WORKING FOR THE REGION

October 2024 – September 2025

For 70 years, Maine 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.

MAINE

SOUTH PORTLAND OFFICE

NEIWPCC's South Portland office leads our work in Maine. This includes supporting the Joint Environmental Training Coordinating Committee (JETCC), which provides training for wastewater and drinking water operators within the state, administrating training and certification for the nonpoint source erosion control program, certifying wastewater operators, and supporting the Maine Drinking Water Program.

In April, NEIWPCC hosted the North Country Convention, a biennial two-day educational event and trade show held in Presque Isle. The convention is designed to provide wastewater and drinking water operators from sparsely populated areas of northern Maine with access to in-person training. The event, which had 165 registered participants, featured a variety of technical sessions, exhibitor interaction, speakers, and networking opportunities.

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- Outdated water infrastructure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

DRINKING WATER PROTECTION

Our staff support the Maine Department of Health and Human Services Drinking Water Program (DWP), which protects public health by ensuring safe drinking water. From updating and accessing data on water sampling results to overseeing the subsurface wastewater permitting process, NEIWPCC helps implement the federal Safe Drinking Water Act and other source water protection regulations in the state.

The Lead and Copper Rule, which was revised in 2024, requires community and non-transient/non-community public water systems to regularly monitor lead and copper levels in drinking water on a six-month, annual, or triennial basis. NEIWPCC works with the DWP to examine documentation for more than 700 public water systems to determine if appropriate sampling protocols were followed. This includes reviewing sampling frequencies, corrosion control treatment plans, and ensuring proper public notification. We also ensure that systems required to test under the Maine PFAS Rule meet necessary testing and treatment requirements.

Additionally, we assist DWP's communications and outreach efforts by managing the website and developing and distributing media and other materials. NEIWPCC facilitated communication between the DWP and public water systems by providing information on grant and loan programs, and leading three training courses on increasing the technical, managerial, and financial capacity of water utilities.

WASTEWATER AND DRINKING WATER OPERATORS

NEIWPCC provides training for some of our nation's most essential workers: wastewater and drinking water 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.

JETCC's training program includes single-day classes and a six-month wastewater operator school. This year, 644 operators based in Maine participated in a total of 97 courses throughout the region. Of these, 22 courses were provided through JETCC.

JETCC operates Maine's Management Candidate School, an 11-month training program aimed at mid-level operators with management potential. Throughout the year, participants attended monthly classes where they gained advanced skills through professional development activities, coursework, and training exercises. At the end of the program, 16 students graduated and received a full renewal period of training contact hours.

Additionally, 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 customized assistance to help the communities of Caribou, Gardiner, Oakland, Rockland, and Rumford to 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.

WASTEWATER OPERATOR CERTIFICATION

NEIWPCC's South Portland staff certify and renew certification for Maine's wastewater workforce, on behalf of the Maine Department of Environmental Protection. Operators must earn 18 training credits every two years as part of the renewal process. This year, South Portland renewed certification for 265 operators, issued 61 new certificates, and granted four state reciprocities. There are 633 active wastewater operators and 100 inactive operators in the state.

ADVANCING STATE INTERESTS

NEIWPCC is governed by its **Executive Committee and Commission**, who collaborate 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 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 discussed water quality-related concerns; advised NEIWPCC in implementing strategies, projects, and programs; and formulated a regional response to environmental policy initiatives. In particular, the commissioners focused on challenges including PFAS and biosolids, cyanobacteria, permit programs, and invasive species in water bodies.

.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 Maine a member of NEIWPCC's commission.

MAINE COMMISSIONERS

(as of Sept. 30, 2025):

Brian Kavanah, representing DEP Commissioner Melanie Loyzim

Amy Lachance, representing acting DHHS Commissioner Sara Gagné-Holmes

Brian Tarbuck

Stacy Thompson

David Van Slyke

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

In October, NEIWPCC hosted the **12th U.S. Symposium on Harmful Algae** in Portland, Maine with the theme of "One Bloom: Unifying Harmful Algal Bloom Science in Aquatic Ecosystems."

The annual **Northeast Aquatic Biologists Conference** took place in February in Bartlett, 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 during April, 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** focused on preventing leaking underground storage tanks and **publishes LUSTLine**, an UST newsletter.

The third season of the **Clean Water Pod** podcast highlighted innovative approaches with the Clean Water Act 303(d) program. NEIWPCC also coordinated a **national webinar series on total maximum daily loads (TMDLs)** focused on trash TMDLs, site-specific water quality criteria and the Lake Loading Response Model.

NEIWPCC revised the **Technical Report 16: Guides for the Design of Wastewater Treatment Works** manual 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. The guide is written for engineers who design wastewater treatment plants, state regulators who review and approve design, and municipalities that are soliciting professional design services.

Per-and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) continue to present critical environmental challenges. NEIWPCC and partners established a Biosolids Technology Hub, an information clearinghouse for regulators and clean water practitioners to find solutions for PFAS in municipal biosolids or sludge.

Our commissioners asked NEIWPCC to investigate mechanisms to assist wastewater and drinking water facilities in responding to severe weather events. Mutual aid is an important component of the preparedness approach because in times of crisis, collaboration and swift action are paramount. NEIWPCC has 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.