye out for more information about when the new website will be going live.

Free “What’s Flushable” Removable Decals

Is your town or city having problems with wipes and non-flushable items impacting your wastewater systems? The Wastewater Engineering Bureau’s Residuals Management Section has 4”x7” “What’s Flushable” removable decals and magnets for you to put up around your town! Contact anthony.drouin@des.nh.gov for more information.

How Cool is That?! – Environmental Education for pre-K – age 99

Environmental education resources and ideas for teachers and parents are now available on NHDES Facebook, Twitter and Instagram sites. Started in April, the *How Cool is That?!* series offers lessons, resources, teacher training opportunities and readings for all grade levels and adults who want to learn more about how the natural world works. Let curiosity and wonder be your guide! Minimize screen fatigue and get outside. We will share *How Cool is That?!* items regularly to support teachers and parents and the kid in us all during this time of remote learning and beyond. Search social media sites for “How Cool is That” to find earlier posts. If you would like your organization to be tagged, please send your social media handle to Lara Hooper at lara.hooper@des.nh.gov.

2020 Local Energy Solutions Conference - Thu, Oct 29 - Fri, Oct 30

[The Local Energy Solutions Conference](#) brings together energy businesses, local energy committees and local staff and officials, state agencies, legislators, nonprofits, and beyond to connect with and learn from one another about New Hampshire's rapidly evolving energy economy. This year will be a two-day virtual event covering energy policy, the interrelated roles of energy efficiency, renewable energy, and strategic electrification, and community leadership, while featuring keynote speaker [Dr. Katharine Wilkinson](#), a climate author, strategist, teacher, and vice president at [Project Drawdown](#). [Time](#) recently featured Dr. Wilkinson as one of 15 “women who will save the world.” Find her [@DrKWilkinson](#).

Please send your comments for the editor to editor@des.nh.gov.

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