

# **New Hampshire Volunteer River Assessment Program 2008 Oyster River Watershed Water Quality Report**



February 2009



**New Hampshire Volunteer River Assessment Program  
2008 Oyster River Watershed Water Quality Report**

State of New Hampshire  
Department of Environmental Services  
Water Division  
Watershed Management Bureau  
P.O. Box 95  
29 Hazen Drive  
Concord, New Hampshire 03302-0095  
[www.des.nh.gov](http://www.des.nh.gov)

Thomas S. Burack  
Commissioner

Harry T. Stewart  
Water Division Director

**Prepared By:**

Ted Walsh, VRAP Program Manager

Jen Drociak, VRAP Coordinator

Danielle Mucciarone, VRAP Assistant

Catherine Foley, Coastal VBAP Coordinator

February 2009

*Cover Photo: Beards Creek*

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>1.</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>6</b>
1.1	Purpose of Report.....	6
1.2	Report Format.....	6
<b>2.</b>	<b>PROGRAM OVERVIEW .....</b>	<b>8</b>
2.1	What is VRAP?.....	8
2.2	Why is VRAP Important?.....	8
2.3	How Does VRAP Work?.....	8
2.4	What is VBAP?.....	9
2.5	Equipment & Sampling Schedule.....	9
2.6	Training & Technical Support.....	9
2.7	Data Usage.....	10
2.8	Quality Assurance & Quality Control.....	11
<b>3.</b>	<b>METHODS.....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>4.</b>	<b>RESULTS &amp; RECOMMENDATIONS.....</b>	<b>16</b>
4.1	Dissolved Oxygen.....	16
4.2	pH.....	19
4.3	Turbidity.....	21
4.4	Specific Conductance.....	24
4.5	Water Temperature.....	27
4.6	<i>Escherichia coli</i> /Bacteria.....	29
4.7	Chloride.....	32
4.8	Biological Assessment.....	34

## List of Figures and Tables

Figure 1:	Oyster River Watershed and Monitoring Stations 2008.....	15
Figure 2:	Dissolved Oxygen Concentration Statistics.....	18
Figure 3:	pH Statistics.....	20
Figure 4:	Turbidity Statistics.....	22
Figure 5:	Specific Conductance Statistics.....	25
Figure 6:	Water Temperature Statistics.....	28
Figure 7:	<i>Escherichia coli</i> /Bacteria Statistics.....	30
Figure 8:	Chloride Statistics.....	33
Figure 9:	Biological Sample Composition Statistics.....	36
Figure 10:	Station Annual Biotic Scores.....	37
Table 1:	Field Analytical Quality Controls.....	12
Table 2:	Sampling Stations for the Oyster River, 2008.....	14
Table 3:	Sampling and Analysis Methods.....	15
Table 4:	Dissolved Oxygen Concentration Data Summary.....	17
Table 5:	pH Data Summary.....	19
Table 6:	Turbidity Data Summary.....	21
Table 7:	Specific Conductance Data Summary.....	24
Table 8:	Water Temperature Data Summary.....	27
Table 9:	<i>Escherichia coli</i> /Bacteria Data Summary.....	29
Table 10:	<i>Escherichia coli</i> /Bacteria Geomean Summary.....	31
Table 11:	Chloride Data Summary.....	32
Table 12:	Biological Data Summary.....	35

## List of Appendices

Appendix A:	2008 Oyster River Watershed Water Quality Data
Appendix B:	Interpreting VRAP Water Quality Parameters
Appendix C:	VRAP Volunteer Monitor Field Sampling Procedures Assessment ( <i>Field Audit</i> )
Appendix D:	2008 Oyster River Watershed Biological Data
Appendix E:	2008 Oyster River Watershed Habitat Data
Appendix F:	New Hampshire Watershed Report Cards
Appendix G:	2008 Biological Assessment Methods

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services Volunteer River Assessment Program extends sincere thanks to the volunteers of the Oyster River Watershed Association for their efforts during 2008. This report was created solely from the data collected by the volunteers listed below. Their time and dedication is an expression of their genuine concern for local water resources and has significantly contributed to our knowledge of river and stream water quality in New Hampshire.

### **2008 Oyster River Volunteers**

Betsy Chadwick

Barbara Flynn

Brian Gallagher

Ben Getchell

Sara Hatch

Kyle Hoffman

Jim Hornbeck

Jordan Jessup

Amy Keith

Tom Lee

Andrew Middleton

Paul Pepler

Emily Poworoznek

Evan Poworoznek

Gloria Quigley

Carl Starr

Devin Vandalinda

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1. Purpose of Report**

Each year the New Hampshire Volunteer River Assessment Program prepares and distributes a water quality report for each volunteer river monitoring group that is based solely on the water quality data collected by that group during a specific year. The reports summarize and interpret the data, particularly as they relate to New Hampshire's surface water quality standards, and serve as a teaching tool and guidance document for future monitoring activities by the individual volunteer groups.

### **1.2. Report Format**

Each report includes the following:

#### **■ Volunteer River Assessment Program Overview**

This section includes a description of the history of VRAP, the technical support, training and guidance provided by NHDES, and how data is transmitted to the volunteers and used in surface water quality assessments.

#### **■ Monitoring Program Description**

This section provides a description of the volunteer group's monitoring program including monitoring objectives as well as a table and map showing sample station locations.

#### **■ Results and Recommendations**

Water quality data collected during the year are summarized on a parameter-by-parameter basis using (1) a data summary table that includes the number of samples collected, data ranges, the number of samples meeting New Hampshire water quality standards, and the number of samples adequate for water quality assessments at each station, (2) a discussion of the data, (3) a river graph showing the range of measured values at each station and (4) a list of applicable recommendations.

Sample results reported as less than the detection limit were assumed equal to one-half the detection limit on the river graphs. This approach simplifies the understanding of the parameter of interest, and specifically helps one to visualize how the river or watershed is functioning from upstream to downstream. In addition, this format allows the reader to better understand potential pollution areas and target those areas for additional sampling or environmental enhancements. Where applicable, the river graph also shows New Hampshire surface water quality standards or levels of concern for comparison purposes.

## ■ **Appendix A – Water Quality Data**

This appendix includes a spreadsheet detailing the data results and additional information such as data results which do not meet New Hampshire surface water quality standards, and data that are unusable for assessment purposes due to quality control requirements.

## ■ **Appendix B – Interpreting VRAP Water Quality Parameters**

This appendix provides a brief description of water quality parameters typically sampled by VRAP volunteers and their importance, as well as applicable state water quality criteria or levels of concern.

## ■ **Appendix C – VRAP Volunteer Monitor Field Sampling Procedures Assessment (*Field Audits*)**

This appendix provides an overview of the VRAP Volunteer Monitor Field Sampling Procedures Assessment (field audit) process with respect to programmatic quality assurance/quality control (QA/QC) guidelines.

## ■ **Appendix D – Biological Data**

This appendix includes a spreadsheet detailing biological data results including Order, common name, number of individuals found, group tolerance value, group biotic score, station biotic score, and narrative category.

## ■ **Appendix E – Habitat Data**

This appendix includes a spreadsheet detailing habitat data results such as surrounding land use, riparian habitat, in-stream characteristics, and erosion and other streamside impacts.

## ■ **Appendix F – New Hampshire Watershed Report Cards**

This appendix provides an overview of the New Hampshire Watershed Report Cards built from the 2008 305(b)/303(d) Surface Water Quality Reports.

## ■ **Appendix G – Biological Sampling Methods**

This appendix details sampling methods in association with the New Hampshire Volunteer Biological Assessment Program.

## **2.0 PROGRAM OVERVIEW**

### **2.1 What is VRAP?**

In 1998, the New Hampshire Volunteer River Assessment Program was established to promote awareness and education of the importance of maintaining water quality in New Hampshire's rivers and streams. VRAP aims to educate people about river and stream water quality and ecology and to improve water quality monitoring coverage for the protection of water resources.

Today, VRAP loans water quality monitoring equipment, provides technical support, and facilitates educational programs to volunteer groups on numerous rivers and watersheds throughout the state. VRAP volunteers conduct water quality monitoring on an ongoing basis and increase the amount of river water quality information available to local, state and federal governments, which allows for better watershed planning.

### **2.2 Why is VRAP Important?**

VRAP establishes a regular volunteer-driven water sampling program to assist NHDES in evaluating water quality throughout the state. VRAP empowers volunteers with information about the health of New Hampshire's rivers and streams. Regular collection of water quality data allows for early detection of water quality changes allowing NHDES to trace potential problems to their source. Data collected by VRAP volunteers are directly contributing to New Hampshire's obligations under the Clean Water Act. Measurements taken by volunteers are used in assessing the water quality of New Hampshire's river and streams, and are included in reporting to the US Environmental Protection Agency.

### **2.3 How Does VRAP Work?**

VRAP is a cooperative program between NHDES, river groups, local advisory committees, watershed associations, and individuals working to protect New Hampshire's rivers and streams. Volunteers are trained by VRAP staff in the use of water quality monitoring equipment at an annual training workshop. VRAP works with each group to establish monitoring stations and develop a sampling plan.

During the summer months, VRAP receives water quality data from trained volunteers. The data are reviewed for quality assurance, and are entered into the environmental monitoring database at NHDES. During the off-season, VRAP interprets the data and compiles the results into an annual report for each river. VRAP volunteers can use the data as a means of understanding the details of water quality, as well as guide future sampling efforts. NHDES can use the data for making surface water quality assessments, provided that the data met certain quality assurance/quality control guidelines.

## **2.4 What is VBAP?**

The Volunteer Biological Assessment Program (VBAP) was established in 2005 to supplement biological data collected by the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services Biomonitoring Unit. The Biomonitoring program regularly collects detailed biological data in order to complete water quality assessments of wadeable streams. VBAP serves to educate the public about water quality issues as interpreted through biological data, build a constituency of volunteers to practice sound water quality management at a local level, and build public support for water quality protection.

Since the program's establishment in 2005, VBAP has continued to work closely with watershed volunteers throughout New Hampshire providing technical assistance, field supervision, training in biological monitoring protocols, educational outreach, and annual biological data collection reports. In 2007, VBAP collaborated with the Volunteer River Assessment Program building greater strength and capability for the future.

## **2.5 Equipment and Sampling Schedule**

VRAP frequently lends and maintains water quality monitoring equipment kits to VRAP groups throughout the state. The kits contain meters and supplies for routine water quality parameter measurements of turbidity, pH, dissolved oxygen, water temperature and specific conductance (conductivity). Other parameters such as nutrients, metals, and *E. coli* can also be studied, although VRAP does not always provide funds to cover laboratory analysis costs. Thus, VRAP encourages groups to pursue other fundraising activities such as association membership fees, special events, in-kind services (non-monetary contributions from individuals and organizations), and grant writing.

Each year, volunteers design and arrange a sampling schedule in cooperation with VRAP staff. Project designs are created through a review and discussion of existing water quality information, such as known and perceived problem areas or locations of exceptional water quality. The interests, priorities, and resources of the partnership determine monitoring locations, parameters, and frequency. VRAP typically recommends sampling every other week from May through September, and VRAP groups are encouraged to organize a long-term sampling program in order to begin to determine trends in river conditions.

## **2.6 Training and Technical Support**

Each VRAP volunteer attends an annual training workshop to receive a demonstration of monitoring protocols and sampling techniques and the calibration and use of water quality monitoring equipment. During the training, volunteers have an opportunity for hands-on use of the equipment and receive instruction in the collection of samples for laboratory analysis. NHDES also provides equipment, supplies and staff support for VRAP groups participating in biological assessment activities.

VRAP groups conduct sampling according to a prearranged monitoring schedule and VRAP protocols. For groups participating in biological assessment, each

station is sampled once annually during the month of September. VRAP staff aim to visit each group annually during a scheduled sampling event to verify that volunteers successfully follow the VRAP protocols (see Appendix C). If necessary, volunteers are re-trained during the visit, and the group's monitoring coordinator is notified of the result of the verification visit. VRAP groups forward water quality results to NHDES for incorporation into an annual report and state water quality assessment activities.

Groups participating in biological assessment activities attend two training sessions prior to sampling. The first training session provides information on the biological monitoring protocol and aquatic invertebrate identification. The second session provides instruction in field methods. An NHDES staff person assists volunteers with all biological assessment activities during the sampling period.

## **2.7 Data Usage**

### **Annual Water Quality Reports**

Water quality measurements repeated over time create a picture of the fluctuating conditions in rivers and streams and help to determine where improvements, restoration or preservation may benefit the river and the communities it supports. All data collected by volunteers are summarized in water quality reports that are prepared and distributed after the conclusion of the sampling period. VRAP groups can use the reports and data as a means of understanding the details of water quality, guiding future sampling efforts, or determining restoration activities.

### **New Hampshire Surface Water Quality Assessments**

Along with data collected from other water quality programs, specifically the State Ambient River Monitoring Program, applicable volunteer data are used to support periodic NHDES surface water quality assessments. VRAP data are entered into NHDES's environmental monitoring database and are ultimately uploaded to the EPA database. Assessment results and the methodology used to assess surface waters are published by NHDES every two years (i.e., Section 305(b) Water Quality Reports) as required by the federal Clean Water Act. The reader is encouraged to log on to the NHDES web page to review the assessment methodology and list of impaired waters <http://des.nh.gov/organization/divisions/water/wmb/swqa/index.htm/>.

## 2.8 Quality Assurance/Quality Control

In order for VRAP data to be used in the assessment of New Hampshire's surface waters, the data must meet quality control guidelines as outlined in the VRAP Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP). The VRAP QAPP was approved by NHDES and reviewed by EPA in the summer of 2003. The QAPP is reviewed annually and is officially updated and approved every five years. The VRAP quality assurance/quality control measures include a six-step approach to ensuring the accuracy of the equipment and consistency in sampling efforts.

- **Calibration:** Prior to each measurement, the pH and DO meters must be calibrated. Conductivity and turbidity meters are checked against a known standard before the first measurement and after the last one.
- **Replicate Analysis:** A second measurement by each meter is taken from the original sample at one of the stations during the sampling day. If the same sampling schedule is used throughout the monitoring season, the replicate analysis should be conducted at different stations. Replicates should be measured within 15 minutes of the original measurements.
- **6.0 pH Standard:** A reading of the pH 6.0 buffer is recorded at one of the stations during the sampling day. If the same sampling schedule is used throughout the monitoring season, the 6.0 pH standard check should be conducted at different stations.
- **Zero Oxygen Solution:** A reading of a zero oxygen solution is recorded at one of the stations during the sampling day. If the same sampling schedule is used throughout the monitoring season, the zero oxygen standard check should be conducted at different stations.
- **DI (De-Ionized) Turbidity Blank:** A reading of the DI blank is recorded at one of the stations during the sampling day. If the same sampling schedule is used throughout the monitoring season, the blank check should be conducted at different stations.
- **End of the Day Conductivity and Turbidity Meter Check:** At the conclusion of each sampling day, the conductivity and turbidity meters are re-checked against a known standard.

### 2.8.1 Measurement Performance Criteria

Precision is calculated for field and laboratory measurements through measurement replicates (instrumental variability) and is calculated for each sampling day. The use of VRAP data for assessment purposes is contingent on compliance with a parameter-specific relative percent difference (RPD) as derived from equation 1, below. Any data exceeding the limits of the individual measures are disqualified from surface water quality assessments. All data that exceeds the limits defined by the VRAP QAPP are acknowledged in the data tables with an explanation of why the data was unusable. Table 1 shows typical parameters studied under VRAP and the associated quality control procedures.

(Equation 1. Relative Percent Difference)

$$RPD = \frac{|x_1 - x_2|}{\frac{x_1 + x_2}{2}} \times 100 \%$$

where  $x_1$  is the original sample and  $x_2$  is the replicate sample

**Table 1. Field Analytical Quality Controls**

Water Quality Parameter	QC Check	QC Acceptance Limit	Corrective Action	Person Responsible for Corrective Action	Data Quality Indicator
Temperature	Measurement Replicate	RPD < 10% or Absolute Difference <0.8 C.	Repeat Measurement	Volunteer Monitors	Precision
Dissolved Oxygen	Measurement Replicate	RPD < 10%	Recalibrate Instrument, Repeat Measurement	Volunteer Monitors	Precision
	Known Buffer (Zero O <sub>2</sub> Sol.)	RPD < 10% or Absolute Difference <0.4 mg/L	Recalibrate Instrument, Repeat Measurement	Volunteer Monitors	Relative Accuracy
pH	Measurement Replicate	Absolute Difference <0.3 pH units	Recalibrate Instrument, Repeat Measurement	Volunteer Monitors	Precision
	Known Buffer (pH = 6.0)	± 0.1 std units	Recalibrate Instrument, Repeat Measurement	Volunteer Monitors	Accuracy
Specific Conductance	Measurement Replicate	RPD < 10% or Absolute Difference <5µS/cm	Recalibrate Instrument, Repeat Measurement	Volunteer Monitors	Precision
	Method Blank (Zero Air Reading)	± 5.0 µS/cm	Recalibrate Instrument, Repeat Measurement	Volunteer Monitors	Accuracy
Turbidity	Measurement Replicate	RPD < 10% or Absolute Difference <1.0 NTU	Recalibrate Instrument, Repeat Measurement	Volunteer Monitors	Precision
	Method Blank (DI Water)	± 0.1 NTU	Recalibrate Instrument, Repeat Measurement	Volunteer Monitors	Accuracy
Laboratory Parameters	Measurement Replicate	RPD < 20% or Absolute Difference less than ½ the mean value of the parameter in NHDES's Environmental Monitoring Database	Repeat Measurement	Volunteer Monitors	Precision

### 3.0 METHODS

Volunteers from the Oyster River Watershed Association began monitoring water quality in the Oyster River watershed in 2001. The goal of this effort was to provide water quality data from the Oyster River watershed relative to surface water quality standards and to allow for the assessment of the river for support of aquatic life and primary contact recreation (swimming). The establishment of a long-term monitoring program allows for an understanding of the river's dynamics, or variations on a station-by-station and year-to-year basis. The data can also serve as a baseline from which to determine any water pollution problems in the river and/or watershed. The Volunteer River Assessment Program has provided field training, equipment, and technical assistance.

During 2008, trained volunteers from the Oyster River Watershed Association monitored water quality at 17 stations in the Oyster River Watershed (Figure 1, Table 2). Station IDs are designated using a three-letter code to identify the waterbody name plus a number indicating the relative position of the station. The higher the station number the more upstream the station is in the watershed.

The Oyster River and all its tributaries in the towns of Barrington, Durham, Lee, and Madbury from their sources to the crest of the Durham Reservoir water supply dam are designated as Class A waters. All other portions of the Oyster River downstream of the water supply dam are designated as Class B waters. These classifications are used to apply the appropriate water quality standards.

Water quality monitoring was conducted from April to October. In-situ measurements of water temperature, air temperature, dissolved oxygen, pH, turbidity and specific conductance were taken using handheld meters provided by NHDES. Samples for *E.coli* and chloride were taken using bottles supplied by the NHDES and/or University of New Hampshire laboratories and were stored on ice during transport from the field to the lab. Table 3 summarizes the parameters measured, laboratory standard methods, and equipment used.

In 2008, volunteers also conducted biological assessments in the Oyster River watershed. The goal of this effort is to complete "screening" level investigations of aquatic macroinvertebrate communities inhabiting the Oyster River and surrounding tributaries. Annual biological sampling at designated stations throughout the watershed can provide an indication of biological community condition, general water quality and overall watershed health as well as highlight changes that occur over time. The program serves to provide supplementary biological data to the NHDES Biomonitoring Program, enhancing state wide monitoring efforts and tracking potential problem areas needing further investigation. NHDES provides field training, equipment, financial assistance, and technical assistance.

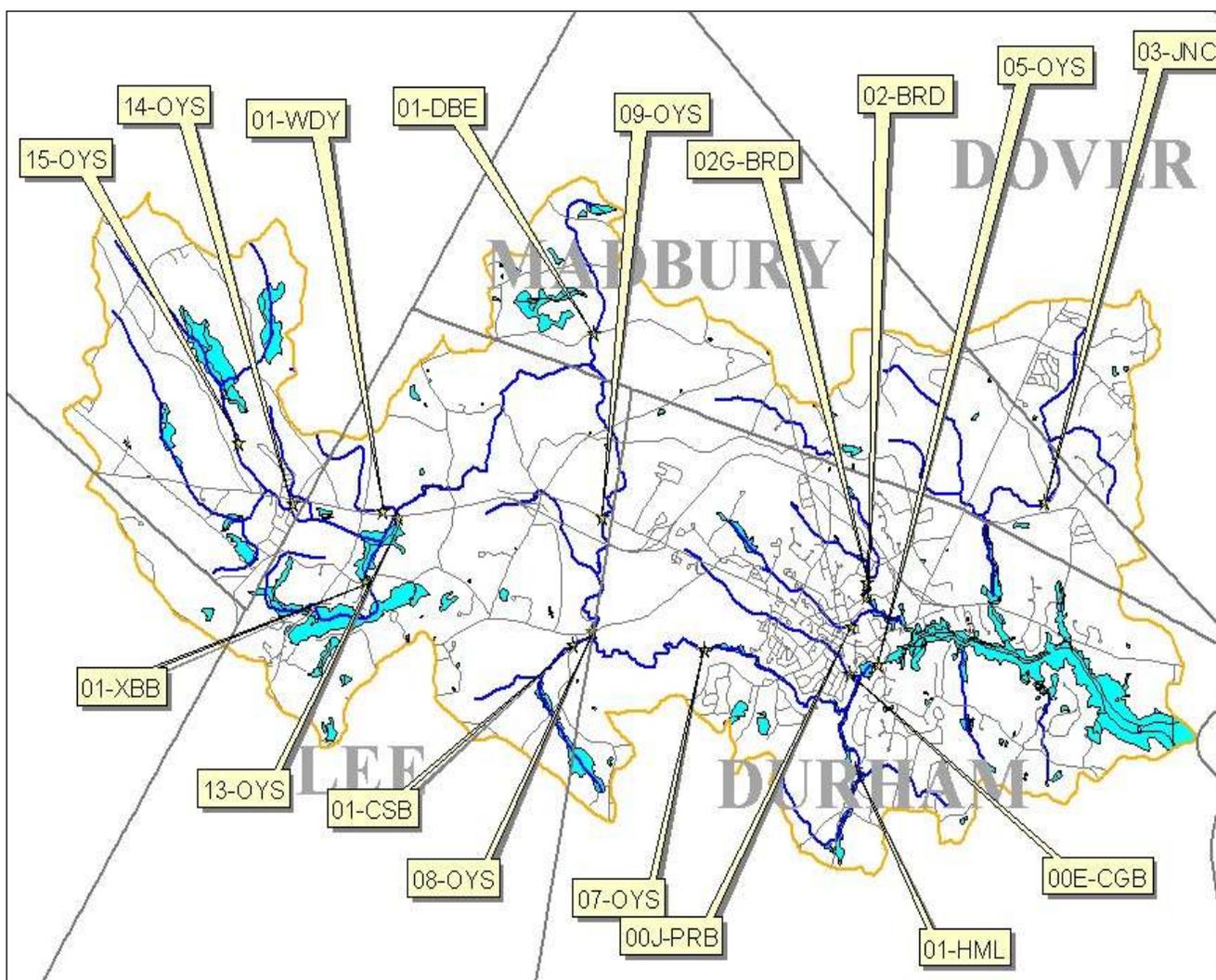
**Table 2. 2008 Sampling Stations for Oyster River Watershed, NHDES VRAP**

<b>Station ID &amp; AUID</b>	<b>Class</b>	<b>Waterbody Name</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Town</b>	<b>Elevation</b> <i>(Rounded to the Nearest 100 Feet)</i>
<b>15-OYS</b> NHRIV600030902-02	<b>A</b>	<b>Oyster River</b>	Sugar Shack	Barrington	100
<b>14-OYS</b> NHRIV600030902-02	<b>A</b>	<b>Oyster River</b>	Jennison Driveway	Barrington	100
<b>01-XBB</b> NHRIV600030902-03	<b>A</b>	<b>Unnamed Trib. to Oyster R</b>	Wheelright Pond Outlet, Stepping Stone Road Bridge	Lee	100
<b>13-OYS</b> NHRIV600030902-03	<b>A</b>	<b>Oyster River</b>	Route 4 Bridge, East of Lee Traffic Circle	Lee	100
<b>01-WDY</b> NHRIV600030902-02	<b>A</b>	<b>Wendy's Brook</b>	Route 4 & Route 125 Traffic Circle	Durham	0
<b>01-DBE</b> NHRIV600030902-03	<b>A</b>	<b>Dube Brook</b>	Cherry Lane Bridge	Madbury	100
<b>09-OYS</b> NHRIV600030902-04	<b>A</b>	<b>Oyster River</b>	Rt. 155A Bridge, USGS Gaging Station	Lee	100
<b>08-OYS</b> NHRIV600030902-04	<b>A</b>	<b>Oyster River</b>	Mast Road Bridge	Durham	100
<b>01-CSB</b> NHRIV600030902-04	<b>A</b>	<b>Chelsey Brook</b>	Packers Falls Road Bridge	Lee	100
<b>07-OYS</b> NHRIV600030902-04	<b>A</b>	<b>Oyster River</b>	Footbridge College Woods	Durham	100
<b>01-HML</b> NHRIV600030902-08	<b>B</b>	<b>Hamel Brook</b>	Route 108 Bridge	Durham	0
<b>00E-CGB</b> NHRIV600030902-09	<b>B</b>	<b>College Brook</b>	Mill Pond Road Bridge	Durham	0
<b>05-OYS</b> NHIMP600030902-04	<b>B</b>	<b>Oyster River</b>	Route 108/Newmarket Rd. Bridge	Durham	0
<b>00J-PRB</b> NHRIV600030902-10	<b>B</b>	<b>Pettee Brook</b>	End of Summer Terrace	Durham	0
<b>02A-BRD</b> NHRIV600030902-11	<b>B</b>	<b>Beards Creek</b>	Stoleworthy Wildlife Sanctuary	Durham	0
<b>02-BRD</b> NHIMP600030902-06	<b>B</b>	<b>Beards Creek</b>	Coe Drive Bridge	Durham	0
<b>03-JNC</b> NHRIV600030902-13	<b>B</b>	<b>Johnson Creek</b>	Freshet Road Bridge	Durham	0

**Table 3. Sampling and Analysis Methods**

Parameter	Sample Type	Standard Method	Equipment Used	Laboratory
Temperature	In-Situ	SM 2550	YSI 85	-----
Dissolved Oxygen	In-Situ	SM 4500 O G	YSI 85	-----
pH	In-Situ	SM 4500 H+	Oakton pH 11	-----
Turbidity	In-Situ	EPA 180.1	LaMotte 2020e	-----
Specific Conductance	In-Situ	SM 2510	YSI 85	-----
<i>E.coli</i>	Bottle (Sterile)	SM 19 9213 D.3	-----	NHDES
Chloride	Bottle	EPA 325.2	-----	NHDES
		D512(C)	-----	UNH

**Figure 1. 2008 Oyster River Watershed and Sampling Stations, NHDES VRAP**



## RESULTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Results and recommendations for each monitored parameter are presented in the following sections. For a description of the importance of each parameter and pertinent water quality criteria for these and other parameters, please see Appendix B, *“Interpreting VRAP Water Quality Parameters.”*

### 4.1 Dissolved Oxygen

Either seven or eight measurements were taken in the field for dissolved oxygen concentration at 14 stations in the Oyster River watershed (Table 4). Of the 101 measurements taken, 94 met quality assurance/quality control requirements and are usable for New Hampshire’s 2010 surface water quality report to the US Environmental Protection Agency.

The Class A New Hampshire surface water quality standard for dissolved oxygen is a minimum concentration of 6.0 mg/L **and** a minimum daily average saturation of 75 %. The Class B New Hampshire surface water quality standard for dissolved oxygen includes a minimum concentration of 5.0 mg/L **and** a minimum daily average of 75 %% of saturation. In other words, there are criteria for both concentration and saturation that must be met before the river can be assessed as meeting dissolved oxygen standards. Table 4 reports only dissolved oxygen concentration as more detailed analysis is required to determine if instantaneous dissolved oxygen saturation measurements are above or below water quality standards.

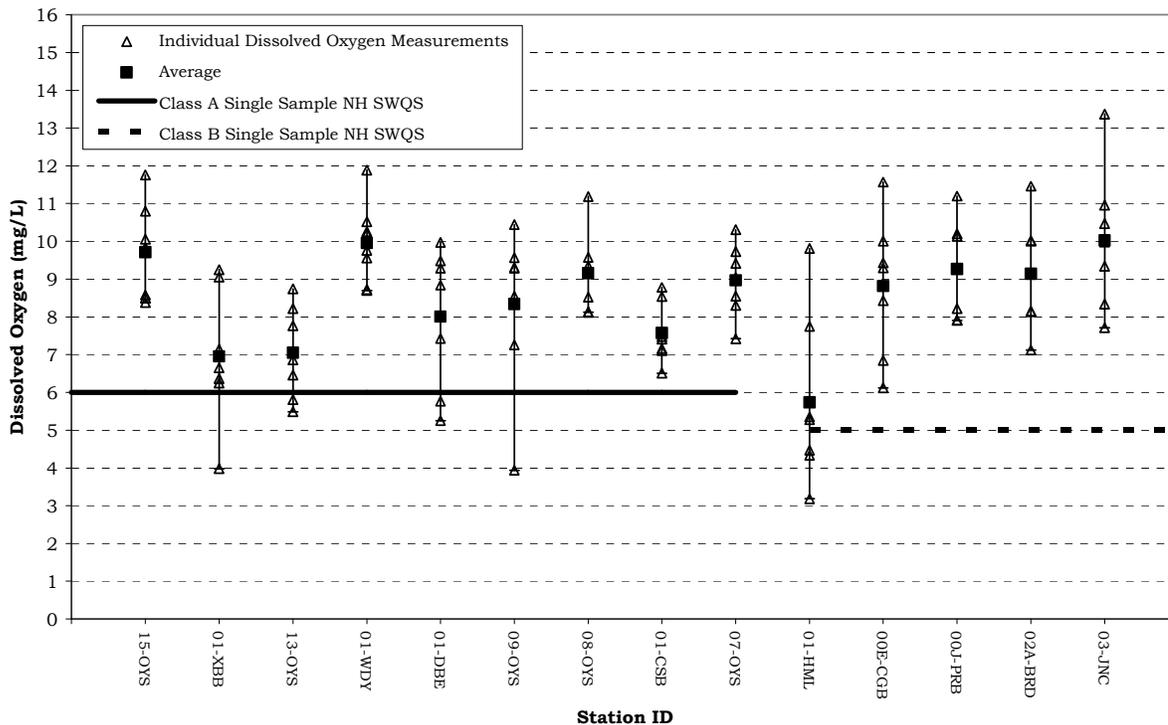
Dissolved oxygen concentration levels were above the relevant New Hampshire surface water quality standard on most occasions. Five stations in the upper portion of the watershed (01-XBB, 13-OYS, 01-DBE, 09-OYS, and 01-HML) had one or more measurements that fell below the New Hampshire Class A or Class B surface water quality standard. The average dissolved oxygen concentration ranged from 5.74 mg/L to 10.02 mg/L (Figure 2).

Levels of dissolved oxygen sustained above the standards are considered adequate for the support of aquatic life and other desirable water quality conditions. Stations where the instantaneous dissolved oxygen standard was not met could potentially have a dissolved oxygen problem and further investigation is warranted. Low dissolved oxygen levels can be the result of natural conditions (e.g., the presence of wetlands or stagnant water caused by a beaver dam)

**Table 4. Dissolved Oxygen (mg/L) Summary – Oyster River Watershed, 2008**

<b>Station ID</b>	<b>Class</b>	<b>Samples Collected</b>	<b>Data Range (mg/l)</b>	<b>Acceptable Samples Not Meeting NH Class A/B Standards</b>	<b>Number of Usable Samples for 2010 NH Surface Water Quality Assessment</b>
<b>15-OYS</b>	<b>A</b>	8	8.38 - 11.76	0	7
<b>01-XBB</b>	<b>A</b>	7	3.98 - 9.25	1	7
<b>13-OYS</b>	<b>A</b>	7	5.49 - 8.74	2	7
<b>01-WDY</b>	<b>A</b>	8	8.70 - 11.89	0	8
<b>01-DBE</b>	<b>A</b>	7	5.25 - 9.97	2	7
<b>09-OYS</b>	<b>A</b>	8	3.94 - 10.44	1	8
<b>08-OYS</b>	<b>A</b>	7	8.12 - 11.19	0	6
<b>01-CSB</b>	<b>A</b>	7	6.51 - 8.78	0	7
<b>07-OYS</b>	<b>A</b>	7	7.42 - 10.31	0	7
<b>01-HML</b>	<b>B</b>	7	3.18 - 9.81	3	6
<b>00E-CGB</b>	<b>B</b>	7	6.12 - 11.57	0	6
<b>00J-PRB</b>	<b>B</b>	7	7.91 - 11.20	0	6
<b>02A-BRD</b>	<b>B</b>	7	7.12 - 11.46	0	6
<b>03-JNC</b>	<b>B</b>	7	7.71 - 13.37	0	6
<b>Total</b>	_____	<b>101</b>	_____	<b>9</b>	<b>94</b>

**Figure 2. Dissolved Oxygen Statistics for the Oyster River Watershed  
April 18 - October 18, 2008, NHDES VRAP**



## Recommendations

- Continue sampling at all stations in order to develop a long-term data set to better understand trends as time goes on.
- If possible, take measurements between 5 a.m. and 10 a.m., which is when dissolved oxygen is usually the lowest, and between 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. when dissolved oxygen is usually the highest. In general, dissolved oxygen levels are lowest in the early morning when there is low photosynthetic activity and a peak in respiration from organisms throughout the water column. This is the time of least oxygen production and greatest carbon dioxide emission. Peak dissolved oxygen levels occur when photosynthetic activity is at its peak. The greater the amount of photosynthetic activity the greater the production of oxygen as a byproduct of photosynthesis.
- Continue incorporating the use of in-situ dataloggers to automatically record dissolved oxygen saturation levels during a period of several days. Stations with potential dissolved oxygen problems should be the priority for datalogger deployments.

## 4.2 pH

Either seven or eight measurements were taken in the field for pH at 14 stations in the Oyster River watershed (Table 5). Of the 101 measurements taken, all met quality assurance/quality control requirements and are usable for New Hampshire's 2010 surface water quality report to the US Environmental Protection Agency.

The Class A and B New Hampshire surface water quality standard is 6.5 - 8.0, unless naturally occurring.

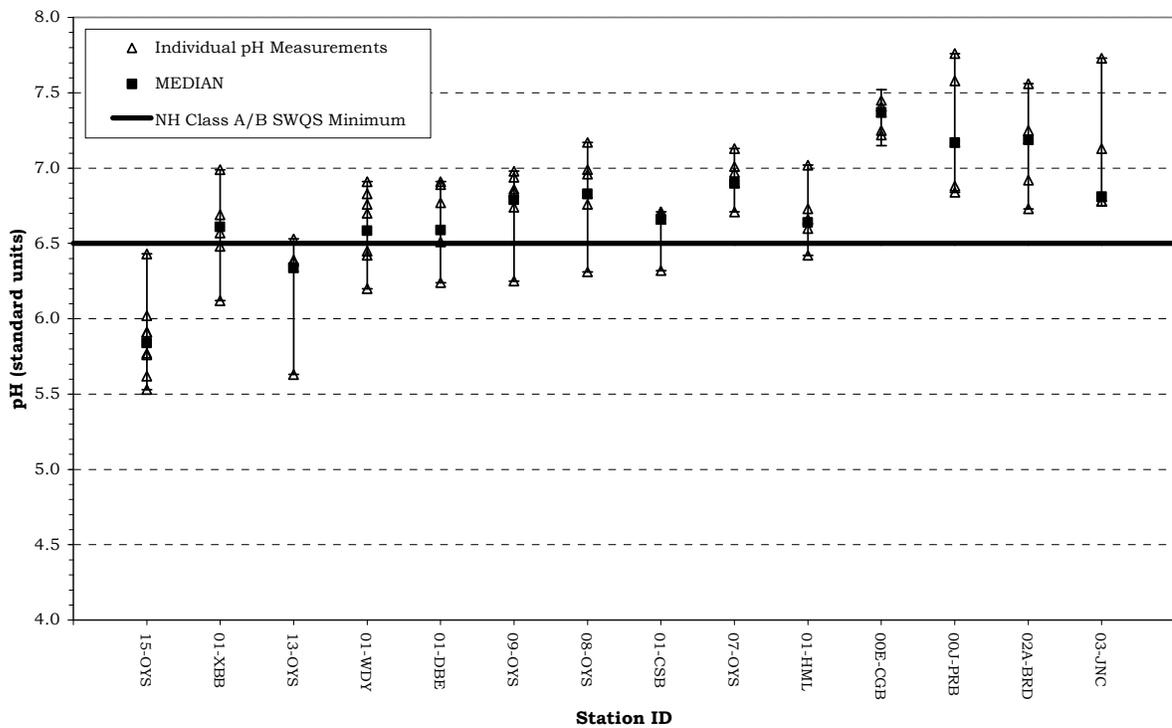
**Table 5. pH Data Summary - Oyster River Watershed, 2008**

Station ID	Class	Samples Collected	Data Range (standard units)	Acceptable Samples Not Meeting NH Class A/B Standards	Number of Usable Samples for 2010 NH Surface Water Quality Assessment
15-OYS	A	8	5.53 - 6.43	8	8
01-XBB	A	7	6.12 - 6.99	2	7
13-OYS	A	7	5.63 - 6.53	6	7
01-WDY	A	8	6.20 - 6.91	4	8
01-DBE	A	7	6.24 - 6.91	1	7
09-OYS	A	8	6.25 - 6.98	1	8
08-OYS	A	7	6.31 - 7.17	1	7
01-CSB	A	7	6.32 - 6.71	2	7
07-OYS	A	7	6.71 - 7.13	0	7
01-HML	B	7	6.42 - 7.02	1	7
00E-CGB	B	7	7.15 - 7.52	0	7
00J-PRB	B	7	6.84 - 7.76	0	7
02A-BRD	B	7	6.73 - 7.56	0	7
03-JNC	B	7	6.75 - 7.73	0	7
<b>Total</b>	_____	<b>101</b>	_____	<b>26</b>	<b>101</b>

A majority of stations had at least one pH measurement below the Class A or Class B minimum standard (Figure 3). In general, stations in the upper portion of the watershed had lower pH measurements, in comparison with stations in the middle to lower portion of the watershed.

Lower pH measurements are likely the result of natural conditions such as the soils, geology, or the presence of wetlands in the area. Rain and snow falling in New Hampshire is relatively acidic, which can also affect pH levels; after the spring melt or significant rain events, surface waters will generally have a lower pH.

**Figure 3. pH Statistics for the Oyster River Watershed  
April 18 - October 18, 2008, NHDES VRAP**



## Recommendations

- Continue sampling at all stations in order to develop a long-term data set to better understand trends as time goes on.

### 4.3 Turbidity

Either seven or eight measurements were taken in the field for turbidity at 14 stations in the Oyster River watershed [Table 6]. Of the 101 measurements taken, 94 met quality assurance/quality control requirements and are usable for New Hampshire’s 2010 surface water quality report to the US Environmental Protection Agency.

New Hampshire Surface Water Quality Standards state that turbidity of Class A waters *shall be as naturally occurring*. The Class B New Hampshire surface water quality standard for turbidity is less than 10 NTU above background. Samples that exceeded the 2008 average for a given station by more than 10 NTU are designated as “potentially not meeting standards”. Higher turbidity measurements may be naturally occurring as they are influenced by precipitation, soil type, the composition of the streambed and the geology of the streambed.

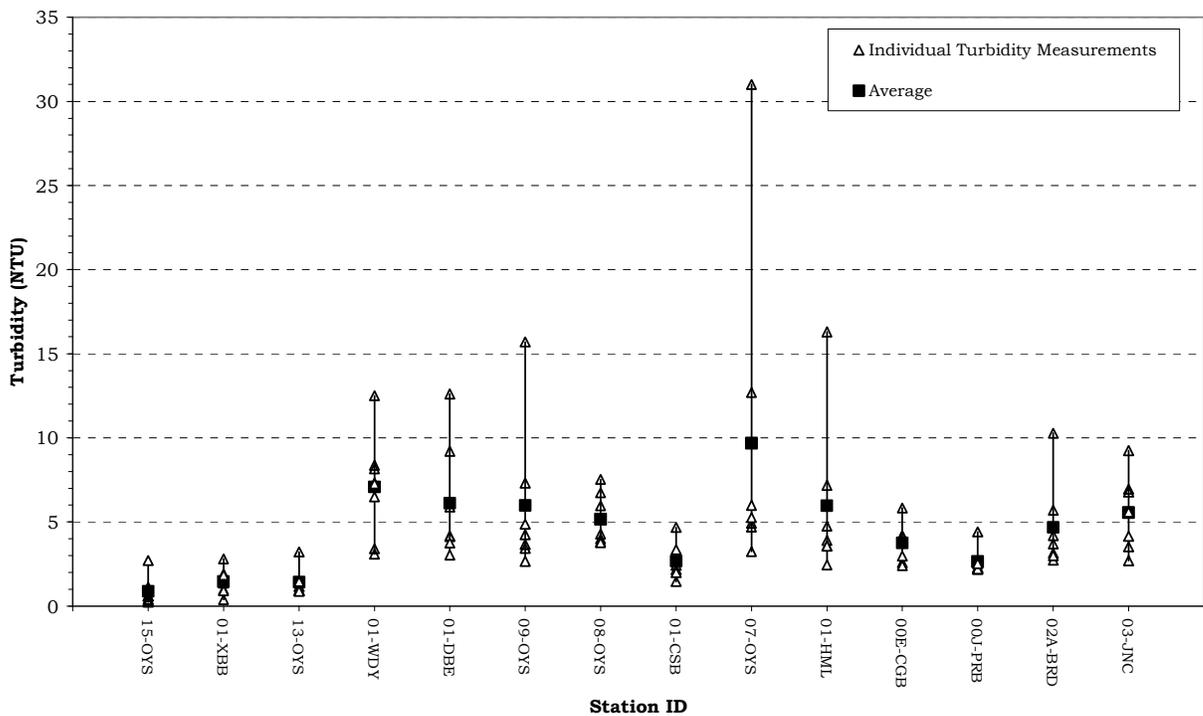
**Table 6. Turbidity Data Summary - Oyster River Watershed, 2008**

Station ID	Class	Samples Collected	Data Range (NTU)	Acceptable Samples Potentially Not Meeting NH Class A/B Standards	Number of Usable Samples for 2010 NH Surface Water Quality Assessment
15-OYS	A	8	0.2 - 2.7	0	8
01-XBB	A	7	0.4 - 2.8	0	6
13-OYS	A	7	0.9 - 3.2	0	6
01-WDY	A	8	3.1 - 12.5	0	7
01-DBE	A	7	3.0 - 12.6	0	6
09-OYS	A	8	2.67 - 15.7	0	7
08-OYS	A	7	3.8 - 7.5	0	7
01-CSB	A	7	1.45 - 4.7	0	6
07-OYS	A	7	3.2 - 31.0	1	6
01-HML	B	7	2.5 - 16.3	1	7
00E-CGB	B	7	2.4 - 5.8	0	7
00J-PRB	B	7	2.2 - 4.4	0	7
02A-BRD	B	7	2.7 - 10.3	0	7
03-JNC	B	7	2.7 - 9.2	0	7
<b>Total</b>	_____	<b>101</b>	_____	<b>2</b>	<b>94</b>

Turbidity levels were very variable with the average ranging from 0.9 NTU to 9.7 NTU (Figure 4). Two stations (07-OYS and 01-HML) each had one elevated measurements potentially not meeting New Hampshire surface water quality standards. One of these measurements were taken on 7/19/08 while the other was taken on 6/20/08. Precipitation one day prior to the 7/19/08 sampling event and three days prior to the 6/20/08 sampling date was noted on the VRAP field data sheet and may have contributed to the higher turbidity levels due to stormwater runoff and the flushing of wetland areas.

Although clean waters are associated with low turbidity there is a high degree of natural variability involved. Precipitation often contributes to increased turbidity by flushing sediment, organic matter and other materials from the surrounding landscape into surface waters. However, human activities such as removal of vegetation near surface waters and disruption of nearby soils can lead to dramatic increases in turbidity levels. In general it is typical to see a rise in turbidity in more developed areas due to increased runoff.

**Figure 4. Turbidity Statistics for the Oyster River Watershed  
April 18 - October 18, 2008, NHDES VRAP**



## **Recommendations**

- Continue sampling at all stations in order to develop a long-term data set to better understand trends as time goes on.
- Collect samples during wet weather. This will help us to understand how the river responds to runoff and sedimentation.
- If a higher than normal turbidity measurement occurs, volunteers can investigate further by moving upstream and taking additional measurements. This will facilitate isolating the location of the cause of the elevated turbidity levels. In addition, take good field notes and photographs. If human activity is suspected or verified as the source of elevated turbidity levels, volunteers should contact NHDES.

## 4.4 Specific Conductance

Between two and nine measurements were taken in the field for specific conductance at 17 stations in the Oyster River watershed (Table 7). Of the 117 measurements taken, all met quality assurance/quality control requirements and are usable for New Hampshire's 2010 surface water quality report to the US Environmental Protection Agency.

New Hampshire surface water quality standards do not contain numeric criteria for specific conductance although in many fresh surface waters, specific conductance can be used as a surrogate to predict compliance with numeric water quality criteria for chloride.

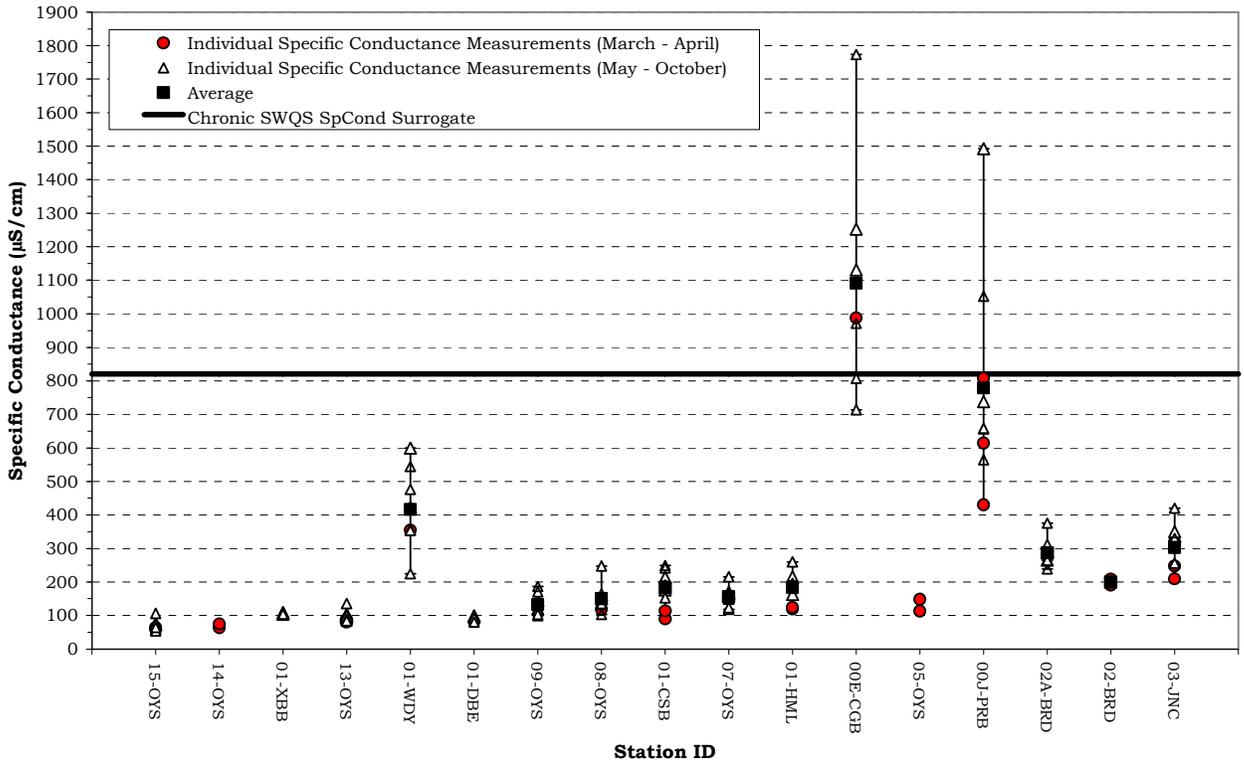
**Table 7. Specific Conductance Data Summary - Oyster River Watershed, 2008**

Station ID	Class	Samples Collected	Data Range ( $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$ )	Acceptable Samples Not Meeting NH Class A/B Standards ( $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$ as chloride surrogate)	Number of Usable Samples for 2010 NH Surface Water Quality Assessment
15-OYS	A	8	54 - 106	0	8
14-OYS	A	2	64 - 75	0	2
01-XBB	A	7	104 - 112	0	7
13-OYS	A	9	80 - 136	0	9
01-WDY	A	8	225 - 599	0	8
01-DBE	A	7	80 - 100	0	7
09-OYS	A	8	100 - 187	0	8
08-OYS	A	7	103 - 248	0	7
01-CSB	A	7	90 - 250	0	7
07-OYS	A	9	119 - 216	0	9
01-HML	B	9	119 - 260	0	9
00E-CGB	B	7	714 - 1774	5	7
05-OYS	B	2	113 - 148	0	2
00J-PRB	B	9	430 - 1492	2	9
02A-BRD	B	7	239 - 375	0	7
02-BRD	B	2	191 - 209	0	2
03-JNC	B	9	209 - 420	0	9
<b>Total</b>	_____	<b>117</b>	_____	<b>7</b>	<b>117</b>

Specific conductance levels were highly variable with the average ranging from 53.7  $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$  to 1091.1  $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$  (Figure 5). The stations in Wendys Brook (01-WDY), College Brook (00E-CGB) and Pettie Brook (00J-PRB) had significantly higher specific conductance levels than other stations throughout the watershed. Higher specific conductance levels can be indicative of pollution from sources such as urban/agricultural runoff, road salt, failed septic systems, or groundwater pollution. Thus, the variable specific conductance levels indicate low pollutant levels at some stations and high pollutant levels at others.

During 2008 the Oyster River VRAP Group also monitored specific conductance during the winter and early spring months to more fully assess the watershed for both specific conductance and chloride. Chloride and specific conductance are very closely related to one another and the protocols NHDES uses to assess waterbodies allows specific conductance to be used as a formal surrogate for chloride. Monitoring for specific conductance and chloride in the winter and early spring months will help determine what the impact of road salt application is in the watershed and indicated what time of year chloride levels tend to be highest. Specific conductance measurements taken during the winter and snowmelt months are indicated with a separate color in Figure 8.

**Figure 5. Specific Conductance Statistics for the Oyster River Watershed  
March 21, 2008 - October 18, 2008, NHDES VRAP**



## **Recommendations**

- Continue sampling at all stations in order to develop a long-term data set to better understand trends as time goes on.
- Continue collecting chloride samples at the same time that specific conductance is measured. This should be conducted during both snowmelt condition and summer low flow conditions.

## 4.5 Water Temperature

Either seven or eight measurements were taken in the field for water temperature at 14 stations in the Oyster River watershed (Table 8). Of the 101 measurements taken, all met quality assurance/quality control requirements and are usable for New Hampshire's 2010 surface water quality report to the US Environmental Protection Agency.

Although there is currently no numerical water quality criteria for water temperature, NHDES is in the process of collecting biological and water temperature data that will contribute to the development of a procedure for assessing rivers and stream based on water temperature and its corresponding impact to the biological integrity of the waterbody.

**Table 8. Water Temperature Data Summary – Oyster River Watershed, 2008**

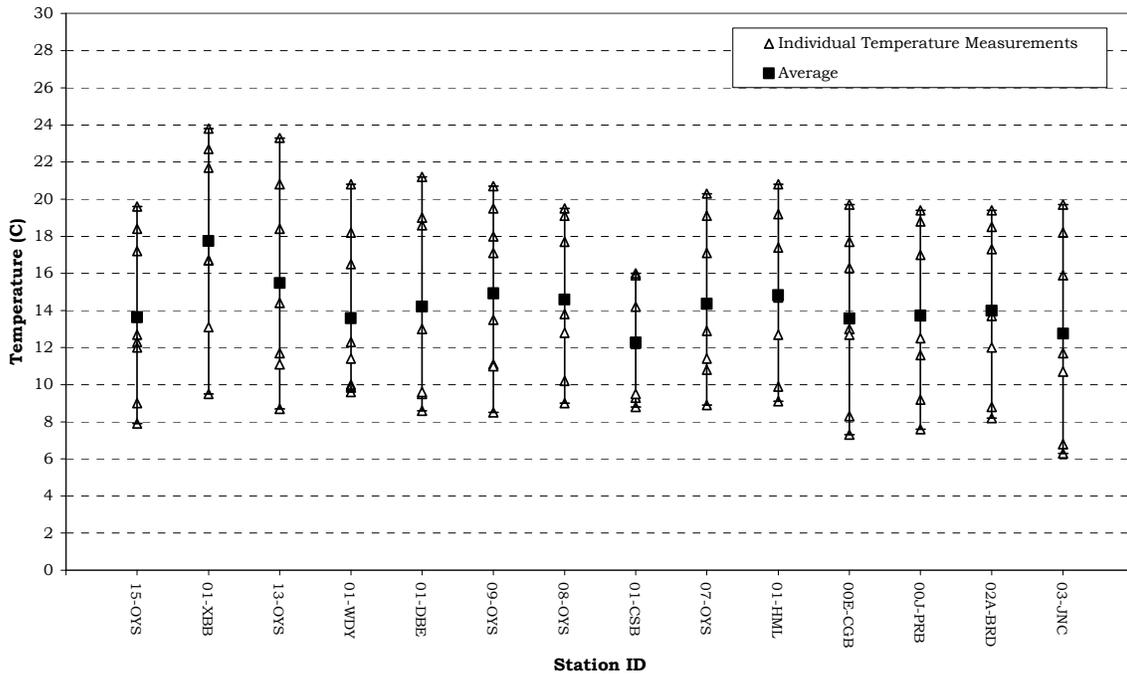
<b>Station ID</b>	<b>Class</b>	<b>Samples Collected</b>	<b>Data Range (°C)</b>	<b>Acceptable Samples Not Meeting NH Class A/B Standards</b>	<b>Number of Usable Samples for 2010 NH Surface Water Quality Assessment</b>
<b>15-OYS</b>	<b>A</b>	8	7.9 - 19.6	Not Applicable	8
<b>01-XBB</b>	<b>A</b>	7	9.5 - 23.8	N/A	7
<b>13-OYS</b>	<b>A</b>	7	8.7 - 23.3	N/A	7
<b>01-WDY</b>	<b>A</b>	8	9.6 - 20.8	N/A	8
<b>01-DBE</b>	<b>A</b>	7	8.6 - 21.2	N/A	7
<b>09-OYS</b>	<b>A</b>	8	8.5 - 20.7	N/A	8
<b>08-OYS</b>	<b>A</b>	7	9.0 - 19.5	N/A	7
<b>01-CSB</b>	<b>A</b>	7	8.8 - 16.0	N/A	7
<b>07-OYS</b>	<b>A</b>	7	8.9 - 20.3	N/A	7
<b>01-HML</b>	<b>B</b>	7	9.1 - 20.8	N/A	7
<b>00E-CGB</b>	<b>B</b>	7	7.3 - 19.7	N/A	7
<b>00J-PRB</b>	<b>B</b>	7	7.6 - 19.4	N/A	7
<b>02A-BRD</b>	<b>B</b>	7	8.2 - 19.4	N/A	7
<b>03-JNC</b>	<b>B</b>	7	6.3 - 19.7	N/A	7
<b>Total</b>	_____	<b>101</b>	_____	<b>N/A</b>	<b>101</b>

Figure 6 shows the results of instantaneous water temperature measurements taken at 14 stations in the Oyster River watershed. The average water temperature varied from 12.8 °C. to 17.7 °C.

Water temperature is a critical parameter for aquatic life and has an impact on other water quality parameters such as dissolved oxygen concentrations, and the activity of bacteria in the water. Water temperature controls the metabolic and reproductive processes of aquatic species and can determine which fish and macroinvertebrate species can survive in a given river or stream.

A number of factors can have an impact on water temperature including the quantity and maturity of riparian vegetation along the shoreline, the rate of flow, the percent of impervious surfaces contributing stormwater, thermal discharges, impoundments and the influence of groundwater.

**Figure 6. Water Temperature Statistics for the Oyster River Watershed  
March 21 - October 18, 2008, NHDES VRAP**



## Recommendations

- Continue collecting water temperature data via both instantaneous reading and long-term deployment of datalogger

## 4.6 *Escherichia coli*/Bacteria

Five samples were taken for *Escherichia coli* (*E. coli*) at 14 stations in the Oyster River watershed (Table 9). Of the 70 samples taken, all met quality assurance/quality control requirements and are usable for New Hampshire's 2010 surface water quality report to the US Environmental Protection Agency.

Class A New Hampshire surface water quality standards for *E.coli* are as follows:

- <153 cts/100 ml, based on any single sample, or
- <47 cts/100 ml, based on a geometric mean calculated from three samples collected within a 60-day period.

Class B New Hampshire surface water quality standards for *E.coli* are as follows:

- <406 cts/100 ml, based on any single sample, or
- <126 cts/100 ml, based on a geometric mean calculated from three samples collected within a 60-day period.

**Table 9. *E.coli* Data Summary – Oyster River Watershed, 2008**

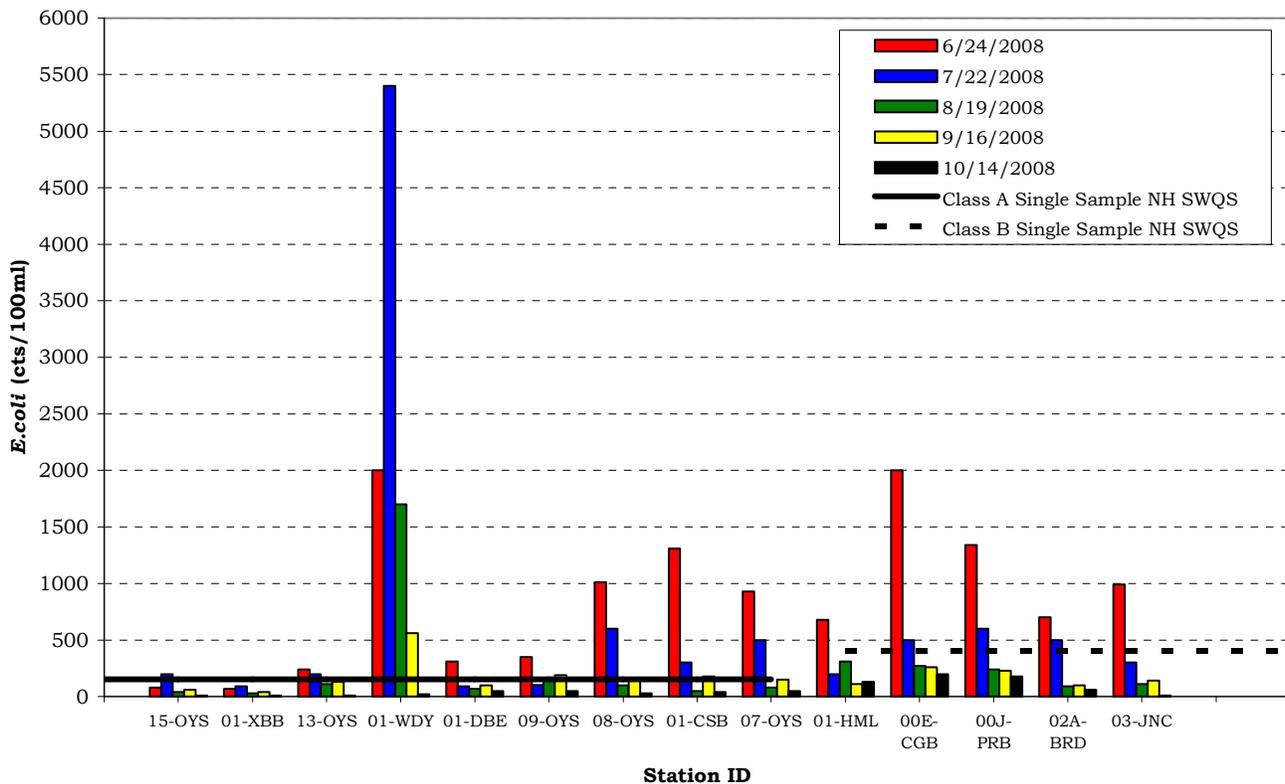
Station ID	Class	Samples Collected	Data Range (cts/100ml)	Acceptable Samples Not Meeting NH Class A/B Standards	Number of Usable Samples for 2010 NH Surface Water Quality Assessment
15-OYS	A	5	9 - 200	1	5
01-XBB	A	5	9 - 90	0	5
13-OYS	A	5	9 - 240	2	5
01-WDY	A	5	20 - 5400	4	5
01-DBE	A	5	50 - 310	1	5
09-OYS	A	5	50 - 350	3	5
08-OYS	A	5	30 - 1010	3	5
01-CSB	A	5	40 - 1310	3	5
07-OYS	A	5	50 - 930	3	5
01-HML	B	5	110 - 680	1	5
00E-CGB	B	5	200 - 500	2	5
00J-PRB	B	5	180 - 1340	2	5
02A-BRD	B	5	60 - 700	2	5
03-JNC	B	5	9 - 990	1	5
<b>Total</b>	—	<b>70</b>	—	<b>28</b>	<b>70</b>

All but one station (01-XBB) had one or more measurements that exceeded the relevant single sample water quality standard for *E.coli* (Figure 7). Stations 01-WDY, 08-OYS, 01-CSB, and 00J-PRB all had one or more highly elevated exceedences on 6/24/08, 7/22/08 and 8/19/08. Precipitation prior to these sampling events may have contributed to the higher *E.coli* levels due to stormwater runoff and the flushing of wetland areas.

Several factors can contribute to elevated *E. coli* levels, including, but not limited to rain storms, low river flows, the presence of wildlife (e.g., birds), and the presence of septic systems along the river

In order to fully determine whether a waterbody is meeting surface water standards for *E.coli* a geometric mean must be calculated. A geometric mean is calculated using three samples collected within a 60-day period. At each of the 14 stations, three geometric means were calculated. All stations but had one or more geometric means that exceeded the relevant surface water quality standard for *E.coli* (Table 10).

**Figure 7. *Escherichia coli* Statistics for the Oyster River Watershed  
June 24 - October 14, 2008, NHDES VRAP**



**Table 10: *E.coli* Geometric Mean Data Summary – Oyster River Watershed, 2008**

Station ID	Class	Geometric Means Calculated	Geometric Mean 6/24/08 - 8/19/08	Geometric Mean 7/22/08 - 9/16/08	Geometric Mean 8/19/08 - 10/14/08	Geometric Means Not Meeting NH Class A/B Standards	Number of Usable Samples for 2010 NH Surface Water Quality Assessment
15-OYS	A	3	87	78	28	2	3
01-XBB	A	3	57	48	22	2	3
13-OYS	A	3	184	142	50	3	3
01-WDY	A	3	2639	1726	267	3	3
01-DBE	A	3	125	86	70	3	3
09-OYS	A	3	177	144	115	3	3
08-OYS	A	3	393	213	78	3	3
01-CSB	A	3	270	139	71	3	3
07-OYS	A	3	334	182	84	3	3
01-HML	B	3	348	190	164	3	3
00E-CGB	B	3	646	327	241	3	3
00J-PRB	B	3	240	321	215	3	3
02A-BRD	B	3	316	165	81	2	3
03-JNC	B	3	320	167	52	2	3
<b>Total</b>	_____	<b>42</b>	_____	_____	_____	<b>38</b>	<b>42</b>

### Recommendations

- Continue to collect three samples within any 60-day period during the summer to allow for determination of geometric means. Samples need only be collected during the critical period of May 24 to September 15 for assessment purposes. This coincides with the peak contact recreation season.
- Further investigation and sampling is recommended at those stations with the highest *E.coli* levels. NHDES staff are available for site visits to help determine potential sources of the high levels.
- Continue to document river conditions and station characteristics (including the presence of wildlife in the area during sampling). At stations with particularly high bacteria levels volunteers can investigate further by moving upstream and taking additional measurements. This will facilitate isolating the location of the cause of the elevated bacteria levels. Those sampling should also look for any potential sources of bacteria such as emission pipes, failed septic systems, farm animals, pet waste, wildlife and waterfowl.

## 4.7 Chloride

Between one and three samples were taken for chloride at 17 stations in the Oyster River watershed (Table 11). Of the 60 samples taken, all met quality assurance/quality control requirements and are usable for New Hampshire's 2010 surface water quality report to the US Environmental Protection Agency.

The Class A/B New Hampshire surface water quality standard for chloride is as follows:

Freshwater chronic criterion	230 mg/l
Freshwater acute criterion	860 mg/l

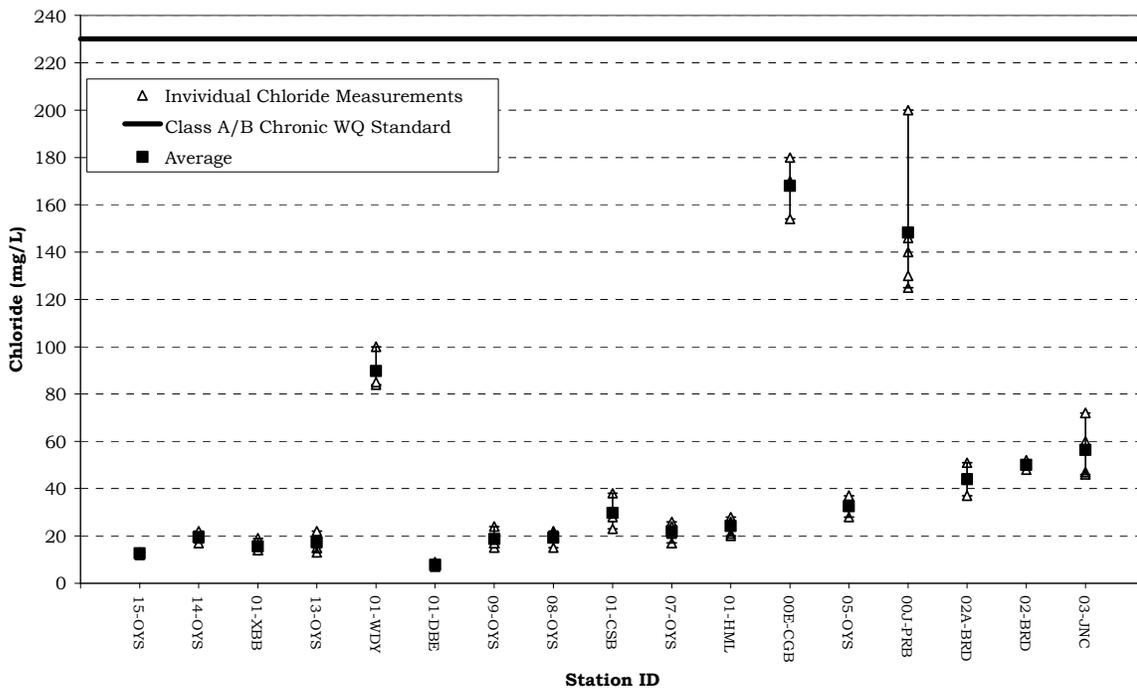
**Table 11. Chloride Data Summary – Oyster River Watershed, 2008**

Station ID	Class	Samples Collected	Data Range (mg/L)	Acceptable Samples Not Meeting NH Class A/B Standards	Number of Usable Samples for 2010 NH Surface Water Quality Assessment
15-OYS	A	3	12 - 13	0	3
14-OYS	A	2	17 - 22	0	2
01-XBB	A	3	14 - 19	0	3
13-OYS	A	5	13 - 22	0	5
01-WDY	B	3	84 - 100	0	3
01-DBE	A	3	7 - 9	0	3
09-OYS	A	3	15 - 24	0	3
08-OYS	A	3	15 - 22	0	3
01-CSB	A	3	23 - 38	0	3
07-OYS	A	5	17 - 26	0	5
01-HML	B	5	20 - 28	0	5
00E-CGB	B	3	154 - 180	0	3
05-OYS	B	2	28 - 37	0	2
00J-PRB	B	8	125 - 200	0	8
02A-BRD	B	2	37 - 51	0	2
02-BRD	B	2	48 - 52	0	2
03-JNC	B	5	46 - 72	0	5
<b>Total</b>	_____	<b>60</b>	_____	<b>N/A</b>	<b>60</b>

All measurements were below the state of New Hampshire Class A/B chronic surface water quality standard of 230 mg/L (Figure 12). In general, stations 01-WDY, 00E-CGB, and 00J-PRB had the highest measurements within the watershed.

Although chloride can originate from natural sources, most of the chloride that enters the environment is associated with the storage and application of road salt. Road salt readily dissolves and enters aquatic environments in ionic forms. As such, chloride-containing compounds commonly enter surface water, soil, and groundwater during late-spring snowmelt (since the ground is frozen during much of the late winter and early spring). Chloride ions are conservative, which means they are not degraded in the environment and tend to remain in solution, once dissolved. Chloride ions that enter ground water can ultimately be expected to reach surface water and, therefore, influence aquatic environments and humans. Additional human sources of chloride can come from fertilizers, septic systems, and underground water softening systems.

**Figure 8. Chloride Statistics for the Oyster River Watershed  
March 21, 2008 - August 15, 2008, NHDES VRAP**



## Recommendations

- Continue collecting chloride samples during both low-flow summer months and during snowmelt period in winter and early spring. It is critical that specific conductance be recorded when chloride samples are collected.

## **4.8 Biological Assessment**

This section summarizes habitat and biological community condition data collected during the 2008 assessment season. A discussion of the results and recommendations for future actions is included.

### **Habitat Analysis**

Surrounding land use, riparian habitat, and in-stream habitat were examined in the immediate observable area prior to collecting biological samples at each station. Findings were recorded on standardized data sheets included in the Volunteer Biological Assessment Program 2008 Draft Protocol.

#### ***Riparian Habitat***

The surrounding land of six of the seven stations sampled in 2008 was composed of greater than 70 percent forest, two of which, 03-JNC and 10K-OYS, were comprised entirely of forest. The surrounding land at the remaining station consisted of residential land. The total estimated width of the riparian zones varied widely, ranging from 40 feet to greater than 600 feet. The canopy cover over the streams varied widely, ranging from 10 to greater than 75 percent cover. In four of the eight stations the canopy covered greater than 40 percent of the stream. Only two stations, 01-HML and 03-JNC, had a canopy covering greater than 75 percent of the stream. Deciduous trees comprised a majority (>50%) of vegetative canopy composition.

#### ***In-stream Habitat***

Extremely high waters were reported at most sampling stations. The United States Geological Survey (USGS) gauging station in the Oyster River recorded mean flows in the month of September at 33 cubic feet per second in 2008 while in 2007 and 2006 mean flows were 2 and 3 cfs respectively. Analysis revealed a significant difference in mean September flows between 2006, 2007, and 2008 (One-way ANOVA;  $F(2,86)=12.1565$ ,  $p<0.001$ ). In addition, maximum flow in September of 2008 was 217 cfs while maximum flow in 2007 was only 9 cfs. Three stations were sampled during unusually high flows (06-OYS, 12-OYS, 14-OYS); moderate flows were reported at four stations (10K-OYS, 03-JNC, 09-OYS, 01-HML).

Riffles were the most common habitat within five of the seven sampling reaches. Water was described as clear at all stations and at most stations woody debris was present but not frequently encountered. The stream substrate was comprised primarily of gravel and/or cobble. Boulder, bedrock, and sand substrates were observed less frequently. At four of the seven stations the substrate was less than 50 percent embedded, and at 09-OYS and 03-JNC the substrate was embedded greater than 75 percent. At four stations, bank erosion was slight to moderate, with only minor impacts to the stream suspected. Heavy erosion was reported at 03-JNC, 12-OYS, and 10K-OYS, where the eroded banks significantly impacted the streambed.

## Biological Community Condition

Biotic scores ranged from 3.38 to 5.79, with a mean of 4.96, corresponding to the “fairly poor” category (Table 12). Of the eight stations sampled, one station, 09-OYS, had a biotic score corresponding to the “excellent” category, two stations, 03-JNC and 10K-OYS, had biotic scores corresponding to the “good” category, and four stations had biotic scores corresponding to the “fairly poor” category.

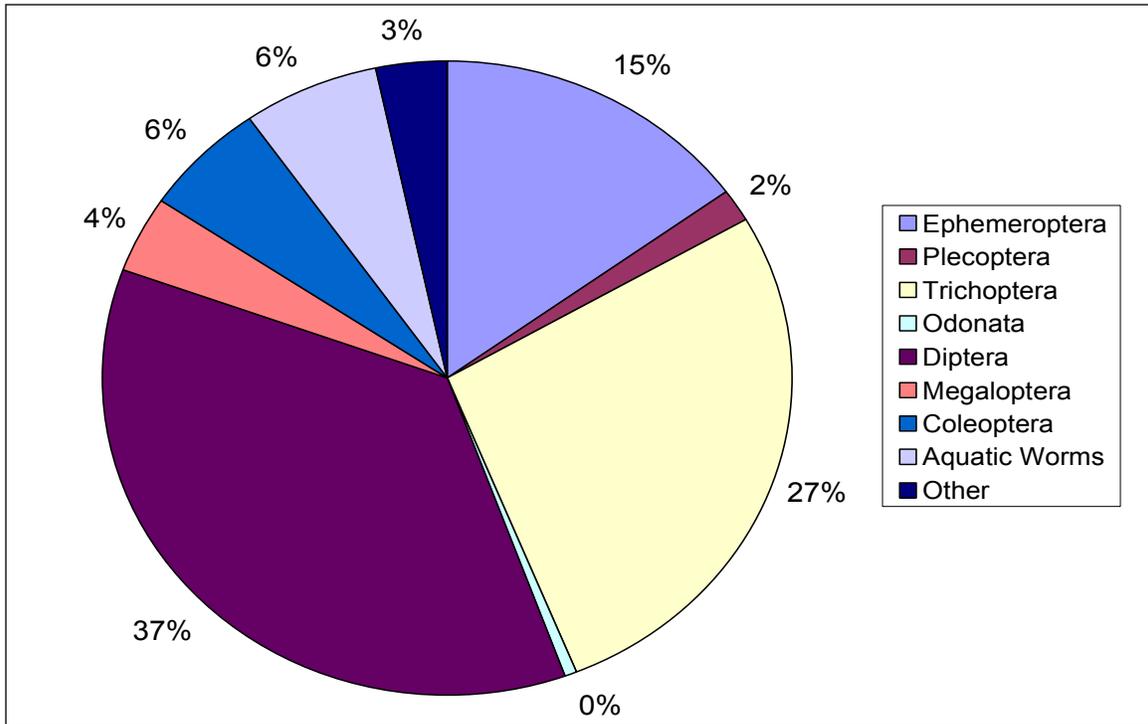
**Table 12. Biological Data Summary – Oyster River Watershed, 2008**

<b>Station ID</b>	<b>Biotic Score</b>	<b>Narrative Category</b>	<b>EPT (%)</b>
<b>15-OYS</b>	5.78	Fairly Poor	24.55%
<b>12-OYS</b>	5.01	Fairly Poor	57.46%
<b>10K-OYS</b>	4.66	Good	35.76%
<b>09-OYS</b>	3.38	Excellent	69.12%
<b>06-OYS</b>	5.78	Fairly Poor	27.59%
<b>01-HML</b>	5.79	Fairly Poor	31.62%
<b>03-JNC</b>	4.33	Good	62.64%
<b>Mean</b>	<b>4.96</b>	<b>Fairly Poor</b>	<b>44.11%</b>

The percentage of EPT individuals refers to the total percentage of Ephemeroptera (mayfly nymphs), Plecoptera (stonefly nymphs), and Trichoptera (caddisfly larvae) individuals in a sample. Generally, the percent of EPT individuals increases with increasing water quality. The percentage of EPT individuals in the Oyster River watershed varied widely from 24.55 percent to 69.12 percent. No stations were comprised of greater than 75 percent EPT individuals. Samples from four stations were comprised of less than 50 percent EPT individuals (14-OYS, 10K-OYS, 06-OYS, 01-HML). The mean percentage of EPT individuals in the watershed was 44.11 percent.

In 2008, a total of 1,184 macroinvertebrates from 18 taxonomic groups were collected and identified by volunteers in the Oyster River watershed. The number of individuals sorted at each station ranged from 68 to 315 individuals. The estimated macroinvertebrate abundance ranged from 181 to 1,125 individuals per sample. The most abundant taxonomic group in the watershed were the Dipterans (true flies), comprising 37 percent of the total sample. Trichoptera (caddisfly larvae) and Ephemeroptera (mayfly nymphs) were also well represented in the total sample, accounting for 27 and 15 percent of the total sample, respectively.

**Figure 9. Biological Sample Composition Statistics - Oyster River Watershed, 2008**



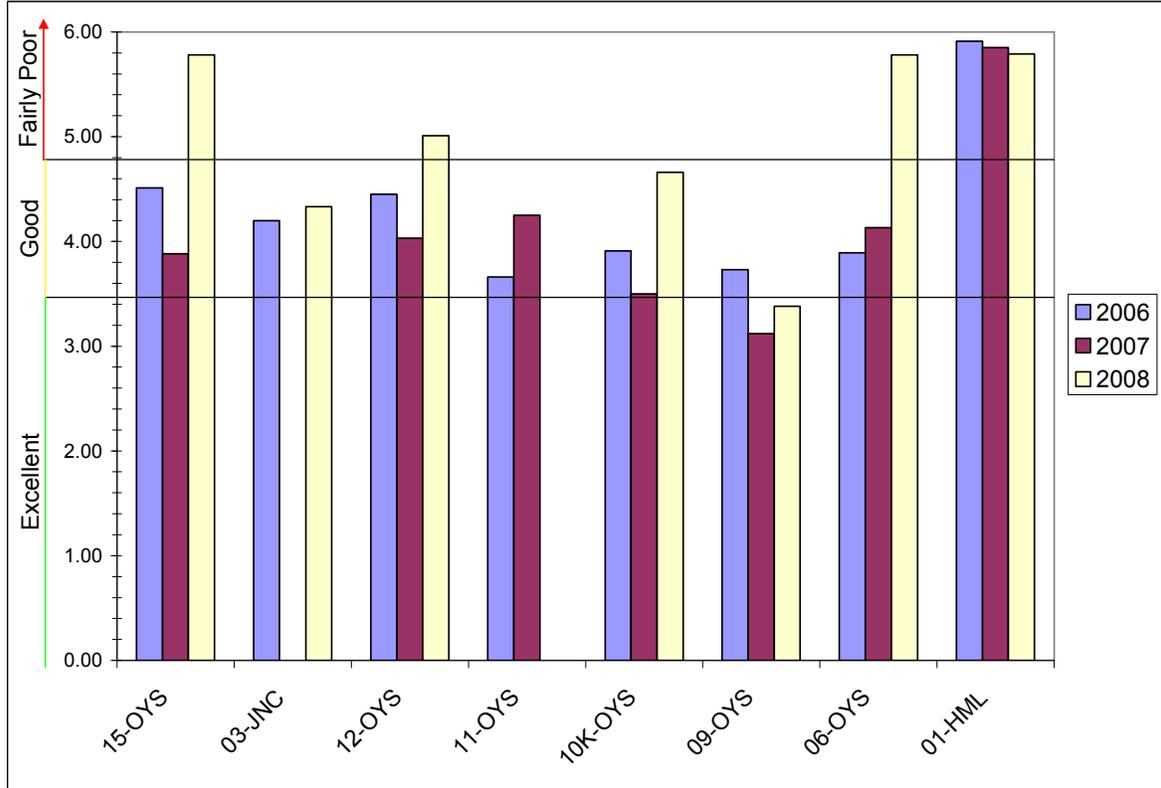
**Discussion**

Compared to results from 2007, biotic scores increased at all but one station (Figure 10). These increasing biotic scores (poorer conditions) resulted in a change in narrative category at four stations, 06-OYS, 10K-OYS, 12-OYS, and 15-OYS. In 2007, 10K-OYS yielded a biotic score corresponding to the “excellent” category, while in 2008 the score corresponded to the “good” category. The three other stations with a negative change in narrative category moved from the “good” category in 2007 to the “fairly poor” category in 2008. In addition, at 06-OYS, 10K-OYS, and 15-OYS, less than 40 percent of the sample in 2008 was composed of EPT individuals. 01-HML was the only station with a biotic score that decreased from the 2007 score. This decrease, however, was very slight and did not result in a change in biotic score.

In 2008, mean abundance of macroinvertebrates in the Oyster River watershed was 577 individuals per station and was lower than the mean abundances of both the 2007 (1,024) and 2006 (948). Mean percent EPT of the watershed in 2008 was 44.11 percent, significantly different than mean percentages of 2007 at 70.83 percent and 2006 at 67.88 percent (One-way ANOVA;  $F(2,19)=5.46224$ ,  $p<0.05$ ).

Differences in habitat were also noted across years. At four of the seven sites sampled in 2008, subtle changes in geomorphology from 2007 and 2006 observations may have been witnessed. Data collected in the past three years may indicate that 14-OYS, 12-OYS, 03-JNC, and 09-OYS may have experienced a shifting of riffle locations as well as a change in streambed shape. In addition, at 11-OYS, not enough riffles were located to collect a full sample.

**Figure 10. Station Annual Biotic Scores – Oyster River Watershed, 2006-2008**



**Quality Control Test**

To test the accuracy of volunteer identification skills and data validity, NHDES staff performed a quality control (QC) test of ten percent of the samples collected (i.e. one station). The Oyster River station 03-JNC was selected as the QC sample. Streamside identification yielded a biotic score of 4.33, corresponding to the “good” category. The QC analysis yielded a biotic score of 3.94. Noticeable variations in sample composition include 12 additional mayfly larvae, eleven additional midge larvae, nine additional caddisfly larvae, 17 fewer black fly larvae and 12 fewer aquatic worms.

## **Recommendations**

- Consider closely monitoring water quality at 01-HML through further physical, chemical, and biological sampling to determine the potential causes of the station's consistently poor biotic scores.
- Examine, at the watershed level, the cause of increased biotic scores at all but one station in 2008.
- Investigate more rigorously if habitat and streambed shape is changing at 14-OYS, 12-OYS, 03-JNC, and 09-OYS.
- Consider closely monitoring water quality at 06-OYS, 12-OYS, and 14-OYS to determine the cause of the "fairly poor" result.
- Conduct a closer examination of the changing sample composition, especially in regards to black fly larvae, midge larvae, beetle and beetle-like insects, and damselfly nymphs.
- Assess the current biotic index and investigate potential ways to further improve the rating scale.
- Continue annual sampling at all stations in order to develop a long-term data set to better understand trends.

# APPENDIX A: 2008 OYSTER RIVER WATERSHED VRAP DATA

	Measurements not meeting New Hampshire surface water quality standards
	Turbidity measurements potentially not meeting New Hampshire surface water quality standards
	Measurements not meeting NHDES quality assurance/quality control standards

<sup>A</sup> Water quality data collected in association with VBAP sampling

<sup>B</sup> Chronic water quality standard

<sup>C</sup> First sample analyzed at NHDES Limnology Lab - Second sample analyzed at UNH Water Quality Analysis Laboratory

## 15-OYS, Oyster River, Sugar Shack, Barrington - Class A

Date	Time of Sample	DO (mg/L)	DO (% sat.)	pH	Turbidity (NTUs)	Specific Conductance (uS/cm)	Water Temp. (°C)	<i>E. coli</i> (CTS/100mL)	<i>E. coli</i> Geometric Mean	Chloride
<b>Standard</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>&gt;6.0</b>	<b>&gt;75% Daily Average</b>	<b>6.5 - 8.0</b>	<b>As naturally occurring</b>	<b>(µS/cm as chloride surrogate)</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>&lt;153</b>	<b>&lt;47</b>	<b>230 mg/L<sup>B</sup></b>
04/18/2008	10:40	11.76	102.0	5.53	0.98	64.8	9.0			
05/16/2008	10:50	10.06	94.8	6.43	0.59	76.4	12.7			
06/20/2008	10:25	8.50	89.4	5.77	0.41	72.0	17.2			
06/24/2008	08:05							80		
07/18/2008	10:40	8.38	91.3	6.02	0.33	106.1	19.6			
07/22/2008	07:43							200		
08/15/2008	09:55	8.58	90.7	5.62	0.60	59.1	18.4			13/12 <sup>C</sup>
08/19/2008	07:55							40	86	
09/16/2008	09:05							60	78	
09/19/2008	10:10	9.83	91.1	5.91	0.24	61.6	12.0			
9/26/2008 <sup>A</sup>	09:09	9.81	92.8	5.76	1.11	53.7	12.3			
10/14/2008	08:08							9	28	
10/18/2008	11:10	10.80	91.4	5.91	2.71	64.5	7.9			13

## 14-OYS, Oyster River, Jennison Driveway, Lee - Class A

Date	Time of Sample	Specific Conductance (uS/cm)	Chloride
<b>Standard</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>(µS/cm as chloride surrogate)</b>	<b>230 mg/L<sup>B</sup></b>
03/21/2008	09:50	63.5	17
04/01/2008	10:15	74.5	22

**01-XBB - Wheelright Pond Outlet, Stepping Stone Road Bridge, Lee - Class A**

Date	Time of Sample	DO (mg/L)	DO (% sat.)	pH	Turbidity (NTUs)	Specific Conductance (uS/cm)	Water Temp. (°C)	<i>E. coli</i> (CTS/100mL)	<i>E. coli</i> Geometric Mean	Chloride
<b>Standard</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>&gt;6.0</b>	<b>&gt;75% Daily Average</b>	<b>6.5 - 8.0</b>	<b>As naturally occurring</b>	<b>(uS/cm as chloride surrogate)</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>&lt;153</b>	<b>&lt;47</b>	<b>230 mg/L<sup>B</sup></b>
05/17/2008	10:56	9.25	94.3	6.99	<del>2.81</del>	104.6	16.7			
06/21/2008	10:40	6.25	70.8	6.69	0.98	107.9	21.7			
06/24/2008	08:10							70		
07/19/2008	10:58	3.98	46.1	6.48	1.91	111.6	22.7			
07/22/2008	07:53							90		
08/16/2008	11:00	7.14	84.7	6.12	1.37	104.5	23.8			19/14 <sup>C</sup>
08/19/2008	08:05							30	57	
09/16/2008	08:50							40	48	
09/20/2008	10:45	6.65	69.1	6.57	0.39	104.2	16.7			
10/14/2008	08:16							9	22	
10/17/2008	09:50	6.37	61.2	6.80	0.91	104.9	13.1			14
11/15/2008	10:06	9.05	78.8	6.61	1.84	104.3	9.5			

**13-OYS, Oyster River, Route 4 Bridge, East of Lee Traffic Circle, Lee, NH - Class A**

Date	Time of Sample	DO (mg/L)	DO (% sat.)	pH	Turbidity (NTUs)	Specific Conductance (uS/cm)	Water Temp. (°C)	<i>E. coli</i> (CTS/100mL)	<i>E. coli</i> Geometric Mean	Chloride
<b>Standard</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>&gt;6.0</b>	<b>&gt;75% Daily Average</b>	<b>6.5 - 8.0</b>	<b>As naturally occurring</b>	<b>(uS/cm as chloride surrogate)</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>&lt;153</b>	<b>&lt;47</b>	<b>230 mg/L<sup>B</sup></b>
03/21/2008	09:45					80.4				20
04/01/2008	10:05					88.2				22
05/17/2008	10:40	7.76	76.1	6.53	<del>1.39</del>	103.8	14.4			
06/21/2008	10:05	6.86	73.4	6.38	1.17	97.6	18.4			
06/24/2008	08:15							240		
07/19/2008	10:31	5.49	64.9	6.34	3.22	136.1	23.3			
07/22/2008	07:34							200		
08/16/2008	10:40	5.81	58.2	5.63	0.93	84.5	20.8			17/13 <sup>C</sup>
08/19/2008	08:00							110	184	
09/16/2008	08:55							130	142	
09/20/2008	10:25	8.22	76.1	6.39	0.92	83.2	11.7			
10/14/2008	08:01							9	50	
10/17/2008	10:05	6.46	58.8	6.08	1.46	88.5	11.1			15
11/15/2008	09:50	8.74	74.9	6.15	0.89	84.5	8.7			

**01-WDY, Wendy's Brook, Route 4 Bridge, East of Lee Traffic Circle, Lee - Class A**

Date	Time of Sample	DO (mg/L)	DO (% sat.)	pH	Turbidity (NTUs)	Specific Conductance (uS/cm)	Water Temp. (°C)	<i>E. coli</i> (CTS/100mL)	<i>E. coli</i> Geometric Mean	Chloride
<b>Standard</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>&gt;5.0</b>	<b>&gt;75% Daily Average</b>	<b>6.5 - 8.0</b>	<b>As naturally occurring</b>	<b>(µS/cm as chloride surrogate)</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>&lt;406</b>	<b>&lt;126</b>	<b>230 mg/L<sup>B</sup></b>
04/18/2008	10:20	11.89	104.6	6.45	3.09	355.2	9.9			
05/17/2008	10:22	10.20	95.3	6.76	<del>3.41</del>	599.0	12.3			
06/21/2008	10:20	9.56	97.8	6.91	7.32	422.1	16.5			
06/24/2008	08:00							2001		
07/19/2008	10:42	8.73	97.3	6.70	8.37	476.2	20.8			
07/22/2008	07:38							5400		
08/16/2008	10:20	8.70	92.2	6.20	12.50	356.6	18.2			100/84 <sup>C</sup>
08/19/2008	07:50							1700	2639	
09/16/2008	09:00							560	1726	
09/20/2008	10:15	10.52	93.5	6.83	8.16	544.0	10.0			
10/14/2008	07:54							20	267	
10/17/2008	10:20	9.76	88.5	6.42	7.26	353.4	11.4			85
11/15/2008	09:36	10.26	88.0	6.47	6.49	224.6	9.6			

**01-DBE, Dube Brook, Cherry Lane Bridge, Madbury - Class A**

Date	Time of Sample	DO (mg/L)	DO (% sat.)	pH	Turbidity (NTUs)	Specific Conductance (uS/cm)	Water Temp. (°C)	<i>E. coli</i> (CTS/100mL)	<i>E. coli</i> Geometric Mean	Chloride
<b>Standard</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>&gt;6.0</b>	<b>&gt;75% Daily Average</b>	<b>6.5 - 8.0</b>	<b>As naturally occurring</b>	<b>(µS/cm as chloride surrogate)</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>&lt;153</b>	<b>&lt;47</b>	<b>230 mg/L<sup>B</sup></b>
05/17/2008	09:53	9.29	88.5	6.89	<del>4.17</del>	95.5	13.0			
06/21/2008	09:45	5.77	61.4	6.77	9.21	99.6	18.6			
06/24/2008	07:45							310		
07/19/2008	09:55	5.25	59.4	6.51	12.60	86.3	21.2			
07/22/2008	07:22							90		
08/16/2008	09:45	7.43	80.2	6.24	5.89	90.8	19.0			8/7 <sup>C</sup>
08/19/2008	08:15							70	125	
09/16/2008	08:35							100	86	
09/20/2008	09:47	9.48	83.9	6.91	4.13	90.8	9.5			
10/14/2008	07:43							50	70	
10/17/2008	09:25	8.84	78.1	6.56	3.75	92.4	9.6			9
11/15/2008	09:15	9.97	85.5	6.59	3.04	80.4	8.6			

**09-OYS, Oyster River, Route 155 Bridge (USGS Gaging Station), Lee - Class A**

Date	Time of Sample	DO (mg/L)	DO (% sat.)	pH	Turbidity (NTUs)	Specific Conductance (uS/cm)	Water Temp. (°C)	<i>E. coli</i> (CTS/100mL)	<i>E. coli</i> Geometric Mean	Chloride
<b>Standard</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>&gt;6.0</b>	<b>&gt;75% Daily Average</b>	<b>6.5 - 8.0</b>	<b>As naturally occurring</b>	<b>(µS/cm as chloride surrogate)</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>&lt;153</b>	<b>&lt;47</b>	<b>230 mg/L<sup>B</sup></b>
05/17/2008	09:30	9.31	89.3	6.98	<del>4.24</del>	144.6	13.5			
06/21/2008	09:20	8.55	90.3	6.84	7.31	119.4	18.0			
06/24/2008	07:30							350		
07/19/2008	09:30	7.26	81.1	6.94	15.70	170.8	20.7			
07/22/2008	07:08							99		
08/16/2008	09:30	8.38	91.2	6.25	3.67	99.7	19.5			24/15 <sup>C</sup>
08/19/2008	08:20							160	177	
9/3/2008 <sup>A</sup>	08:45	3.94	42.9	6.86	5.94	186.9	17.1			
09/16/2008	08:30							190	144	
09/20/2008	09:28	9.57	87.2	6.74	3.43	117.0	11.1			
10/14/2008	07:30							50	115	
10/17/2008	09:05	9.29	84.0	6.50	4.87	116.8	11.0			17
11/15/2008	09:00	10.44	89.0	6.51	2.66	103.4	8.5			

**08-OYS, Oyster River, Mast Road Bridge, Durham - Class A**

Date	Time of Sample	DO (mg/L)	DO (% sat.)	pH	Turbidity (NTUs)	Specific Conductance (uS/cm)	Water Temp. (°C)	<i>E. coli</i> (CTS/100mL)	<i>E. coli</i> Geometric Mean	Chloride
<b>Standard</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>&gt;6.0</b>	<b>&gt;75% Daily Average</b>	<b>6.5 - 8.0</b>	<b>As naturally occurring</b>	<b>(µS/cm as chloride surrogate)</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>&lt;153</b>	<b>&lt;47</b>	<b>230 mg/L<sup>B</sup></b>
04/18/2008	10:05	11.19	99.6	6.83	4.29	119.0	10.2			
05/16/2008	10:30	9.35	90.4	7.17	3.99	162.2	13.8			
06/20/2008	10:05	8.14	<del>84.8</del>	6.76	6.73	151.2	17.7			
06/24/2008	07:25							1010		
07/18/2008	10:15	<del>8.52</del>	87.9	6.96	7.52	247.8	19.5			
07/22/2008	07:01							600		
08/15/2008	09:40	8.12	88.0	6.31	5.96	102.8	19.1			20/15 <sup>C</sup>
08/19/2008	07:35							100	393	
09/16/2008	08:25							160	213	
09/19/2008	09:50	9.58	90.5	6.99	3.82	133.1	12.8			
10/14/2008	07:25							30	78	
10/18/2008	10:40	9.19	80.0	6.80	3.77	135.3	9.0			21

### 01-CSB, Chelsey Brook, Packer's Falls Road Bridge, Lee - Class A

Date	Time of Sample	DO (mg/L)	DO (% sat.)	pH	Turbidity (NTUs)	Specific Conductance (uS/cm)	Water Temp. (°C)	E. coli (CTS/100mL)	E.coli Geometric Mean	Chloride
<b>Standard</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>&gt;6.0</b>	<b>&gt;75% Daily Average</b>	<b>6.5 - 8.0</b>	<b>As naturally occurring</b>	<b>(µS/cm as chloride surrogate)</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>&lt;153</b>	<b>&lt;47</b>	<b>230 mg/L<sup>B</sup></b>
05/17/2008	09:00	6.51	62.6	6.69	<del>1.46</del>	213.0	12.2			
06/21/2008	09:00	7.41	73.0	6.71	2.15	176.6	14.2			
06/24/2008	07:20							1310		
07/19/2008	09:10	7.16	72.6	6.71	4.67	249.4	16.0			
07/22/2008	06:56							300		
08/16/2008	09:05	7.11	71.9	6.32	2.44	216.5	15.9			38/28 <sup>C</sup>
08/19/2008	07:30							50	270	
09/16/2008	08:20							180	139	
09/20/2008	09:05	8.78	77.4	6.66	2.68	241.8	9.3			
10/14/2008	07:20							40	71	
10/17/2008	08:40	7.48	69.9	6.35	3.35	191.4	9.5			23
11/15/2008	08:45	8.54	72.4	6.51	1.99	152.8	8.8			

### 07-OYS, Oyster River, Footbridge, College Woods, Durham, NH - Class A

Date	Time of Sample	DO (mg/L)	DO (% sat.)	pH	Turbidity (NTUs)	Specific Conductance (uS/cm)	Water Temp. (°C)	E. coli (CTS/100mL)	E.coli Geometric Mean	Chloride
<b>Standard</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>&gt;6.0</b>	<b>&gt;75% Daily Average</b>	<b>6.5 - 8.0</b>	<b>As naturally occurring</b>	<b>(µS/cm as chloride surrogate)</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>&lt;153</b>	<b>&lt;47</b>	<b>230 mg/L<sup>B</sup></b>
03/21/2008	09:35					90.2				21
04/01/2008	09:45					113.8				26
05/17/2008	08:35	9.04	85.6	7.13	<del>4.92</del>	169.3	12.9			
06/21/2008	08:30	8.55	88.5	7.01	12.70	164.5	17.1			
06/24/2008	07:10							930		
07/19/2008	08:35	7.42	82.0	6.97	31.00	215.7	20.3			
07/22/2008	06:44							500		
08/16/2008	08:43	8.30	90.1	6.90	4.69	118.7	19.1			24/17 <sup>C</sup>
08/19/2008	07:15							80	334	
09/16/2008	08:10							150	182	
09/20/2008	08:40	9.73	90.2	6.71	3.24	148.8	10.8			
10/14/2008	06:55							50	84	
10/17/2008	08:25	9.42	86.2	6.80	5.99	149.7	11.4			22
11/15/2008	08:20	10.31	87.7	6.77	5.27	123.4	8.9			

### 01-HML, Hamel Brook, Route 108 Bridge, Durham - Class B

Date	Time of Sample	DO (mg/L)	DO (% sat.)	pH	Turbidity (NTUs)	Specific Conductance (uS/cm)	Water Temp. (°C)	<i>E. coli</i> (CTS/100mL)	<i>E. coli</i> Geometric Mean	Chloride
Standard	NA	>5.0	>75% Daily Average	6.5 - 8.0	As naturally occurring	(µS/cm as chloride surrogate)	NA	<406	<126	230 mg/L <sup>B</sup>
03/21/2008	09:00					119.3				26
04/01/2008	09:20					124.2				28
04/18/2008	09:35	9.81	86.5	6.73	3.90	162.9	9.9			
05/16/2008	10:05	7.75	76.8	7.02	4.75	212.2	14.7			
06/20/2008	09:45	4.47	<del>47.7</del>	6.60	16.30	260.1	17.4			
06/24/2008	06:55							680		
07/18/2008	09:55	<del>3.18</del>	35.4	6.66	7.18	217.5	20.8			
07/22/2008	06:27							200		
08/15/2008	09:20	4.34	47.7	6.42	3.58	181.2	19.2			26/20 <sup>C</sup>
08/19/2008	07:00							310	348	
09/16/2008	07:50							110	190	
09/19/2008	09:30	5.35	50.5	6.64	2.45	196.3	12.7			
10/14/2008	06:04							130	164	
10/18/2008	10:15	5.28	46.3	6.56	3.57	181.8	9.1			21

### 00E-CGB - College Brook, Mill Pond Road Bridge, Durham - Class B

Date	Time of Sample	DO (mg/L)	DO (% sat.)	pH	Turbidity (NTUs)	Specific Conductance (uS/cm)	Water Temp. (°C)	<i>E. coli</i> (CTS/100mL)	<i>E. coli</i> Geometric Mean	Chloride
Standard	NA	>5.0	>75% Daily Average	6.5 - 8.0	As naturally occurring	(µS/cm as chloride surrogate)	NA	<406	<126	230 mg/L <sup>B</sup>
04/18/2008	08:25	11.57	98.8	7.41	4.18	988	7.3			
05/16/2008	08:20	10.01	94.5	7.45	2.58	1131	13.0			
06/20/2008	08:20	6.85	<del>71.4</del>	7.22	5.83	1253	16.3			
06/24/2008	06:15							2001		
07/18/2008	08:35	<del>6.12</del>	67.1	7.25	4.16	1774	19.7			
07/22/2008	05:47							500		
08/15/2008	08:10	8.43	87.3	7.37	4.16	714	17.7			170/154 <sup>C</sup>
08/19/2008	06:35							270	646	
09/16/2008	07:00							260	327	
09/19/2008	08:20	9.43	89.2	7.52	2.97	971	12.7			
10/14/2008	07:12							200	241	
10/18/2008	09:00	9.30	79.6	7.15	2.41	807	8.3			180

**05-OYS, Oyster River, Route 108/Newmarket Road Bridge, Durham - Class B**

Date	Time of Sample	Specific Conductance (uS/cm)	Chloride
Standard	NA	( $\mu\text{S/cm}$ as chloride surrogate)	230 mg/L <sup>B</sup>
03/21/2008	08:55	113.4	28
04/01/2008	09:15	148.2	37

**00J-PRB, Pettee Brook, Sauer Terrace, Durham - Class B**

Date	Time of Sample	DO (mg/L)	DO (% sat.)	pH	Turbidity (NTUs)	Specific Conductance (uS/cm)	Water Temp. (°C)	<i>E. coli</i> (CTS/100mL)	<i>E. coli</i> Geometric Mean	Chloride
Standard	NA	>5.0	>75% Daily Average	6.5 - 8.0	As naturally occurring	( $\mu\text{S/cm}$ as chloride surrogate)	NA	<406	<126	230 mg/L <sup>B</sup>
03/21/2008	08:15					430.1				140
04/01/2008	08:40					614				200
04/18/2008	08:40	11.20	94.5	7.17	4.41	808	7.6			
05/16/2008	08:35	10.20	94.2	7.58	2.18	1492	11.6			
06/20/2008	08:40	7.91	<del>81.4</del>	6.84	2.68	738	17.0			
06/24/2008	06:20							1340		
07/18/2008	08:45	<del>7.92</del>	86.0	7.76	2.27	657	19.4			
07/22/2008	05:55							600		
08/15/2008	08:25	8.22	88.8	6.88	2.28	565	18.8			130/125 <sup>C</sup>
08/19/2008	06:40							240	240	
09/16/2008	07:10							230	321	
09/19/2008	08:40	10.13	95.2	7.49	2.21	1052	12.5			
10/14/2008	06:35							180	215	
10/18/2008	09:30	9.29	81.1	7.16	2.53	658	9.2			146

**02G-BRD, Beards Creek, Stoleworthy Wildlife Sanctuary, Durham - Class B**

Date	Time of Sample	DO (mg/L)	DO (% sat.)	pH	Turbidity (NTUs)	Specific Conductance (uS/cm)	Water Temp. (°C)	<i>E. coli</i> (CTS/100mL)	<i>E. coli</i> Geometric Mean	Chloride
<b>Standard</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>&gt;5.0</b>	<b>&gt;75% Daily Average</b>	<b>6.5 - 8.0</b>	<b>As naturally occurring</b>	<b>(µS/cm as chloride surrogate)</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>&lt;406</b>	<b>&lt;126</b>	<b>230 mg/L<sup>B</sup></b>
04/18/2008	08:55	11.46	98.4	7.25	3.71	273.8	8.8			
05/16/2008	08:55	10.02	97.8	7.56	3.15	309.2	13.7			
06/20/2008	09:05	8.14	84.4	6.73	5.70	265.8	17.3			
06/24/2008	06:25							700		
07/18/2008	09:10	7.12	77.1	6.92	10.28	375.2	19.4			
07/22/2008	06:02							500		
08/15/2008	08:45	8.15	91.0	7.19	4.19	239.2	18.5			51
08/19/2008	06:45							90	316	
09/16/2008	07:20							100	165	
09/19/2008	09:00	9.12	84.7	7.38	2.73	287.1	12.0			
10/14/2008	06:27							60	81	
10/18/2008	08:40	10.00	85.3	7.10	3.00	265	8.2			37

**02-BRD, Beards Creek, Coe Drive, Durham - Class B**

Date	Time of Sample	Specific Conductance (uS/cm)	Chloride
<b>Standard</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>(µS/cm as chloride surrogate)</b>	<b>230 mg/L<sup>B</sup></b>
03/21/2008	08:25	190.8	48
04/01/2008	08:45	208.7	52

**03-JNC, Johnson Creek, Freshet Road Bridge, Durham - Class B**

Date	Time of Sample	DO (mg/L)	DO (% sat.)	pH	Turbidity (NTUs)	Specific Conductance (uS/cm)	Water Temp. (°C)	<i>E. coli</i> (CTS/100mL)	<i>E.coli</i> Geometric Mean	Chloride
Standard	NA	>5.0	>75% Daily Average	6.5 - 8.0	As naturally occurring	(µS/cm as chloride surrogate)	NA	<406	<126	230 mg/L <sup>B</sup>
03/21/2008	08:40					209.4				60
04/01/2008	09:00					247.8				72
04/18/2008	09:15	13.37	108.3	6.81	3.52	318.5	6.3			
05/16/2008	09:25	10.96	101.3	7.73	2.70	336.4	11.7			
06/20/2008	09:25	9.34	94.2	6.78	6.95	349.9	15.9			
06/24/2008	06:40							990		
07/18/2008	09:30	7.71	76.8	7.13	9.24	420.1	19.7			
07/22/2008	06:17							300		
08/15/2008	09:05	8.34	87.8	6.78	6.77	254.4	18.2			57/46 <sup>C</sup>
08/19/2008	06:55							110	320	
09/16/2008	07:30							140	167	
09/19/2008	09:15	10.47	94.4	6.75	5.59	329.9	10.7			
10/14/2008	06:16							9	52	
10/18/2008	10:00	9.98	82.0	6.96	4.14	256.1	6.8			47

# APPENDIX B: Interpreting VRAP Water Quality Monitoring Parameters

## Chemical Parameters

### Dissolved Oxygen (DO)

- **Unit of Measurement:** concentration in milligrams per liter (mg/L) and percent saturation (%).
- **Description:** A measure of the amount of oxygen in the water: Concentration is a measure of the amount of oxygen in a volume of water; saturation is a measurement of the amount of oxygen in the water compared to the amount of oxygen the water can actually hold at full saturation. Both of these measurements are necessary to accurately determine whether New Hampshire surface water quality standards are met.
- **Importance:** Oxygen is dissolved into the water from the atmosphere, aided by wind and wave action, or by rocky, steep, or uneven stream beds. The presence of dissolved oxygen is vital to bottom-dwelling organisms as well as fish and amphibians. Aquatic plants and algae produce oxygen in the water during the day, and consume oxygen during the night. Bacteria utilize oxygen both day and night when they process organic matter into smaller and smaller particles.

**Class A NH Surface Water Quality Standard:** 6 mg/L at any place or time, or 75% minimum daily average – (unless naturally occurring).

**Class B NH Surface Water Quality Standard:** 5 mg/L at any place or time or 75% minimum daily average – (unless naturally occurring).

Several measurements of oxygen saturation taken in a 24-hour period must be averaged to compare to the 75 percent daily average saturation standard. The concentration of dissolved oxygen is dependent on many factors including temperature and sunlight, and tends to fluctuate throughout the day. Saturation values are averaged because a reading taken in the morning may be low due to respiration, while a measurement that afternoon may show that the saturation has recovered to acceptable levels. Water can become saturated with more than 100 percent dissolved oxygen.

### pH

- **Unit of Measurement:** units (no abbreviation).
- **Description:** A measure of hydrogen ion activity in water, or, in general terms, the acidity of water. pH is measured on a logarithmic scale of 0 to 14, with 7 being neutral. A high pH indicates alkaline (or basic) conditions and a low pH indicates acidic conditions. pH is influenced by geology and soils, organic acids (decaying leaves and other matter), and human-induced acids from acid rain (which typically has a pH of 3.5 to 5.5).
- **Importance:** pH affects many chemical and biological processes in the water and this is important to the survival and reproduction of fish and other aquatic life. Different organisms flourish within different ranges of pH. Measurements outside of an organism's preferred range can limit growth and reproduction and lead to physiological stress. Low pH can also affect the toxicity of aquatic compounds such as ammonia and certain metals by making them more "available" for uptake by aquatic plants and animals. This can produce conditions that are toxic to aquatic life.

**Class A NH Surface Water Quality Standard:** Between 6.5 and 8.0 (unless naturally occurring).

**Class B NH Surface Water Quality Standard:** Between 6.5 and 8.0 (unless naturally occurring).

Sometimes, readings that fall below this range are determined to be naturally occurring. This is often a result of wetlands near the sample station. Wetlands can lower pH because the tannic and humic acids released by decaying plants can cause water to become more acidic.

pH Units	Category
<5.0	High Impact
5.0 – 5.9	Moderate to High Impact
6.0 – 6.4	Normal; Low Impact
6.5 – 8.0	Normal;
6.1 – 8.0	Satisfactory

### **Specific Conductance or Conductivity**

- **Unit of Measurement:** micromhos per centimeter (umhos/cm) or microsiemens per centimeter (uS/cm).
- **Description:** The numerical expression of the ability of water to carry an electrical current at 25° C and a measure of free ion (charged particles) content in the water. These ions can come from natural sources such as bedrock, or human sources such as stormwater runoff. Specific conductance can be used to indicate the presence of chlorides, nitrates, sulfates, phosphates, sodium, magnesium, calcium, iron, and aluminum ions. There is a difference between conductivity and specific conductance. Specific conductance measures the free ion content of water at a *specific* water temperature, whereas conductivity measures the free ion content of water at 25° C. VRAP uses the term “specific conductance” because our conductivity measurements account for temperature. In some studies and programs, the term “conductivity” is used. This term should only be used when the measurement *does not* adjust to a specific temperature.
- **Importance:** Specific conductance readings can help locate potential pollution sources because polluted water usually has a higher specific conductance than unpolluted waters. High specific conductance values often indicate pollution from road salt, septic systems, wastewater treatment plants, or urban/agricultural runoff. Specific conductance can also be related to geology. In unpolluted rivers and streams, geology and groundwater are the primary influences on specific conductance levels.

**Class A NH Surface Water Quality Standard:** No numeric standard.

**Class B NH Surface Water Quality Standard:** No numeric standard.

Although there is no formal standard for specific conductance, data collect by VRAP groups and NHDES indicated a very close relationship between specific conductance levels and chloride. In some cases NHDES can use specific conductance measurements as a surrogate for chloride levels. The data collected by NHDES indicate that the chronic chloride standard is correlated with a specific conductance level of approximately 850 uS/cm.

Specific Conductance (uS/cm)	Category
0 – 100	Normal
101 – 200	Low Impact
201 – 500	Moderate Impact
> 501	High Impact
> 850	Likely exceeding chronic chloride standard

## **Turbidity**

- **Unit of Measurement:** Nephelometric Turbidity Units (abbreviated as NTU).
- **Description:** A measurement of the amount of suspended material in the water. This material, which is comprised of particles such as clay, silt, algae, suspended sediment, and decaying plant material, causes light to be scattered and absorbed, rather than transmitted in straight lines through the water.
- **Importance:** Higher turbidity increases water temperatures because suspended particles absorb more heat. This, in turn, reduces dissolved oxygen (DO) concentrations because warm water holds less DO than cold water. Higher turbidity also reduces the amount of light that can penetrate the water, which reduces photosynthesis and DO production. Suspended materials can clog fish gills, reducing disease resistance, lowering growth rates, and affecting egg and larval development. As the particles settle, they can blanket the stream bottom, especially in slower waters, and smother fish eggs and benthic macroinvertebrates. Clean waters are generally associated with low turbidity, but there is a high degree of natural variability involved. Rain events can increase turbidity in surface waters by flushing sediment, organic matter and other materials into the water. Human activities such as vegetation removal and soil disruption can also lead to dramatic increases in turbidity levels.

**Class A NH Surface Water Quality Standard:** As naturally occurs.

**Class B NH Surface Water Quality Standard:** Shall not exceed naturally occurring conditions by more than 10 NTU.

## **Physical Parameters**

### **Temperature**

- **Unit of Measurement:** Degrees Celsius (° C)
- **Importance:** Water temperature is a critical parameter for aquatic life and has an impact on other water quality parameters such as dissolved oxygen concentrations, and bacteria activity in water. Water temperature controls the metabolic and reproductive processes of aquatic species and can determine which fish and macroinvertebrate species can survive in a given river or stream.

A number of factors can have an impact on water temperature including the quantity and maturity of riparian vegetation, the rate of flow, the percent of impervious surfaces contributing stormwater, thermal discharges, impoundments and groundwater.

**Class A NH Surface Water Quality Standard:** No numeric standard; as naturally occurs.

**Class B NH Surface Water Quality Standard:** No numeric standard

Although there is currently no numerical water quality criteria for water temperature, NHDES is in the process of collecting biological and water temperature data that will contribute to the development of a procedure for assessing rivers and stream based on water temperature and its corresponding impact to the biological integrity of the waterbody.

## **Chlorophyll-a (Chlor a)**

- **Unit of Measurement:** Milligrams per liter (mg/L).
- **Description:** An indicator of the biomass, or abundance, of planktonic algae in the river. The technical term “biomass” is used to represent “amount by weight.” Chlorophyll-a can be strongly influenced by phosphorus, which is derived by natural and human activities.

**Importance:** Because algae is a plant and contains the green pigment chlorophyll-a, the concentration of chlorophyll-a found in the water gives an estimation of the concentration of algae. If the chlorophyll-a concentration increases, this indicates an increase in the algal population.

**Class A NH Surface Water Quality Standard:** No numeric standard.

**Class B NH Surface Water Quality Standard:** No numeric standard.

<b>Chlorophyll-a (mg/L)</b>	<b>Category</b>
< 3	Excellent
3 – 7	Good
7 – 15	Less than desirable
> 15	Nuisance

## **Total Phosphorus (TP)**

- **Unit of Measurement:** Milligrams per liter (mg/L).
- **Description:** A measure of all forms of phosphorus in the water, including inorganic and organic forms. There are many sources of phosphorus, both natural and human. These include soil and rocks, sewage, animal manure, fertilizer, erosion, and other types of contamination.
- **Importance:** Phosphorus is a nutrient that is essential to plants and animals. However, excess amounts can cause rapid increases in the biological activity in water. Phosphorus is usually the “limiting nutrient” in freshwater streams, which means relatively small amounts can increase algae and chlorophyll-a levels. Algal blooms and/or excessive aquatic plant growth can decrease oxygen levels and make water unattractive. Phosphorus can indicate the presence of septic systems, sewage, animal waste, lawn fertilizer, road and construction erosion, other types of pollution, or natural wetlands and atmospheric deposition.

**Class A NH Surface Water Quality Standard:** No numeric standard; as naturally occurs.

**Class B NH Surface Water Quality Standard:** No numeric standard; as naturally occurring, shall contain no phosphorus in such concentrations that would impair any existing or designated uses.

<b>Total Phosphorus (mg/L)</b>	<b>Category</b>
< 0.010	Ideal
0.011 – 0.025	Average
0.026 – 0.050	More than desirable
> 0.051	Excessive (potential nuisance concentration)

## **Total Kjeldahl Nitrogen (TKN)**

- **Unit of Measurement:** Milligrams per liter (mg/L).
- **Description:** A measure of the amount of ammonia and organic nitrogen in the water.
- **Importance:** High nitrogen levels can increase algae and chlorophyll-a levels in the river, but is generally less of a concern in fresh water than phosphorus. Nitrogen can indicate the presence of sewage, animal waste, fertilizer, erosion, or other types of pollution.

**Class A NH Surface Water Quality Standard:** No numeric standard; as naturally occurs.

**Class B NH Surface Water Quality Standard:** No numeric standard; as naturally occurring, shall contain no nitrogen in such concentrations that would impair any existing or designated uses.

<b>TKN (mg/L)</b>	<b>Category</b>
< 0.25	Ideal
0.26 – 0.40	Average
0.41 – 0.50	More than desirable
> 0.51	Excessive (potential nuisance concentration)

## **Other Parameters**

### **Chloride**

- **Unit of Measurement:** Milligrams per liter (mg/L).
- **Description:** The chloride ion (Cl<sup>-</sup>) is found naturally in some surface waters and groundwater. It is also found in high concentrations in seawater. Higher-than-normal chloride concentrations in freshwater is detrimental to water quality. In New Hampshire, applying road salt for winter accident prevention is a large source of chloride to the environment. Unfortunately, this has increased over time due to road expansion and increased vehicle traffic. Road salt (most often sodium chloride) readily dissolves and enters aquatic environments in ionic forms. Although chloride can originate from natural sources, most of the chloride that enters the environment is associated with the storage and application of road salt. As such, chloride-containing compounds commonly enter surface water, soil, and groundwater during late-spring snowmelt (since the ground is frozen during much of the late winter and early spring). Sodium chloride is also used on foods as table salt, and consequently is present in human waste. Thus, sometimes chloride in water can indicate sewage pollution. Saltwater intrusion can also elevate groundwater chlorides in drinking water wells near coastlines. Chloride ions are conservative, which means they are not degraded in the environment and tend to remain in solution, once dissolved. Chloride ions that enter ground water can ultimately be expected to reach surface water and, therefore, influence aquatic environments and humans.
- **Importance:** Research shows elevated chloride levels can be toxic to freshwater aquatic life. Among the species tested, freshwater aquatic plants and invertebrates tend to be the most sensitive to chloride. In order to protect freshwater aquatic life in New Hampshire, the state has adopted acute and chronic chloride criteria.

**Acute Standard:** 860 mg/L.

**Chronic Standard:** 230 mg/L.

## **Escherichia Coliform Bacteria (*E. coli*)**

- **Unit of Measurement:** Counts per 100 milliliter (cts/100 mL).
- **Description:** An indicator of the potential presence of pathogens in fresh water. *E. coli* bacteria is a normal component in the large intestines of humans and other warm-blooded animals, and can be excreted in their fecal material. Organisms causing infections or disease (pathogens) are often excreted in the fecal material of humans and other warm-blooded animals.
- **Importance:** *E.coli* bacteria is a good indicator of fecal pollution and the possible presence of pathogenic organisms. In freshwater, *E. coli* concentrations help determine if the water is safe for recreational uses such as swimming.

Several factors can contribute to elevated *E. coli* levels, including, but not limited to rain storms, low river flows, the presence of wildlife, and the presence of septic systems along the river.

**Class A NH Surface Water Quality Standard:** Unless naturally occurring, shall contain not more than either a geometric mean of 47 *E.coli* cts/100 mL based on at least three samples obtained over a sixty-day period, or greater than 153 *E.coli* cts/100 mL in any one sample.

**Class B NH Surface Water Quality Standard:** Unless naturally occurring, shall contain not more than either a geometric mean of 126 *E.coli* cts/100 mL based on at least three samples obtained over a sixty-day period, or greater than 406 *E.coli* cts/100 mL in any one sample.

## **Metals**

Depending on the metal concentration, its form (dissolved or particulate), and the hardness of the water, trace metals can be toxic to aquatic life. Metals in dissolved form are generally more toxic than metals in the particulate form. The dissolved metal concentration is dependent on pH, as well as the presence of solids and organic matter that can bind with the metal to render it less toxic.

Hardness is primarily a measure of the calcium and magnesium ion concentrations in water, expressed as calcium carbonate. The hardness concentration affects the toxicity of certain metals. New Hampshire water quality regulations include numeric criteria for a variety of metals. Since dissolved metals are typically found in extremely low concentrations, the potential contamination of samples collected for trace metals analyses has become a primary concern of water quality managers. To prevent such contamination and to ensure reliable results, the use of “clean techniques” is becoming more and more frequent when sampling for dissolved metals. Because of this, sampling for metals may be more costly and require additional effort than in the past.

### **New Hampshire Volunteer River Assessment Program**

29 Hazen Drive – PO Box 95  
Concord, NH 03302-0095  
p (603) 271-0699 – f (603) 271-7894  
[www.des.nh.gov](http://www.des.nh.gov)

**2008**

## **APPENDIX C:**

### **2008 VRAP Field Audit**

On July 18, 2008 VRAP staff visited volunteers from the Oyster River VRAP group to conduct a field audit. VRAP staff aim to visit each group annually during a scheduled sampling event to verify that volunteers successfully follow the VRAP protocols. If necessary, volunteers are re-trained during the visit, and the group is notified of the result of the verification visit. During the visit, volunteers were assessed in the following five categories:

#### **1) Overall Sampling Procedures**

Appropriate storage of meters, sample collection, laboratory sample collection and transportation, beginning and end of day meter checks, collecting a field replicate, performing QA/QC Meter Checks, and ensuring that all calibration and sampling data are properly documented on the 2008 VRAP Field Data Sheet and the Laboratory Services Login & Custody Sheet.

#### **2) Turbidity**

Inspecting and cleaning of glass turbidity vials prior to measurement of standards and samples, performing the *Initial Turbidity Meter Check*, calibrating the meter to a known standard at the beginning of the sampling day, recording the value of the DI turbidity blank (*QA/QC Meter Check*) once during the sampling day, and performing the *End of the Day Meter Check* at the conclusion of the sampling day.

#### **3) pH**

Inspecting the pH electrode prior to sampling, calibrating to both pH 7.0 and 4.0 buffers prior to each measurement, rinsing and wiping the pH electrode probe prior to and after the measurement of standards and samples, allowing the pH measurement to stabilize prior to recording the measurement, and recording the value of the 6.0 buffer (*QA/QC Meter Check*) once during the sampling day.

#### **4) Water Temperature/Dissolved Oxygen**

Ensuring that the meter is allowed an adequate time to stabilize prior to the first calibration, the meter is calibrated prior to each measurement, the calibration value is properly recorded, the chamber reading is properly recorded, that sufficient time is allowed for readings to stabilize, and that a zero oxygen check (*QA/QC Meter Check*) is completed during the sampling day.

#### **5) Specific Conductance**

Performing the *Initial Conductivity Meter Check* using a known standard, allowing for the meter to properly stabilize before recording measurements, properly cleaning the probe between stations, and performing the *End of the Day Meter Check* at the conclusion of the sampling day.

During the field sampling procedures assessment, VRAP staff offered important reminders and suggestions to ensure proper sampling techniques and re-trained volunteers in the areas needing improvement. Afterwards, the volunteers were sent a follow-up e-mail providing written reminders and suggestions of the methods that need improvement. Overall, the Oyster River VRAP group did an excellent job. It is important to ensure that all volunteers attend an annual VRAP training workshop prior to the sampling season and to familiarize themselves with proper sampling techniques. Please remember to schedule an annual field audit in 2009.

# APPENDIX D: New Hampshire Watershed Report Cards Built from the 2008 305(b)/303(d) Surface Water Quality Reports

## 305(b)/303(d) Integrated Report Background

<http://des.nh.gov/organization/divisions/water/wmb/swqa/>

The Surface Water Quality Assessment Program produces two surface water quality documents every two years, the "305(b) Report" and the "303(d) List". As the two documents use the same data and assessment methodology, the 305(b) Report and 303(d) List were combined into one Integrated Report. The Integrated Report describes the quality of New Hampshire's surface waters and an analysis of the extent to which all such waters provide for the protection and propagation of a balanced population of shellfish, fish, and wildlife, and allow recreational activities in and on the water.

**Each Watershed Report Card covers a single 12 digit Hydrologic Unit Code (HUC12), on average a 34 square mile area. Each Watershed Report Card has three components;**

1. **Report Card:** A one page card that summarizes the overall use support for Aquatic Life, Primary Contact (i.e. Swimming), and Secondary Contact (i.e. Boating) Designated Uses on every Assessment Unit ID (AUID) within the HUC12.
2. **HUC 12 Map:** A map of the watershed with abbreviated labels for each AUID within the HUC12.
3. **Assessment Details:** Anywhere from one to forty pages with the detailed assessment information for each and every AUID in the Report Card and Map.

## How to Find Your HUC12 Watershed Report Card:

[http://des.nh.gov/organization/divisions/water/wmb/swqa/report\\_cards.htm](http://des.nh.gov/organization/divisions/water/wmb/swqa/report_cards.htm)

then go to: <http://www2.des.nh.gov/SWQA>

**TO FIND YOUR HUC12...**

On the web, select your town of interest.

Town/City: ALEXANDRIA

- ACWORTH
- ALBANY
- ALEXANDRIA
- ALLENSTOWN
- ALSTEAD
- ...

Then the HUC12 of interest.

HUC 12	Name
010700010601	COCKERMOUTH RIVER
010700010602	HORNET COVE
010700010603	SANBORN BAY TO NEWFOUND R.
010700010701	SMITH RIVER UPPER
010700010702	SMITH RIVER LOWER

**TIP!** Turn off Pop-up Blockers to see the Report Card.

**TIP!** It may take a try or two to get the right area.

## What are Assessment Units?

Each waterbody is divided into smaller segments called Assessment Units (AUs). In general, AUs are the basic unit of record for conducting and reporting the results of all water quality assessments. AUs are intended to be representative of homogenous segments; consequently, sampling stations within an AU can be assumed to be representative of the segment. Many factors can influence the homogeneity of a segment. Factors used to establish homogenous

AUs for assessments include: waterbody type, HUC12 boundaries, water quality standards, pollutant sources, Maximum AU size for rivers and streams, major changes in land use, stream order/location of major tributaries, public water supplies, outstanding resource waters, shellfish program categories, designated beaches, and cold water fish spawning areas.

**Assessment Unit IDs (AUIDs)** for each of the stations your group monitored in 2008 can be found in the sampling station table in this year’s VRAP report. Similarly, a list of all current and historic sampling stations for your group can be found on the VRAP webpage at <http://des.nh.gov/organization/divisions/water/wmb/vrap/index.htm>.

### How are the Surface Water Quality Assessment Determinations Made?

All readily available data with reliable Quality Assurance/Quality Control is used in the biennial surface water quality assessments. For a full understanding of how the Surface Water Quality Standards (Env-Wq 1700) are translated into surface water quality assessments we urge the reader to review the 2008 Consolidated Assessment and Listing Methodology (CALM) at <http://des.nh.gov/organization/divisions/water/wmb/swqa/2008/index.htm> (Appendices 4 & 5)

### Where Can I find More Advanced Resources?

Additional resources including GIS shapefiles (Appendix 12) of all AUIDs in a sortable EXCEL file (Appendix 22) of the detailed assessments are available at <http://des.nh.gov/organization/divisions/water/wmb/swqa/2008/index.htm>.

### How Are Assessments Coded in the Report Card?

Assessment outcomes are displayed on a color scale as well as an alpha numeric scale that provides additional distinctions for the designated use and Parameter level assessments as outlined in the table below.

		Severe	Poor	Likely Bad	No Data	Likely Good	Marginal	Good
		Not Supporting, Severe	Not Supporting, Marginal	Insufficient Information – Potentially Not Supporting	No Data	Insufficient Information – Potentially Full Supporting	Full Support, Marginal	Full Support, Good
Category	Description							
*Category 2	Meets standards						2-M or 2-OBS	2-G
Category 3	Insufficient Information			3-PNS	3-ND	3-PAS		
Category 4	Does not Meet Standards;							
4A	TMDL^ Completed	4A-P	4A-M or 4A-T					
4B	Other enforceable measure will correct the issue.	4B-P	4B-M or 4B-T					
4C	Non-pollutant (i.e. exotic weeds)	4C-P	4C-M					
Category 5	TMDL^ Needed	5-P	5-M or 5-T					

\* “Category 1” only exists at the Assessment Unit Level.  
 ^ TMDL stands for Total Maximum Daily Load studies (<http://des.nh.gov/organization/divisions/water/wmb/tmdl/index.htm>)

### For More Information:

Ken Edwardson, NHDES Surface Water Quality Assessment Program Coordinator  
 (603) 271-8864 - [Kenneth.Edwardson@des.nh.gov](mailto:Kenneth.Edwardson@des.nh.gov)

# WATERSHED 305(b) ASSESSMENT SUMMARY REPORT:

HUC 12 010600030902

HUC 12 NAME OYSTER RIVER

(Locator map on next page only applies to this HUC12)

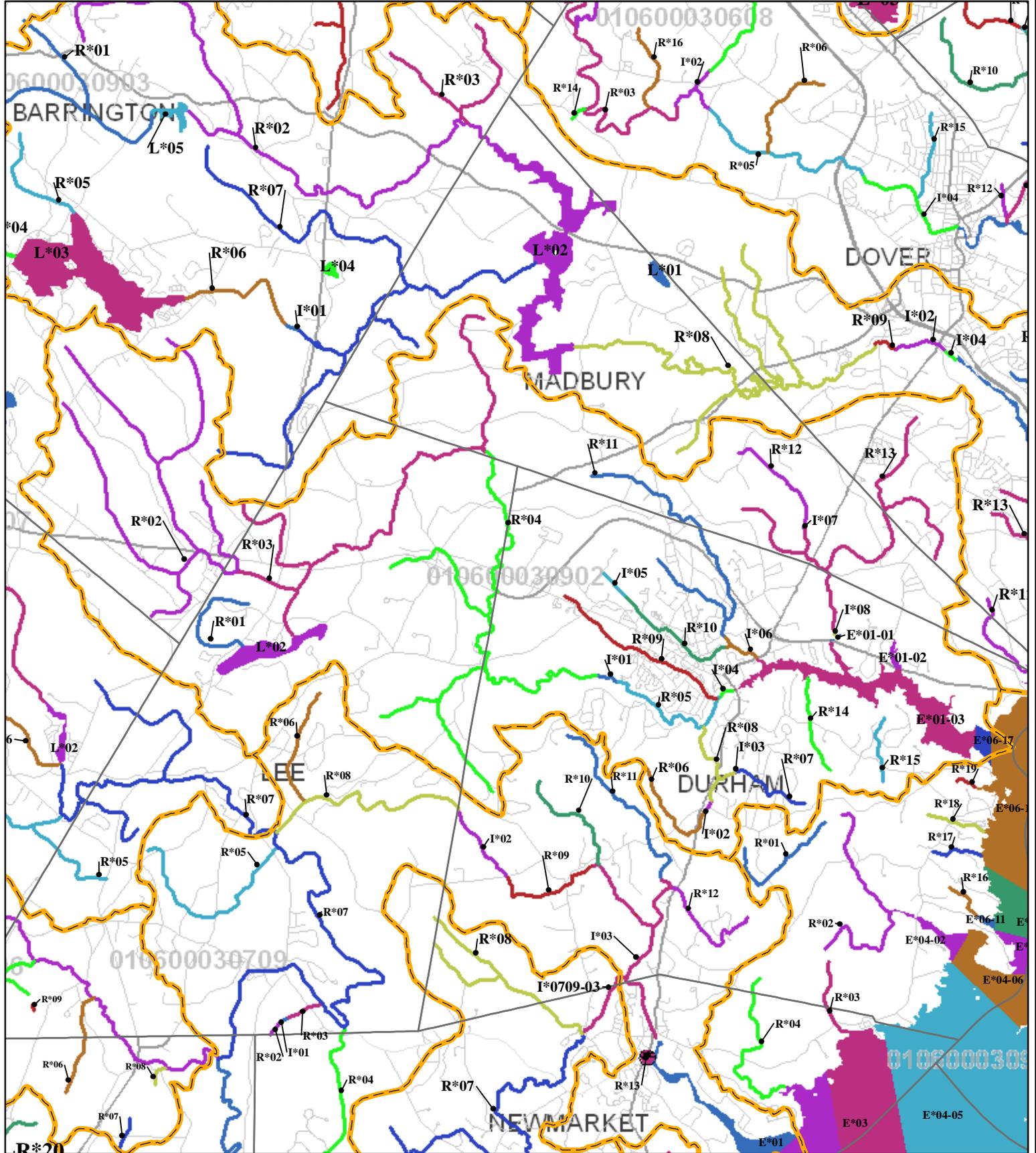
Assessment Cycle 2008

Good	Full Support Good
Marginal	Full Support Marginal
Likely Good	Insufficient Information – Potentially Full Support
No Data	No Data
Likely Bad	Insufficient Information – Potentially Not Support
Poor	Not Support Marginal
Severe	Not Support Severe



ASSESSMENT UNIT ID	MAP LABEL	ASSESSMENT UNIT NAME	AQUATIC LIFE	SWIMMING	BOATING	FISH CONSUMP.
NHEST600030902-01-01	E*01-01	OYSTER RIVER (JOHNSON CR)	5-P	3-ND	3-ND	3-M
NHEST600030902-01-02	E*01-02	OYSTER RIVER (BUNKER CR)	5-P	3-ND	3-ND	3-M
NHEST600030902-01-03	E*01-03	OYSTER RIVER	5-P	5-P	3-PNS	3-M
NHIMP600030902-01	I*01	OYSTER RIVER - OYSTER RESERVOIR	3-PAS	3-ND	3-ND	4A-M
NHIMP600030902-02	I*02	UNKNOWN RIVER - LONSINGER DAM	3-ND	3-ND	3-ND	4A-M
NHIMP600030902-03	I*03	HAMEL BROOK - FERNANDEZ POND	3-ND	3-ND	3-ND	4A-M
NHIMP600030902-04	I*04	OYSTER RIVER	5-P	5-P	2-M	4A-M
NHIMP600030902-05	I*05	UNKNOWN RIVER - DURHAM RESERVOIR	3-ND	3-ND	3-ND	4A-M
NHIMP600030902-06	I*06	BEARDS CREEK	5-P	5-P	5-M	4A-M
NHIMP600030902-07	I*07	GERRISH BROOK - HOYT POND	3-ND	3-ND	3-ND	4A-M
NHIMP600030902-08	I*08	JOHNSON CREEK - FARM POND	3-ND	3-ND	3-ND	4A-M
NHLAK600030902-02	L*02	WHEELWRIGHT POND	3-ND	3-ND	3-ND	4A-M
NHRIV600030902-01	R*01	UNNAMED TRIBUTARY - TO WHEELWRIGHT POND	5-P	3-ND	3-ND	4A-M
NHRIV600030902-02	R*02	OYSTER RIVER - CALDWELL BROOK	5-P	5-P	5-P	4A-M
NHRIV600030902-03	R*03	OYSTER RIVER	5-P	5-P	5-P	4A-M
NHRIV600030902-04	R*04	OYSTER RIVER - CHELSEY BROOK	5-P	5-P	5-P	4A-M
NHRIV600030902-05	R*05	OYSTER RIVER	3-PAS	5-P	2-M	4A-M
NHRIV600030902-06	R*06	LONGMARSH BROOK - BEAUDETTE BROOK	5-P	5-P	2-M	4A-M
NHRIV600030902-07	R*07	HAMEL BROOK	3-PNS	3-ND	3-ND	4A-M
NHRIV600030902-08	R*08	HAMEL BROOK	5-P	5-P	3-M	4A-M
NHRIV600030902-09	R*09	COLLEGE BROOK	5-M	5-P	2-M	4A-M
NHRIV600030902-10	R*10	RESERVOIR BROOK	5-P	5-P	5-M	4A-M
NHRIV600030902-11	R*11	LITTLEHOLE CREEK	3-PNS	3-ND	3-ND	4A-M
NHRIV600030902-12	R*12	GERRISH BROOK	3-ND	3-ND	3-ND	4A-M
NHRIV600030902-13	R*13	JOHNSON CREEK - GERRISH BROOK	3-M	5-P	2-M	4A-M
NHRIV600030902-14	R*14	HORSEHIDE BROOK	5-P	3-ND	3-ND	4A-M
NHRIV600030902-15	R*15	CHASE BROOK	3-PNS	3-ND	3-ND	4A-M

# AUIDs for HUC12: 010600030902 - OYSTER RIVER



	Town Boundaries	<b>Assessment Unit Coloring</b>	4 =	<b>Roads</b>		Interstate
	HUC12 Boundaries					<b>AUs Ending with:</b>
		0 =				Local
		1 =				Private and Class 6
		2 =				
		3 =				

Scale: 1:79,876

0 0.2 0.4 0.8 1.2 1.6 Miles

<u>Abbrev. Label</u>	<u>HUC 12</u>
L*03	010 700060201
AUID = NH LAK700060201-03	

**Appendix E:  
2008 Oyster River Watershed Biological Data**

<b>Order</b>	<b>Common Name</b>	<b>Tolerance Value</b>	<b>15-OYS</b>	<b>12-OYS</b>	<b>10K-OYS</b>	<b>09-OYS</b>	<b>06-OYS</b>	<b>01-HML</b>	<b>03-JNC</b>
Ephemeroptera	Mayfly Nymph	3	36	16	26	31	14	4	52
Plecoptera	Stonefly Nymph	1	1	3	5	5	4	0	0
Trichoptera	Caddisfly Larvae	4	18	162	23	11	14	39	57
Odonata	Dragonfly Nymph	7	3	0	1	0	1	0	0
	Damselfly Nymph	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Diptera	Black Fly Larvae	7	131	108	51	1	47	21	23
	Midge Larvae	6	0	0	2	0	2	0	0
	Most True Flies	4	6	8	6	5	0	0	16
Megaloptera	Alderfly	4	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
	Fishfly Larvae or Hellgrammite	0	9	3	17	7	2	1	6
Coleoptera	Beetle & Beetle-like	7	1	1	4	0	3	12	4
	Rifle Beetle	4	2	6	4	0	1	18	3
	Water Penny	4	0	0	3	0	7	0	0
Other	Aquatic Worms	8	14	6	9	5	10	19	13
	Clams & Mussels	7	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
	Crayfish	7	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
	Scuds	8	3	0	0	0	11	10	0
	Snails	7	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
	Sowbug	7	0	1	0	0	0	12	0
<b>Total Macroinvertebrates</b>			<b>224</b>	<b>315</b>	<b>151</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>174</b>
<b>Final Biotic Score</b>			<b>5.78</b>	<b>5.01</b>	<b>4.66</b>	<b>3.38</b>	<b>5.78</b>	<b>5.79</b>	<b>4.33</b>
<b>VBAP Narrative Category</b>			<b>Fairly Poor</b>	<b>Fairly Poor</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Excellent</b>	<b>Fairly Poor</b>	<b>Fairly Poor</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Percent EPT</b>			<b>24.55%</b>	<b>57.46%</b>	<b>35.76%</b>	<b>69.12%</b>	<b>27.59%</b>	<b>31.62%</b>	<b>62.64%</b>
<b>Abundance</b>			<b>896</b>	<b>1125</b>	<b>403</b>	<b>272</b>	<b>464</b>	<b>181</b>	<b>696</b>

## Appendix F: 2008 Oyster River Watershed Habitat Data

Station ID	Surrounding Land Use	RIPARIAN HABITAT			IN-STREAM CHARACTERISTICS				Erosion & Other Streamside Impacts
		Dominant Vegetative Type	Width of Riparian Zone (ft)	Canopy Cover (%) & Tree Type (%)	Most Prevalent Habitat Type	Water Color & Stream Flow	Substrate & Embeddness (%)	Aquatic Vegetation	
<b>15-OYS</b>	80% Forest 10% Residential 10% Commercial	Trees Herbaceous	R: 100-500 L: 20-100	40-75% 80% D 20% C	Run/Glide	Clear High	Gravel 0-25%	Moss	Moderate erosion on both banks
<b>12-OYS</b>	75% Forest 25% Residential	Trees Shrubs	R: 20-100 L: 20-100	10-40% 95% D 5% C	Riffles	Clear to Reddish/ Orange High	Gravel 25-50%	Algae, Moss, Plants	L Bank: Heavy erosion R Bank: Slight erosion Old gravel pit on left bank, several trees down causing logjams
<b>10K-OYS</b>	100% Forest	95% Trees 5% Shrubs	R: 100-500 L: 20-100	10-40% 20% D 80% C	Riffles	Clear Moderate	80% Cobble 20% Sand 50-75%	Moss	L Bank: Moderate erosion R Bank: Heavy erosion Woody debris frequently encountered along bank edges
<b>09-OYS</b>	75% Forest 10% Residential 15% Road	Trees	R: >500 L: 100-500	40-75%	Riffles	Clear Moderate	Gravel >75%	None	Moderate erosion on both banks
<b>06-OYS</b>	100% Residential	Trees	R: 0-20 L: 100-500	10-40%	Riffles	Clear Very High	30% Cobble 60% Boulder 10% Bedrock 25-500%	Moss	Slight to moderate erosion on both banks
<b>01-HML</b>	70% Forest 30% Residential	Trees	R: 20-100 L: >500	>75% 50% D 50% C	Riffles	Clear Moderate	Gravel/Cobble 0-25%	Moss	Moderate erosion on both banks
<b>03-JNC</b>	100% Forest	Trees	R: 20-100 L: 100-500	>75% 80% D 20% C	Pools	Clear Moderate	Gravel / Cobble 75%	None	Moderate to heavy erosion on both banks Several log jams in river and several trees down on banks

Note: Data is derived from a standardized Field Volunteer Biomonitoring Habitat Data Sheet included in the Volunteer Biological Assessment Program 2008 Draft Protocol instructions.  
R = Right bank, L = Left bank, D = Deciduous, C = Coniferous

# **Appendix G: 2008 Biological Sampling Methods**

## **Background**

Macroinvertebrates are organisms capable of being seen by the naked eye such as immature and adult aquatic insects, mollusks, worms, leeches, and crayfish. These organisms have different abilities to tolerate pollution, vary in their habitat preferences, and reflect the shared effects of multiple pollutants and environmental conditions integrated over time. Thus, they are often used as indicators of aquatic community condition.

The New Hampshire Volunteer Biological Assessment Program (VBAP) assists volunteers in the collection and identification of macroinvertebrates throughout NH's streams. Each year, volunteers collect and identify macroinvertebrates and VBAP staff summarizes the data in annual reports for each group. These reports contribute to knowledge about aquatic community conditions and serve as guidance for future monitoring activities. Prior to sampling, VBAP volunteers are trained in sampling techniques, identification, and biotic index computation. Volunteers are also trained to collect and record basic habitat, physical and chemical parameters.

## **Sampling Station Description**

Sampling stations are chosen based on input from VBAP volunteers. All stations must be accessible, wadeable and approximately 50 to 200 feet in length. They must also contain at least one riffle with mixed cobble substrate. Whenever possible, stations must be located upstream of major human influences such as bridges.

## **Sampling and Data Collection**

At each sampling station, volunteers record station information, select the sampling reach, identify five sampling locations within the reach and assess instream and riparian habitat. To avoid disrupting biological communities, volunteers do not walk in the stream and always collect samples from downstream to upstream. At each collection site, volunteers designate a 1/5 m<sup>2</sup> sampling area and place a 500 micron mesh kicknet immediately downstream of that area. One volunteer holds the net perpendicular to stream flow with the opening of the net facing upstream and the bottom firmly against the substrate (Image 1). A second volunteer agitates the sampling area upstream of the net by using both hands to scrub the rocks within the sample area for 30 seconds and then uses both feet to disturb the sediment within the sample area for 30 seconds.

After agitation, macroinvertebrates should be trapped in the net. The downstream volunteer slowly lifts the net out of the water, being careful not to let any bugs wash downstream. This process is repeated at each sampling location until a total of five samples are collected.

## **Sorting and Identification**

After collection, the entire sample is transferred into a plastic dish pan fitted with 500 micron wire mesh. The sample is mixed for 15 seconds and then divided into four equal portions. One portion is randomly selected for sorting and transferred to a separate tray. The remaining portions are kept in the dish pan and submersed in a plastic basin with water to prevent desiccation. Volunteers sort the selected portion for one hour. During that time, spoons, forceps, or pipettes are used to place specimens into individual containers for identification. If the first portion is completely sorted before one hour had elapsed, an additional portion is selected and sorted. After one hour, specimens are counted and identified to coarse taxonomic groups. Additionally, cumulative sorting effort and estimated total abundance are calculated.

## Biotic Index and Accessory Metric Computation

Individual taxonomic groups are each assigned a tolerance value ranging from zero to ten (Table 1). More tolerant groups have a higher tolerance value than less tolerant groups. To compute a taxonomic-specific biotic score VBAP multiplies the number of individuals in a sample by the individual's tolerance value. To compute the final biotic score, VBAP sums the taxonomic-specific biotic scores and then divides by the number of total individuals identified. The Final biotic scores correspond to three categories: excellent (0-3.5), good (3.5-4.8), or fairly poor (>4.8).

**Table 1: Order, common name, and tolerance value of aquatic common macroinvertebrates**

Order	Common Name	Tolerance Value
Ephemeroptera	Mayfly nymph	3
Plecoptera	Stonefly nymph	1
Trichoptera	Caddisfly larvae	4
Odonata	Dragonfly nymph	3
	Damselfly nymph	7
Diptera	Black fly larvae	7
	Midge larvae	6
	Most true flies	4
Megaloptera	Alderfly	4
	Fishfly or hellgrammite	0
Coleoptera	Riffle beetle	4
	Water penny	4
	Beetle and beetle-like	7
Others	Crayfish	6
	Snails	7
	Aquatic worms	8
	Scuds	8
	Sowbugs	7
	Clams and mussels	8

Abundance, which estimates the total number of organisms within the sample, is calculated by multiplying the number of individuals sorted by the fraction of the sample sorted. The percentage of EPT (Ephemeroptera, Plecoptera, and Trichoptera) individuals within the sample is also calculated to provide an estimate of the amount of least tolerant taxa present at each site.

## Water Chemistry

In addition to biological sampling, basic water quality data including pH, dissolved oxygen, specific conductance, and temperature are collected whenever possible using VRAP Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and handheld meters provided by NHDES.

## Quality Control Test

Quality control samples were not collected in the 2008 season.