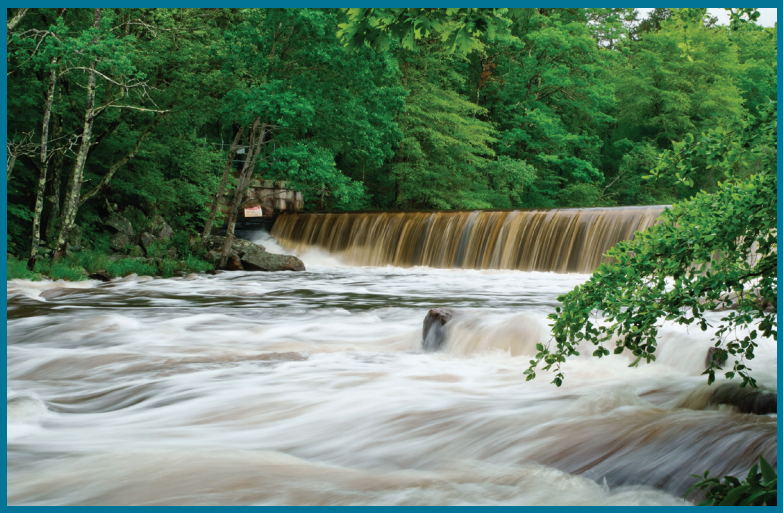
WORKING FOR THE REGION

October 2024 – September 2025

MASSACHUSETTS

For 78 years, Massachusetts has collaborated on clean water issues with other states in the region through its membership with 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.



INVASIVE SPECIES MANAGEMENT

A grant awarded to NEIWPCC by the Southeast New England Program funded the planning and organizing of 16 events from May through August, in which volunteers hand-pulled invasive water chestnut from waterways. In total, 256 community members removed an estimated 23 cubic yards, totaling approximately 6,500 pounds of plant material. NEIWPCC also developed water chestnut management materials to support local government and nonprofit organizations in better educating the public about the invasive plant.

TRAINING WASTEWATER OPERATORS

NEIWPCC provides training for some of our nation's most essential workers: wastewater operators. We offer basic, intermediate, and advanced courses to train operators and prepare them for certification exams. Classes, which are available in-person, online, or in a self-paced format, cover all aspects of the job, from chemistry and microbiology to equipment safety and lab procedures. This year, 1,135 operators based in Massachusetts participated in a total of 93 courses throughout the region.

At the request of town managers who voiced concerns about staffing at wastewater treatment facilities, NEIWPCC presented a free public seminar on working in the wastewater field at Shawsheen Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School. The school serves the communities of Bedford, Billerica, Burlington, Tewksbury, and Wilmington. Attendees learned about the process of becoming an operator, how the work protects public health and the environment, and the growing need for skilled workers in the field. In the spring, we worked with MassHire to hold a seminar about the wastewater industry for more than 20 young adults.

We offer training and technical assistance for rural, small, and tribal wastewater treatment plants to help them achieve and maintain regulatory compliance. Our staff provided tailored assistance to help the town of Oxford identify and prioritize solutions to challenges within their collection systems. NEIWPCC also began developing six comprehensive self-paced online training courses that will provide nationwide access to much-needed education and training resources.

CLEAN WATER CHALLENGES

- PFAS/emerging contaminants
- Nutrient pollution
- Extreme weather events
- Source water protection
- Harmful algal blooms
- Invasive species
- Leaking underground storage tanks
- Wetlands protection
- Road salt/chloride contamination
- Habitat restoration
- Outdated water infrastructure
- Barriers to fish passage
- Stormwater runoff

INTERNSHIPS

Four high school students completed paid internships at wastewater treatment plants in Lowell through the Youth and the Environment Program (YEP). Funded through the Environmental Protection Agency, YEP provides young adults with hands-on experience in the environmental field through a six-week schedule that includes working alongside professionals, educational lessons, and field trips.

Two students from Tufts University's School of Medicine assisted in advancing PFAS resources while earning credit towards their required Applied Practice Experience internship. Their work includes conducting a literature review of articles focused on the remediation and treatment of PFAS in municipal biosolids, developing summaries of emerging treatment technologies, and assessing communication strategies.

Additionally, three interns joined NEIWPCC at the Lowell headquarters. They were responsible for leading YEP, assisting with the Long Island Garden Rewards Program, and providing administrative support for the wastewater training and certification programs.

WASTEWATER OPERATOR CERTIFICATION

NEIWPCC is responsible for certifying and renewing licenses for Massachusetts's wastewater workforce, on

behalf of the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection. We renewed certification for 387 operators, issued 492 new licenses and granted 17 state reciprocities, 21 upgrades, and 118 status changes. There are 3,474 active wastewater operators and 1,662 inactive operators in the state.

SEPTIC SYSTEMS

NEIWPCC coordinates the Massachusetts Title 5 Certification Renewal and Training Program for soil evaluators and systems inspectors who design, install, and regulate septic systems. This year, 76 professionals participated in our soil evaluator certification training course, while 66 professionals participated in our system inspectors training. We also renewed or newly certified more than 804 soil evaluators and more than 695 system inspectors.

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 and Congress. We provided comments on regulatory issues, including the Clean Water Act Section 401 certification process, federal budget requests, water-related state revolving fund programs, PFAS human health water quality criteria, and the definition of Waters of the United States.

COLLABORATION ACROSS STATE LINES

NEIWPCC is governed by its **Executive Committee and Commission**, consisting of five water quality professionals from each of its seven member states, who collaborate across state lines to guide our agenda and identify new priorities. They are leaders in the states' environmental and health agencies, complemented by experts from the private sector. NEIWPCC held three multi-day meetings with the full Commission and an additional four with the Executive Committee alone. Representatives from the EPA's Regions I and II also attended. The commissioners identify and discuss water quality-related concerns; offer guidance to NEIWPCC in implementing strategies, projects and programs; and formulate a regional response to environmental policy initiatives.

A committee of staff and commissioners developed a new **Strategic Plan** for fiscal years 2026-2030. It outlines four priorities focused on inspiring action, scientific monitoring and data collection, workforce development, and ensuring financial resources. Supporting goals provide a roadmap for achieving our mission to advance clean water in the Northeast.

In October, NEIWPCC hosted the **12th U.S. Symposium on Harmful Algae** in Portland, Maine. More than 500 participants discussed harmful algal bloom management and mitigation, emerging toxins, predictive modeling, and public health threats. The annual **Northeast Aquatic Biologists Conference**, which took place in February in New Hampshire, covered topics such as chloride impacts on streams, cyanobacteria, and long-term monitoring networks. NEIWPCC held the **35th Annual Nonpoint Source Conference** in Freeport, Maine with sessions focused on water pollution reduction success stories, watershed restoration, and aquatic ecosystem management.

The **28th National Tanks Conference** brought nearly 700 professionals to Spokane, Washington to collaborate on timely issues facing the underground storage tanks (UST) industry. NEIWPCC also **manages two workgroups** that prevent leaking underground storage tanks and **publishes LUSTLine**, a newsletter that promotes the exchange of information in the UST community.

The third season of the **Clean Water Pod** podcast highlighted stories from across the country that showcased innovative approaches with the Clean Water Act 303(d) program. NEIWPCC also coordinated a **national webinar series on total maximum daily loads** for professionals who regulate and monitor water quality.

NEIWPCC revised the **Technical Report 16: Guides for the Design of Wastewater Treatment Works** manual, which includes sections on procurement of services, sanitary sewers and collection systems, wastewater pumping stations, and treated effluent resource recovery. The revisions include updates to align with current industry technology and practices, eliminate out-of-date materials and add new concepts such as alternative forms of procurement and contaminants of emerging concern.

Per-and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) continue to present critical environmental challenges. NEIWPCC and partners established a Biosolids Technology Hub, an information clearinghouse providing published literature, technology vendors, and project summaries for regulators and clean water practitioners to find solutions for PFAS in municipal biosolids. Wastewater staff were also involved in several working groups.

In response to the Vermont 2023 floods, NEIWPCC was asked to investigate mechanisms to assist wastewater and drinking water facilities in responding to severe weather events. We have been working with our partners in the Water and Wastewater Agency Response Networks (WARN) and Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC) to increase awareness about these **state and federal mutual aid response networks** and help utilities fill the gaps in their capabilities.

NEIWPCC hosts virtual and in-person meetings for more than 20 different **workgroups and collaboratives** to improve regional communication and state-federal engagement on critical topics related to water, including emerging contaminants, chlorides, harmful algal blooms, stormwater, onsite wastewater, and wetlands.

.12%

That is how much of NEIWPCC's funding comes from the annual dues paid by our member states: a combined $151,561 out of the total available funding to NEIWPCC during fiscal year 2025 in the amount of $128,975,971. 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 Massachusetts a member of NEIWPCC's commission.

MASSACHUSETTS COMMISSIONERS

(as of Sept. 30, 2025):

Kathleen Baskin, representing DEP Commissioner Bonnie Heiple

Margaret Blanchet, representing DPH commissioner Robert Goldstein

Steven McCurdy

John Sullivan

F. Adam Yanulis