Since the founding of the New England Interstate Water Pollution Control Commission, we have believed strongly in the value of working collaboratively. Over the years, we have brought people together, agencies together, states together. We have created publications together, put on conferences together, discussed and pursued solutions to tough problems together. But always we have operated with the understanding that the process of collaboration cannot be an end unto itself. It is what that process inspires, what it produces that matters in the long run. What matters in the end are—results.

At NEIWPC, the process that begets results often follows an established pattern. A need in our member states is identified, and together we explore with our Commissioners, our states, EPA, and others about how to meet the need. NEIWPC staff then take the reins, continually seeking input from our partners in the process so that whatever is ultimately created—be it a schedule of training courses, a guide for operators, a classroom curriculum, or even a new water quality model—delivers exactly what is needed. By delivering on an identified need through this highly collaborative process, we dramatically increase the likelihood that the desired results will be achieved. As a final step, we go to considerable lengths to monitor the results, to gauge the effectiveness of what we’ve done, to learn how we might do better the next time.

In the pages that follow are many descriptions of projects at various stages in this process. As always we are proud to highlight finished projects that are achieving positive results. In some cases, those results are easily seen—the boatful of water chestnuts pulled from Lake Champlain’s Missisquoi National Wildlife Refuge, for example. In others, tangible results are less obvious. Consider the impact of a well-run, exhaustively planned conference, carefully targeted at the specific needs of attendees. They head home educated and enlightened—and enthused about using their newfound knowledge on the job.

In this report, we are also eager to share the news of new initiatives that may not bear fruit for some time to come. After all, today’s complex water challenges did not emerge out of nowhere, nor will they be solved overnight. It will take collaboration, and it will take a commitment to results. At NEIWPC, we believe there is no other way.
According to our compact, NEIWCPC is to be overseen by and projected to provide overall leadership in water management and protection.

Providing overall leadership in water management

Educating the public

Initiating and overseeing scientific research projects

Training environmental professionals

Representing the region in matters of federal policy

Developing resources that foster progress on water issues

Coordination among the states

Guiding and assisting our members and our region

Since 1947, NEIWPCC has been a leader in the fight for clean water as a not-for-profit interstate agency. We serve and assist our member states—Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, Rhode Island, and Vermont—by:

1. Appointing qualified individuals, including individuals appointed to the commission by virtue of their professional or public experience and interest in water and wastewater issues.

2. Ensuring the effective and efficient use of NEIWPCC funds and resources to achieve the commission’s goals.

3. Providing leadership and support to state and local governments and agencies in the development and implementation of policies and programs related to water and wastewater management and protection.

4. Coordinating efforts among the states and other stakeholders to achieve our common goals.

5. Developing and implementing strategies to address water and wastewater issues, including the development of new technologies and approaches.

6. Providing technical assistance and training to state and local governments and agencies.

7. Representing the region in matters of federal policy.

8. Providing leadership and guidance to the region in matters of water and wastewater management and protection.

9. Coordinating efforts among the states and other stakeholders to achieve our common goals.

10. Developing and implementing strategies to address water and wastewater issues, including the development of new technologies and approaches.

11. Providing technical assistance and training to state and local governments and agencies.

12. Representing the region in matters of federal policy.
From the Chair

When an organization has been around as long as NEIWPC, it is expected that some might ask: Is it still needed? After all, when NEIWPC was formed in 1947, its Commissioners faced far different issues than exist today. Back then, water pollution control was a novel concept. Today, the pressing water issues are far more complex—atmospheric deposition of mercury and the potential threat posed by pharmaceuticals and personal care products in the waste stream, to name just two. Back then, NEIWPC was desperately needed. I would argue it is needed even more so today—and this annual report provides compelling evidence to support that view.

The report reflects upon the many diverse issues and projects the Commission was involved with during fiscal year 2006. Some activity came in areas long associated with NEIWPC—the training of wastewater operators, for example—while other actions showed how this organization adapts to the new needs of those of us in its member states. Consider the aforementioned issue of mercury. It is a concern that is felt at all levels of society—from the kitchen table, as we wonder what fish are safe to eat, to the halls of Congress, as policymakers in Washington consider new ways to address this vexing problem. All this attention on a seemingly intractable issue might have prompted some organizations to avoid entering the fray. NEIWPC has not only joined the debate, it has assumed a position of leadership. From coordinating a major mercury conference to developing a regional mercury TMDL, NEIWPC is encouraging collaboration with a commitment to producing real, tangible results.

A similar focus can be seen in NEIWPC's approach to pharmaceuticals and personal care products, or PPCPs. Members of NEIWPC's Regional Research Initiative Steering Committee said this emerging issue was a priority, prompting NEIWPC to embark in fiscal 2006 on preparations for a conference that will enlighten attendees from throughout our region about the latest science on PPCPs. Only by being fully informed on an issue can we take the right steps toward any potential regulation.

Of course, it is not only new challenges that must be addressed, but also lingering ones. State water agencies continue to struggle with shrinking budgets amid growing public demands for instant, comprehensive responses to local issues. New federal mandates pose another heavy burden. EPA continues to present challenges to us such as Phase II Stormwater Permit implementation, wetlands protection, regulatory changes in light of recent U.S. Supreme Court decisions (Rapanos and Carabell), NPDES permitting issues, implementation of the Underground Storage Tank Compliance Act of 2006, and beaches/marine protection necessities.

Through its Commission and Executive Committee meetings, workgroups, conferences, and multiple projects, NEIWPC provides the nexus for the states in our region to collaborate as we work through these challenging issues. It is a valuable, vital service, and I believe NEIWPC is in a better position to provide this service than ever before. There is excellent representation on the Commission from all the states' environmental agencies, as well as knowledgeable and active non-agency Commissioners. In addition, the EPA New England Regional Administrator, Bob Varney, is a past NEIWPC Commissioner from New Hampshire, and a man who understands and appreciates the work of the Commission. His frequent presence at Commission meetings only strengthens NEIWPC's relationship with EPA, a critically important alliance that seems to get only stronger with time. We also continue to have very close ties to the Association of State and Interstate Water Pollution Control Administrators, which greatly benefits our regional ability to participate in national issues. Finally, we have a strong staff at NEIWPC ready and willing to tackle the most difficult problems.

On behalf of the staff and Executive Director Ron Poltak, as well as my fellow NEIWPC Commissioners, I thank you for taking the time to read this report about NEIWPC's many accomplishments in fiscal 2006. As we move through fiscal 2007, NEIWPC will continue to promote regional cooperation and provide indispensable assistance in the pursuit of progress in the protection of the environment and public health. We needed that in 1947. And we need it now—more than ever.

Harry Stewart
NEIWPC Chair
Director, Water Division, New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services
The meeting which was held at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Newport, Rhode Island was the 173rd Commission Meeting in NEWPCC's history.

At the NEWPCC Commission Meeting on May 18, 2006, Dick Corio (rear table with spiral notebook) delivered the Treasurer's Report.

September 21, 2005
Lowell, Massachusetts
July 6, 2006
Newport, Rhode Island
May 18, 2006
Lowell, Massachusetts
March 16, 2006
Lowell, Massachusetts
January 12, 2006
Lowell, Massachusetts
December 9, 2005

Executive Committee Meetings

September 21-22, 2005
Newport, Rhode Island
May 18-19, 2006
Lowell, Massachusetts
January 12-13, 2006

Fiscal 2006 Commission Meetings
Overview

Commission Meetings: A Timely Tradition

As water and wastewater issues have grown more complex, the value of bringing together the region’s leading players on these issues has grown accordingly. In fiscal 2006, NEIWPC’s full slate of Commissioners met three times, as is customary, while our Executive Committee, made up of the states’ environmental agency commissioners (or their designees), met six times. These sessions have long been the cornerstone of NEIWPC’s collaborative process, as they provide for an invaluable face-to-face exchange of information. They provide an efficient way for NEIWPC staff to keep abreast of the needs in our member states, and for our states to be fully informed on our actions and plans for meeting those needs. And they provide an effective means of gathering input and feedback on our projects from experienced environmental decision makers who can help us revise and improve our work so that it achieves the intended results.

It is beyond the scope of this report to convey all that took place at these meetings in fiscal 2006. The agendas included updates from NEIWPC staff on some of the many projects that are described in detail in this report, as well as updates from the states on legislative and programmatic matters. For the first time in years, we periodically heard positive budget news from the states, such as the approval in New York State for 14 additional staff in the Division of Water. Regrettably, such good news was often offset by fresh evidence of financial strain in our states’ environmental agencies, which generally speaking continue to take on more responsibilities with fewer staff and tighter budgets.

The maneuvering in Washington on federal budgetary matters was a frequent topic of discussion, with our Executive Director Ron Poltak keeping the Commissioners up-to-date on the increasingly uncertain state of the Clean Water State Revolving Fund. This fund, which provides federal low-interest wastewater loans to states, has suffered serious budget cuts over the years, and the threat of potentially devastating reductions loomed large in fiscal 2006. (As of early 2007, the funding status of the CWSRF remained in question, as lawmakers skirmished over a bill to reauthorize the fund at $14 billion over four years.)

An occasional special guest at our 2006 meetings was EPA New England Regional Administrator Bob Varney, who discussed a variety of topics, including emergency preparedness, drinking water security, and the progress on NPDES permits. Since taking the helm at EPA New England, Mr. Varney has made regular appearances at our meetings, allowing our Commissioners a unique opportunity to engage in frank dialogue with one of EPA’s top officials.

continued next page
Working Together for Outcomes

Spending smart, reducing the gap between our institution's needs and current resources could result in a more efficient and effective use of our resources. The NEIMPC shared its experience with a number of institutions, highlighting the importance of strategic planning and collaborative decision-making.

In particular, the need for a clear, strategic vision is highlighted, emphasizing the importance of effective communication and collaboration. The NEIMPC encourages institutions to work together, sharing resources and best practices to achieve common goals.

NEIMPC's Chair, 1998 and 99

For New England Regional Administrators Report, VYIRAGF

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For New England Regional Administrators Report, VYIRAGF
Partnering for Progress

In fiscal 2006, NEIWPCCC continued to place great emphasis on working with other organizations in the pursuit of common goals. Executive Director Ron Poltak and Deputy Director Susan Sullivan met regularly with our sister interstate organizations, the Northeast States for Coordinated Air Use Management (NESCAUM) and the New England Waste Management Officials Association (NEWMOA). Together, we addressed high-priority resource management issues in the region that affect our three areas of concern - water, air, and waste management. Out of this regular communication grew efforts to cooperate on exploring opportunities for expanding the regional use of biofuels, and to collaborate on producing a document that highlights the substantial and often underappreciated progress made in the region on reducing mercury releases to the environment. (For more on all our mercury-related endeavors, see page 11).

NEIWPCCC staff represented regional interests at the national level by participating in the meetings and activities of many organizations, including the Water Environment Federation (WEF), the Association of State Drinking Water Administrators (ASDWA), and the Association of State and Interstate Water Pollution Control Administrators (ASIWPCA). This participation was active - and influential. At ASIWPCA, for example, Ron Poltak serves on the board, as do NEIWPCCC’s Chair Harry Stewart, and two other NEIWPCCC Commissioners, Maine DEP’s Andy Fisk and NYSDEC’s Sandi Allen. Beth Card, our Director of Water Quality Programs, is Chair of ASIWPCA’s Legal Affairs Task Force. At the National Onsite Wastewater Recycling Association, our Director of Wastewater and Onsite Programs, Tom Groves, serves as Vice-President and President-Elect. Our participation with other organizations also occurred in 2006 in less formal ways, as staff took part in numerous meetings and conferences across the region and country, listening and learning about water-related concerns, and speaking on behalf of our member states.

In 2006, we also continued our longtime partnerships with several programs that target the needs of specific areas. For example, NEIWPCCC staff who work directly with the Hudson River Estuary Program and the Hudson River National Estuarine Research Reserve played key roles in a wide variety of critical projects last year. And our well-established relationship with the Lake Champlain Basin Program continued to help that organization make important progress toward restoring and protecting Lake Champlain and its watershed. For more on these organizations’ accomplishments in 2006, and our role with them, see the Partnerships section of this report (page 40).

Our partnerships are one more way that we ensure the delivery of results. Our partners share our commitment to working to produce real outcomes. They share our dedication to working efficiently and effectively. And together, we share our successes.
This accomplishment—along those of NEPCC, as a whole—has been a strengthening of our environmental leadership. We have worked with member governments and businesses, at the local and national level, to improve the health of our waterways, reduce pollution, and protect the environment. This progress is not just good for the environment, but also good for businesses and our quality of life.

Achievement in this area is the result of a strong commitment to environmental protection and the work of our environmental leadership. NEPCC’s success is a testament to the power of collaboration and the importance of taking action to protect our environment.

High Honor

NEPCC’s work has been recognized with several awards, including the EPA’s Environmental Leadership Award, which recognizes outstanding contributions to environmental protection. This award is given annually to organizations and individuals that have made significant contributions to the protection of the environment.

Our success in protecting the environment has been recognized by the EPA, as well as by our member governments. We are proud of the work we have done, and we will continue to work towards a cleaner, healthier environment for all.

Getting It Right: An Emphasis on Accuracy and Oversight

Accuracy is key in any organization. Our data must be as accurate as possible in order to make informed decisions. We have implemented systems to ensure the accuracy of our data, including quality assurance and quality control processes.

In January 2006, NEPCC was recognized by the EPA for its efforts in protecting the environment. This recognition highlights the importance of our work and the need to continue to improve our processes in order to ensure the accuracy of our data.

Our success in protecting the environment is a result of the dedication and hard work of our member governments and businesses. We will continue to work towards a cleaner, healthier environment for all.

The story of NEPCC is one of dedication and hard work. We are proud of the progress we have made, and we will continue to work towards a cleaner, healthier environment for all.
In fiscal 2006, our Water Quality staff assisted our member states through a wide variety of workgroups, technical projects, and policy initiatives. All the activity supported the division's overall goals—to help our states determine the quality of their waters, assess the causes of the identified problems, and pursue the appropriate solutions.

Water Quality

- Monitoring and Modeling
  Effective monitoring of the water quality in our lakes, rivers, and streams is fundamental to an accurate determination of the condition of our region's waterbodies. And our commitment to monitoring could clearly be seen through our work on several high-profile projects in 2006. However, long-term surface water monitoring does have a downside: it takes a lot of people, a lot of time, and a lot of money. Hence our involvement in developing computer-based simulation models, which increasingly are providing the information needed to develop and implement water pollution control programs.

New Water Quality Tool
The model's full name is complicated—Generalized Watershed Loading Function with an ArcView GIS interface—which is why it's typically referred to by the abbreviation, AVGWLF (or "average wolf" as some pronounce it). In January 2005, NEIWPCC began collaborating with Dr. Barry Evans of Pennsylvania State University to build a Northeast

Dr. Barry Evans of Penn State University instructs NYSDEC's Shohreh Karimipour in the use of a beta version of the Northeast AVGWLF model. The training occurred during a meeting of the model's Technical Advisory Committee held in August 2006 at NEIWPCC's Lowell headquarters.

continued next page
the results from previous research done in the 1990's, we will
learn more about conditions that are different.


to make greater contributions to the state of New England
the study's progress. The study is funded by the National
Science Foundation, which provides the necessary
resources to ensure its success. The study focuses on
understanding the distribution and abundance of
brown trout in New England streams. Through this
research, we aim to better understand how climate
change and other factors affect these important
fish populations.


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Need Drives New Training Effort

...in a recent example of our needs-based work process, NEWPPCC surveyed our member states in May 2006 on their views about comprehensive monitoring strategies and the states' efforts and needs. Using the survey responses, we crafted a training session focused on the biological assessment of lakes, rivers, and wetlands, and in the use of modeling technologies to enhance monitoring efforts. The project was approved by the Water Quality subcommittee of the conference on April 26, 2006. In developing the training sessions, we will provide our members with opportunities to learn about the latest tools and techniques for monitoring water quality. The training will be held in late summer and early fall, and will be open to all interested parties.

Faster Results, Quicker Fix

Although NEWPPCC staff at our Lowell headquarters coordinate much of our work, our staff who work directly with our states' representatives are also engaged in important projects. NEWPPCC staff based in Wisconsin, for example, have been working on the development of a rapid testing method for detecting E. coli in water samples. This method will enable targeted monitoring of water bodies and provide more accurate data to assess water quality.

Streams Study Near Completion

NEWPPCC's participation in an extensive, multi-year effort to assess the health of the nation's streams has been ongoing since 2006. As the study reaches its final phase, our efforts will focus on improving the accuracy and reliability of the data collected. The study, which was designed to determine the health of American streams by collecting state water quality data in five different regions, will be completed in late 2008. The data collected will provide valuable information for policymakers and water managers.

In 2008, we submitted our final report to EPA, which includes our findings and recommendations for improving water quality in the nation's streams. We also offered suggestions for future research and monitoring efforts.
www.nwemccqma.org/ncuc

Change anything together and then the conference is multi-media. Don't touch the key issues, and hold your workshops. All other
\textit{developing} them. Do not attend secondary or tertiary conferences.

\textbf{Information Exchange}

Endorsement of our member states. In early 2007, we released the TMDL for public comment.

\textbf{New Weapon in the Works}

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Wetlands

Not only do wetlands provide food and shelter for fish and wildlife, they also purify water by sifting out sediments and pollutants, help control flooding, and reduce coastal storm damage by absorbing stormwater and releasing it gradually. Yet they’ve been filled by developers, drained to irrigate fields, and tainted by pollutants. NEIWPCCC works intensively with our member states to help preserve these vital areas.

Group Efforts

NEIWPCCC’s Wetlands Workgroup is comprised of wetlands staff from our member states, EPA, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the National Marine Fisheries Service, and the Natural Resources Conservation Service. The group met three times in fiscal 2006, and engaged in productive discussions on everything from compensatory mitigation to the effects of dam removals on wetlands.

Aerial Evidence

If you want to catch wetlands law violators, sometimes the best strategy is to get a bird’s-eye view. On April 25-27, 2006, expert instructors from the USFWS and EPA led a training session in Hadley, Mass., entitled “Wetlands Enforcement Training III: Aerial Photography Interpretation and Building a Good Case.” State wetlands and regulatory staff received intensive instruction in using image processing software to compare aerial photos taken at different times to detect changes in wetlands. The photo comparison can provide key evidence in cases against violators, but is just a first step in building a case; once a change is detected, wetlands staff must visit the site to determine definitively if a wetland has been filled, and if so, whether it was done with or without the proper permits.

The session wrapped up our series of training modules aimed at enhancing the knowledge and skills of state staff in wetlands delineation, regulation, and enforcement. Our Water Quality staff coordinated all logistics for the series, including developing agendas, booking instructors and locations, and reimbursing travel expenses for attendees. The training was supported by a grant from EPA’s Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance.
The 2006 NPS Conference
NPS Source Pollution
2006 Annual Conference
Ending Traditions
agricultural runoff.

Experiences and Lessons Learned.

Workshop attendees discussed what a great example of how our workshops help our states learn from each other through a sharing of ideas on NPS management were taken to night. Dick

Forum for Progress

The challenge of accounting for wetlands' criticality on NPS (Natural Pollution Source) conference. The annual NPS conference strives to cover the cost of the event.

Department of Environmental Conservation was to cover 86.1% of the total costs. This year, 2006, NPS reached to employ distinguished women from the conference with an educational focus on environmental strategies.
Stormwater

In our cities and suburbs, rain and snowmelt often can’t seep into the ground because of impervious surfaces such as driveways, sidewalks, and streets. Instead, the stormwater moves across these surfaces, collecting pollutants along the way, before flowing into a waterbody or into a sewer system that discharges directly to a bay, lake, or river. Polluted stormwater runoff remains a leading reason why so many of our nation’s waterbodies don’t meet water quality standards.

Learning Opportunities

Our Stormwater Workgroup continues to be the primary vehicle through which we cultivate progress on this pressing issue. For example, the quarterly workgroup meetings in fiscal 2006 provided an ideal setting for our states to share information with Vermont as it moved to finalize its multi-sector general permit. (Many industrial facilities must seek permit coverage through the MSGP, which may include requirements such as developing and implementing a stormwater pollution prevention program.) Staff from VT DEC spoke of the legal and technical issues they’d encountered in developing the permit, and received guidance from staff from other states who’d gone through a similar development process. VT DEC successfully issued its MSGP in late 2006.

We also continued to take advantage of opportunities for cross-program discussions. Our Stormwater Workgroup meeting in February 2006 ended with a joint session with our Wetlands Workgroup. And on June 8, 2006, members of our Stormwater and TMDL Workgroups gathered for a permitting workshop at the EPA New England Regional Laboratory (see photo on page 6). Speakers included MA DEP’s Russ Isaac, who spoke about a draft Stormwater Pollutant TMDL for the Shawsheen Headwaters, and Anne Peery of the Missouri Department of Natural Resources, who discussed implementation of a TMDL that has led to a documented decline in phosphorous levels in the James River. The meeting followed up on a number of issues raised during our “Stormwater Discharges to Impaired Waters” meeting, which was held at our Lowell headquarters on November 7, 2005, and attended by technical and legal staff from all our member states and EPA.

The activity wasn’t confined to the meeting room. NEIWPC’s staff coordinated a visit by 20 Stormwater Workgroup members to the University of New Hampshire Stormwater Center on September 12, 2006. The center features a field facility where different stormwater management systems undergo side-by-side comparisons under strictly controlled conditions. The center’s co-director Robert Roseen conducted the tour. “Many of you have seen these systems in stormwater manuals before,” he said. “But it’s not easy to actually see them for yourself.” Workgroup members appreciated the chance to see first-hand three classes of stormwater treatment systems: manufactured devices, conventional structural designs, and Low Impact Development Designs (LIDs).

Research Project Approved

In late fiscal 2006, we teamed up with the UNH Stormwater Center to submit a proposal to EPA for a one-year project to assess the effectiveness of constructed gravel wetlands in removing nutrients from stormwater in a northern climate. EPA ultimately selected the project for funding, and the work will begin in late 2007. The results from the research will go a long way toward providing state and federal environmental managers and their partners with the knowledge they need to make decisions about using constructed gravel wetlands as a tool to reduce nutrient loading from stormwater.

Compliance Assistance

Stormwater is the focus of a number of our staff who work with New York’s Department of Environmental Conservation in Albany, and among their accomplishments in 2006 was finalization of the agency’s Critical Path to Compliance. This document describes tasks and benchmarks for meeting the requirements of the Stormwater Phase II MS4 permit as well as reference information for other stormwater management assistance documents. It was prepared with help from the Central New York Regional Planning and Development Board with input from the New York State Association of Regional Councils.

Copies were sent to all regulated municipalities in the state as well as other organizations who are partners with NYSDEC in helping the municipalities develop Stormwater Management Programs, which they are required to do by January 2008.

Municipalities have found the document useful in making sure they are on track to meet the deadline.

Dr. Robert Roseen (center), co-director of the University of New Hampshire Stormwater Center, explains a stormwater control system at the center’s field facility to members of NEIWPC’s Stormwater Workgroup.
What It Takes to Write a Permit

The National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permits are issued under regulations established by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to regulate the discharge of pollutants from non-point sources into water bodies. The permits are issued to ensure compliance with water quality standards and to prevent pollution of water bodies. The permits include provisions for monitoring and reporting, and they require permittees to implement and maintain water quality management plans. The permits are designed to protect water quality and the health of aquatic life.
Speaking Out on Fee Incentive Plan

In fiscal 2006, EPA began developing a rule that would provide a financial incentive for states to generate a greater share of the funding for their permitting programs, which right now are supported through a blend of federal monies, state revenues, and fees paid by facilities that receive permits. In early 2007, EPA released details of the proposal, which calls for setting aside $5 million in Clean Water Act funds to share only among states that increase the portion of their permit program funding generated by user fees to at least 75 percent.

We didn’t wait for the details to come out before we acted. In late fiscal 2006, we crafted a letter to all those who represent our member states in Congress. We urged them to support language in the fiscal 2007 appropriations bill that would prohibit EPA from continuing with the disconcerting rulemaking. We pointed out the problems that many in the Congressional delegation would later point out themselves—that to qualify for the incentive, states would have to dramatically increase their permit fees, putting a bigger burden on municipalties and industrial entities; that the measure of success of a permit program would shift from improvements in water quality to an increase in fees generated; and that the overall intent of the proposal appeared to be to cut Clean Water Act funding, rather than increase it as we and so many others believe is necessary.

In early 2007, after the release of the proposed rule, we sent an official comment letter to EPA on behalf of our member states, where we further delineated our stance. We were hardly alone in criticizing the plan, and EPA responded to the broad opposition by extending the comment period. As this report went to press, however, the agency continued to maintain it would not withdraw the proposal.

Water Quality Standards

Federal regulations require water quality standards for all surface waters of the United States. States and tribes must establish standards that define the water quality goals of a waterbody by 1) designating the use (or uses) to be made of the water, 2) setting criteria necessary to protect the uses, and 3) preventing degradation of water quality through antidegradation provisions. Getting it right is critical, as standards influence so much of a state’s work, including monitoring programs, NPDES permits, and TMDLs.

On the Agenda: Nutrient Criteria

A meeting of our Water Quality Standards Workgroup in December 2005 was notable not only for the substance of the conversations on such matters as antidegradation and the presentations by such experts as Scott Sterner of NYSDEC. The discussion at the meeting also provided the impetus for a collaborative effort led by NEIWPCC to reconvene the region’s Nutrient Regional Technical Assistance Group, or RTAG, for short. EPA established RTAGs throughout the nation years ago as a means of getting a region’s EPA and state representatives to work together to accomplish common goals. But it had been a long time since this particular Nutrient RTAG had met.

Given the importance of developing nutrient criteria, and EPA’s emphasis on it, the need for a meeting was clear. Waterbodies require nutrients such as nitrogen and phosphorus, but an overload can cause algal blooms that choke off the oxygen supply and wreak havoc on an ecosystem. The key is to determine appropriate criteria for distinguishing natural nutrient enrichment in a waterbody from the over-enrichment caused by pollution.

Working with staff from EPA Region 1 and 2, our Water Quality staff set up a meeting of the Nutrient RTAG on April 6, 2006, at our Lowell headquarters. Twenty-seven people attended, including representatives from each of our member states and both EPA regions. The eight speakers on the agenda addressed the states’ approaches to developing nutrient criteria for lakes and streams, as well as EPA’s involvement in nutrient criteria development. It was a session worth waiting for, but next time the wait won’t be so long. The group agreed on the need to meet regularly again.
The development of a Northeast Regional Mercury TMDL was quickly to locate the experts and deliver the desired training. Current TMDL projects, with the need in hand, moved ahead. Various locations were targeted, and working sessions on those topics were held. The decision to set up two meetings was made.

The days were focused on key questions: What are the best locations for these projects? How much will this cost? What is the risk associated with this?

Two of the systems sampled by NEPCC in the large river revolution.

TMDL programs.

Toxics of Concern and Training.

The contamination of the TMDL is extensive, and the challenge is to develop a comprehensive system of Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) programs. A TMDL specifies the maximum allowable load of a pollutant that the Clean Water Act requires that must be developed for TMDLs. The Clean Water Act requires that these develop TMDLs.

Total Maximum Daily Load.
Aquatic Nuisance Species

Nonnative plants, fish, and other organisms are a growing presence in the waters of New England and New York State. However they are introduced, their entry into intricate ecosystems is a disturbance with the potential for great harm. For years, NEIWPCC has joined with other organizations to address the problem of aquatic nuisance species in our region.

Regional Effort

As a founding member of the Northeast Panel on Aquatic Nuisance Species (NEANS), we have long played a role in that organization’s efforts to increase visibility of ANS problems in the Northeast and facilitate funding and grant awards to the region. In fiscal 2006, NEIWPCC’s Susy King continued to serve as co-chair of NEANS’s Policy and Legislation Committee, which promotes consistent and effective policies and legislation to prevent and control ANS throughout the Northeast. In this role, King contributed to the panel’s increased efforts to coordinate rapid responses to ANS invasions on a regional basis. As a pilot project, NEANS is focusing on hydridilla, a particularly problematic ANS that is now present in three of our member states. The goal: to get the hydridilla out, and prevent any further spread. Hydridilla is native to Africa, Australia, and parts of Asia, but has been destroying fish and wildlife habitat in the southern United States for decades.

Protecting Lake Champlain

NEIWPCCC staff at the Lake Champlain Basin Program initiated and participated in a wide range of ANS efforts in fiscal 2006. In February, for example, our staff worked with Lake Champlain Sea Grant to coordinate a workshop on alewives for resource managers and the public. Alewives are native to the Atlantic Ocean, but they’ve been spreading to inland waters for years and have been found throughout Lake Champlain. Although the extent of the fish’s impact on the lake so far isn’t known, the long-term ecological and economic effects could be substantial. State and federal agencies are working together to monitor and manage the alewife population.

Perhaps the most visible effort occurred in late July when NEIWPCCC staff helped coordinate a rapid response to an outbreak of water chestnuts in Lake Champlain’s Missisquoi National Wildlife Refuge (MNWR). If the water chestnut became established there, its dense mats could displace native plants, reduce oxygen levels in the water, and limit recreational use. Barely a week after the initial sighting of the water chestnuts, pontoon boats ferried more than two dozen people and their canoes and kayaks four miles to the infested area. Pulling the water chestnuts out by hand, the crew loaded two entire skiffs with piles of the plants in just half a day. The effort succeeded in removing all the water chestnuts from the refuge, and MNWR staff are dedicated to surveying and managing the wetland areas for any re-growth.

For more on the Lake Champlain Basin Program’s 2006 activities, see page 40.

The alewife, seen below the ruler in the photo above, may be a small fish, but its presence in Lake Champlain is causing big concerns. The fish on the ruler is a rainbow smelt, which unlike the alewife is native to the lake.

Heather Pembrock of the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation stands beside a pile of water chestnuts pulled during the “rapid response” in Lake Champlain’s Missisquoi National Wildlife Refuge.
For more on our staff's work at the HRFNR, see page 41.

Hudson Valley

3rd new riparian species were discovered in New York's lower Hudson Valley; 2003. New York's Conservation

journey continues—New York's Conservation

The Hudson River

1. The mile-a-minute vine is the largest of numerous efforts to control its spread—but it is proving to be difficult to control.

Controlling an Invasive

and the design and maintenance of its website.

New York State Dept. of Environmental Conservation

The mile-a-minute vine is the largest of numerous efforts to control its spread—but it is proving to be difficult to control.
For six decades, wastewater treatment has been a major focus at NEIWPCC, and no doubt it will remain so far into the future. In fiscal 2006, we coordinated a great many projects related to the operation and maintenance of treatment plants, collection systems, and onsite systems. As always, training was a priority; we coordinated and conducted a vast number of courses and exams to help meet the need for a properly trained workforce in our member states.

Wastewater and Onsite Systems

- Wastewater Treatment
- Onsite Systems
- Residuals
- Collection Systems

Wastewater Treatment

The development of the modern wastewater treatment plant may be the single most important advance in America's quest for clean water. But the building of a plant is only part of the equation. To be effective, a plant must be operated and maintained properly. That's why each year NEIWPCC devotes extensive time and energy to conducting training and developing resources to ensure the plants are in good hands.

Personnel Matter

Determining the precise nature of its workforce needs is not easy for any business, and it's no different for a municipal wastewater treatment plant. How many operators are necessary? How many maintenance personnel? The need for accurate answers to such questions is acute now, with many plants struggling to find qualified job candidates while simultaneously facing budget cuts from their community.

To help with the proper identification of workforce needs, NEIWPCC has begun the process of updating Estimating Staffing for Municipal Wastewater Treatment Facilities, an EPA guide for the operation of publicly owned treatment works published in 1973. The new version will reflect the many changes in the wastewater field since the first edition. For instance, there are now labor-saving computer applications and telemetry, which did not exist in the 1970s, and new treatment processes. Overseeing the

continued next page

Thomas Walsh, director of the Upper Blackstone Water Pollution Abatement District treatment plant in Millbury, Mass., makes a point during the June 2006 meeting of our WWTP Staffing Advisory Committee.
null
Massachusetts Management

The transition of Massachusetts’s wastewater operator certification and training program to a consortium of training organizations led by NEIWPC was a gradual process, but since July 2005, the program has been fully in our hands. MA DEP continues to be involved in the consortium, and still issues licenses and handles appeals, but NEIWPC handles virtually all else. With some 5,500 licensed wastewater operators in Massachusetts, that is no small task.

In fiscal 2006, our staff notified each operator of the need to renew his or her license by Dec. 31, 2005, sent follow-up notices to some 4,000 operators, processed all renewal applications, and worked with MA DEP on the printing, signing, and mailing of licenses. Throughout the year, our staff also coordinated 27 training courses for the program, which attracted a total of nearly 500 students. The schedule included a special six-week introductory course held in the evening, which proved popular with newcomers to the wastewater treatment field. Our staff also engaged in many other efforts, such as scheduling the operator certification exams and serving as exam proctors. The exams are offered twice a year, in May and November, at various locations across the state. And they are popular; nearly 450 applicants took the operator exams in May 2006, with 51 percent passing (roughly the historical average).

Transition in Maine

Our success in managing Massachusetts’s wastewater operator program has not gone unnoticed in our other member states. In Maine, a similar transition is now underway. In early 2006, Maine’s Joint Environmental Training Coordinating Committee, which NEIWPC has managed since 1985, began assuming responsibility for coordinating that state’s wastewater operator certification program. As happened in Massachusetts, the change is occurring gradually, with ME DEP training and certification staff remaining involved. In 2006, however, the NEIWPC staff based at JETCC’s office in South Portland already had their hands full managing license renewals, scheduling exams, tracking training credits, and conducting other duties for the program that serves more than 700 licensed wastewater treatment plant operators in Maine.

During the year, JETCC also delivered its typically wide range of training programs on wastewater and drinking water topics. Our staff in Maine do not actually teach courses, but they do everything else associated with making them happen, such as recruiting volunteer instructors and host facilities to help keep course fees as low as possible. The 2006 offerings included multi-week classes on basic wastewater treatment, as well as one-day sessions on such matters as instrument calibration and new technologies for phosphorus removal. JETCC also helped ME DEP’s Non-Point Source Training Center with its courses on erosion control and other NPS topics, and partnered with other organizations to put on a popular series of workshops for onsite system installers. In fiscal 2006, JETCC either directly coordinated or assisted with 59 training sessions, which reached a total of more than 2,300 students.

Safeguarding the Assets

In order to minimize the vulnerability of wastewater treatment plants in our region to terrorist activity and other security risks, NEIWPC has for years been coordinating visits to plants in our member states to assess potential security threats, identify existing countermeasures, and recommend improvements. In fiscal 2006, we wrapped up this work by conducting a final set of workshops with state environmental agency staff on the lessons learned from the assessments. Many of the security flaws that our staff and contractor discovered during the visits were simple matters such as inadequate fencing or leaving keys inside plant vehicles. They weren’t hard or expensive to fix, but without the assessments, could have been overlooked until an actual security breach occurred.

We also coordinated the development of a Security and Emergency Response Manual, which includes sample procedures and polices, and incorporates the lessons gleaned from the assessment process. EPA approved the document, and we made it available to our member states in early fiscal 2007.

Learning Experience

The aging of our region’s wastewater workforce is no mystery. A 2005 NEIWPC survey showed that nearly three-quarters of the employees at wastewater treatment facilities in our member states are over 41 years old and nearly a third are over 51. To help expose more young people to the benefits of the field, NEIWPC has for years joined with EPA and the Lowell Regional Wastewater Utility to coordinate a Youth and the Environment Program.

At the Maine Wastewater Control Association’s Fall 2006 convention, JETCC presented its first Jerome Guevremond Founders Award to Thomas Haggan, chief operator at the Chick Hill Water Pollution Control Facility, and its 2006 Lee Agger Award to Stephen Broadbent of Wright-Pierce. Posing after the ceremony are (left to right) John Hart, Saco Wastewater Treatment Plant and JETCC Board member; Haggan; Kirk Laflin, Partnership for Environmental Technology Education and former director of NEIWPC’s Environmental Training Center; Broadbent; Jerome Guevremond; and Leann Hanson, JETCC Coordinator. Guevremond, or “Frenchie” as he’s best known, helped establish JETCC in 1985 and has had a long and distinguished career with the town of Rangeley.

The program stresses hands-on work experience and academic training to introduce disadvantaged inner-city high school students to professional opportunities in the environmental field, with a particular emphasis on careers in the wastewater industry. In 2006, the five YEP students worked for eight weeks at the Lowell plant, working in nearly every aspect of the facility’s operations. In addition, they heard (continued next page)
The first two editions of the event, held in 2002 and 2003, NEPWCC took a lead role in developing and coordinating project water resources.

The course is provided by the State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry.

The course provides comprehensive instruction in the field of water resources management and planning and integrates many different aspects of the discipline, including hydrology, water quality, water supply, and wastewater treatment and disposal.

Participants in the course learn about the latest technologies and techniques used in water resources management, including modeling, decision-making, and planning.

The course is designed for professionals in the field, including engineers, scientists, and managers, as well as students interested in pursuing a career in water resources management.

The course is offered in a modular format, with participants completing modules on their own schedule.

In addition to the technical content, the course includes case studies and guest lectures from industry experts.

The course is delivered online, with live sessions and interactive components.

Overall, the course provides a comprehensive and practical education in the field of water resources management and planning.

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Growing Responsibility

Not only does NEWPCC oversee Massachusetts’s wastewater operator certification and training program (page 23), we also coordinate the state’s Title 5 Soil Evaluators and System Inspectors. This work is associated with fiscal 2006, due in large part to the development of Title 5 regulations requiring license renewals by January 2007.

We compiled a list of 8,000 Soil Evaluators and System Inspectors in the state’s active onsite professionals. Noting and processing the renewals as they came in, we flooded in on the small organization. By March 2007, we had already received and processed well over 3,500 renewals. The underlying result was that we now have an up-to-date database of the state’s active onsite professionals, through which we can inform them of training opportunities and track their progress toward meeting their renewal deadlines.

In Massachusetts, Title 5 Soil Evaluators have the ability to train and report on their own, which is why our team is working to ensure the continuation of training programs, either by checking research publications or by reaching out to the 100 people who have signed up as NEWPCC members. In the past, we have conducted training programs for the third Northeast Conference, and we continue to do so.

At a YOWA’s first official meeting, NEWPCC’s Tom Groves was elected to serve as the organization’s interim vice-president. Several other members of our staff are also among the more than 100 people who have signed up as YOWA members. This inclusion in the New England states’ work with the Tennessee River is a testament to the leadership and coordination of the region’s onsite industry and the environment.

In our Massachusetts Title 5 Soil Evaluators’ training programs, we encourage you to look at the types of soil samples that are being collected and documented for different horizons of soil. By focusing on gathering samples and understanding the soil types, we can better inform our members about the options available to them.
When the project is complete, the model evaluation process will provide a guide for nutrient management across the Northeast, with the goal of reducing phosphorus and nitrogen in surface waters and groundwater. The project will also address the issue of how to measure and monitor stormwater systems and their impacts on water quality.

The project will focus on the development of a model (COW) for nutrient management that is scalable and can be applied across the Northeast. The model will be tested and refined through ongoing evaluation and feedback from stakeholders.

Collection Systems

The project will also work on improving collection systems, which are crucial for nutrient management. The project will develop and test new technologies and best practices for collection system design and operation.

Productive Gating

The project will also work on improving the design and operation of stormwater gates, which are used to control the flow of stormwater. The project will develop new models and tools for optimizing gate design and operation.

Clear Talk on FGC

Furthermore, the project will work on improving the communication of nutrient management strategies to the public. The project will develop new tools and materials for communicating the benefits of nutrient management to the public.

Birds of a Feather

The project will also work on improving the efficiency of nutrient management through the use of new technologies and best practices. The project will develop new models and tools for optimizing nutrient management practices.
The residents of our region get their drinking water in a variety of ways—from private wells, from very small community systems, and from the giant, complex water providers in the biggest cities. Since 1994, NEIWPC has worked with the New England state drinking water programs to foster regional cooperation and to support initiatives that help ensure that all residents, regardless of how they get their water, have access to a clean, adequate supply of it—straight from the tap.

**The Bottom Line**

It was a moment we had long anticipated. At our May 2006 Commission meeting, we presented our Commissioners and EPA New England Regional Administrator Bob Varney with *The Cost of Clean and Safe Water*, an extensive report on our year-long effort to identify how much households in our region are paying now, and will pay in the future, to maintain and improve our aging drinking water and wastewater infrastructure.

If the project sounds familiar, that is because a similar effort was first conducted a decade ago. In 1995, NEIWPC and EPA New England published the influential *Projected Household Costs for Mandated Environmental Infrastructure Investments* report. Considering the many new environmental standards and rules issued since then, the need for a new report was clear. In 2005, we identified approximately 300 communities in New England and New York State that represented a wide range of system complexity and level of service. We then sent surveys to the communities' water and wastewater facilities, asking them to provide the basic information needed to complete the household cost analysis.
the states we sort through numerous policy decisions.

Project NIEPCC's role has never been more critical to

New Rules, New Need for Help

in January 2006, EPA published two significant drinking

Improvements. It is available online at www.niepcc.org/niepcc/docs/.

The final report presents the results of our data collection and analysis, and includes many useful tables and figures that offer

while the pass of increasingly complicated regulations.

years, and the effort does not go unappreciated.

The types of assistance we've consistently provided in recent

months and addressed. On June 1st, 2006, we hosted a meeting of

WIA DEP staff to discuss issues associated with the rule. It was

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The major role that the Long Term 2 Enhanced Surface Water

the direct influence of surface water: key provisions include

the direct influence of surface water: key provisions include

The major role that the Long Term 2 Enhanced Surface Water

the direct influence of surface water: key provisions include

the direct influence of surface water: key provisions include

Figure 1

Figure 2

Projected Annual Household Costs:

Projected Annual Household Costs:

Projected Annual Household Costs:

in drinking water. This final report to all systems regarding

Projected Annual Household Costs: Drinking Water & Wastewater

Projected Annual Household Costs: Drinking Water & Wastewater
Working Relationships

In 2006, as in every year, spirited, productive conversation was the order of the day during the quarterly meetings of our Drinking Water Administrators Workgroup. The discussions touched on a variety of vital issues, including the new LT2ESWTR and Stage 2 DBPR rules, pharmaceuticals in the environment, improving small system access to Drinking Water State Revolving Fund monies, drinking water security and emergency preparedness, water withdrawals and permitting in New England, and revisions to the Lead and Copper Rule.

NEIWPCC Drinking Water staff also coordinate our Groundwater and Source Water Protection Managers workgroup, which met four times. There the conversation was wide-ranging, and covered topics such as the threat that poorly maintained onsite wastewater treatment systems pose to drinking water supplies. In August we took that conversation to a new level by bringing the workgroup together with our Onsite Workgroup for a joint session in our Lowell offices. See page 25 for more details on this important effort to foster collaboration between state programs that share some of the same concerns but typically work independently of each other.

Seeking Answers on Arsenic

Arsenic gets into groundwater when the water flows through arsenic-rich rocks, and long-term exposure to it in drinking water can cause serious health problems, including bladder cancer. This is no idle matter in northern New England, where arsenic has been found in many wells. As a result, many homeowners with private wells as well as public water systems have had to install expensive arsenic treatment systems. In 2006, NEIWPCC worked on two new studies that are addressing this important regional issue.

NEIWPCC and the Maine Center for Disease Control initiated a study evaluating how the arsenic removal effectiveness of home water treatment devices is affected by such things as maintenance, selection of appropriate technologies, and variations in water chemistry. The study includes sampling at 100 households in Maine with high concentrations of arsenic in their groundwater supplies.

Working with New Hampshire’s Department of Environmental Services, we conducted a study of ways in which existing wells might be altered to yield water that complies with the new arsenic standard of 10 parts per billion. Certainly, the standard can be met by installing a new treatment system or drilling a new well; we wanted to find out if less expensive methods existed.

Previous research on water systems with multiple bedrock wells showed that arsenic concentrations produced by wells that are close together and at similar depths can vary widely, implying the wells were fed by different water bearing fractures. continued next page ➤
Ongoing Support, Outgoing Service

The ACS of the regulations...
Since 1983, NEIWPCC has been deeply involved in efforts related to underground storage tanks that store fuel and other hazardous substances. USTs, as they're called, can leak if not built, installed, operated, and maintained correctly, and the leaked material can contaminate soil and groundwater, resulting in cleanups that can be extensive and expensive. Great progress has been made on UST issues, but much more work remains to be done.

**Act of Leadership**

To date, roughly 350,000 contaminated UST sites have been cleaned up nationwide. Yet there are still 113,000 sites where cleanups have yet to take place. Meanwhile, new leaks continue to occur, typically because of poor UST operation and maintenance. And then there are emerging issues; evidence shows that even new, upgraded USTs can contaminate soil and groundwater via vapor releases.

To help address these challenges and others in a collaborative fashion, NEIWPCC has long played a major role in coordinating the National Tanks Conference and Expo, which each year brings together staff from tanks programs across the country. The 2006 conference, which was held on March 20-22 in Memphis, Tennessee, marked the eighteenth annual version of the event. But for the first time, NEIWPCC took on the lead role for developing and coordinating the conference. Our tasks were many: we coordinated the agenda development, booked speakers and moderators, set up the website and online registration, designed all conference materials, and arranged all contracts with the venues, vendors, and exhibitors. The result was a smooth, vital event that was a smooth, vital event that
Meeting the Mandates

inspections to make the mandate

The 2007 conference in Arlington, Texas, was held on June 12-14 in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. The conference featured educational and networking opportunities. The conference was well attended and had a high level of interest from participants. The conference provided an opportunity to network and meet other professionals in the field.
Publication in Demand

It happens without fail several times a year: we get a request for a complete collection of every LUSTLine issue that we have ever published. It is not a simple request, but we don’t mind complying. For it is a sign of the enduring popularity and importance of LUSTLine, which since 1985 has been covering the issues of importance to the tanks community with a depth and expertise that cannot be found anywhere else.

As we do every year, we published three LUSTLine issues in fiscal 2006. Especially notable was Bulletin 53, published in September, which featured a cover story on Arizona’s initiative to assess and clean up the roughly 350 leaking underground storage tank (LUST) sites along that state’s stretch of Route 66. The LUSTs are left over from the highway’s heyday, when now-abandoned gas stations filled the tanks of a steady stream of vehicles. Through Arizona’s program, the struggling communities along the highway have received help with LUST investigations and cleanups. But barriers remain to redevelopment at the sites. It was a classic LUSTLine piece—a fascinating exploration of a story that conveyed important lessons to readers such as Steven McNeely of EPA’s Office of Underground Storage Tanks.

“Old abandoned gas stations often pose real challenges for communities, but these sites can also be opportunities for positive change and growth,” said McNeely. “When some people looked at the old 1950s gas stations strung along historic Route 66, they saw decay, rust and potential environmental challenges. Others, however, saw an opportunity to spruce up and revitalize a historic highway and its buildings just in time for ‘nostalgia travel’ as baby boomers retire and hit the road. The story of Route 66, if it accomplishes nothing else, may inspire others to take a second look at old LUST sites and think of what could be rather than what is.”

Questions (and Answers) on MtBE

Gasoline containing the fuel oxygenate methyl tertiary-butyl ether, better known as MtBE, has been stored in USTs since the 1970s. That’s a problem since MtBE poses a health threat when present in drinking water, and leaking USTs are a common way that it enters the environment. Although many states have now banned its use, MtBE is a lingering environmental concern as are the other oxygenates often used in its place.

In fiscal 2006, we embarked on preparations for our third survey of how all 50 states are dealing with this issue. The first survey, conducted in 2000, revealed sizable gaps in the states’ approaches to remediating soil and groundwater contaminated with MtBE. In our 2003 survey, we found a shift toward increased protectiveness, though the shift was not dramatic; fifteen states said they were considering making changes to their action and cleanup levels.

The third survey, which is being conducted in 2007, will give us a fresh look at state experiences with MtBE and other oxygenates, and allow us to identify new trends. As was the case with the first two surveys, we expect that the results will be referenced extensively by the media, government agencies, state and federal lawmakers, and researchers.

In a related effort, NEIWPCC staff planned a training workshop entitled “MtBE and other Fuel Oxygenates: Considerations for Assessments and Remediation,” which was held on November 2-3, 2006, in Westford, Mass. More than 80 people attended the session, which offered both theoretical and field-based information covering site characteristics, remedial technology selection, design and implementation.
Integrating the future.

Projects will serve to guide the Regional Research Initiative.

The top five priorities that are shared by all the states for these environmental agencies. Through this process, we determined our research priorities from the water programs in these agencies.

We took the first step by asking our sites to solicit and select several non-agency NEWMPC commissions. In 2006, the steering committee, which is comprised of these agency staff and members of our initiative, helped a great deal in this by narrowing our list of priorities and determining which ones should be priorities. We've been identifying the specific research needs of our member agencies. Regional Research Initiative has emphasized the importance of very long-term research, since the launch of our Regional Research Coordination Network. Do you quickly glance at the bottom of the page or read the entire text?

Identifying Priorities: Promoting Coordination

Regional Research Initiative

...make great strides with this effort.

Member states by launching our Regional Research Initiative. In fiscal 2004, we continued to identify water issues that have become more complex, growing importance has been put on...
The five priorities are:

- Research to support the development and application of new technologies and methods to reduce nutrients, bacteria, and sediment loads from urban and suburban areas to rivers and estuaries.
- Research into the fate and transport of nutrients from septic systems to surface water and groundwater.
- Research into the fate, transport and toxicity of existing and emerging chemicals of concern (pharmaceuticals, personal care products, flame retardants).
- Mercury deposition and monitoring/modeling.

NEIWPC staff also continued to educate and promote coordination among the critical research stakeholders in our region and beyond. In March 2006, our staff attended the USGS Regional Science Forum in Portsmouth, N.H., and presented our member states’ priority research needs to the federal and regional water resources research partners in attendance. During the year, we continued to work closely with the directors of the Water Resources Research Institutes at the regional land grant universities, and hosted a meeting of the regional directors in January 2006. Discussions at the meeting focused on improving the dissemination of research in the region.

**The New Contaminants of Concern**

You don’t have to look hard to find pharmaceuticals and personal care products (PPCPs) in America’s waterways. Researchers are finding traces of them everywhere. The challenge is to determine if the presence of PPCPs in the water is hazardous to humans and aquatic life, and if so, how to keep them out of our lakes, rivers, and streams.

Our member states put the issue of emerging contaminants, and PPCPs in particular, among their top five shared research priorities, and we moved quickly to address the need. Throughout 2006, we tracked research developments and shared them with our states. And in a major step for NEIWPC, we began organizing the 2007 Northeast Water Science Forum, which will bring together scientists, regulators, water and wastewater professionals, and other technical experts to disseminate and evaluate the latest research findings and technical data on PPCPs in the water environment. The event, which is cosponsored by the U.S. Geological Survey, will take place on August 8-9 in Portland, Maine. The sessions will examine the fate and transport of PPCPs, aquatic and human health effects, removal and treatment, and product stewardship and waste management.

This is the first of what we hope will be many more Northeast Water Science Forums. The goal is to elevate the visibility and dissemination of critical research to ensure that the best available scientific information is used to establish priorities and make management decisions regarding our water resources.

For more information and to register for the Water Science Forum, visit www.neiwpcc.org/ppcpconference.

**Expert Opinions**

On November 10, 2005, Pat Phillips of the U.S. Geological Survey, one of the Northeast’s top experts on the environmental impact of pharmaceuticals and personal care products, spoke at a meeting of NEIWPC’s Regional Research Initiative Steering Committee. After the meeting, we interviewed him for an article in our newsletter, Interstate Water Report. Below is a portion of that conversation.

**NEIWPC:** Should the U.S. have started looking into the impact of PPCPs in the waste stream a long time ago, as the Europeans did?

**Phillips:** First of all, hindsight is 20/20. Second, a lot of advances in instrumentation have occurred over the past couple of years that are allowing us to make better measurements of these things. Ten years ago, we didn’t have that technology. Yes, we have been behind the Europeans in doing this work, but I see no reason to look back and say, “We could have done this or should have done that.” The question is what we’re going to do now.

**NEIWPC:** And are we doing enough now?

**Phillips:** I’ve seen more attention paid to this issue by a larger variety of people in the last three or four months than I’ve seen in the last three or four years. But we have to build up a certain level of science, enough scientific conclusions, to support any movement toward regulation.

**NEIWPC:** Are some of the European studies of value to us here?

**Phillips:** Yes, a lot of them are useful. But there are certain chemicals that we use that are banned over there. They also have a lot more regulation in this sphere than we do. I’m not saying that’s good or bad. I’m just saying it’s a fact.

**NEIWPC:** Well, we have virtually no regulation, right?

**Phillips:** Yes, but I wouldn’t be surprised if we had more regulation in ten years. I’m not a regulator, of course. That’s just a wild guess. But I wouldn’t be surprised.
Education and Outreach

Issues that warrant attention and provide information that might otherwise be missed.

That informs decision makers and others already working in the water arena. We open eyes to water issues in doing so. We spread support for the fight for clean water. It also includes work at NEIWPC. Our education and outreach endeavors include efforts to inform the public on
An IWR article on the extensive flooding in October 2005 featured candid, informative comments from Donna Hanscom, the assistant public works director in Keene, N.H. Here, she speaks with Don Kennedy, a NEIWPC Training Coordinator, in the building that houses the Keene wastewater treatment plant's ultraviolet disinfection system, which was shut down as waters from the flooded Ashuelot River backed up into the chamber.

New and Improved
Throughout fiscal 2006, NEIWPC's Outreach staff worked on an overhaul of our website, which was no mere cosmetic change. The idea was to simplify and improve the structure and navigation, so as to make the vast amount of information within the site more accessible to agency staff in our member states and the countless others who visit us online. Increasingly, people are turning to our website for immediate access to essential resources and information, and it was vital to make the experience more user-friendly.

The revamped website launched in early 2007. Please visit us at www.neiwpc.org!

Saluting Our Partners
Another of NEIWPC's major outreach products each year is the very report you are reading. The fiscal 2005 Annual Report, which we published in early 2006, carried the theme "Meeting the Growing Needs of Our Partners in Progress." In addition to the usual comprehensive summary of our activities, the report featured mini-profiles of 23 of NEIWPC's favorite "partners"—those individuals who have been particularly supportive of our work over the years and have been great contributors to our workgroups, programs, and projects. To read the profiles, download the report at www.neiwpc.org/annualreport.asp.

Each year, the goal with our annual report is to improve upon the effort of the year before, to make the report clearer, more comprehensive, and simply better overall. We see the report as an educational tool that informs readers not only about NEIWPC and our achievements but also about the water and wastewater challenges faced by our member states and the progress being made.
At the 2006 New York State Fair in Syracuse, on the site of NYDEC's Barge Museum, NYDEC and NYWPCIC staff prepared to greet visitors to the Division of Water's Water Bike demonstrations and promoting water quality in central New York's Chautauqua Lake.

Our staff also coordinated the NYDEC Division of Water's exhibit at the New York State Fair.

Control Infrastructure... focused on ways to manage and maintain dams, tributaries, management, coastal erosion, and flood control issues. At stort to long-range flood control improvements throughout the state. The 2006 materials for "Wetland Week" and ongoing annual NYDEC program in which packets of information about NYWPCIC initiatives in 2006 highlighted the development of numerous publications of our outreach initiatives. The approach included the development of numerous publications about NYWPCIC initiatives in 2006.

NYWPCIC staff are the New York State Department of Conservation in Albany involved in a variety of outreach initiatives.

The Sound, Healthy 2006 Report

A report on states and trends in the health of the Long Island Sound.

Sound Support

A collection of organizations and sound patrons focusing on the health of the Long Island Sound.
Spreading the Messages

Much of what our Outreach staff in Lowell does each year supports the activities of other NEIWPCC staff as well as partnerships with which we are involved. This includes the design, layout, writing, and editing of a variety of print materials and websites that bring attention to vital issues and projects. Seen here are just a few examples of such work completed in fiscal 2006.
to Lake Champlain.

With so many serious water challenges before us, it’s a question of how can we still do our part—on our own or our partners’ back. The NEWMPC’s support of our member states isn’t limited to the projects and programs that

Partnerships

needs within our states.

invisible to those outside the organization, but it’s one more way we meet the

well as staff who work directly with state environmental agencies. This support is largely

bear our name. We also provide funding and staff to programs that target specific areas as

recognition and cultural resources, enhance the benefits from farmlands, wildlife,

efforts to improve the lakes’ water quality and

the project’s restoration projects. A variety

of efforts to combat aquatic nuisance species

the program’s restoration projects. A variety

release 2006 included the

vessel highlights in Fiscal 2006 included the

LCPB, which accomplishments a great deal every

We are proud of our association with the

and budget-related tasks, and providing

includer managing financial and contractual

In addition, the NEWMPC serves as program adviser and

LCPB, our contribution

Fifteen Years of Progress
On Behalf of the Hudson

For nearly a decade, NEIWPCC has been providing funding and staff to New York State Department of Environmental Conservation programs that work to protect, conserve, restore, and enhance the Hudson River and its estuary. Through these partnerships, we are supporting vital projects in such areas as water quality monitoring, river bottom (benthic) mapping, education and interpretation, and river access.

In fiscal 2006, our staff at NYSDEC’s Hudson River Estuary Program worked on numerous projects. Highlights included coordinating the production of a 24-page report on the progress made since the release of the first Hudson River Estuary Action Plan in 1996, determining the recipients of the program’s annual grants, and delivering the results of an intensive effort to survey the river’s shoreline and identify restoration alternatives. In March 2006, some 50 state regulators, municipal officials, environmental engineers and consultants attended a workshop on the shoreline project. Next steps in 2007 include implementing at least one small-scale shoreline stabilization and habitat improvement project.

At the Hudson River National Estuarine Research Reserve, our staff led many activities, such as educational canoe trips through the reserve and critically important efforts to slow the advance of the mile-a-minute vine (see page 20). They also coordinated a survey of attendees at a ‘green landscaping’ workshop to determine training needs and outreach strategies. Among other things, the survey found that native plants and organic fertilizers need to be more readily available, and that those who use green landscaping practices should be publicly recognized through a certificate program. NEIWPCC staff are now exploring collaborative ways to implement the recommendations.

Valuable and fascinating maps of the floor of the Hudson River are being generated in a project coordinated by NEIWPCC staff. The benthic maps provide information useful for wildlife management, contaminant transport studies, and remediation and restoration efforts. In the image above, the warmer colors (reds and oranges) are shallower water; colder colors (blues and greens) are deeper water. The river floor is characterized by sediment waves that in some cases are three meters high.

Among the many projects overseen by NEIWPCC staff at the Hudson River Estuary Program was the installation of an “eel ladder” on Saw Kill Creek in April 2006. The device was successful in allowing American eels to make their way around the dam on the creek and on to viable habitat upstream. Such devices are considered central to the effort to reverse the disturbing decline in American eel populations.
The Hudson River Valley

Bassin investigation

A research effort to bring successful and the effective cost

Restore the marsh so the birds return the habitat of such
a resilient study on Hudson River to investigate was to
which was published in December 2000, according to
and abundant in the marshes. The report on the project
establish an ongoing collaboration in data community diversity
of the Hudson River. Fourteen individuals, 12 of the
marshes in the Hudson River included the study, the
Personnel Commission initiated a study of bird breeding
in February 2000. NYSDEC and the Partnership

The 2000 study of the breeding

Hudson River Valley

were a sign of the presence of the

study to determine if the 2000 results

that other Hudson River marshes be

study. The Reservoirs Recommendation

study, the Reservoirs Recommended

marshes since the first

species that occurs frequently in

marshes, June 2000. It showed

six Hudson River marshes a second

year-round. In 2000, the study continued to investigate

marshes, June 1986 and 1987. A study was

recommendation of a study that has been

in 2006 our first overview the

Through our partnership with the Hudson River Ecosystem Partnership, we support NYSDEC
New York State Support

NEIWPCA also supports the work of the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation through our staff based in Albany and elsewhere in the state. The staff's activities are diverse; they write State Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permits (see page 16), work on studies to support development of numeric nutrient criteria (page 18), and participate in other essential projects aimed at protecting water quality in the state's lakes, rivers, aquifers and coastal areas.

Of particular note in 2006 was the work done on the state's Water Quality Improvement Project (WQIP) program, which provides funding to projects that address NPS control, aquatic habitat restoration, wastewater treatment improvement, and implementation of Phase II Stormwater Permits. Our staff played integral roles in advancing a program to more fully manage WQIPs throughout the entire life cycle of the projects. This included developing a WQIP tracking database that provides a single system for regional water managers to use for reporting progress on WQIPs in their regions. Until its implementation, there was no defined process for collecting and maintaining information on the status of WQIPs.

In another significant achievement, NEIWPCA staff coordinated the development and delivery of Hazard Awareness training sessions for NYSDEC Division of Water staff. More than 150 DOW field staff attended the sessions, which covered common safety hazards associated with DOW field work, and how to avoid or control the hazards.

As she does every year, NEIWPCA's Nicole Wright spent many hours behind a microscope in 2006, conducting aquatic toxicity tests using the tiny water flea known as Ceriodaphnia dubia. Wright examines the fleas' survival and reproductive rates when exposed to samples from surface waters throughout the state. It's a key step in New York's Rotating Integrated Basin Studies water monitoring program.

In perhaps the most adventurous outing of our staff in fiscal 2006, NEIWPCA's Erik Posner (front row, second from left) spent 11 days on the EPA research vessel Bold collecting air, water, and zooplankton samples from the edge of the continental shelf in the New York Bight. It was no cruise in the park. As Posner described it, "We had one of the engines quit, almost severed a sewer line, lost an anchor, ran from a gale, and rescued an injured gull." All, however, for a good cause: the data are being used to develop a model for dredging and disposing of contaminated sediments in the New York/New Jersey Harbor.
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<th>Total Revenue</th>
<th>Contributions</th>
<th>Contractual Exam Fees</th>
<th>License Renewal Fees</th>
<th>Other Contracts</th>
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<th>Member Site Support</th>
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<td>$1,021,800</td>
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</tbody>
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Fiscal year 2006 was a generally good year financially for NEPWCC, with total revenue exceeding total operating expenditures. This resulted in an increase in net assets.

We also are pleased to report that we generated a surplus of $8,352, which provides a reserve for the organization to draw upon if necessary. To date, the NEPWCC Endowment Fund has grown, and with financial support from its members, we have a projected fund balance of $4,124 as of September 30, 2006.

This page contains the results of the latest audit of NEPWCC’s program revenue as of September 30, 2006.