For 71 years, New Hampshire has collaborated on clean water issues with other states in the region through its membership to NEIWPCC. Established in 1947, NEIWPCC [NŪ-Ē-PĬK] is a regional commission that helps the states of the Northeast preserve and advance water quality.

We engage and convene water quality professionals and other interested parties from New England and New York to collaborate on water, wastewater and other environmental science challenges across shared regions, ecosystems and areas of expertise.

LONG ISLAND SOUND STUDY WORKGROUP

NEIWPCC hosts the Long Island Sound Study’s Nitrogen Coordination Workgroup, which regularly has participants from New York, Connecticut and Massachusetts. The workgroup presents an opportunity for staff from different states to coordinate ongoing nitrogen reduction efforts.

This year, a representative from the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (NH DES) joined the workgroup, adding New Hampshire to the list of states collaborating on nitrogen reduction. Parts of New Hampshire are in the Long Island Sound watershed, as a portion of the 400-mile Connecticut River passes through the state on its way to Long Island Sound. The NH DES representative will focus on nitrogen reductions into the river.

CHANGING PFAS REGULATIONS

A program manager from NEIWPCC participated in a monthly group of wastewater industry professionals to discuss updates to the regulation of per-and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) in New Hampshire.

She joined discussions around the types of updates needed and helped draft language for the changes. The draft has been submitted to NH DES and will be available for the analyst to make any needed revisions once reviewed.

NEBAWWG WORKGROUP

The New England Biological Assessment of Wetlands Workgroup (NEBAWWG) is coordinated by NEIWPCC to hold meetings and workshops on wetland assessment and monitoring tools. NEBAWWG is currently developing a set of “common metrics” that will standardize the biological assessment of wetlands across all the New England states. New Hampshire is participating in developing these metrics by attending meetings and completing a survey asking what biological assessments they use to assess their wetlands.

CLEAN WATER CHALLENGES

- PFAS (“forever chemicals”)
- Nitrogen pollution
- Climate change impacts
- Source water protection
- Wetlands protection
- Habitat restoration
- Harmful algal blooms
- Invasive species
- Leaking underground storage tanks
- Road salt/chloride contamination
- Outdated water infrastructure
- Barriers to fish passage
- Addressing environmental justice
- Modernizing the Clean Water Act
- Aging workforce

TRAINING WASTEWATER OPERATORS

For more than 50 years, NEIWPCC has offered training for some of our nation’s most essential workers: wastewater operators. We offer basic, intermediate, and advanced courses to train all levels of operators and prepare them for certification exams. Classes cover all aspects of the job, from wastewater treatment chemistry and microbiology to equipment safety and lab procedures.

This year, NEIWPCC offered 134 courses and 421 Training Contact Hours (TCH) to a total of 84 operators based in New Hampshire. All of these courses were offered virtually.
ADVANCING STATE INTERESTS

Working closely with our member states, NEIWPCC represents a regional perspective on proposed water policies to federal parties such as the U.S. EPA or Congress. This past year, we provided comments on regulatory issues such as implementing temporary waivers for the Build America, Buy America Act, revising the definition of “Waters of the United States,” and regulating PFAS.

COLLABORATION ACROSS STATE LINES

In 2022, NEIWPCC celebrated its 75th year of clean water work in the Northeast, as well as the 50th anniversary of the Clean Water Act (CWA). In commemoration of these milestones, NEIWPCC produced a series of multimedia content including print publications, videos and a timeline that shared the reflections, experience and expertise of our leadership and commissioners. The series explores the many successes of NEIWPCC over the years and the need to modernize the CWA to meet the challenges of the present day.

In the spring, more than 100 people attended the annual Northeast Aquatic Biologists (NAB) Conference, which focused on aquatic invasive species, climate change and fish monitoring. At the 32nd Annual Nonpoint Source Conference, 110 attendees participated in sessions with themes ranging from environmental justice, modernizing water quality and adapting to climate change.

In September, 600 people from around the country gathered at NEIWPCC’s largest event of the year, the biannual National Tanks Conference in Pittsburgh. Panels were divided into four main categories: release prevention, release cleanup, funding and cross-program issues. The conference sparked discussion of how to transfer industry knowledge to younger staff as veteran employees begin to retire. Other topics included staffing shortages, aging infrastructure, supply chain shortages and natural disasters.

In partnership with the EPA, NEIWPCC established a Chloride Resources Clearinghouse. This searchable database, housed on the NEIWPCC website, compiles resources on related topics including water softening, chloride reduction, winter maintenance and residential salt usage guidelines.

NEIWPCC staff developed two biosolids surveys which collected data about the amount and disposal methods of sewage sludge produced annually from wastewater treatment plants in all member states. In total, 122 surveys were completed using data from 2018 and 2019 sludge reports. The findings were analyzed and presented at several conferences, as well as shared through our e-newsletter and on our website and social media channels.

PFAS continue to present critical environmental challenges. NEIWPCC staff have been monitoring the latest research on PFAS pollution and holding regular discussions with our states, helping them coordinate efforts to monitor, regulate and remove these “forever chemicals” that persist in our waterbodies, wastewater and drinking water. Much of the effort this year has focused on PFAS in wastewater residuals, as states are working quickly to respond to the fast-paced changes in regulations and public perspective.

NEW HAMPSHIRE COMMISSIONERS

NEIWPCC is governed by 35 commissioners, consisting of five highly experienced environmental and health professionals from each of our seven member states. Our executive committee, a subset of that delegation, consists of the heads of our member states’ environmental agencies, or their representatives. Representing New Hampshire (as of Sept. 30, 2022):

Rene Pelletier, representing NH DES Commissioner Robert Scott
Fred McNeill, city of Manchester
Robert Varney, Normandeau Associates
Thomas Ballestero, University of New Hampshire

We thank Nelson Thibault (Hoyle, Tanner & Associates, Retired) for his 26 years of service to the region as a NEIWPCC commissioner.

0.3%

That’s how much of NEIWPCC’s funding comes from the annual dues paid by our member states: a combined $163,719 out of the total $53,457,955 directed to NEIWPCC in fiscal 2022.

Most of our funding comes from Clean Water Act appropriations or through grants and contracts with federal, state and other entities, but this small contribution makes New Hampshire a member of NEIWPCC’s commission.