Rising to the Challenges of Our Times
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Alicia M. Good

Your support and participation in NEWPC's workshops and other efforts is vital to the success of the NEWPC itself and of the many projects that benefit the environment. NEWPC's vision is to build a more environmentally sustainable future, and your participation helps us achieve that vision.

I am honored to serve as NEWPC's Chair and am proud of the commission's accomplishments in its first year. I am confident that with your continued support, we will achieve our goals.

Alicia M. Good, Chair

The success of the NEWPC is due in large part to the support of our stakeholders, including businesses, government agencies, and non-profit organizations. Together, we can create a more sustainable future.

NEWPC is working on several projects that will help improve water quality and protect our environment. These projects include:

- Developing strategies to reduce water pollution
- Enhancing public awareness about water conservation
- Collaborating with other organizations to achieve common goals

The success of these projects will depend on the support of all stakeholders. I encourage you to get involved and help shape the future of water management.

Alicia M. Good, Chair

Since the NEWPC was established, we have achieved several important goals. These include:

- Developing a comprehensive plan for water quality improvement
- Increasing awareness about the importance of water conservation
- Building partnerships with other organizations

These accomplishments demonstrate the power of collaboration and the importance of working together to achieve common goals.

Alicia M. Good, Chair

Thank you for your support and for helping us make a difference.
Challenge: Regional Coordination and Collaboration

Environmental issues have always transcended state boundaries. After all, can we blame the natural world for not respecting the lines drawn on a political map? On matters of the environment, what happens in one state can and frequently does affect another—and when the medium is water, this is particularly the case. Rivers flow across state lines, lakes straddle them. Where the water flows, the pollution goes.

To achieve clean water everywhere, states must work together. And nowhere is this need for regional coordination and collaboration more critical than in the Northeast, where heavily populated states coexist in a relatively small geographical area. Since our creation, NEIWPC has worked to achieve strong coordination among those in our member states with interests in water quality and public health. It is an ever-present challenge and one that is as important today as it was in 1947.

Sharing Ideas... and Concerns

Since NEIWPC's creation, the meetings of our Commissioners have been the most visible aspect of our operations—and indeed they provide the foundation for all that we do. The meetings bring together in one place a truly remarkable group of men and women from our seven member states. Some are appointed to the Commission by virtue of their position; a state's delegation always includes the commissioners of its environmental and health agencies (or their designated representatives). Others are appointed because of their experience and interest in water and wastewater issues. But all are committed to learning from each other and pursuing opportunities for collaboration.

In fiscal 2008, we held our traditional number of gatherings—that is, three meetings involving all our Commissioners and five meetings of our Executive Committee, which is made up of the states' environmental agency commissioners or their designees. Harry Stewart, director of the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services' Water Division, presided over the meetings until December 2007 when his two-year term as NEIWPC chair ended; on Jan. 1, 2008, Alicia Good, assistant director of the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management's Office of Water Resources, took over as our chair, making her the first female chair in NEIWPC's history.

Attendance was strong at each meeting, and we were especially pleased to see positive results from our efforts in recent years to once again get full participation from our states' health agencies. All the health agencies now have a representative on the Commission who is dedicated to our cause, and their presence and contributions at our 2008 meetings reinforced the value of the perspective they bring to our table.

Executive Director Ron Poltak and Deputy Director Susan Sullivan carefully crafted each meeting agenda to address the issues of greatest importance to our states, and to allow the Commissioners ample opportunity to learn about and comment upon NEIWPC staff projects. The meetings provided the ideal setting, for example, to keep our Commissioners abreast of our water quality team's critical work on mercury (summarized on page 12),
more on the program and NEWPCC's role, see page 26.

At the May 2006 meeting, the Providence City Council's Department of Environmental Management presented a proposal for the construction of a new wastewater treatment plant. The meeting was held at the City Hall on May 2, 2006. The presentation included discussions on the need for improved wastewater treatment facilities and the benefits of the proposed plant. The audience was also given the opportunity to ask questions and provide feedback.

The Providence City Council and Executive Committee meetings focused on many other critical subjects. Among them were the issues of environmental planning and the success of the Newport Water Reclamation Plant. The meetings were held at the City Hall on May 2, 2006. The presentation included discussions on the need for improved wastewater treatment facilities and the benefits of the proposed plant. The audience was also given the opportunity to ask questions and provide feedback.

The Newport Water Reclamation Plant is one of the largest and most advanced wastewater treatment facilities in the state. The plant is located on the outskirts of the city and serves a population of over 500,000 people. The plant treats an average of 35 million gallons of wastewater per day and is equipped with the latest technology to meet the state's stringent environmental standards. The Newport Water Reclamation Plant is a model for other communities and is often visited by officials from other states.

The Newport Water Reclamation Plant was the result of a joint effort between the City of Newport, the state of Rhode Island, and the federal government. The project was funded through a combination of local, state, and federal grants and was completed in 2004. The plant has received numerous awards for its environmental performance and has been recognized as one of the best wastewater treatment facilities in the country.
Rational Response
In September 2008, NEIWPC sent a letter signed by Executive Director Ron Poltak to Worcester (Mass.) Public Works Commissioner Robert Moylan, a leader of the Massachusetts Coalition for Water Resources Stewardship. The coalition had released a report sharply critical of Clean Water Act permit requirements and the costs of compliance borne by communities. In our letter, we pointed out that our states agreed with a number of the recommendations in the report, including the need for an analysis of the cost of current and future regulatory programs.

We also emphasized areas of disagreement. The coalition’s report, for example, stated that regulators “...cling to older, outdated and discredited resource models and reject improved versions for reasons that seem to defy any logic or rationale.” Our letter: “Contrary to the coalition’s understanding, NEIWPC, on behalf of our states, is constantly investigating avenues to fund new and improved approaches to developing cost-effective management tools and programs, including research and modeling and monitoring water quality in watersheds throughout the Northeast. Our states are very receptive to considering new information as it becomes available.”

We look forward to maintaining a dialogue with the coalition, and to working together to improve water quality.

Strong Relationships Getting Stronger
Although not a formal member of NEIWPC, the Environmental Protection Agency has long had a seat at our Commission meeting table, and for many years has provided the majority of the funding that supports our operations. Former NEIWPC Chair Robert Varney, who served as EPA New England’s Regional Administrator from 2001 until January 2009, was a frequent guest at our 2008 meetings, delivering news about EPA’s priorities and proposing opportunities for collaboration with NEIWPC and our member states. The discussions generated results: at the January 2008 Commission Meeting, for example, Varney spoke of the need for clear information on each state’s funding vehicles for water and wastewater infrastructure improvements; NEIWPC and the states subsequently worked with EPA on compiling this information, and at our September 2008 meeting, EPA New England’s Stephen Perkins announced that a brochure containing state-by-state details on infrastructure financing was being printed.

Having EPA and the states in one place at the same time leads to efficient decision making. At that same September meeting, the Commissioners from our New England states agreed to EPA New England’s request to sign a statement of intent endorsing the “Ten Attributes of Effectively Managed Water Sector Utilities,” a document developed by a group of collaborating organizations including EPA.

In fiscal 2008, as in every year, NEIWPC leadership met quarterly with the leaders of our sister interstate agencies, the Northeast Waste Management Officials’ Association (NEWMOA) and the Northeast States for Coordinated Air Use Management (NESCAUM). It is a mutually beneficial relationship, with each agency bringing different expertise to the table for strategy discussions on environmental issues that are pressing—and that frequently include water, air, and solid waste components. Climate change is certainly one such issue, and a joint NEIWPC-NESCAUM project to develop a comprehensive assessment of the region’s adaptive capacity is in the planning stage (see page 8 for details).

The list of other organizations with which NEIWPC maintains a strong, working relationship is long, and includes such prominent groups as the Water Environment Federation, the Interstate Council on Water Policy, and the American Water Resources Association. Of particular note is our active participation at many levels in the Association of Tidal and Interstate Water Pollution Control Administrators. NEIWPC Executive Director Poltak continued to serve on ASIWPAC’s board as the representative of all interstate commissions; two NEIWPC Commissioners, Mass DEP’s Glenn Hass and New York State DEC’s James DeZolt, serve on the board as representatives of Region 1 and Region 2, respectively; and another NEIWPC Commissioner, Maine DEP’s Andy Fisk, leads ASIWPAC’s Call for Change Implementation Committee. Executive Director Poltak is also co-chair of ASIWPAC’s Funding Task Force, and NEIWPC’s Beth Card co-chairs the organization’s Legal Affairs Task Force. Our involvement with ASIWPAC provides us with a key and vital means to represent regional interests at the national level.
The current dilemma in wastewater, there is reason to believe near term fund reg is being introduced in 2009 to fund national efforts to reduce the amount of water used. The problem is acute, and certain solutions will need to be prioritized. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) is working closely with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) on a multi-agency approach to address water quality issues. The goal is to reduce the amount of water used in wastewater systems. The solution must be comprehensive, including the development of new technologies and the implementation of existing technologies. The solution must be balanced, incorporating the needs of both industry and the environment. In summary, $15 billion has been allocated for the Clean Water Act and $3 billion for the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative. These funds will support projects that reduce the amount of water used in wastewater systems. The Clean Water Act is the primary legislation that governs the quality of water in the United States. It is estimated that 20% of all wastewater produced in the United States is discharged into bodies of water, including lakes, rivers, and streams. The Clean Water Act prohibits the discharge of polluted water into navigable waters. The act also establishes standards for the discharge of pollutants. The Clean Water Act requires that new and existing facilities meet the pollution control requirements. The act also establishes a permitting process for new and existing facilities. The permitting process is designed to ensure that facilities meet the pollution control requirements.
Challenge: A Climate in Transition

While there remains uncertainty about the exact scope and timing of climate change, there is little doubt that it is happening. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has concluded that it is “unequivocal” that Earth's climate is warming, and data show that since 1970, the northeastern United States has been experiencing a 0.45°F (0.25°C) average temperature increase every ten years. Scientists are even warning that the pace of global warming may quicken, because the increased burning of coal in developing countries has led to an unexpectedly rapid rise in industrial emissions of greenhouse gases—that is, gases that trap heat in Earth's atmosphere.

What will be the impact on our member states' water resources? Higher water temperatures reduce dissolved oxygen levels, harming aquatic life. The expected changes in precipitation patterns and amounts will increase the likelihood of heavy rains and floods, which transport contaminants into water bodies and overload stormwater and wastewater systems. Earlier snowmelt and higher temperatures in the summer raise the risk of drought, and when streamflow and lake levels fall, there is less dilution of pollutants. Even sea level rise can affect freshwater quality by causing saltwater intrusion into coastal groundwater resources. The potential consequences are many, and they cannot be ignored.

Advancing a Regional Approach

With the approval and encouragement of our Commissioners, NEIWPCA launched a Climate Change Initiative in 2007, and ever since, we have been pursuing regional efforts and keeping our member states informed on climate change developments. All of the states are proceeding with climate change plans of their own, but through NEIWPCA, they are able to move forward on the water side of the equation together. At virtually every Executive Committee and Commission meeting in fiscal 2008, the states shared information about their strategies, and at the meeting on January 17, climate change dominated the agenda. NEIWPCA invited two prominent experts from the University of New Hampshire to deliver presentations: Charles Vorosmarty described UNH's Earth System Data Collaborative, through which emerging web-based technologies are being used to offer new means of access to data that can inform decisions on climate change, and Cameron Wake of UNH's Climate Change Research Center summarized the latest scientific findings. While Wake's information was disturbing, his message was not devoid of hope; if greenhouse gas emissions are significantly reduced, we will still experience a warmer world but perhaps avoid catastrophe. And Wake's comments on the need for a regional approach underscored the importance of NEIWPCA's involvement.

On June 19, NEIWPCA cosponsored the EPA New England Climate Change Forum, which convened EPA scientists, experts from academia, and regional, state, and municipal officials to examine the latest scientific research on the impacts of climate change on the region's natural resources. One week later, on June 26, our intensive efforts to put together a Climate Change Workgroup culminated in the group's first official meeting. Held at our Lowell headquarters, the session brought together climate change staff from each of our seven member states as well as experts from EPA, the U.S. Geological Survey, UMass Amherst, and the University of New Hampshire. The workgroup set goals, such as facilitating regional coordination of state climate change action plans, and heard presentations from UNH's Wake, USGS's Keith Robinson, and others. It was a promising start for a workgroup that we are confident will become increasingly important and influential in the years to come.

In another effort during the summer of 2008, NEIWPCA worked with our state monitoring and climate change contacts to begin discussions on developing a framework to support a regional climate change monitoring program. This would likely include developing a central database, identifying and collaborating with other partners in the region conducting climate change research and monitoring, determining monitoring parameters, and tying the network into existing state monitoring programs.

Other endeavors are focusing on methods of adapting to the climate change that is inevitable, regardless of what happens with efforts to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions. To this end, we began talks in fiscal 2008 with EPA New England and ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability about cooperating on regional adaptation efforts, and we are now moving forward together on several projects. We also expect to move forward in 2009 with a proposal, developed in 2008 in conjunction with NESCAUM, for initiating a climate change adaptation planning effort for the Northeast states and Eastern Canadian provinces. The proposal calls for NEIWPCA to lead a focused assessment of water-related climate change impacts and possible strategies for near-term action. The study would focus on those aspects of adaptation that best lend themselves to regional coordination.
Ron Polka, Executive Director of the New England Water Planning Council (NEPWPC) with NH State Rep. Tom Keenan, Chair of the Commission on Water and Climate Change Research.

Commission Meeting held June 26, 2006 at our Lowell Headquarters.

Conference DEP’s Paul Streeper makes a point during the NEPWPC Climate Change Workshop’s first meeting.

September 2008: EPA released final version of the study in which NEPWPC’s strategy was described as one of many ways to achieve implementation of the strategy.

Strategies to implement the act and safe drinking water act programs to fund the act’s water resources and the act’s implementing regulations to ensure that the resources are used for the benefit of the public and the environment.

Commission members and observers debate the merits of various strategies for addressing the challenges of climate change, including the role of water conservation and the need for enhanced greenhouse gas emissions reduction programs. The commission’s final report on climate change and water resources includes recommendations for several strategies, including:

- Developing a plan for water conservation and efficiency
- Establishing a task force to oversee the implementation of climate change strategies
- Encouraging the use of alternative sources of water, including recycled water and groundwater
- Promoting the use of green infrastructure to reduce the impact of climate change on water systems
- Developing a plan for the long-term sustainability of water resources

On behalf of our member states, we are urging the EPA to consider the following strategies for addressing climate change:
In Search of Energy Savings

The link between climate change and energy use is no mystery; carbon dioxide is by far the number one greenhouse gas emitted by human activity, and emissions of CO₂ have an obvious source: the burning of fossil fuels. That is how we power our planes, trains, and automobiles, and it is also how we continue to get much of the energy that powers America’s homes and businesses. Most power plants burn fossil fuels to create electricity, and typically what they burn is coal, which has higher levels of carbon than oil or natural gas. How to burn less coal? One simple way—reduce electrical demand.

Since 2006, NEIWPC’s Water Resource Protection team has been conducting training sessions on energy conservation at water and wastewater treatment plants, and the classes have been popular, primarily because of the savings associated with a lower electrical bill. But with the growing awareness of the environmental benefits, the classes have taken on even greater meaning. On December 19, 2007, a strong turnout of 30 students attended a daylong session in Attleboro, Mass., on energy use and savings at water and wastewater plants conducted by NEIWPC’s Don Kennedy. During the year, we also began plans for a new energy savings course designed as a hands-on computer training seminar and involving, in addition to NEIWPC staff, energy experts from EPA, the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection, and the private sector. The class, which was held in early 2009, attracted 19 students, just shy of capacity. (For more on all our training efforts, see page 28).

In a related effort, NEIWPC’s Kennedy is a member of a workgroup formed by Massachusetts to guide and track an important new pilot project being run by MassDEP and the state’s Department of Energy Resources. The state agencies are working with 14 water and wastewater treatment facilities on ways to improve their energy efficiency, with the goal of reducing energy consumption at the plants by 20 percent. More details on the project can be found in an in-depth article on regional efforts to curb energy use at water and wastewater plants that appeared in the Winter 2008-09 issue of our newsletter, Interstate Water Report. The article is available at www.neiwpc.org/iwr/saving-energy.asp.

New Division

The coordination of NEIWPC’s work on climate change is the responsibility of our new Water Resource Protection division and its director, Becky Weidman. The division also coordinates:

- All our drinking water programs and projects, including those pertaining specifically to groundwater and source water protection.
- Our activities related to underground storage tanks, including our extensive involvement in planning the National Tanks Conference.
- NEIWPC’s Regional Research Initiative, including our work on pharmaceuticals and personal care products in the waste stream.

The creation of the new division in 2008 resulted in several new hires and a significant promotion for Weidman, who joined NEIWPC in 2003 as an environmental analyst in our Water Quality division. We regret that there was no honeymoon period; the division and its new staff have had their hands full with programs and projects from day one. But they are getting the job done, and doing it well. The region can look forward to benefitting from their work for many years to come.
Challenge: Reducing Mercury in Our Waters

Each year, NEIWPCC’s Water Quality division coordinates multiple workgroups, technical projects and policy initiatives. But in fiscal 2008, the division’s work on mercury received the most attention—and for good reason. Mercury is a potent neurotoxin that is present in surface waters throughout our member states. In fish, mercury levels build up over time, and when people eat the fish, they are exposed to the mercury inside.

Our states’ response has been to issue and vigorously publicize advisories specifying the safe levels of consumption of affected fish species, and to put tremendous effort into successfully reducing mercury pollution within their borders. The problem is that the vast majority of mercury in the region’s surface waters can be attributed to atmospheric deposition—that is, when mercury emitted into the air by sources such as coal-fired power plants falls directly into surface waters or enters them via stormwater runoff. And since a significant portion of the deposited mercury in our states comes from sources outside the region, there is no simple fix. The situation requires an innovative, forceful, and well coordinated regional response. With NEIWPCC’s guidance and support, that is exactly what has taken place.

At any given time, the amount of mercury being emitted by a coal-fired power plant is minute, but when the mercury falls into surface waters, bacteria convert the metal into methylmercury, a toxic form that bioaccumulates in fish.

Novel Approaches

In late 2005, NEIWPCC’s Executive Committee urged our staff to “think big” on the mercury issue, and we immediately went to work on a powerful new tactic to reduce mercury in the region’s waters. Working with our member states, NEIWPCC’s Water Quality staff began developing a plan known as a Total Maximum Daily Load. The Clean Water Act requires that states develop TMDLs, which specify the maximum amount of a pollutant a water body can receive and still meet its water quality standards, for all impaired waters. But a mercury TMDL covering an entire region and multiple states was something new.

Using the EPA-approved Minnesota Statewide Mercury TMDL as a model, NEIWPCC staff, with support from our states, crafted a plan calling for significant regional mercury reductions that would be achieved in part by the states continuing on their successful in-state mercury reduction programs. The TMDL also spelled out a plan for reducing the mercury from sources outside the region. As a first step, it asked EPA to enact a rule requiring 90 percent mercury control from all coal-fired power plants.

The states officially submitted the Northeast Regional Mercury TMDL to EPA in late October 2007. Less than two months later, the agency issued its approval, noting the highlights of the plan: “The predominant nonpoint source of mercury to the waters included in the TMDL is atmospheric deposition.” EPA wrote that the TMDL’s limits on mercury in stormwater were “reasonable given that nearly all of the mercury in stormwater originates from atmospheric sources and will be addressed at its source...” The supportive language provided important impetus as we began focusing on the next step—implementation.

To help our states achieve the reduction targets in the mercury TMDL, NEIWPCC staff and our Executive Committee chose to invoke a largely overlooked provision of the Clean Water Act. Section 319(g) of the CWA stipulates that if a state determines its waters are being impaired in part by nonpoint source pollution from other states, the affected state may petition EPA to convene a conference of the states contributing the pollution. The conference’s purpose “shall be to develop an agreement among such States to reduce the level of pollution” and improve the water quality in the affected areas.

Throughout fiscal 2008, our staff worked on the 319(g) petition, consulting with our states and legal counsel at
levels in our waters reduced to the point where those who enjoy eating fish need no longer worry about the mercury inside.

As with the submission of the Northwest Regional Mercury TMDL, the filing of the petition regarding considerable media
gains and complaints with Clean Water Act regulations.

The data showed us to nearly those contributing sources in the petition, which by the fall of 2006 had been thoroughly reviewed and approved by our member states.

Each step in the process, NEPWCC contacted with our sister Interstate agencies, NESCAN, to conduct a study pinpointing the origins of the mercury that ends in Northeast waters. The study showed that while much of the mercury comes from sources outside the counties, the county's significant amounts can be attributed to sources in states that feed into the region, and are not negligible.

The action TMDL was a local NEPWCC's Snohomish County Board of Supervisors, the workshop, and workshops, and NEPWCC's director of water quality programs (ret.) and Dr. King, a NEPWCC environmental analyst.

The cover letter of the Section 314(g) petition, which can be downloaded in its entirety at www.nepwcc.org/mercury.
Forum for Dialogue

In addition to the high-profile TMDL and Section 319(g) projects, NEIWPCC continued to coordinate our Mercury-Fish Workgroup, which is made up of representatives from our states' environmental and public health agencies, as well as staff from EPA Regions 1 and 2. The group typically meets twice a year in our Lowell headquarters to discuss mercury fish tissue monitoring and fish consumption advisories for mercury, and 2008 was no exception. In the past, a key topic has been the variety of outreach materials and approaches employed by state agencies to communicate fish consumption advisory issues. A new focus of the group is the evaluation of these materials and approaches, since states are now looking to determine if they are communicating their message effectively. Other topics covered in 2008 included supermarket outreach, the New Hampshire Women's Outreach project, fish advisories for stocked fish, the national lake fish tissue study, and indicator-based monitoring.

NEIWPCC's focus on mercury is continuing unabated in 2009. One exciting new item on the calendar: the 2009 Mercury Science and Policy Conference with a Special Focus on the Great Lakes and Northeast Regions, which is being organized by NEWMOA and EPA. NEIWPCC is cosponsoring the event, and Susy King serves on the Steering Committee. For details, visit www.newmoa.org/prevention/mercury/conferences.

Challenge: Controlling Stormwater

When rain falls and snow melts, the ensuing flow of water across land is known as stormwater runoff—and in urban areas, the preponderance of impervious surfaces means the runoff is not naturally absorbed into the ground. Instead, the runoff—and any pollutants it picks up on its way—flows directly into a water body or into a storm sewer system that discharges into one.

The continued rapid pace of urbanization in the United States means that every year there are more roads, more parking lots, more hard surfaces designed to make our lives easier—and more trouble for those working to control stormwater discharges. A 2008 report from the National Research Council estimated that urban stormwater is now the primary source of impairment for 13 percent of the country's assessed rivers, 18 percent of lakes, and 32 percent of estuaries. Such figures only highlight that controlling stormwater is integral to achieving clean water.

In cities with combined sewers, the water flowing into storm drains is piped to a wastewater treatment plant. Typically, however, the stormwater that goes down drains is discharged directly into a body of water.
Nutrient Removal Research: Working Together—The Issues

Eight years of MNPCC’s Stormwater workshops and professional discus-
sions across the state and region have been held, providing a platform for
researchers and professionals to collaborate and share ideas. The recent
inclusion of workshops in MNPCC’s annual conference has further
strengthened these efforts. The workshops focus on various aspects of
stormwater management, including green infrastructure, nutrient removal,
and water quality monitoring.

The workshops have been instrumental in bringing together re-
sources and expertise from different sectors. This has led to the
development of innovative solutions and the establishment of strong
networks among participants.

The workshops have also served as a platform for discussing the
challenges and opportunities in stormwater management in Michigan.
Participants have shared experiences, best practices, and strategies for
addressing these challenges.

Overall, the workshops have played a crucial role in advancing the
discipline of stormwater management and promoting collaboration
among professionals in the field.
Challenge: Protecting Wetlands
In June 2008, the Heinz Center, a prominent nonpartisan think tank, released its State of the Nation’s Ecosystems report. It showed that despite decades of growing environmental awareness in the country, and a plethora of nonprofit organizations and government agencies committed to environmental protection, there remain enormous strains on the nation’s natural resources. Consider the report’s finding on wetlands: since 1955, the area covered by freshwater wetlands in the country declined by 9 percent. It is no coincidence that in roughly the same time period, the amount of developed land (urban and suburban areas) quadrupled from 15 million acres to 60 million acres.

There are many types of wetlands—swamps, bogs, marshes, vernal pools—but they all play a crucial environmental role. And to this day, regrettably, that role is still often underestimated. At NEIWPCC, we have long understood the need for wetlands protection and restoration. Through a variety of programs and projects, we support and augment the efforts of our member states.

This forested wetland in Wells Reserve, Maine, is well protected, but across the country freshwater wetlands continue to be lost due to pressures from development.

Considering Complex Issues
In recent years, issues pertaining to wetlands have been particularly complicated, further highlighting the importance of NEIWPCC’s Wetlands Workgroup as a vehicle for considering all aspects of a subject and developing a regional response. The workgroup is comprised of wetlands staff from our member states, our federal partners (EPA, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Natural Resources Conservation Service), and partners from regional universities and wetlands organizations. The group met three times in fiscal 2008, with one item invariably high on the agenda: the joint EPA and Army Corps of Engineers guidance on who has the authority under the Clean Water Act to regulate certain water bodies, including wetlands.

Significant questions arose about Clean Water Act jurisdiction after the U.S. Supreme Court’s decision in the landmark Rapanos case, in which the justices said regulators may have misinterpreted the CWA when they refused to allow two Michigan property owners to build on wetlands they own. In our workgroup discussions, the states made it clear that the guidance from EPA and the

Supporting Innovative Assessment
Since its creation in 1998, the New England Biological Assessment of Wetlands Workgroup (NEBAWG) has been bringing together state and federal wetland managers and academic scientists to collaborate on ways to improve how we biologically evaluate the health of the region’s wetlands. And since 1998, NEIWPCC has supported the workgroup in a variety of ways; through our NEBAWG funding from EPA New England, we reimburse travel expenses so state wetlands staff can attend regional and national meetings they might otherwise miss, and we coordinate meetings and workshops. In fiscal 2008, we went a step further by organizing and hosting two well reviewed technical training sessions.

The first took place in October 2007 in Lowell, Mass., with Ralph Tiner of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service at the helm. Tiner, a nationally recognized wetlands expert, covered new developments in wetlands mapping, including new National Wetlands Inventory projects in New England and New York State. More than 40 people
Meeting the Standards

Challenge:

Section 303(c) of the 1977 Clean Water Act Amendments requires 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 water body by 1) designating the use or uses to be made of the water, such as recreation, swimming, fishing, boating or providing drinking water, 2) setting criteria necessary to protect the uses, and 3) preventing degradation through antidegradation provisions.

It is a laudable program, but unfortunately, setting standards and meeting them are two different things. In EPA’s latest assessment of water quality, the agency found that 39 percent of the assessed rivers and stream miles in the country were not fully meeting water quality standards, meaning at least one designated use was impaired. Increasing the compliance rate with existing standards, while also working on new programs, such as nutrient criteria development, requires action in a number of areas, including monitoring and total maximum daily loads.

Effective implementation of water quality standards can prevent disturbing sights like this—green, algal-filled water that provides unmistakable evidence of nutrient overload.

Rhode Island Assistance

NEWPPC staff based at the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management worked on a variety of wetlands projects, including verbal pool training and field work. The Brown Pawtucket River Watershed is designed to verify the status of potential vermiculite pools in the Wood Pawtucket River Watershed. The training of field personnel and the development of field data forms, training of volunteers and RDEM staff, and coordination of field assignments by NEWPPC’s Christine Caron provided outreach assistance to the project and a progress tracking chart. In 2008, the study participants visited 397 pools; more will be visited in 2009 as the project continues.

NEWPPC’s guide to identifying and documenting New England’s hydric soils and their boundaries continues to be a useful and popular resource. In fiscal 2008, we sold nearly 500 printed copies of version 3, which were published in 2004. For more information and ordering instructions, visit newppc.org/hydricsoils.asp.
NEEMCC's efforts to continue the planning process and optimize environmental outcomes, including workshops, with the assistance of EPA, NYSDEC, and NYCDEP, will continue into 2007. NEEMCC стартовала в 2007 году и включала в себя мероприятия по улучшению качества окружающей среды в Нью-Йорке. Основная задача NEEMCC - определить способы улучшения окружающей среды, включая вопросы качества воды и воздуха.

**Supporting New Nurture Research**

A federal grant awarded through NEEMCC will allow Rutgers University to continue its work on aquatic ecosystem restoration. The grant will fund research into the effects of pollution on aquatic ecosystems and develop strategies to mitigate these effects. The work will include the development of new techniques for monitoring and assessing the health of aquatic ecosystems, as well as the development of new methods for restoring degraded ecosystems.

**Innovations in Permitting**

EPAs EAP (Effluent Limitations Partnership) program aims to reduce the amount of pollutants discharged into surface waters. NEEMCC's efforts to improve water quality standards in New York City will be supported by EAP funding.

**Natural Criteria Development**

Natural criteria development efforts focus on the development of natural regulations and policies that can improve water body conditions and minimize the impact of pollution. NEEMCC, in partnership with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, began a project to develop natural criteria that can be used to assess water body conditions and prioritize restoration efforts.

**Policy Issues**

NEEMCC, in collaboration with the New York City Department of Environmental Protection, has been working to improve water quality standards, reduce pollution, and protect aquatic ecosystems in the region.
Monitoring Matters

EPA and the states may have their differences, but on one point, they are in full agreement: we need a consistent approach throughout the nation for assessing water quality data. And the preferred approach of many experts is to utilize the biological condition gradient (BCG) model developed by EPA. BCG describes how ten attributes of aquatic ecosystems, such as organism condition and stream size, change in response to increasingly levels of stressors. States can use the model to precisely evaluate the current and potential biological condition of their waters. In the view of many, widespread adoption of BCG would enhance the effort to conduct comprehensive assessments of water quality in our region and across the country.

In an effort to explore the benefits of BCG, staff from NEIWPCC, EPA, and the environmental agencies of Connecticut, Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont have partnered to conduct statistically valid assessments of the condition of wadeable streams in the region and nation using data from the New England Wadeable Streams project and the national Wadeable Streams Assessment. By subjecting the studies' data to a BCG framework, the goal is to bridge some of the compatibility issues between the studies' results, which were collected by different organizations and agencies. It works, the end product will be a comprehensive assessment of wadeable streams in the region. A final report is expected in September 2009.

In another cooperative venture, NEIWPCC staff are working with former Maine DEP Commissioner Martha Kirkpatrick, Maine DEP's Susan Davies, and the Midwest Biodiversity Institute on a project we call the "TALU Manager's Pilot." TALU stands for Tiered Aquatic Life Use, a relatively new assessment framework that incorporates a tiered system of use designations for a water body, thereby providing for different levels of protection. With TALU, segments of a water body are assigned aquatic life use designations, based on their potential to support the use. In fiscal 2008, a steering committee was formed to develop a strategy for applying TALU as a management framework to selected water bodies in the Northeast. The plan is to examine TALU's applicability in scenarios where we see a variety of things taking place, such as antidegradation, urbanization, stormwater management, increasing chloride inputs, human-caused changes in stream hydrogeomorphology, and effluent-dominated streams.

We will shortly know a great deal more about the state of New England's lakes and ponds. Since 2006, NEIWPCC, EPA New England, and a number of state agencies and universities have been working together on the New England Lakes and Ponds Study (NELAP). Researchers selected about 300 lakes and ponds reflecting a wide range of characteristics, from pristine environments to ecosystems highly impacted by human activity, and then began assessing each water body to determine water quality and ecological condition. Sampling finally wrapped up in September 2008, and data analysis is currently underway. We hope to identify several indicators, both biological and chemical, of lake and pond health that can be utilized in annual monitoring programs to track the ecological status of the water bodies. The final NELAP report is expected in April 2010.

In one other monitoring matter of note, NEIWPCC continues to collaborate with EPA Region 1 on National Aquatic Resource Surveys (NARS). In December 2007 at the EPA New England Laboratory in Chelmsford, Mass., NEIWPCC staff hosted a workshop and training for states participating in the Summer 2008 surveys of rivers, lakes, and other water bodies. Staff from EPA and all our member states took part in the session.

In the New England Lakes and Ponds Study, researchers used a variety of monitoring techniques, including towing nets alongside boats to collect plankton samples. Plankton's high sensitivity to environmental change, particularly nutrient enrichment, makes them good indicators of ecosystem health.

The Rev. Martha Kirkpatrick, a former commissioner of Maine DEP and currently the Episcopal Diocese of Maine's environmental stewardship officer, is collaborating with NEIWPCC on a project examining the application of the Tiered Aquatic Life Use framework to water bodies in the Northeast.
The development and approval of the Northeast Regional Mercury Total Maximum Daily Load (TRM-TMDL) is an important step in our efforts to reduce mercury emissions from coal-fired power plants and other sources. The TRM-TMDL provides a framework for states in the region to develop and implement plans to reduce mercury emissions and protect human health and the environment. This document outlines the steps taken during the development of the TRM-TMDL process and discusses the challenges and opportunities that were encountered along the way.

The development of the TRM-TMDL was a collaborative effort involving stakeholders from various sectors, including state and federal agencies, industry, and environmental organizations. The process began with a series of workshops and meetings in which stakeholders shared their perspectives and provided input on the development of the plan.

The TRM-TMDL includes a comprehensive set of strategies for reducing mercury emissions, including the development of new technologies, the implementation of best management practices, and the implementation of policies and regulations to reduce mercury emissions from coal-fired power plants and other sources.

The TRM-TMDL also includes a monitoring program to track the effectiveness of the strategies and to ensure that the goals of the plan are being met. The program includes regular assessments of mercury emissions, as well as ongoing evaluations of the effectiveness of the strategies being implemented.

The development of the TRM-TMDL was a complex and challenging process, but it was essential to ensure the protection of human health and the environment. The TRM-TMDL provides a framework for states in the region to work together to reduce mercury emissions and protect public health.

In summary, the development of the TRM-TMDL was a significant step in the process of reducing mercury emissions and protecting human health and the environment. The plan includes a comprehensive set of strategies and a monitoring program to ensure that the goals of the plan are being met. The TRM-TMDL is an important example of the power of collaborative efforts to address complex environmental challenges.
Forum for Collaboration
Since 1990, NEIWPCC, in coordination with the nonpoint source pollution programs of the New England states, New York State, and EPA Regions 1 and 2, has been bringing together the region’s NPS pollution experts and managers for the annual Nonpoint Source Pollution Conference. The gathering has long been acknowledged as the premier forum in our region for sharing information and improving communication on NPS pollution issues and projects, and the 2008 edition only enhanced the conference’s reputation. More than 175 people attended the event, which took place on May 19-21 at the Mystic Marriott Hotel and Spa in Groton, Conn.

All the sessions related in some fashion to the conference theme, “Progress Through Partnerships: Collaborating to Protect Our Watersheds.” Highlights included the keynote address on “Smart Partnering,” delivered by John Weber of Surfrider Foundation, a nonprofit ocean-protection organization formed by California surfers in 1984; and a full-day Stormwater Funding and Utility Development Workshop led by Andrew Reese and Charlene Johnston of AMEC Earth and Environmental, one of the world’s leading environmental consulting firms. Establishing a utility to handle stormwater, similar to a water or sewer utility, is a relatively recent development in municipal stormwater management, but is an attractive option due to the use of fees to fund a city’s stormwater management programs and capital projects.

The Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection cosponsored the conference, and a collaborative spirit was tangible both during the presentations and the informal networking that followed. By all accounts, we met our goal for the conference—to stress the importance of partnerships and integrated programs among local, regional, state, and federal agencies.

Productive Discourse
Unlike the case with point sources of pollution, the Clean Water Act does not offer enforceable regulatory support to states for controlling nonpoint sources. However, Congress amended the CWA in 1987 to establish Section 319, through which states and tribes receive grant money to support nonpoint source efforts. Lately, an increased emphasis has been placed on tracking the results of these efforts and ensuring that anticipated environmental improvements come to fruition.

During the 2008 meetings of NEIWPCC’s NPS Workgroup, our states and EPA engaged in many exchanges on how to improve the NPS grants reporting and tracking system (GRTS) so we have a better idea of how Section 319 funds are being utilized and how to more effectively distribute funds for holistic watershed management. The group contemplated ways to ensure that best management practices funded through the nonpoint source program are properly operated and maintained throughout the expected life of a project (and beyond). The discussions focused on legal remedies as well as the practicality of enforcement.

Like every year, the NPS Workgroup met quarterly in 2008, and as is typical, attendance was high. Representatives from all seven of our member states along with staff from EPA Regions 1 and 2 took part in the talks.
Long Island Sound Study

New York's Water Quality Partnerships

State of the Lake

Lake Champion Basin Program
Challenge: Plant Staffing

For more than six decades, wastewater treatment has been a key issue for NEIWPC. The focus of so many of our programs and projects. Being involved with the industry for so long has meant being part of the incredible evolution in wastewater treatment since the late 1940s, when many American cities finally stopped discharging raw sewage into waterways and began relying on treatment plants to remove household waste and contaminants. The practice led to immediate and major improvements in water quality, but over the years, wastewater processes have advanced dramatically. The modern wastewater treatment plant is a marvel of applied science and technology.

But even the best of plants do not run on their own. Smart, experienced, well trained operators still are needed to ensure a wastewater treatment facility is run safely, efficiently, and effectively. Ideally, a plant employs the exact number of operators it needs—no less and no more. Such a plant is deemed to be “properly staffed,” and is far less likely to fall out of compliance with its permit. Helping facilities get it right on staffing was the goal of one of NEIWPC’s major projects of the year.

New Guide for New Times

The need for guidance on properly staffing a wastewater treatment plant is not new: in 1973, U.S. EPA published Estimated Staffing for Municipal Wastewater Treatment Facilities, which for years helped state regulatory agencies and plant managers determine the staffing needs associated with treatment plant processes and activities. But changes in the wastewater industry had seriously diminished the EPA guide’s usefulness. It covered treatment processes that were no longer widely used, while not covering many modern processes, such as sequencing batch reactors. The EPA guide also touched only briefly on computer systems, which play such a large role in today’s treatment plants.

With the approval of NEIWPC’s Commissioners, our wastewater staff began developing an all new staffing guide to be used for plants in the Northeast. Helping us at
Guides for the Treatment Works Design of Wastewater Treatment Plants

Undermined demand

TR-16

www.nemepco.com/technicalpublications.asp

and excel charts of the corresponding sections of the guide to obtain a printed copy of access the spreadsheet format Contract NEMEPCO is now providing the entire in an interactive Excel format. Printed copies of the guide are

available on request. The guide will be useful for finding specific design criteria and equations to develop an expanded wastewater treatment plant. The 2009 national wastewater standards are

presenting a new challenge, and NEMEPCO is now publishing a new, updated version of the guide. The Guide Quick Reference Manual provides quick reference material for the entire wastewater treatment plant design process. The guide includes numerous tables and figures to aid in understanding the latest regulations and standards. A quick reference manual is also available online.

To get feedback on the accuracy of the chart estimates, visit the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) website (www.mass.gov/dep) and search for "NEMEPCO." DEP offers a wealth of information on wastewater treatment plants and provides an easy access to the latest regulations and standards. The guide is designed to help engineers and designers make informed decisions and comply with the latest regulations.

In an e-mail to NEMEPCO: Craig Moskalik, Consulting Engineer

Regulatory community needs to meet one another and get before us the

asset to many communities, as well as those of us in the

completing the task of making it a valuable

experience while meeting the needs of NEMEPCO's many popular wastewater treatment

yers in need of assistance in the design of the projects, we

support NEMEPCO's demand for technical assistance from their service providers. NEMEPCO's support for technical assistance from their service providers is essential to the success of the projects. We need to line-up the experts and improve their skills and

managers and operators of the facilities provided communications and

every step was an advisory committee made up of state

regulations. Wastewater treatment plant managers and

regulations. Wastewater treatment plant managers and

Challenge: In Need of Managers

In the wastewater treatment industry, young plant managers are hard to find. Most current managers entered the field as operators in the 1970s, after the passage of the Clean Water Act sparked a massive federal investment in sewer systems and treatment facilities. They climbed through the ranks at plants, with some eventually landing in the manager's seat. And now, like countless baby boomers across the country, these managers, with their vast institutional knowledge and experience, are ready for retirement. Who will fill their shoes?

At too many plants, that question has no obvious answer. Virtually all wastewater facilities possess a capable workforce with a coterie of solid, well-trained operators. Few possess managers-in-waiting, individuals fully prepared to take over when the boss steps aside.

At NEIWPC, we are well aware of this problem—or "looming crisis," as some have called it. The time for succession planning is now.

Training the Next Generation

Rhode Island is one of four NEIWPC member states that direct to us the federal funds they receive through Section 104(g) of the Clean Water Act. These funds support on-site technical assistance designed to help small community wastewater treatment plants improve performance, and achieve and maintain permit compliance. In 2007, Rhode Island officials decided to use some of the state's 104(g) funds to groom front-line and midlevel wastewater operators for elevation to a higher step on the career ladder—plant management.

As a first step in the process, NEIWPC's Manager of Training Operations Charles Conway worked with Bill Patenaude of Rhode Island's Department of Environmental Management to develop a comprehensive program to introduce operators to the responsibility of plant management. The next step: getting the right operators. The call went out for nominations, and in the end, 13 operators from throughout the state were selected for the program, based on their management potential. On September 27, 2007, the training got underway, with classes held once a month for ten months. The instructors covered a diverse range of topics—from the permitting process to media relations and budgeting—but in each session, the goal was the same: to develop the skills that an effective treatment plant manager needs.

The "boot camp," as it was called, was by any definition a success. Rhode Island's wastewater community

In July 2008, NEIWPC's Charles Conway (third from right) took the students in Rhode Island's Wastewater Boot Camp on a tour of the massive Deer Island treatment plant in Boston Harbor.
Challenge: A Trained Workforce

The same evolution in wastewater treatment technologies and processes that necessitated our development of a new guide to plant staffing has also made training of wastewater operators absolutely essential. In a modern plant, operators use increasingly sophisticated equipment requiring the mastery of complex procedures. Good training throughout operators’ careers ensures they get the jobs done and get them done well. That is why almost all of NEIWPC's member states include a minimum number of training hours in their requirements for operator license renewal.

To provide the best possible training, there is no substitute for experience—and at NEIWPC, we have plenty of it. For more than 40 years, we have been conducting courses in our member states. Our instructors travel throughout New England and New York State to bring their expertise directly to those who can benefit from it. Our goal in 2008 was the same as it is every year—to develop and conduct the training that meets our region’s needs.

Delivering Targeted Training

A key challenge for any organization offering training is to keep that training fresh, up-to-date, and highly applicable to the target audience. This requires staying on top of training needs as they change over time, then crafting training sessions that deliver the desired instruction.

Before each spring and fall training season, NEIWPC’s training staff scrutinize course evaluations for helpful suggestions; consult with wastewater authorities in our member states; and attend state, regional, and national water pollution conferences and trade shows—all in an effort to gather information that we use to develop new courses or refine existing ones.

Perhaps the best measure of the success of this effort is attendance, and by that measure, NEIWPC’s training programs are doing very well. Excluding the courses conducted by JETCC in Maine, we coordinated a total of 132 training sessions in fiscal 2008, which attracted a total of 2,643 students. This includes our core training that we offer in each of NEIWPC’s member states, as well as the sessions we coordinate for Massachusetts's wastewater operator training program and the customized training we provide on a contractual basis to municipalities and companies. These companies choose NEIWPC for the same reason students attend our courses—a high level of instruction delivered at a reasonable cost. Entities contracting with NEIWPC for training in 2008 included Shire Chemical (Cambridge, Mass.), Boston Water and Sewer, Distrigas of Massachusetts, and the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority.

Many of NEIWPC’s courses combine presentations in the classroom with instruction in the field. Here, an instructor explains equipment used in our “PVC Valves, Connections, and Joining” class, October 27, 2008, Haverhill, Mass.

Excluding JETCC courses, NEIWPC coordinated 132 training sessions for 2,643 students, which computes to a very healthy average of more than 20 students per class.

The average number of participants in each training program was strong at just over 20, but as usual we saw considerable variance in attendance. Some of the more specialized courses, such as “Simplified Test Methods for Chemical Analysis,” are critically important but relevant to a smaller constituency; hence they drew less than the average. Others such as “Sampling Procedures for Wastewater Treatment Plant Operators” have value for virtually the entire wastewater workforce and generated attendance beyond the norm; the sampling class in Cobleskill, N.Y., on January 17, 2008, for example, attracted 35 students. One trend we observed as the year went on was growth in attendance at our introductory wastewater classes, a trend seen at other times in the past when the regional economy has slowed. Our trainers reported having master electricians and highly skilled individuals from other fields in their classes; as the recession ground on, the steady employment offered by a wastewater treatment plant clearly began to grow in appeal.

One training initiative that generated considerable interest and enthusiasm during the year from NEIWPC’s Commissioners was our partnership with EPA to plan a workshop in asset management—that is, managing infrastructure capital assets to minimize the cost of owning and operating them, while at the same time delivering the service that customers desire. With concerns growing about America’s aging infrastructure, including wastewater systems, asset management has taken on even greater importance, and EPA has been conducting training sessions on the issue throughout the country. Our region’s workshop, entitled “Advanced Asset...
Management Agency (MEP)

Massachusetts Water Resources Authority

MEP

Massachusetts Water Resources Authority

Massachusetts Water Resources Authority

Massachusetts Water Resources Authority

The Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA) provides water and wastewater services to more than 2 million people in the greater Boston area.

The Authority operates 19 wastewater treatment plants and 10 water treatment plants. It also manages the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA) system.

Training in Maine

MEP

Massachusetts Water Resources Authority

MEP

Massachusetts Water Resources Authority

The MEP is responsible for ensuring that all of the Authority's operations are conducted in a safe, efficient, and cost-effective manner.

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Getting the Word Out

Before each fall and spring training season, NEIWPCC goes to great lengths to publicize our training offerings, so that all potential participants are fully aware of their options. We mail roughly 6,000 of our printed catalogs, which include the details about each course and full descriptions. The catalogs reflect a great deal of work, not only in assembling the course schedule but also in writing and designing the catalog content. The end result is a product that provides all the pertinent information in a concise, accessible package. We also continue to improve and expand the training section of our website (www.neiwpcc.org/training), which includes an online version of the catalog and individual flyers, with registration forms, for each course.

In fiscal 2008, we also created and mailed a card publicizing our custom training, and thoroughly updated our online list of colleges and universities offering programs in wastewater treatment and water quality technology. The list is available at www.neiwpcc.org/wwprograms.asp.

Challenge: Nutrient Removal

According to U.S. EPA, many of the nation's more than 16,000 municipal wastewater treatment plants discharge to sensitive waters or waters designated as impaired. And in many cases, the impairment is a low dissolved oxygen content due to an overload of nutrients, such as nitrogen and phosphorus. As a result, wastewater facilities are increasingly being required to use treatment processes to help reduce nutrient concentrations in their effluent.

It is no small challenge. The nutrient limits that plants must meet can be extremely low, and the upgrades necessary to achieve the reductions can be very expensive. Some argue that such low limits have little impact environmentally, and that the money could be better spent elsewhere. But the fact is that strict effluent limits on nutrients are, for many plants, a reality that is not going away. The task therefore is to meet the limits cost-effectively.

As a condition of the permit that allows them to operate, many wastewater treatment plants must meet extremely low effluent phosphorus and nitrogen targets that necessitate expensive facility upgrades.
the workshop used by NEWPCo's Climate Company due to the facility's location.

The team providing on-site technical assistance in nutrient removal at special Highlander plants included:

- John Smith, the project manager
- Susan Lee, the technical coordinator
- Michelle Johnson, the quality control specialist
- Tom Brown, the equipment specialist

The team was tasked with helping the Plant managers to optimize their nutrient removal processes and improve their overall water quality. They worked closely with the facility's operators to identify areas for improvement and provide guidance on the best practices to follow.

The workshop included discussions on:
- The importance of regular maintenance and cleaning of the treatment units
- The benefits of using bioremediation techniques to enhance nutrient removal
- The role of technology in improving water quality

The workshop ended with a group photo to commemorate the successful event. The team left the facility with a strong sense of achievement and excitement for the future prospects in nutrient removal.

After the workshop, the team received positive feedback from the facility managers, who appreciated the hands-on approach and the practical solutions provided.

The workshop was a collaborative effort aimed at improving the facility's water quality and enhancing its contribution to the local ecosystem.
Developing a Model Approach

In an effort to reduce SSOs, EPA developed principles known as capacity, management, operation, and maintenance, or CMOM, as they are now universally called. Although never formally promulgated in a federal rule, the value of the proposed principles has been widely embraced; a CMOM approach outlines a dynamic system management framework that encourages evaluating and prioritizing efforts to identify and correct performance-limiting situations in a collection system. In 2004, NEIWPCC and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation began work on a pilot project to develop a model process for evaluating CMOM programs. In late fiscal 2008, we could finally pronounce the project complete—and well worth the time and effort.

In developing the process, we worked with utilities in three communities—Saratoga County, N.Y.; Somersworth, N.H.; and Boonville, N.Y.—that represent the needs and capabilities of communities with large, medium, and small collection systems, respectively. In each community, a team including NEIWPCC’s Mike Jennings and NYSDEC’s Tim Miller reviewed the utility’s policies and procedures, conducted field observations to observe work practices in various parts of the collection system, and interviewed employees (confidentially, to inspire a frank exchange). The team then developed draft CMOM Business Practice Evaluation Reports, in which the utility was analyzed and ranked in a number of categories associated with CMOM and environmental compliance.

The next step involved holding workshops in each community involving the assessment team and senior utility managers, which provided an opportunity to confirm the report findings, identify areas for improvement, and develop a framework for program improvement. Finally, the team created a Recommendation and Action Matrix for each community, which included the rating for each category, as well as the findings, recommendations, risks, and consequences.

For everyone involved in the project, much was gained. By participating in the process, Saratoga County, Somersworth, and Boonville received a considerable amount of free services, and a foundation to better manage, operate, and maintain their collection systems. The utilities gained valuable knowledge that can be used in their work in other communities. NEIWPCC and the other parties in the assessment team learned a great deal more about measures and activities that can improve collection system performance and reduce SSOs. Most importantly, we achieved the desired result—to develop a model process that other communities can follow in evaluating their CMOM programs.

NEIWPCC has posted a comprehensive summary of the evaluation process to the recently expanded collection systems portion of our website, and we are in the process of posting the matrices and business practice evaluations. Visit www.neiwpcc.org/collection systems to access the information about the CMOM project as well as our other work related to collection systems, including training sessions; fats, oils, and grease (FOG) management; and our popular technical manual Optimizing Operation, Maintenance, and Rehabilitation of Sanitary Sewer Collection Systems, published in 2003.
Growing Traditions: From a Short Course to a Certificate Program

The Niagara Frontier Technical Community College (NFIT) offers a Certificate Program in Wastewater Treatment Operations, which includes a Short Course in Wastewater Treatment. The program is designed to provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary to work in the field of wastewater treatment. The Short Course is a popular choice for individuals looking to enter the field or enhance their skills. The program is taught by experienced instructors who bring real-world experience to the classroom. The Certificate Program is structured to allow students to build on their understanding of wastewater treatment and prepare for a career in the field.
Multi-Level Involvement

While the Short Course was a highlight of our work in fiscal 2008, it was just one facet of our extensive commitment to pursuing progress on onsite systems. During the year, we conducted two meetings of NEIWPC’s Ongoing Workgroup, which brings together staff from our member states and EPA to discuss various onsite challenges and explore opportunities to collaborate on projects.

NEIWPC also continued to coordinate Massachusetts’s program for Title 5 Onsite Wastewater Training and Examination of System Inspectors and Soil Evaluators, a responsibility we assumed in 2004. Title 5 of the state’s environmental code requires that anyone who inspects onsite systems or evaluates the soil in which the systems are located have the appropriate credentials and be properly trained. Making that happen is no small feat.

During the year, NEIWPC’s Rosemary Decie, who coordinates our Title 5 work, oversaw the mailing of license renewal applications and approval cards to thousands of inspectors and evaluators. She also set up and conducted training sessions throughout the state, with the locations carefully selected to bring the training to different regions at regular intervals. Decie’s classes continue to be popular; her system inspector certification program in June 2008 in Wilmington, for example, attracted 40 participants. NEIWPC works closely with the Massachusetts Health Officers Association and MassDEP in coordinating the Title 5 program.

Taking the Reins

Tom Groves, NEIWPC’s director of wastewater and onsite systems, has taken on a new and influential role. On December 1, 2008, Groves began a two-year term as president of the National Onsite Wastewater Recycling Association (NOWRA), the largest organization in the United States dedicated to educating and representing members within the onsite and decentralized industry. NOWRA has over 4,000 individual members and more than 20 affiliated associations, including the New England chapter, the Yankee Onsite Wastewater Association (YOWA), in which Groves and other NEIWPC staff play significant roles. NOWRA’s members come from all segments of the onsite/decentralized industry; they are installers, designers, product manufacturers, regulators, academics, and service providers. Considering his extensive experience in the field, Groves is well up to the challenge of serving the diverse membership and providing superb leadership.

The NOWRA appointment is one more indication of the prominence of Groves and NEIWPC in the onsite world. Another telling example: Groves had the honor of being invited to speak at Italy’s First National Workshop on Decentralized Systems, held in Venice on October 3-5, 2007. The conference attracted speakers from all over the world, including Japan and Australia. Groves spoke about the management of decentralized systems in the United States.
RESIDUALS PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS

The New England Water Residuals Committee, along with the Water Treatment Working Group, continued their work through the 2009 NEWMPC annual Northeast Residuals and Biosolids Conference in November. NEWMPC’s Residuals Committee works with the New England Water Residuals Committee to develop and implement water treatment programs.

NEWMPC’s Residuals Committee works with the New England Water Residuals Committee to develop and implement water treatment programs.

Programs on Issues: Progress on Issues that affect our member systems, e.g., cost, quality of our water, etc., or in our region or the nation in general.


The Residuals Committee promotes the implementation of new technologies and the application of innovative methods for the treatment of residuals. The Committee focuses on the development, demonstration, and implementation of new technologies and innovative methods for the treatment of residuals. The Committee also promotes the development and implementation of new technologies and innovative methods for the treatment of residuals. The Committee also promotes the development and implementation of innovative methods for the treatment of residuals.

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Challenge: Pharmaceuticals and Personal Care Products

Among the many responsibilities of our new Water Resource Protection division is the coordination of our work on two of the newer challenges to emerge in the water arena—climate change, which we covered earlier in this report (page 8), and pharmaceuticals and personal care products. PPCPs, as they are known, include prescription and over-the-counter drugs, veterinary drugs, and consumer goods such as perfumes, lotions, and cleaning products. They enter the environment in many ways: people send them down drains, rinse them off in the shower, and excrete them into toilets. Eventually they can make their way into water bodies, and researchers increasingly find PPCPs in trace amounts in America’s rivers and streams. A recent study also found pharmaceutical residues in the tissue of fish caught near wastewater treatment plants in five major U.S. cities.

The public’s attention to the issue has been muted, but a 2008 Associated Press series raised eyebrows with its reports documenting minute levels of PPCPs in the nation’s drinking water supplies. Lawmakers on Capitol Hill questioned if enough was being done to explore whether such levels could cause harm, prompting EPA officials to defend the agency’s efforts to analyze the effects of PPCPs and the options for removing them from wastewater and drinking water. So far, no study has shown that the presence of PPCPs in the environment poses a threat to human health, but the mere possibility is reason enough for concern.
On March 12, 2008, in our town headquarters...

Responding to a Mutual Concern...
Twenty-Year Tradition

In November of 1988, some 250 state UST regulators convened in Santa Fe, N.M., for a national workshop hosted by EPA’s Office of Underground Storage Tanks. For two days, there were panel discussions on everything from corrective action to corrosion. When it was over, attendees urged the organizers to make the gathering a regular event. It has indeed become that—and much more.

In the years since that first workshop in Santa Fe, the National Tanks Conference and Exposition, as it is now known, has become the place for the underground storage tanks community to focus on progress and priorities, and to learn from experts and each other. In 2008, we marked the twentieth edition of the event, and by any measure, it was a tremendous success. More than 500 people took part in the conference on March 17-19 in Atlanta, and if there was ever a dull moment, it probably came as a welcome break amid the constant learning and networking. The conference featured multiple presentations from leading tanks authorities, while in the exhibit area, the nation’s leading providers of tanks products and services provided attendees with a firsthand look at the latest innovations in the field. Also on the agenda—a site revitalization tour, which took participants to several destinations including Atlanta’s Atlantic Station, the largest urban redevelopment in the nation.

As we have done for many years, NEIWPC led the development and coordination of the conference, with support from our cosponsors, EPA OUST and Region 4, the Environmental Protection Division of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, and the Association of State and Territorial Solid Waste Management Officials. With each edition of the conference, we look for opportunities for improvement, and in Atlanta, the new highlights included two national training workshops held the Sunday before the conference officially began. The workshops, “Inventory Control: A New Look at an Old Method of Leak Detection” and “Assessing Vapor Intrusion at Petroleum Release Sites” each attracted more than 40 participants.

For many years, NEIWPC also cosponsored another major event on the tanks calendar, the State Fund Administrators Meeting, and this tradition continued in 2008. The administrators manage state funds generated by gasoline taxes earmarked for covering the costs of cleaning up leaks at tank sites, and on June 8-11, 2008, the administrators convened in Charleston, S.C. This meeting too was a success—and it was also a fitting finale. EPA OUST has decided to integrate the SFA

The 2008 State Fund Administrators Meeting in Charleston, S.C., marked the end for the meeting’s existence as a stand-alone event; the issues pertinent to state fund administrators are now being addressed in the National Tanks Conference, making it a comprehensive gathering for the entire tanks community.
Training initiatives

The training initiatives are designed to better equip workers to manage their jobs more efficiently and effectively. These initiatives include:

1. Regular safety training sessions
2. Continuous education programs
3. On-site workshops and seminars
4. Online courses and modules

These training programs aim to improve worker skills, enhance productivity, and reduce workplace accidents. By investing in training, organizations can create a safer, more productive work environment.

Environmental Stewardship Projects

The company is committed to environmental stewardship and has implemented several projects to reduce its carbon footprint. These projects include:

1. Renewable energy initiatives
2. Waste reduction programs
3. Water conservation measures
4. Alternative transportation options

By adopting sustainable practices, the company is not only contributing to a cleaner environment but also saving costs in the long run.

Employee Education and Development

The company recognizes the importance of ongoing employee education and development. It offers various programs to support the professional growth of its employees, including:

1. Leadership development programs
2. Technical skill-building workshops
3. Soft skills training sessions
4. Internship and mentorship opportunities

These programs help employees gain new skills and knowledge, which can lead to career advancement and increased job satisfaction.
Tanks Publications

Using UST funds from EPA, NEIWPCC staff developed a guide for owners and operators of gas stations whose drinking water comes from a private well on the premises. Due to the potential for USTs to leak and contaminate wells, these gas stations face regulatory responsibilities quite different from those that get their water from a municipal system. Although a gas station may not intend to provide water for drinking, it still offers many opportunities for contact. People may drink from a bathroom faucet, for example, or drink coffee made with the station's well water.

In clear language complemented by colorful graphics, the guide outlines the key responsibilities, required testing, steps to take if contamination is detected, methods for protecting a well from fuel contamination, and necessary actions if fuel is spilled on the ground. NEIWPCC does not distribute printed copies of the guide, but on our website, a downloadable high-resolution printable version is available for free, along with instructions to be provided to a printing company (if multiple copies are desired). Also provided are PowerPoint slides that are ideal for educational sessions, and easily incorporated into an existing presentation for UST operator training. The guide and slides are available at www.neiwpc.org/tnccguide.asp. (Our guide, which

was designed by NEIWPCC's Cindy Barnard, was also used as a template for a version produced by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection. Its guide is at www.mass.gov/dep/water/drinking/tnccguide.htm.)

Our other major tanks-related publishing project was one that is hardly unfamiliar. For well over two decades, NEIWPCC has published LUSTLine, a national bulletin covering tanks issues, activities, and technologies, and the 2008 issues more than met the publication’s typically high standards. Notable articles included the September 2008 cover story on the progress on tanks and the work yet to be done to protect groundwater, written by longtime LUSTLine editor Ellen Frye. For information on how to join the thousands of subscribers across the country who receive LUSTLine, visit its home on the web at www.neiwpc.org/lustline.asp, which also features online versions of current and archive issues, online-only supplements, and an index of every LUSTLine article published since 1985.

Challenge:
Safe Drinking Water

In many poor countries, clean, potable water remains a luxury available to far too few; each year, nearly two million people in the developing world die from waterborne diseases. This tragic fact stands in sharp contrast to the situation in the United States, where the water flowing from taps is very rarely a health threat. As a result of key legislation such as the Safe Drinking Water Act and many years of intensive efforts to comply with some of the world’s strictest drinking water laws and codes, the nation has one of the safest drinking water supplies in the world. The challenge is to ensure that it stays that way, no simple task given the profusion of potential contaminants.

In 2004, a survey of all 50 states found a nationwide gap of $360 million between the funds needed to administer state drinking water programs and the funds that were available. Such a disparity makes a hard job even harder, which is why the monies being allocated in the national economic stimulus package and federal budget process have been so welcomed by the drinking water community. Any additional support is helpful, considering the situation. The promulgation of new federal rules and the ongoing challenge of meeting existing standards, particularly in rural areas, continue to keep the pressure on those in our member states who manage state drinking water programs and those who work to protect drinking water supplies.
Water quality and public health workshops for the second NEPCC annual meeting for the workshop to meet with EPA and drinking water professionals to discuss and improve the regulation of water systems, the regulating of drinking water quality, and the enforcement of regulations to protect public health.

NEPCC members who are involved in drinking water administration workshops led by EPAs drinking water administration workshops and other programs.

Participants in this meeting include the following:

- Groundwater and surface water systems
- Water quality and public health professionals
- Drinking water administrators
- Water system operators
- Water system engineers
- Water system managers
- Water system stakeholders

The focus of the meeting is to discuss and improve the regulation of water systems, the regulating of drinking water quality, and the enforcement of regulations to protect public health.
Still Meeting a Need

Requests continue to come into NEIWPC for our 2004 guide to source water protection for municipal officials. The 52-page manual provides tools that mayors, selectmen, planning and zoning board members, and others can use to take action to protect local drinking water sources. The focus is on five key areas of vulnerability identified in New England state Source Water Assessments—inadequate local regulations and ordinances, underground storage tanks, onsite sewage disposal systems, hazardous materials storage, and stormwater runoff. In fiscal 2008, we sold 38 printed copies of the guide, which are available by contacting NEIWPC. Free downloads of the guide’s chapters as well as supplementary fact sheets are available at www.neiwpc.org/sourcwateroutreach.
The Hudson River Estuary Programs' efforts and tracking of Atlantic salmon provides vital information on the fish.

During the spring of 2008, researchers deployed massive otters in experimental cages at six locations in the upper region of the Hudson River estuary. NEWPCC's staff also manages the Hudson River Estuary Program's eels, which are measured and counted with a tone tone.

No shortage of question here. NEWPCC's Amadeo Hidalgo (right) helps to lift a 230-pound salmon so it can be measured and cloned. Hidalgo's efforts and those of his colleagues have helped NBA in Habitats produce successful Atlantic salmon restoration programs and continue to track the population as needed.

The Hudson River Estuary Program's efforts and tracking of Atlantic salmon provides vital information on the fish.
Challenge: Communicating for Impact

In an era where we are literally surrounded by an unfathomable amount of information that can be pulled out of the air by wireless networks and sent instantaneously to computer screens, it is no small challenge to cut through the clutter. At NEIWPC, it is a challenge we accept and embrace. Through our communications products, we strive to deliver distinctive, truly useful information that can impact the way a recipient thinks about an issue and even behaves. We do this in a variety of ways, and increasingly do it over the Internet. But we have not abandoned our commitment to print. There remains something welcoming about the printed page, especially when the topic at hand is complex—which is invariably the case with water and wastewater issues. So visit our website often and make full use of our other electronic products, but look for us in your mailbox too. It does not matter if a mode of communication is new or old. What matters is that it works.

News and Views

In the summer of 2003, NEIWPC launched a new newsletter called Interstate Water Report or IWR for short. The name and large size of the newsletter gave it a journalistic feel, which was no accident. IWR was conceived as a publication that would use the techniques of journalism and storytelling to inform readers about existing and emerging water and wastewater issues, while also imparting the latest news about developments at NEIWPC and in our member states.

That vision still drives every issue of IWR. The feature articles reflect a commitment to original reporting and creative writing that is unusual in a newsletter, and makes IWR stand out in a crowded field of water-related publications. The Winter 2007-08 issue included a front-page article that compellingly described the story behind the development of the Northeast Regional Mercury TMDL; another front-page piece documented the experience of attending the first Northeast Water Science Forum, while explaining the latest findings about pharmaceuticals and personal care products in the water environment, the focus of the forum. On page three, IWR editor Steve Hochbrunn shared his story of visiting Merrimack Station, a coal-fired power plant in Bow, N.H. Hochbrunn and NEIWPC's Susy King traveled to the plant to find out about plans for reducing its mercury emissions, and the article reveals what they learned and experienced as they toured a facility that burns through 4,000 tons of coal a day.

Current issues of IWR regularly run 20 pages, nearly double the length of the debut issue. Printed copies are mailed to roughly 3,000 subscribers throughout the country, and the reach is extended through the IWR section on NEIWPC's website (www.neiwpc.org/iwr), where visitors can download the current issue in its entirety or view individual articles, access an archive of previous issues, and sign up for a free subscription.

E-Mail Edition

During the year, NEIWPC's outreach staff fine-tuned plans for IWR, an e-mail water and wastewater news summary that will complement the print edition of Interstate Water Report. The electronic version, which will make its debut in 2009, will be sent to subscribers quarterly. If you are interested in receiving IWR, send an e-mail to iwr@neiwpc.org with "Subscribe" in the subject field.
Record of Achievement

Unlike the many organizations that turn to outside firms to produce their annual reports, NEIWPCC relies on those who best know our activities and their results—the Commission’s staff. The production of our annual report is an internal affair, which we believe benefits the reader; the content is generated by staff intimately familiar with a subject and with a deep background in the complex issues involved.

As with all our annual reports, the fiscal 2007 edition highlighted our achievements during the year and updated readers on the progress made on water and wastewater challenges. But in honor of our 60th anniversary, the report went a step further by including brief summaries of NEIWPCC’s major accomplishments in every year since the Commission was created in 1947. The summaries reveal NEIWPCC’s central role in efforts past and present to control water pollution in this country. To view the 2007 report and read the historical summaries, visit our archive of annual reports at www.neiwpc.org/annualreport.asp.

International Arrivals

A wastewater treatment facility is not a “must see” for most visitors to the United States, but then the 18 people who toured the plant in Lowell, Mass., on April 18, 2008, were not typical tourists. The delegation consisted of mid- to senior-level water sector executives from Central Asia, Western Eurasia, and the Caucasus, who were spending a month in this country through the U.S. Chamber of Commerce’s Special American Business Internship Training (SABIT) program. The idea was to introduce them to trends in U.S. water infrastructure management, equipment, and treatment processes, and help them establish contacts with potential American partners.

Before the visit, a SABIT staff member contacted NEIWPCC, asking for assistance with the New England portion of the trip. We were more than happy to help, and coordinated the visit to the Lowell plant as well as a tour of the University of New Hampshire Stormwater Center. Several weeks after the visit, one of the delegates, Shaiba Kokochashvili of Tbilisi, Georgia, surprised us with an e-mail. “I saw lots of new and very useful devices and engineering solutions,” Kokochashvili wrote. “Thank you for all your efforts and the implementation of such an important program for me and my fellow delegates.” As we told Mr. Kokochashvili in our reply, the pleasure was ours.

Direct Connection

In addition to distributing NEIWPCC materials through the mail and over the Internet, we continued in fiscal 2008 to take advantage of display opportunities at conferences and events. While many of our publications are designed for a specific target audience, others are geared for public consumption, such as the brochure “Mercury in Our Waters: What you need to know to make the right decisions for you and your family.” The diverse offerings made the NEIWPCC booth a popular spot, whether the event was a small sustainability fair or a large conference for environmental professionals. It takes a little extra travel and effort to display our resources in such settings, but by providing our informational resources directly to those who might otherwise miss them, we increase awareness and support for programs and policies that protect water resources and public health.

NEIWPCC’s Charles Conway explains a wastewater treatment process to the SABIT group as he leads a tour of the Lowell Regional Wastewater Utility.

At the UNH Stormwater Center in Durham, N.H., members of the SABIT delegation admire a stormwater treatment process in the company of the center’s site manager, Jamie Houle (far right).
Year ended September 30, 2008

Statement of Program Activities
New England Interstate Water Pollution Control Commission

Revenue

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increase in Net Assets</td>
<td>$157,994</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operating Expenditures</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Revenue</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exhibition Rent</td>
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<tr>
<td>M/A NEC Certification Exam Fees</td>
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<td>M/A NEC License Renewal Fees</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other Contingents</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other Income</td>
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<tr>
<td>Donated Services</td>
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<td>Interest Income</td>
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<td>Testing</td>
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<tr>
<td>State Grants</td>
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<tr>
<td>Member State Support</td>
<td>$1,875,479</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal Grants</td>
<td>$5,963,185</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reveue
Among those on our Commissioners list marking milestones were Connecticut DEP's Yvonne Bolton (left) and Astrid Hanzalek of Suffield, Conn. (right) Bolton was recognized for five years of service, Hanzalek for fifteen. We also paid tribute to Maine DEP's Andy Fisk (five years), MassDEP's Glenn Haas (five), Les Sutton of Sharon, Mass., (ten), and New Hampshire DES's Harry Stewart (ten).

At NEIWPC's All-Staff Meeting in June 2008, Deputy Director Susan Sullivan congratulates Kris McShane, who works with NYSDEC's Hudson River Fisheries Unit. McShane was saluted for five years of employment with NEIWPC, as were Robert Burg, Richard Chase, Steve Hochbrunn, Laura Hollowell, Susy King, Stephanie Larkin, Chris Lassell, Meg Medley, Yassir Soffan, and Becky Woidman. Nicole Ballinger was honored for ten years with NEIWPC, and in the fifteen-year category, we recognized the many achievements of Colleen Hickey and Kathy Jarvis.

Jeanette Bengston looked happy and relaxed at the May 2008 Commission meeting, as well she should have been. After serving as NEIWPC's office manager for sixteen years, Bengston retired on May 30. Her presence is still missed at our Lowell offices, but we are pleased to report her smile has not faded. She is traveling, spending time with her grandchildren, and thoroughly enjoying retirement. Farewell, Jeanette!
All photos by NEIMPCC unless otherwise noted.

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2008 Annual Report