



## The Municipal EcoLink

An e-bulletin from the  
NH Department of Environmental Services

September 2009

*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 (DES). We respectfully request that the following is read into the minutes of your municipal committees, councils and boards. Please feel free to post it on your municipal website as well.

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### State Definition of Dams Change September 11

Effective September 11, the state's definition of a "dam" changes, which applies to a number impoundments. Under the revised definition, a dam is any artificial barrier that impounds or diverts water and which has a height of 6 feet or more; or, is located at the outlet of a great pond, regardless of height or storage; or, is an artificial barrier that impounds liquid industrial or liquid commercial wastes, or septage or sewage, regardless of height or storage. Some roadway culverts are considered dams. Certain stormwater detention ponds are exempted. For complete information on the new [dam definitions](#), please go to the DES Dam Bureau at [www.des.nh.gov](http://www.des.nh.gov).

### DES Wetlands Permit and Rules Update

Senate Bill 124 becomes effective September 14, which adds one **exemption** to wetland permitting for the installation of beaver pipes or beaver fences and clarifies the condition under which a beaver dam may be removed without a permit. Please see <http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/legislation/2009/SB0124.html> for details of the bill.

The DES Wetlands Bureau has proposed new stream crossing rules and they are posted for public comment. The comment period has been extended to November 18, 2009. Hearings are being re-scheduled and will be posted on-line at <http://des.nh.gov/organization/commissioner/legal/rulemaking/index.htm#pwetlands>. Additional information and references may be found on the new Streams and Stream Crossings web page: [http://des.nh.gov/organization/divisions/water/wetlands/streams\\_crossings.htm](http://des.nh.gov/organization/divisions/water/wetlands/streams_crossings.htm).

### 2009 Pollution Prevention Week, September 21-27

Reducing pollution before it ever gets to the environment is one of the most important ways to protect the environment. By reducing our energy and creating less waste, for example, we reduce the need for expensive environmental controls, treatment, disposal - and even cleanup. Pollution prevention has grown from a good idea many years ago to one of the principal ways our country protects the environment. As a result, our land, air and water are cleaner and safer. In the past decade, reductions from pollution prevention have been remarkable, for example, cutting billion pounds of hazardous materials, saving trillions of BTUs of energy, and conserving billions of gallons of water. Learn more about preventing pollution at <http://des.nh.gov/organization/commissioner/p2au/pps/ppp/index.htm>.

### NHGS Expands Groundwater Monitoring Network

The New Hampshire Geological Survey is installing monitoring wells to create an ambient bedrock monitoring well network, and augment the current network of shallow wells that monitor the surficial aquifer that consists largely of sand and gravel. Ambient, or unstressed wells, reveal natural conditions with minimal influence from pumped wells, or known contamination sites. Characterizing ambient groundwater conditions is important for drought management, and determining background levels of natural contaminants. In addition to the ambient well network, the state also needs a *stressed* well network to see the effect of water use and pumping in regions that are widely utilizing groundwater supplies. This will allow water managers to monitor the long-term impacts, if any, on groundwater in areas that are "stressed" by society's needs. To read more, please see the [September/October 2009](#) edition of DES's [Environmental News](#).

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