

New Hampshire Lives On Water



New Hampshire Water Sustainability Commission Final Report - Overview December 2012

Governor John Lynch established the Water Sustainability Commission in April 2011 by Executive Order 2011-02. The Commission's purpose was to identify strategies and management measures for ensuring that the quality and quantity of New Hampshire's water resources in 25 years are as good as or better than they are today. The Commission consisted of 14 members representing business, conservation, agriculture, water utilities, the general public, and local and state government. The Commission's final report includes goals and recommendations designed to be the beginning of the work to ensure enough good quality water for future generations.

Why Now?

Today, most areas of New Hampshire have sufficient quantities of good, clean water to support a healthy environment, individuals, communities and economic activity. Most New Hampshire residents generally recognize the crucial role that water plays in our lives, but many do not fully understand the commitment required to assure that our water is this good or better in 25 years. The challenges we face regarding water are becoming increasingly complex:

- If not properly located, designed, and managed, land development has the potential to pollute our waters. In fact, over 80 percent of water pollution in New Hampshire is currently from storm water and wastewater.¹
- Water infrastructure and the clean water that it provides is part of New Hampshire's economic advantage. However, the condition of the systems that provide us with clean water and treat our waste may not be able to meet future demands, and many are or will shortly be in need of significant repair or upgrade. Over the next 10 years, the estimated cost of needed replacement and rebuilding of water infrastructure in New Hampshire is \$2.9 billion.² Unless we begin to make investments relatively soon, we will lose this competitive advantage.

Commission's Goals

1. The people of New Hampshire will be knowledgeable, engaged, and careful consumers and stewards of our water resources.
2. Flexible and coordinated water management programs and practices will be designed and implemented to ensure that New Hampshire has an adequate quantity and quality of water to support ecological and human health and economic activity.
3. Management and planning for New Hampshire's water quality and quantity will be integrated at appropriate state, watershed and sub-watershed levels.
4. The infrastructure for delivering our drinking water, cleaning our wastewater, and managing storm water and water storage will protect human and environmental health and safety in an affordable manner.
5. Runoff from rain and snow, and the pollution it carries, will be minimized and effectively managed.
6. Our watersheds, communities, and built infrastructure will be robust, resilient, and able to adapt to changing weather patterns.
7. Adequate public and private funding will be available for managing water resources effectively and efficiently.

Where Do We Go From Here?

The work started by the Commission must be continued using a multi-sector approach - a coordinated network of interests from across the state - to build the vision articulated in the goals above and to implement the actions called for in the Commission's report.

For more information about the New Hampshire Water Sustainability Commission and to view the full final report please visit: <http://www.nh.gov/water-sustainability/>

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¹ New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services. (2012). *Draft 2012 303(d) List of Impaired Waters*. Concord, N.H. Available at: <http://des.nh.gov/organization/divisions/water/wmb/swqa/2012/index.htm>

² Estimates for the three components (water supply, wastewater, and dams) of this figure come from three sources:

- a) Wright- Pierce. (2011). *Drinking Water Infrastructure in New Hampshire: A capital needs analysis*. Prepared for the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services. Available at: http://www.nhlgc.org/attachments/nhma/WS_Wright-Pierce-Report.pdf
- b) New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services. (2012). *Draft 2012 New Hampshire Clean Watersheds Needs Survey*. Wastewater Engineering Bureau. Concord, N.H.
- c) New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services. (2012). Dam Bureau. Concord, N.H. Unpublished data.