



The Municipal EcoLink

An e-bulletin from the NH Department of Environmental Services

March 2024

The Municipal EcoLink is a monthly e-bulletin designed to inform you of the latest environmental ideas, trends, grants, rules and more from the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (NHDES). We respectfully request that the following is electronically distributed or otherwise made available to your municipal committees, councils and boards. Please feel free to post it on your municipal website as well. You may read past issues at [The Municipal EcoLink](#).

Mapper's Workshop

This year's Mapper's Workshop, put on by the New Hampshire Geological Survey, will be held on **Tuesday, April 9**, starting at **8 AM** and lasting until mid-afternoon, at the New Hampshire Department of Transportation (7 Hazen Drive in Concord). The workshop features presentations and results from geologists working in New Hampshire that showcase their surficial and bedrock mapping work during the past year, and how their applied and scientific contributions further our knowledge of New Hampshire geology and its use by stakeholders. If you plan to attend, please RSVP to Rebecca LeCain by emailing geology@des.nh.gov before **Friday, March 8**.

Water Infrastructure Funding Workshop

NHDES is hosting a Water Infrastructure Funding Workshop **April 8-12, 2024**. The workshop will include sessions focusing on NHDES-administered funding programs with topics including, funding program updates, asset management, PFAS and lead updates, and more! The intended audience includes current/future loan recipients, community/financial decision makers, public works directors, city/town managers, municipal and regional planners, consultants/engineers, operators, and others interested in the NHDES-administered funding programs. Registration information and a preliminary agenda are available on the [NHDES Events webpage](#). If you have questions, please contact the NHDES Event Coordinators at dwsrf@des.nh.gov.

Food Waste Diversion & Composting Workshop Series

NHDES has partnered with Northeast Resource Recovery Association and Mark King of Maine DEP to develop a workshop series that discusses all aspects of food waste diversion. Workshops will address everything from the basics of food waste and food waste diversion to specifics on how to implement a food waste diversion program within your community, including outreach and community education. Facility or organization decision makers are encouraged to attend these workshops, along with their operators (if the decision maker is not an operator) so lessons learned can turn into local action more quickly and easily. [Register](#) EARLY as space is limited. The sessions are in Concord, NH on **April 16 and 17**.

Upcoming soilSHOP Events in Concord and Nashua

NHDES is hosting two soilSHOP events on **Saturday, April 20**. SoilSHOP stands for Soil Screening, Health, Outreach, and Partnership. It is a health education event that offers free soil screenings for lead and provides education about how to reduce or avoid exposures while working or playing in the yard. For more information, see the brochure for the [Concord event](#) or [Nashua event](#). Please contact Sarah Boyle (sarah.m.boyle@des.nh.gov) with any questions.

Water Works Operator Certification Exams

Drinking Water Operator Certification Examinations will be held on **April 23, 2024**, location TBD. Applications for the exam are due 30 days prior to the examination. There is also an option to take a computer-based exam for Grades I-IV at various locations throughout the state at any time. For more about Water Works Operator Certification, see the [Operator Certification webpage](#).

National Small Business Week April 28-May 4, 2024

According to data from [U.S. SBA](#), over 97% of all businesses in New Hampshire are small businesses with under 20 employees. To celebrate Small Business Week, consider supporting small businesses by shopping local, sharing on social media and posting reviews. NHDES' [Small Business Technical Assistance Program \(SBTAP\)](#) will celebrate Small Business Week by highlighting the program services and other NHDES small business assistance providers. The public can follow along on Facebook, X and Instagram.

Source Water Protection Conference, May 16

NHDES will hold its 2024 Source Water Protection Conference on Thursday, May 16 (in-person) in Pembroke, N.H., at the new Edward Cross Training Complex (National Guard facility) at 722 Riverwood Drive, Pembroke, NH. The conference will feature a full day of presentations concerning NHDES priorities and funding levels, state legislative and drinking water program funding updates. Technical Credit Hours, (TCHs) will be offered to New Hampshire water works operators. To register, please visit the [American Ground Water Trust's website](#).

Coming Soon...2024 Source Water Protection Grant Round

The Drinking Water and Groundwater Trust Fund (DWGTF) Source Water Protection program offers competitive grants to permanently protect drinking water supply lands in New Hampshire. NHDES is accepting proposals this spring for the 2024 annual funding round. Grants will be available to cover **up to 50%** of total project costs to permanently protect "high-priority water supply lands," which can be viewed in the [Source Water Protection Mapper](#) to determine if your project is eligible. Grants are capped at **\$500,000** per project. Pre-applications must be submitted by **May 30, 2024**, to be considered for funding. The total allocation for the 2024 funding round and application timeline are pending Drinking Water and Groundwater Advisory Commission approval in April. More details on the funding round will be posted at that time. To learn more and review application materials, please visit the [DWGTF Source Water Protection website](#) or email WSLP@des.nh.gov.

\$5.5 Million Available for Aquatic Restoration Projects

The [Aquatic Resource Mitigation \(ARM\) Fund](#) is now accepting pre-proposals! Funds are available for five watersheds: the Merrimack River, Pemigewasset-Winnepesaukee River, Saco River, Salmon Falls-Piscataqua River, and Lower Connecticut River service areas. [Pre-proposals](#) are due **May 31, 2024**. Please share this information with anyone who may be interested. Since the start of this program in 2006, money granted from the ARM Fund has resulted in 5 acres of restored or enhanced tidal waters, 70 miles of fish passage and aquatic connectivity, 422 protected vernal pools, 4,048 acres of protected wetlands, and 28,080 acres of conserved land.

Get the Lead Out of Drinking Water Program

NHDES has created the Get the Lead Out of Drinking Water program to support schools and child care facilities in completing their required lead in drinking water testing. All facilities can receive technical support, and public schools and licensed child care facilities can receive free sample analyses. For more information and to view testing results, visit www.gettheleadoutnh.org. Funding for the program is provided by the U.S. EPA Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation (WIIN) Act. In addition, the New Hampshire Drinking Water and Groundwater Trust Fund has awarded \$1 million for remediation grants for public and private schools, which are available now. The New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services is working to establish a \$400,000 grant program for child care facilities that will be available later this spring. The details for both opportunities are on the "Available Funding" page of our website.

Public Pool Registrations Required!

Owners and operators of public bathing facilities (PBFs) are required by New Hampshire law to register all existing and new public pools or spas with the state, conduct an annual fee-based self-certification of each existing facility and certify that the PBF is operated under the supervision of a certified pool operator. An online registration form is now available on our [PBF Registration Form webpage](#). The annual self-certification fee is \$250 per PBF (regardless of size) up to a maximum of \$1,500 annually for any facility that has more than six PBFs. The online form and payment instructions are available on the [PBF annual Self-](#)

[Certification Form webpage](#). To learn more about the program, please visit the [NHDES Public Bathing Facility Program webpage](#).

Annual Drinking Water, Stormwater and Wastewater Asset Management Workshop

NHDES will host its annual Asset Management Workshop on **October 30, 2024**, in Pembroke, N.H. This year's theme is "Bringing It All Together." The annual workshop focuses on asset management topics relating to drinking water, stormwater and wastewater infrastructure. Every year the event brings together professionals ranging from utility managers and operators, public works staff, community administration, consultants, and other asset management enthusiasts from around New Hampshire. See [additional save-the-date information](#) on our website.

Certified Culvert Maintainers: Quarterly Reporting Deadline

Cities and towns reporting culvert work, please note the next [quarterly reporting](#) deadline of April 15 for Jan. 1 – March 31 work. The Culvert Maintainer Certification program is a [partnership with University of New Hampshire](#) designed specifically for municipal employees, as well as state transportation staff who work in and around [stream crossings](#).

Septic System Records Access Getting Easier, Faster

A multiyear digitization project is in progress to help residents, businesses and other organizations. When the project is complete, hundreds of thousands of records and plans will be available on demand, in just a few clicks, dating back to 1967. For all records, please [check OneStop first](#). You will need the original owner at the time of installation. Please check with your local town office or search [nhdeeds.org](#) to obtain that information. You can also request septic records using [onlineforms.nh.gov](#) and searching "[archive](#)" in the form finder.

Small Business Environmental Assistance – [Environmental Justice](#)

Do you have small businesses in what is considered an environmentally overburdened, marginalized or vulnerable area of your town or community? The [Small Business Technical Assistance Program](#) (SBTAP) can help. SBTAP will work one-on-one to provide environmental compliance assistance to small businesses.

Please send your comments for the editor to editor@des.nh.gov.

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