



The Municipal EcoLink

An e-bulletin from the NH Department of Environmental Services

October 2023

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 Solid Waste Management Bureau is Hosting Workshops to Assist Solid Waste Facilities in Writing Compliant Operating Plans

The NHDES Solid Waste Management Bureau (SWMB) announced two workshops specifically geared to solid waste facilities that need help writing or updating their operating plan, which is required by their solid waste permit. The first workshop "[Introduction to Operating Plans](#)" is available either as an in person 2.5 hour workshop on **November 2** from 9:00 AM-Noon or as a 1-hour condensed online version ([Register](#) for the online session). The second session "[Writing Operating Plans – Work Session](#)" is a 2.5 hour in-person time slot where SWMB staff members will work with permittees and operators to edit, draft and develop adequate operating plans to be held on **November 2** from 1-4 PM. Session 1 is a required pre-requisite for Session 2. Seating is LIMITED for the in-person sessions and registration is required. To register for the in-person sessions, please contact Tara Mae Albert at SWOT@des.nh.gov.

Get the Lead Out of Drinking Water Program

NHDES has created the Get the Lead Out of Drinking Water program to support schools and child care facilities in completing their required lead in drinking water testing. All facilities can receive technical support, and public schools and licensed child care facilities can receive free sample analyses. For more information and to view testing results, visit www.gettheleadoutnh.org. Funding for the program is provided by the U.S. EPA Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation (WIIN) Act. In addition, the New Hampshire Drinking Water and Groundwater Trust Fund has awarded \$1.6 million for remediation grants for public and private schools, and is working with the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services to establish a grant program for child care facilities. Information about the remediation grant will be available this fall and will be posted on the [Get the Lead Out webpage](#).

Water Works Operator Certification Exams

Drinking water operator certification examinations will be held on Tuesday, **December 5, 2023**, at NHDES, 29 Hazen Drive, Concord. Applications for the exam are due 30 days before the examination. There is also an option to take a computer-based exam for Grades I-IV at various locations throughout the state at any time. For more information, see our [Water Works Operator Certification webpage](#).

FREE – NH 4th Grade Drinking Water Festival and Water Science Fair, and 3rd-5th Grade Water Poetry Contest

Three events – New Hampshire schools may participate in one or all! At the **Festival**, fourth-grade students will spend the day learning about water quality, conservation, pollution, technology and many other water-related topics. Activities are hands-on and students interact with professionals in STEM fields. For the New Hampshire state-level **Water Science Fair**, fourth-graders will conduct research and present their findings to a panel of judges. Guide booklet available. We are happy to discuss ways your school can participate. The festival and Water Science Fair are free to registered schools and will take place on **May 8, 2024**, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. in Plymouth, NH. Registration deadline: **January 31, 2024**. Space is limited. Students in third through fifth grades, home schooled and in traditional classes, may participate in the **Water Poetry Contest**. Submission deadline: TBD March 2024; more information available soon. For more information on all three events and to register, visit us at <https://nhwaterfestival.org> or contact Lara Hooper at [\(603\) 271-4071](tel:6032714071) or lara.hooper@des.nh.gov.

NHDES Updating Climate Action Plan

NHDES has been awarded a \$3 million Climate Pollution Reduction Grant through the U.S. EPA. The first phase of the grant is to create an updated Climate Action Plan due **March 1, 2024**. The plan will be the basis for the second phase of this process, which will be a competitive implementation grant program. Applicants will be able to apply for implementation grants based on measures identified in the preliminary plan. Applications for implementation grants must be submitted no later than **April 1, 2024**, to be considered for funding. Applicants from all participating states, local governments, tribes and territories can compete for \$4.6 billion in implementation grants based on the measures identified. More information can be found on the [NHDES website](#), or questions can be emailed to cprg@des.nh.gov.

New Video Highlights Wetlands Permitting Resource

This [short video](#) offers an overview of the state Natural Heritage Bureau's DataCheck tool for checking records on rare species and natural communities. It features top tips based on stakeholders' frequently asked questions. To use the tool, or for additional questions, visit the [DataCheck](#) section of the New Hampshire Division of Forests and Lands website.

WATCH: New NHDES Video Highlights Land Development Permitting Rule Changes

This [short video](#) offers an overview of New Hampshire's latest "Alteration of Terrain" rules updates, including some that relate to agriculture, redevelopment, stormwater treatment and solar arrays. These updates also include a revised definition of "earth-moving activities" in or near protected shoreland with steeper slopes. To read the full adopted rules, visit the [administrative rules area](#) of the NHDES website

Wetlands Rules Updates Approved and Adopted

[Wetland rules updates](#) became effective on **October 13, 2023**. Several highlights include mitigation hierarchy removal, greater Wetlands Permit by Notification (PBN) form accessibility and ease of use, and new PBN project categories. It is possible you may need to refresh your browser window to access and download the latest updated versions of [wetland permit application forms](#).

Attention Household Hazardous Waste Collection Event Coordinators:

NHDES is now accepting requests for applications for household hazardous waste (HHW) grants for state Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 (**July 1, 2024, through June 30, 2025**). Costs eligible for matching grant funds include contractor HHW disposal costs and an educational campaign addressing source reduction, reuse and recycling of HHW. The deadline for submitting a completed grant application is **February 1, 2024**. The grant application can be downloaded from the Grant Forms and Guidance tab on the [NHDES HHW Page](#). For more information, please contact the HHW Program at [\(603\) 271-2047](tel:6032712047), or by email at hww@des.nh.gov.

Public Pool Registrations Required!

Owners and operators of public bathing facilities (PBFs) are required by New Hampshire law to register all existing and new public pools or spas with the state, conduct an annual fee-based self-certification of each existing facility and certify that the PBF is operated under the supervision of a certified pool operator. An online registration form is now available on our [PBF Registration Form webpage](#). The annual self-certification fee is \$250 per PBF (regardless of size) up to a maximum of \$1,500 annually for any facility that has more than six PBFs. The online form and payment instructions are available on the [PBF annual Self-Certification Form webpage](#). To learn more about the program, please visit the [NHDES Public Bathing Facility Program webpage](#).

Reminders Regarding Outdoor Wood Boilers and Residential Wood and Pellet Stoves

Wood smoke is of particular concern in the winter when the cold air and temperature inversions limit air movement. Smoldering fires and short chimneys may cause heavy smoke to stay close to the ground and in turn, cause neighborhood nuisances and adversely impact public health and the environment. Operate in accordance with the manufacturers recommendations and use only permissible fuels. Today, only EPA-certified wood stoves, pellet stoves and outdoor wood boilers can be purchased and installed in New Hampshire. Manufacturers are required to meet the Step 2 [emission standards](#) that went into effect in May 2020. The use of these cleaner-burning units, with proper operation, can reduce the adverse health and environmental impacts associated with using these devices. Find more information on our [Home Wood-Burning Appliances](#) webpage. Look at attached poster for specific rule requirements about these devices.

Reminder about Brush Burning Limitations

Residents are reminded that even though there may be snow on the ground and a [fire permit](#) from the local fire warden may not be required, only brush with branches less than 5 inches in diameter can be burned. The burning of construction and demolition debris is prohibited, as well as the burning of domestic waste, tires, trash, treated wood and [other non-conforming materials](#). Residents must also check with the local fire department to determine what other restrictions may apply.

State Asbestos Requirements

A reminder that when residents are requesting permits from the town or city to conduct demolitions or renovations there are also state requirements they may have to comply with. For example, a notification must be received by NHDES at least 10 working days before the start of any major asbestos abatement project or any demolition activity. In addition, inspections for asbestos must be conducted and all asbestos-containing materials must be removed before a demolition. There are additional requirements for the proper disposal of the material. Don't forget to inform your residents about also complying with state requirements!

Stream Crossings and Culverts

The Granite State features at least 17,000 stream crossings. The NHDES Culvert Maintainer Certification program in partnership with UNH Extension, helps support critical infrastructure and mitigate risks of flooding. For more details on this and other initiatives, visit the [stream crossings section of our website](#).

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

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