

**S**ince 1949, New York has coordinated its water-protection efforts with neighboring states through its membership in the New England Interstate Water Pollution Control Commission. In the Northeast, watersheds cross many political borders. NEIWPCC convenes water quality professionals to collaborate and share knowledge, conducts or funds research and water-resource-protection projects, and coordinates training for wastewater and other water professionals. NEIWPCC supports place-based education and outreach programs and represents the interests of member states to federal agencies and other organizations.

The Commission is led by its seven member states—the six New England states and New York. Many of NEIWPCC’s activities span several states, or address problems and needs that all the states share.

As a member state, New York appropriates funds to support NEIWPCC’s work. Every five years the Commission sets state dues. In fiscal 2019 (October 2018 through September 2019), the combined contribution from its states was \$160,053, or 0.4 percent of the total monies directed to NEIWPCC during the fiscal year (\$37,181,846). While the majority of the Commission’s funding, therefore, comes from other sources—primarily federal grants, state contracts, and fees generated by its training and certification programs—the dues paid by states are indispensable to NEIWPCC’s ability to serve New York and its other member states. The following are just a few highlights from fiscal 2019 that illustrate the significant return on New York’s contribution to NEIWPCC.



## 2019 Selected Highlights: New York

**A** Twelve wastewater professionals attended NEIWPCC’s “Train the Trainer” class, offered in partnership with the New York Water Environment Association in Cheektowaga March 12–13. There they learned effective leadership and communication techniques for teaching wastewater principles to their colleagues. Attendees practiced what they learned by presenting a mini-lesson of their own design.

For more than fifty years, NEIWPCC has offered wastewater training to environmental professionals in the Northeast. This past fiscal year, NEIWPCC offered six classes in New York, awarding a total of 1,014 training contact hours to seventy-eight participants.

**B** Millions of gallons of untreated stormwater will be redirected away from Lake George thanks to an \$86,227 grant from the Lake Champlain Basin Program (LCBP) to the Lake George Association. The project is replacing asphalt stormwater channels along Interstate 87 with grass and erosion-control mats.

The LCBP, which NEIWPCC staffs, gave thirty-six grants totaling \$442,597 directly to New York municipalities and nonprofits in early 2019. The scope of these local grants is vast. One \$5,000 heritage grant brought four graduate students to Fort Ticonderoga last summer for an intensive ten-week fellowship working with members of the Fort Ticonderoga staff in collections, exhibitions, interpretation, and education. A \$7,316 pollution-control grant went to the Town of Keene for equipment to measure and control the amount of salt applied on its roads.

The LCBP, through all its grants programs, awarded forty-four grants in New York in fiscal 2019, totaling \$852,425.

**C** The Northeast Aquatic Biologists Conference has enriched the work of scientists for decades, and in 2019 NEIWPCC was the event’s sponsor for the first time. The conference drew more than 150 scientists and policymakers from around the region to Saratoga Springs in February. The event offered sixty presentations on such topics as freshwater mussel restoration, road salt pollution, harmful algal blooms, and fish monitoring.

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Earlier in the fiscal year in Cooperstown, NEIWPCC co-facilitated a joint meeting between its New England Biological Assessment of Wetlands Workgroup and the group's mid-Atlantic counterpart. There, wetlands professionals had the opportunity to draw knowledge and resources from outside their regions. The event featured more than twenty educational presentations.

**D** In Albany and other locations, NEIWPCC staff members worked on the state's burgeoning multi-agency source water protection program.

At NYSDOH offices, the staff members developed a guidance document for communities that are adding source water protection plans to existing assessment plans. At NYSDEC offices, NEIWPCC staff members served the Division of Water in a variety of source-water-related capacities, including reviewing and renewing discharge permits, and monitoring streams and lakes.

Another small team of NEIWPCC employees in Syracuse and Albany supports other facets of the Division of Water's work.

**E** The Commission provides support to NYSDEC's Hudson River Estuary Program (HREP) and the Hudson River National Estuarine Research Reserve in the areas of staffing, project-management, and the procurement of goods and services.

During the fiscal year, the NEIWPCC staff at the Research Reserve in Staatsburg worked on ongoing studies of marsh accretion and submerged aquatic vegetation. At the HREP, NEIWPCC staff members led and supported extensive education and outreach offerings for youth and adults.

In addition, NEIWPCC solicited proposals and awarded funding to a project that will generate recommendations for improving the resilience of river-access sites on the Hudson River and its tributaries. Access sites throughout the Hudson valley are vulnerable to floods, storms, and sea level rise. NEIWPCC manages the contract on behalf of the HREP.

**F** The Commission's five-year role supporting storm recovery in New York ended last year as the recovery program scaled back.

After Hurricane Sandy, New York Governor Andrew Cuomo created the Governor's Office of Storm Recovery (GOSR). To respond quickly, New York turned to NEIWPCC to augment the state's environmental inspection team with a workforce that, at peak, comprised ten NEIWPCC employees. They worked in Albany, New Paltz, Long Island City, and Stony Brook. The positions were funded by a federal grant.

Most of this staff's work involved reviewing and certifying environmental permits, but some NEIWPCC employees at GOSR performed environmental assessments related to reconstruction. For example, one staff member assessed the potential impact of proposed construction projects on bats and other wildlife.

Also during the fiscal year, other NEIWPCC staff members continued to monitor and review New York City's efforts to comply with requirements of a consent order related to combined sewer overflows. The monitors also assisted NYSDEC with its ongoing review of New York City's stormwater management plan.

**G** A NEIWPCC environmental analyst based in Stony Brook provides overall program coordination for the Long Island

## New York Commissioners

The governors of the seven member states each appoint five of the Commission's thirty-five members. New York's delegation comprises representatives for the head of the state's environmental and health agencies, and three other highly experienced individuals.

The Commission congratulates Mark Klotz for his tenth year representing the commissioner of NYSDEC on NEIWPCC's board. Commissioners also elected Klotz chair of the Commission in September 2019.

### New York Commissioners at the start of 2020:

Mark Klotz, representing Basil Seggos • Roger Sokol, representing Howard Zucker • Richard Lyons • two vacancies

Nitrogen Action Plan, a multi-agency initiative. In fiscal 2019, as part of a larger exploration of water reuse as a means of reducing nitrogen inputs to Long Island's waters, the analyst completed a general guide to the state's environmental permitting process as it relates to the reuse of treated municipal effluent. She also developed an interactive map of golf courses, where effluent could be used as fertilizer, and of wastewater treatment facilities.

**H** More than one hundred scientists and other practitioners attended the Long Island Sound Research Conference in Port Jefferson Harbor on March 15. A NEIWPCC staff member with the Long Island Sound Study (LISS) teamed up with the Connecticut and New York Sea Grants to organize the biennial event, where participants learned about current science, the issues facing the health of the Sound, and what's being done to address these issues.

Another of the four NEIWPCC employees at LISS investigates the feasibility of removing excess nitrogen from the Sound through growing and harvesting shellfish and seaweed. In fiscal 2019, she began identifying areas within Long Island coastal waters and the Sound that are suitable for such projects and that have the greatest potential for reducing nitrogen.

Other activities by NEIWPCC staff members at LISS included: training thirty-five volunteers to contribute to the documentation of river herring runs, which have been decimated by dams, habitat loss, and declining water quality; and reaching more than 135,000 people with the #DontTrashLISound social media campaign.

**I** At the end of fiscal 2019, the Peconic Estuary Program (PEP), which NEIWPCC staffs, was putting the final touches on its draft 2020 Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan, released for public comment in October. The draft plan details PEP's strategy for achieving its goals for the Peconic Estuary over the next ten years, including: strong partnerships and engagement, resilient communities prepared for climate change, clean water, and a healthy ecosystem with abundant, diverse wildlife.

The plan incorporates input from such stakeholders as members of the Shinnecock Nation and other residents of the area, farmers, aquaculturists, scientists, and elected officials. It also reflects ideas from businesses, nonprofit groups, and local, county, and state agencies.

