

# Share Your Thoughts

## Peterborough, NH Wastewater Treatment Facility: A Model of Sustainability and Innovation

*Phillip Boisvert NHWPCA 2nd Director*

The Peterborough Wastewater Treatment Facility (WWTF) in New Hampshire stands as a testament to the town’s commitment to environmental stewardship and sustainable infrastructure. Over the past several years, the town’s humble operational staff and facility have received numerous awards and recognition for being at the forefront of what wastewater operations embody in New Hampshire. Peterborough WWTF was most recently awarded the 2024 Plant of the Year by the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services. Serving the town’s nearly 6,500 residents and businesses, the facility plays a crucial role in maintaining the water quality of the adjacent Contoocook River.



*From left to right: the Peterborough professionals Nathan Limric, Jamie Jarest, Nate Brown, Pete Bergeron, Anthony Carland, and Tim Jarest.*

### Upgrades: Keeping Up with the Times

To keep up with the evolution of standards governed by various permits, Peterborough—much like many other facilities—has received numerous upgrades through the years. Recognized in the early 2000s, Peterborough set forth on its path toward securing funding opportunities to finance the upgrades. In 2010, the town secured an over twelve-million-dollar financing package. This included a \$5.7 million grant and a \$7 million loan from the USDA Rural Development Water and Environmental Program. The money was used for the construction of a new activated sludge facility, along with upgrades to the pump station, administration facilities, and discharge piping.

### Constantly Moving Toward Efficiency

Peterborough has not stopped demonstrating its commitment to energy efficiency and sustainability. 2023 was another gilded year for the town when it received the “Most Improved Energy Savings for an Activated Sludge Facility” award from the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (NHDES) and NH Saves. Through

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# Editor's Words



Stephanie, Somersworth WWTF

I recently attended the celebration-of-life for my Auntie Bet. She was 100 years old when she passed and it did not surprise anybody who knew Auntie Bet to learn that she had written down several stories with the instruction that she "would be pleased if any of these could be read aloud if there is a Memorial Service for me". For these editor's words, I'd like to share one of her stories:

"Rabbi Robert Reichert from Cincinnati was a close friend of Robert Frost's. One day when they were walking together, Frost asked him 'Rabbi, do you believe in miracles?' Rabbi Reichert turned the question around and asked him 'Robert, do you believe in miracles?' Frost paused for a while and then he said 'I've had many nature favors.'

When I heard this, it spoke to something in my own heart since I feel I too have had many 'Nature Favors'. In the past I have done a program called 'Nature Favors' showing some of the birds that I have had unique experiences with: a hummingbird bathing in the rainwater of a lilac leaf, a grouse drumming on a log in the forest, and of course loons, always the loons and their wild calling on this lake I love so much."

Auntie Bet's story resonated with me because we all do the work that allows others to find nature favors. When somebody asks me what I do for work, I answer with my elevator speech, "I'm one of five very talented individuals that treat all the wastewater for the City of Somersworth, NH." Sometimes that's enough information and sometimes there's questions and I can explain more. And now I have another story to add!

As always, I encourage you to enjoy this edition of The Collector and to Share Your Thoughts...but also take a moment to look around for nature favors.

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## Upcoming Events

Go to [www.nhwPCA.org](http://www.nhwPCA.org) for live links to online registration

*Save the Dates*

- Sep. 12 - Fall Meeting, Peterborough
- Sep. 23 - Confined Space Training
- Sep. 25 - Construction Career Days
- Oct. 10 - Board Meeting

- Nov. 14 - Board Meeting
- Dec. 5 - Winter Meeting with Business Meeting

**NEWSLETTER COMMITTEE**

Stephanie Rochefort, Mary Jane Meier, Dylan Delisle, April Sargent, **YOUR NAME HERE.**  
 We welcome additional members. We are looking for meaningful articles for the Wastewater Operator in a timely fashion. Send submission articles for *THE COLLECTOR* to: Stephanie Rochefort via email at [srochefort@somersworth.com](mailto:srochefort@somersworth.com).

Editor: Stephanie Rochefort

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operational changes and low-cost measures, the facility achieved an estimated 34% reduction in energy use. This lessened the facility's environmental impact as well as expenses toward power.



### Solar Power Savings

2014 was yet another remarkable year for Peterborough when construction began on the 944-kilowatt solar array. The system spans nearly five acres and reclaimed space from the former lagoons. At the time, this was the largest array at a wastewater facility in New Hampshire. A \$1.2 million grant from the New Hampshire Public Utilities Commission and a 20-year power purchase agreement with Borrego Solar allowed this construction to have no upfront cost to the town. Not only does this provide power to the wastewater facility, but other municipal buildings/facilities utilize it as well, amounting to substantial long-term savings.

### Spreading the Word for a Cleaner Future

Peterborough extends its commitment far beyond operation and maintenance of its facility. The staff has a long-standing commitment to community engagement and environmental responsibility. The town's staff reached out on numerous occasions through these upgrades to the community. This took shape in public forums, tours, and educational sessions over the years. Having transparency about the direction of upgrades and the reasoning behind them has led to trust between the town's community and operational staff. The team at Peterborough understands that this relationship fosters a better understanding of what being a steward to the environment looks like. This reflects throughout the community and shines a light on Peterborough in this often-misunderstood industry.

### The Treatment Process

At the core of Peterborough's wastewater treatment is the Aqua-Aerobic Systems Sequencing Batch Reactor (SBR)—an advanced biological treatment process that combines efficiency, flexibility, and compact design. The SBR is especially well-suited for small to mid-sized communities like Peterborough, offering high-quality effluent while minimizing space and energy requirements.

The treatment process includes the following steps:

**Preliminary Treatment** – Wastewater first flows through mechanical screens and a grit removal system to eliminate large debris, sand, and other heavy particles that could damage equipment or reduce treatment efficiency.

**Sequencing Batch Reactor (SBR) Process** – The SBR operates in a time-sequenced cycle within a single reactor basin, performing all major treatment steps—fill, react (aeration), settle, decant, and idle—in one tank:

- **Mix/React Fill:** Wastewater enters the tank.
- **React:** Air is introduced to support aerobic microbial digestion of organic pollutants and nutrients.
- **Settle:** Aeration stops, allowing solids to settle to the bottom.
- **Decant:** The clarified, treated water is drawn off the top and sent for disinfection.
- **Idle:** Prepares the basin for the next cycle.

**Disinfection** – The treated effluent is disinfected using sodium hypochlorite, a chlorine-based compound that effectively neutralizes harmful pathogens before being released into the Contoocook River.

**Sludge Management** – Biological solids collected during the process are thickened up to 6% and then transported offsite for appropriate disposal.

The Aqua-Aerobic SBR system enables Peterborough to meet stringent EPA and state discharge requirements for nutrient removal—especially nitrogen and phosphorus—making it a sustainable and scalable solution for long-term community needs.

### The Fall Meeting

Join us for the annual New Hampshire Water

Pollution Control Association (NHWPCA) Fall Meeting, hosted this year by the Peterborough Wastewater Treatment Facility on Friday, September 12, 2025. The day will begin with coffee and snacks generously provided by Wright-Pierce, followed by facility tours showcasing the plant’s treatment process. Staff will guide attendees through the Aqua-Aerobic Systems Sequencing Batch Reactor (SBR), as well as the chemical dosing systems and septage receiving area. After the tours, attendees are invited to a luncheon at the Monadnock Country Club, located at 49 High Street, Peterborough, NH. The event will include a presentation, and offer a relaxed atmosphere ideal for networking with facility staff and fellow environmental professionals. We look forward to seeing you there!



## Blurbs, Blurbs, & More Blurbs

### New Wastewater Operators

*Richard “Dick” Emberley, Wastewater Operations Technical Advisor, NHDES Water Division*

The first half of 2025 saw an encouraging change in the downward trend of wastewater operators.

While we lost 21 operators, mostly due to retirement, we added 32 new operators.

Overall, we added or increased certification grade for 49 operators.

Congratulations to everyone!

### New Wastewater Operator Certifications Grades

EXAM	GRADE
Jeremy Brunelle	I
Robert Carr	I
Stephen Champagne	I
Travis S. Clark	I
Joshua Curtis	I
Chelsea P. Jackson	I
David Labombard	I
Tonya Lindsell	I
John Mckenna	I
Michael Mckenna	I
Silas I. Mckenney	I
Sarah Mentus	I

Douglas W. Murphy	I
Brian D. Newton	I
Craig A. Pickering	I
Marcus H. Rosa	I
Julian R. Santolucito	I
Raven Solomon	I
Bryan M. Wood	I

Joshua H. Beal	II
Robert A. Clark	II
Brandyn M. Cromer	II
Brandon A. Decato	II
William Dewitte	II
Brandon D. Doucet	II
Cooper J. Gaffney	II
Ray T. Gordon Iii	II
Brandon A. Grover	II
Jaedin Guldenstern	II
Louis J. Houle Iv	II
Michael A. Lynch	II
Kristofer M. Maclean	II
Samuel D. Mena	II
Ashlee M. Nowell	II
Russell L. Sargent	II
Bradley L. Tallent	II
Joseph Watts	II
Kyle Williams	II
Jeremy Wood	II

Brian Deschamps	III
William E. Petersen	III
Margaret R. Whitcomb	III
Derek C. Wyskiel	III

Al Keeler	IV
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RECIPROCITY	GRADE
Mark Deponte	II
David Driscoll	II
James Waldron	III
Lillian Todd	III
Janet Puffenbarger	III

## NHWPCA & NHWWA Joins National Water Week in DC to Advocate for Clean Water

Earlier this spring, April Sargent, Shelagh Connelly, Tracy Wood and NEWEA YP Scholarship awardee Meghan Abbey representing NHWPCA traveled to Washington, D.C. to participate in the National Water Policy Fly-In during Water Week 2025. This annual event brings together water professionals from across the country to highlight the critical issues facing the nation's water and wastewater systems. The two-day program began Tuesday morning with the team's arrival in D.C., followed by a policy briefing featuring senior officials from the U.S. EPA and other federal agencies. That evening, attendees gathered for a networking reception hosted by DC Water and later joined fellow NEWEA representatives for a group dinner.



On Wednesday, the NHWPCA team was joined by Sam Currier, President and CEO of NHWWA, along with his daughter - continuing a meaningful tradition of involving the next generation in advocacy efforts!

They successfully met with all four Congressional offices representing the Granite State. These productive conversations focused on how federal policy decisions, especially related to funding, PFAS regulation, workforce development, and cybersecurity are directly impacting New Hampshire's public water and wastewater utilities.

A top concern shared with the delegation was the destabilization of the State Revolving Funds (SRFs),

caused by federal earmarks reducing the pool of funding available for state-prioritized infrastructure projects. NHWPCA urged Congress to protect SRF integrity and restore consistent, dedicated funding levels so that New Hampshire can continue to replace aging infrastructure, some of which dates back over a century.

Also conveyed were our industry's growing challenges around workforce recruitment and retention, as well as the need for clearer, science-based regulation of PFAS. As passive receivers of PFAS contamination, wastewater systems should not bear the brunt of liability - a point we emphasized in our support for H.R. 1267, the Water Systems PFAS Liability Protection Act.

Other key messages included support for the WIPPES Act (H.R. 2269/S. 1092) to address harmful non-flushable wipes, and an emphasis on improving cybersecurity preparedness for utilities operating SCADA-based systems.

One of the key requests from our Congressional delegation was for regular feedback on how federal policy changes such as funding levels, EPA staffing, or regulatory shifts are impacting operations here in New Hampshire. If your facility has experienced challenges or changes due to these federal actions, we want to hear from you. Your firsthand experiences help inform our advocacy. Please reach out to April Sargent to share your story.



Hello  
Autumn!



## Clean Water Week 2026 Open House

**Who:** Wastewater treatment facilities across the state. That means YOU. The NHWPCA Education Committee is looking for state-wide participation—from Colebrook to Claremont, Swanzey to Somersworth.

**What:** Open your doors for guided group tours, individual visits, or just “be open” and welcome anyone who wants to stop by and check out your facility. Whatever works for you. Be open for a day or the whole week.

**When:** April 12 to 18, 2026

**Why:** Wastewater operators are dedicated, hardworking and instrumental in protecting public health and the environment. Without the work you all do, we would not have such a beautiful state to call home. Awareness is the first step in educating the public on the important work we do and what it takes to do it.

**How:** Check out these great NEWEA resources:

*Open House Toolkit:*

[http://www.newea.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/Open-House-Guidelines\\_Final.pdf](http://www.newea.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/Open-House-Guidelines_Final.pdf)



*Open House Guidelines:*

[http://www.newea.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/Guidelines\\_Final.pdf](http://www.newea.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/Guidelines_Final.pdf)



*Public Outreach:*

<https://www.newea.org/resources/publiceducation/>



Advertise your Open House at your local schools, at the library and town hall. Invite your public officials. Get in touch with your Career and Technical Education Centers; find your local CTE Center here:

<https://www.education.nh.gov/who-we-are/division-of-learner-support/bureau-of-career-development/cte-programs-in-new-hampshire>



Need more help? NH DES Operations group will be releasing a survey to find out where extra help may be needed.

Reach out to your Education Committee co-chairs Krista Larsen, [krista.p.larsen@des.nh.gov](mailto:krista.p.larsen@des.nh.gov), and Wade Pelham, [ANCEL.W.PELHAM@des.nh.gov](mailto:ANCEL.W.PELHAM@des.nh.gov), if you have any questions.



## Safety Corner

### Don't Become a Casualty

Brought to you by the NHWPCA Safety Committee

The NHWPCA is pleased to share with you the following important article on traffic safety written by Wende Giorgi, NHDES Safety Compliance Administrator



How can it be fall already? It feels like the summer passed in the blink of an eye.

Unfortunately, New Hampshire has seen a sharp increase in fatal motor vehicle accidents; many have included motorcycles. As a rider (mother, sister, aunt, cousin, wife, niece, friend, fellow human) myself, I want to remind you to be extra vigilant—whether you travel via two wheels or four (or more?). When I'm on my motorcycle, I choose to wear a helmet and follow the rules of the road, while staying alert for hazards. When I'm in my car, I always look twice, especially for motorcyclists.

Any holiday where people are out having fun, traveling around town or across the country, is a prime time for accidents. Drivers get tired and distracted. People let their guard down and sometimes drink too much. The American Automobile Association (AAA) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) publish travel safety tips. Some of their suggestions include:

- ✓ **Don't drink and drive.** As one public service announcement reminds you, buzzed driving is drunk driving. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) has asked states to ramp up their enforcement of NHTSA's "Drive

Sober or Be Pulled Over" campaign during Labor Day travel time.

- ✓ **Get your vehicle in shape.** Before you start on your outing, do a routine check to be sure the oil and radiator fluids are at the right levels, and the tires are in good shape with the proper tread level and tire pressure. Keep an emergency kit with water, a flashlight, and maybe some energy bars and blankets. You may get stranded or be stopped on the highway if there is an unexpected problem ahead.
- ✓ **Plan your route.** Use GPS or an online mapping service (such as New England 511) to plan your route in advance. Check to be sure no roads are closed and try to avoid heavy traffic areas. Don't drive distracted – enter all information prior to operating your vehicle.
- ✓ **Allow extra time.** With so many more vehicles on the road than usual, plan for traffic snarls and allow extra time to get to your destination.
- ✓ **Follow the rules of the road.** Speed limits, stop lights and signs, and other traffic safety laws are there to help protect the travelling public – including you.
- ✓ **Buckle up.** The risk of serious injury or death in a motor vehicle accident is substantially reduced for those who wear seat belts.
- ✓ **Check twice—save a life.** Motorcycles are everywhere! Motorcyclists can easily get lost in one of your vehicle's blind spots, especially when you attempt to merge, change lanes or turn.

Drive safely and have fun when you get there!!

*This article was brought to you by the NHWPCA Safety Committee in the absence of any Near Miss submissions. We are still seeking Near Miss ideas, so if you or someone you know has had a Near Miss, please reach out to Patty Chesebrough at [ChesebroughPL@gmail.com](mailto:ChesebroughPL@gmail.com). Submissions are always kept confidential!*

*If you have questions or requests for other safety articles or training you would like the Safety Committee present, please reach out to Committee Chair, John Hart at [jhart@r-r-inc.com](mailto:jhart@r-r-inc.com) or 207-747-8597.*



## Thoughts from the Bench

By Stephanie Rochefort, City of Somersworth WWTF



There was a recent pizza crisis at my parents' home. My parents are both 80+ years old. And set in their ways. And very picky about what they eat. They eat pizza for Sunday dinner every week. I don't know where this routine came from. When I was a little girl, Sunday was red meat day. Between Memorial Day and Labor Day, the Sunday dinner was steak (London Broil) cooked on the barbeque. The rest of the year the Sunday dinner was roast beef (Spoon Roast).

We did eat pizza fairly regularly when I was a little girl. (Ask me for my pizza story sometime.) But it wasn't Freschetta brand FOUR cheese pizza, which is apparently the only pizza that they will eat now. Recently, this pizza was out of stock. If you're interested, the FIVE cheese pizza is not an acceptable substitute. The store-brand which looks exactly like

the name-brand is also not an acceptable substitute because the cooking instructions are not exactly the same. Before their pizza came back into stock, they had to eat cheese and crackers for Sunday dinner a few times.

What does this have to do with the WWTF lab-world? Well, recently the filter papers that we use for our process solids were out-of-stock. They were very, very, out-of-stock with an anticipated shipment date sometime next year! Of course, there's other brands of filter papers that we could use for our process solids and I'm pretty sure that other facilities use other brands. I asked myself if I was being picky and the answer was a hard NO. We have decades of data proving that the results we obtain with these filter papers allow us to stay in compliance with our NPDES permit. I ended up buying ten boxes of "our" filter papers in a larger diameter size. I'm kinda liking the larger size – I may make it a repeat purchase.

I always do strive to make sure that we have a sufficient stock of all of our critical reagents and chemicals. After the filter paper fiasco, I began to wonder if I'm keeping a large enough stock. There's actually a lot to consider, let's talk about pH buffers as an example:

1. How often do I use the product? For pH buffers, the requirement is daily.
2. If I run out of the product, can I just hold the samples and analyze later? For pH, we all know that the answer is NO.
3. If I run out, could I send the sample to a contract lab? This is another NO answer for pH.
4. If there's a crisis like an unexpected spill, could I borrow enough to get by for a few days? Yup, been there, done that.
5. If my usual brand is out-of-stock, is there another acceptable brand or another vendor? For pH buffers, this would typically be yes.
6. Do I have enough of the right kind of storage space? For any chemicals, I make sure that I don't store above shoulder level to minimize the risk of dropping when reaching down from a high shelf. (ask me about the time I took an acid-bath...not here in Somersworth) So, I don't actually have a lot of storage space.
7. What are the typical expiration dates? Quite often, pH 10 buffers have a shorter time.

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I went through these questions for all my critical reagents and chemicals and decided that I am doing okay with my methods, as long as I don't deviate from my plan...you think? I encourage y'all to do the same exercise.



## Residuals Report

By Wade Pelham, Water Division – Wastewater Engineering Bureau, NHDES

The other day I took a walk down memory lane, although it wasn't a lane so much as it was the dewatering bay at the Hooksett Wastewater Treatment Facility. I did have memories of it though as I had been there a few years ago. Back then it housed a belt-filter press which had been in service for quite a while. The belt-filter press had reached the end of its useful life and was requiring a significant amount of maintenance, so the Hooksett Sewer Department retained a firm to pilot test and compare two alternative types of dewatering units, screw presses and centrifuges. The results of the pilot test showed screw presses to be a more favorable technology option for the Hooksett WWTF and therefore were selected to replace the belt-filter press. The project scope for the dewatering upgrade included:

- Demolition and removal of the existing Belt Filter Press and associated piping.
- Demolition and removal of the existing polymer feed system including pumps, piping, and tankage.
- Installation of two new screw press dewatering units in the Dewatering Room.
- Installation of new aluminum walkways, platforms, and concrete for the new dewatering units.
- Installation of two new polymer feed systems including pumps, totes, and piping.
- Modifications to the existing sludge feed piping to accommodate new screw press dewatering units.
- Modifications to existing plant water piping for the new dewatering units.
- Installation of new shaftless screw conveyor system with multiple discharge ports.
- Modifications to existing steel dumpster plates

in the Sludge Loading Bay.

- Modifications to the two existing 22-ft diameter sludge storage tank walls.
- Installation of new dewatering control panel.
- Modifications to the existing SCADA system.

The screw presses selected were made in the United States, thereby satisfying funding requirements for American made products. The manufacturer's headquarters is regionally located in upstate New York, so occasional service visits have been described as straightforward and timely. The upgrade to screw presses has resulted in a more controlled dewatering process, with higher resulting cake solids and fewer maintenance demands for operational staff. The dewatering upgrades, along with many other improvements championed by Hooksett WWTF Superintendent Ken Conaty and Assistant-Superintendent John Clark, will be on display at the NH Water Pollution Control Association's Winter Meeting in December, so be on the lookout for your chance to sign-up!

In addition, for all you wastewater history buffs out there, you can learn more about the history of the Hooksett wastewater system on-line, here: <https://hooksettwwater.nh.gov/History.pdf>.

## Pretreatment Tales

### 27th Annual New England Regional Pretreatment Coordinators Association (NERPCA) Workshop

Registration is now open for the 27th Annual New England Regional Pretreatment Coordinators Association (NERPCA) Workshop! This year's workshop will be happening on October 21-23, 2025.

All Workshop information (agenda, registration, hotel rooms, etc.) can be found by visiting: <https://www.nerpca.org/>

Other EPA regions/IP Associations have workshops, but New England's is the longest consistent running workshop in the country. NERPCA didn't miss a beat during the pandemic, instead there was a quick pivot to a 2-day virtual workshop. This workshop

has expanded from its original one-day format to the current three-day format with a networking reception.

This year’s workshop will be at the centrally-located Doubletree by Hilton in Nashua, NH.

Attendance at this conference is strongly encouraged for all municipal (and their consultants, if applicable) and state industrial pretreatment personnel. This workshop is NOT open to industrial users so please do not share with your permitted users.

Please note that the training session on October 21st is Advanced Pretreatment 101. This session will be taught by Kerry Britt from Narragansett Bay Commission, RI and Stephanie Rochefort from Somersworth, NH. These two ladies have a combined 70+ years of experience in the field of industrial pretreatment.

Any questions about the conference can be addressed to Kerry Britt (NERPCA chair) at [KBritt@narrabay.com](mailto:KBritt@narrabay.com) or Jay Pimpare (EPA Regional Pretreatment Coordinator) at [Pimpare.Justin@epa.gov](mailto:Pimpare.Justin@epa.gov).



## Couples Who Work for Water

*The Collector has entered its 42nd year in publication in 2025. Our 2025 theme reflects the industry-wide call to honor existing workers and attract new workers into our industry. This year we will feature couples from around New England who both work in the water and wastewater industry.*

Our featured couple, who work in the water and wastewater industry with Wright-Pierce in Maine, are Paul and Bryanna Denis. We thank them both for their participation and their commitment to ‘Work for Water—For Communities; For the Environment; For our Future.’



*Bryanna and Paul Denis boiling maple sap inside their Sugar Shack, one of the first structures they built together.*

**Current place of employment and years of service:**

We both work at Wright-Pierce. Bryanna has worked here for 14 years, Paul for 10.

**How long have you been a couple?**

We’ve been together for 15 years and married for 13 years.

**Years employed in WW field:**

Bryanna has been in wastewater for 16 years, Paul for 10.

### Where/how did you meet?

We grew up a few towns apart in central Maine. Our parents knew each other and told us that we met as children (though we don't remember it). We officially met at a paper mill where we both held summer jobs in college. Stacking paper plates isn't quite as glamorous as wastewater!

### Commonalities in your work duties?

We work in the same industry but have very different roles. Bryanna entered the wastewater field as a design engineer and is currently a project manager of wastewater projects throughout New England. Paul was initially an electrical engineer in the maritime industry before Bryanna convinced him to join our great industry. For the last 10 years, Paul's focus has been on control systems, including Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA), and instrumentation for water and wastewater projects.

### Any overlapping duties between your job functions?

We are occasionally part of the same project team, working on specific wastewater projects together. A lot of people give us funny looks when they hear that we work together. We both think that we work well jointly, although you may have to ask others to verify that! On projects, we treat each other the same as anyone else, albeit there is plenty of 'shop talk' going on at home.

### Common Recreation interests; how you spend your 'personal time':

Recreation? What's that? Just kidding. Parenting our young daughter currently takes up a good chunk of our free time. On the recreation side, our most common interests are a carry-over of our passions to create and build things. This could be anything from tapping maple trees to make syrup, building barns and bridges, clearing land for a fruit orchard, or working on the local snowmobile trail system.

### Most memorable conversations at dinner:

There are probably too many work conversations that carry over to our home life that tend to extend much further than the typical "how was your day" question. One that recently stood out was related to a TV show where the main character was an engineer and referred to the Golden Gate Bridge as more than just a bridge, saying it had a soul. The engineer said something designed can have a form that matches

the function, and it matters to those that use it.

This led to a conversation on whether wastewater treatment plants can have a "soul". We are certainly taking a loose definition of it, and while some may not agree, our consensus was that treatment plants can have a soul when form and function align. While treatment facilities are taken for granted by many, when water and sewer do not work, we all realize how much they matter to us all. Additionally, we've all likely personified something we're working on when it's not cooperating the way we'd like it to.

### What you like most about your profession:

Solving problems. We find passion in continuous improvement and the ability to solve new and interesting problems every day. On the larger scale, it's providing a better treatment plant. To us, it's doing more with less, thinking ahead to the future, and creating the best end-user experience that we can.

### How do you manage stress levels and pressures?

A combination of recreational outlets like the ones mentioned above, and just working through things. We are lucky to have the comfort of a relationship and career flexibility where we can give the other the opportunity to 'unplug' when needed.

### What do you see as the best motivator to bring new people into this profession?

As we all know, our industry is an easy one to take for granted – especially when everything is working as it should. We can speak from experience in saying that many people don't realize that this industry exists. From that perspective, starting with awareness is important. We need to continue to highlight to the public the difference our industry makes in the



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lives of everyone in society. In this industry, you can truly say we are making a difference and leaving something better than we found it. We believe that purpose resonates with a lot of people.

**Describe any challenges you encounter in the workplace.**

Every facility is unique, has its own set of challenges, pain points, and goals. It takes significant time to understand each of those elements. Having and making enough time to do everything we'd like to do is a common challenge to us both. We are very motivated individuals in our careers, and we continuously look for ways to improve things. This often means taking on new initiatives beyond just our typical project work. Making the time, and finding the balance continues to be one of our greatest challenges.

**Any other info you would like to share about yourselves:**

We're passionate about what we do. The challenges we face on a daily basis are also part of what drives us. We both constantly try to look for ways to do better and improve our designs, making them easier to construct, operate, and maintain. Our projects have experienced setbacks, but we choose to turn those challenges into opportunities for growth.

**The following was shared by Amanda Smith, Director of Water Quality Management, City of Bangor, Maine:**

*I first met Paul Denis in 2017, when Wright-Pierce Environmental Engineering was awarded a competitive bid for the wastewater treatment plant's SCADA needs assessment. This project was especially sensitive, technical, and even emotional for some of our operators. Paul immediately came across as a good listener. It became apparent that Paul had the answers to solve many of the SCADA challenges we were facing, but he had a unique talent for guiding all parties down a path to making the right choices with no assertion that he knew better from the get-go. The final needs assessment was packaged in concise layman's terms and so began the first of three phases of a long-term SCADA upgrade.*

*It was a few years later that Wright-Pierce was awarded another competitive bid for the wastewater treatment plant's emergency generator project. Again, this was a highly technical, sensitive project to integrate two 750kW natural gas generators into*

*a 1960s-1990s wastewater treatment plant that had never had back-up power. It was a nerve-wracking endeavor for the treatment plant operators. Here is where we met Bryanna Denis.*

*Bryanna is calm, friendly, and highly intelligent. She fielded our endless, and often uninformed, technical questions and listened to our concerns and worries. She walked us through the planning and processes more times than was probably necessary. Another side of Bryanna was her advocacy for us when it came to the contractor and working through challenges with the vendor, covid-era lead times, and the resulting general uncertainty across the entire world.*

*The generator project came and went successfully, Paul and Bryanna's family grew, and we moved on to the second phase of our SCADA upgrade.*

*It is easy to see why the Denis' are married and working together in this industry: in order to facilitate seamless information-sharing across Bangor's wastewater projects!*

*All kidding aside, it is easy to see why they are together, but working with both of them on separate projects actually did have the benefit of behind-the-scenes institutional knowledge. They both were so familiar with intimate details of our treatment plant, and working from home during covid, we witnessed one frequently assisting the other while trouble shooting issues with each project.*

*We have just completed the second phase of our SCADA upgrade and are looking forward to the third phase as much as we are looking forward to updates on the Denis family.*

## FUN FACT

Approximately 12% to 15% of couples in the US work in the same narrow industry according to the Census Bureau.



## Operator Profile

### Maintenance Manager Profile

**An interview with a highly valued Water and Wastewater Maintenance Manager—in his own Words**

*By Joe Mulleavey, City of Concord*



*Wastewater Team Photo (left to right): Tanner Reale (Maintenance Technician), Troy Hardy (Maintenance Technician), Joe Mulleavey (Maintenance Manager), Shane Szilagyi (Utility Technician), Derek Emerson (Maintenance Lead), Blake Miner (Utility Electrician), Mike Sanborn (Utility Technician).*

**Please provide your name, location of work, and certifications.** Joe Mulleavey, City of Concord Wastewater Treatment Facility, Licenses: Wastewater Treatment Facility Operator Grade I, Masters Electricians License, IMI Certified Water/Wastewater Maintenance Technician I, State of NH UST Class A/B Operator

**Please tell us about your plant or plants where you work, and a description of the process and/or machinery that you maintain.** Our maintenance team is composed of a Maintenance Manager, one Maintenance Lead, one Utility Electrician, two Utility Technicians, and two Maintenance Technicians. Together we are responsible for the upkeep and reliable operation of many assets. Concord's Wastewater facilities include the Hall St. Secondary Treatment Plant (capacity 10.1 MGD), Penacook SBR Plant (capacity 4.2 MGD), 8 Pump Stations, and 1 Metering Station. Our responsibilities cover three primary areas: buildings, grounds, and process

equipment. The building maintenance includes full maintenance of electrical, plumbing, heating, and HVAC systems. The grounds maintenance encompasses mowing, snow removal, and care of all yard related equipment and infrastructure. The process equipment maintenance is a critical focus area involving diagnosis and repair of equipment failures, along with preventive and predictive maintenance. We are committed to minimizing outsourcing by taking on as many projects as possible in-house, leveraging the diverse skill sets within our team to ensure cost effective and efficient operations.

**How long have you been working in the Water/WW treatment profession?** I started as Utility Electrician in 1997, Wastewater Maintenance Supervisor in 2007 and Wastewater Maintenance Manager in 2025.

**What is your favorite part about being a Maintenance Manager?** My favorite part of being in Maintenance is the sense of accomplishment that comes from keeping older equipment in good working order and the satisfaction in troubleshooting a breakdown and getting things back up and running.

**What have you learned that you wish you knew when you first started in the industry?** I came to this job with a background in manufacturing and contracting. The hands-on maintenance work I did in those roles is similar to the work here at the Wastewater Facility, but the significance of the work feels very different. I've come to learn and truly appreciate how critical the wastewater industry is. It's a utility that most people rarely think about, until it's not available, and then it becomes a game changer. With that in mind, the maintenance team here at Concord understands the importance of having a solid maintenance program. It may sound cliché, but there is a lot of truth in the saying, "Do it right the first time". We work in a corrosive and potentially hazardous environment, so ensuring all installs and repairs are completed with the proper materials and using the required PPE during all installations and repairs is of great importance. It's human nature to become complacent over time, but the maintenance crew here does a great job holding themselves and coworkers accountable. That commitment goes a long way in maintaining safety, reliability, and high standards throughout the facility.

**What advice do you have for new maintenance workers getting started in the industry?** Your skill set is valuable and will likely become even more

important in the future. Take every opportunity to broaden your knowledge. Don't wait for someone else to offer you training or development. Advocate for yourself and actively seek out ways to learn and grow. When your working on a piece of equipment, don't just focus on the immediate task. Make it a goal to understand how the entire unit functions, and then connect that unit to the bigger picture of the process. The more you understand the system as a whole, the better you'll be at troubleshooting and preventing issues down the line. Technology in the wastewater industry is constantly evolving, and the equipment continues to advance. Stay current, stay curious, and enjoy the ride.

**From a Supervisory perspective, what is the most rewarding (or challenging) part of your job?** One of the most rewarding aspects of being a Supervisor is building healthy, productive relationships with coworkers. A strong team dynamic built on trust and mutual respect makes a big difference in both day-to-day operations and long-term success. That said, developing those relationships through effective communication can also be one of the more challenging parts of the role. It takes consistent

effort, active listening, and a willingness to adapt. Clear, open communication between Operations, Maintenance, and Management is essential, and should always be a top priority. When communication is strong across departments, it creates alignment, reduces friction, and helps everyone do their jobs more effectively.

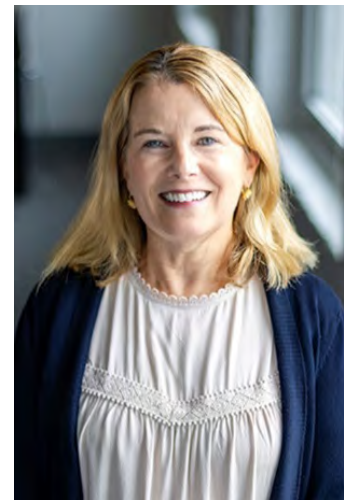


## Paula Boyle Retires After Nearly 38 Years of Service to New England Communities

By Heidi Marshall, PE Hoyle & Tanner

*We continue our salute to the wastewater and drinking water operators and administrators who are now enjoying retirement. Our newsletter committee would appreciate hearing from our readers to expand this list so we can recognize our loyal, hardworking associates and friends. Please reach out to any of the newsletter committee members with contact information for retirees and we'll take it from there!*

After nearly 38 years with Hoyle Tanner, Paula Boyle is hanging up her hard hat and heading into a well-earned retirement—and those of us in the New England wastewater community are certainly going to miss her!



Paula has built an incredible career specializing in environmental and wastewater engineering, with a particular focus on industrial pretreatment programs. If you've ever worked on an IPP, chances are Paula's name came up—and for good reason. She's been a go-to resource for municipalities across the region, helping communities navigate the complexities of regulatory compliance, funding, and infrastructure planning.

Throughout her career, Paula supported countless

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cities and towns with everything from Sewer Use Ordinance updates to compliance monitoring methodologies for EPA and state requirements. She had a unique talent for turning dense regulatory requirements into practical, effective programs—and always did so with patience, clarity, and a commitment to doing what was best for each community.

Her expertise spans all aspects of pretreatment programs: developing Master Industrial User Lists, conducting industrial surveys, creating Technically Based Local Limits, drafting enforcement response plans—you name it. She's also been a trusted advisor to IPP Coordinators across New England, offering guidance, support, and often a bit of reassurance that yes, we can figure this out.

One of Paula's greatest strengths has been her ability to bridge the gap between regulation and real-world application. Her work with environmental funding programs helped clients secure the resources they needed to get important projects off the ground—and her efforts ensured those projects stayed on track, followed the rules, and made a real difference.

While we'll certainly miss her technical know-how and steady leadership, we'll miss Paula the person even more. She's been a mentor, a collaborator, and a friend to so many in the water and wastewater world.

Please join us in congratulating Paula on a remarkable career and wishing her all the best in retirement. Here's to new adventures, fewer spreadsheets, and maybe even a little time to relax—you've earned it, Paula!

## 2025 Operator Exchange

*By Cody Daigneault, Wolfeboro WWTF*

I would like to start by thanking the NHWPCA for selecting me for this year's Wastewater Operator Exchange Program. I am a Grade II wastewater treatment plant operator in the state of New Hampshire, and I have been working at the Wolfeboro WWTF—which averages around 300,000 gallons per day—for all four years of my career in wastewater treatment. This program has been an amazing opportunity for me to see how larger treatment plants operate on a day-to-day basis.

The exchange was a three-day trip that included tours of three different wastewater treatment plants throughout Massachusetts. During this time, I was

warmly welcomed and treated exceptionally well by both the MAWEA organization and the staff at each of the facilities I toured. Between tours, I was accompanied by Denise Descheneau and John Downey for meals and daily debriefings. Every day, they made sure I was comfortable with my lodging and satisfied with meals—something I truly appreciated.



Day one included visits to two plants: Lowell Regional WWTF and Upper Blackstone Clean Water. The Lowell Regional WWTF was undergoing a wide range of upgrades, both at the plant and throughout the combined sewer overflows located around the Lowell region. This facility featured many processes and pieces of equipment I hadn't seen in person before, including screw pumps, rotary drum thickeners, and a centrifuge.

After the Lowell tour, Denise and I traveled to Upper Blackstone. In 2024, this facility averaged a daily flow of 39.7 million gallons. At the start of the tour, I was taken to a hill that overlooked the entire site—my first time seeing a wastewater plant of this scale. I was truly blown away by its size compared to the Wolfeboro facility. What stuck with me most was their use of multiple hearth furnaces and a robust air pollution control system.

The third and final tour featured a visit to the Greater Lawrence Sanitary District, which treats about 30 million gallons of wastewater per day, along with roughly 75,000 gallons of septage. This facility is particularly unique in that it has been considered "net zero" since 2021—fully self-sufficient from grid-supplied power. On average, the facility produces

70,000 kWh of electricity per day by utilizing biogas produced from onsite digesters to fuel its combined heat and power systems.



Overall, this was an incredible experience. As someone from a small facility who hadn't visited many other plants before, I found the exchange program highly beneficial. I learned and saw so many new things, and my eyes were opened to the wide range of possibilities for what wastewater treatment

facilities can achieve to protect their communities and the environment.

I would highly encourage any operator—whether you're just beginning your career or have decades of experience—to take part in the Operator Exchange Program. Whether you work at a small facility like Wolfeboro or a larger one like those I toured in Massachusetts, this program offers meaningful opportunities for growth and learning. In our field, no matter how long you've been in it, there is always something new to discover. The Operator Exchange Program provides an educational and professional experience that would otherwise be difficult and costly to pursue independently.

Thank you for taking the time to read about my experience with the program. I'd like to close with a special thank you to Denise Descheneau, John Downey, and the MAWEA for making this opportunity possible.


## Certified Wastewater Operator Update

*By Richard "Dick" Emberley, Wastewater Operations Technical Advisor, NHDES Water Division*

With many wastewater operators retiring, some leaving for other jobs, and the fact that not all certified operators are working in NH wastewater treatment plants, we have been facing a staffing crisis (800+ operators down to 566 now). While it's common for us at NHDES to hear municipalities say, "We can't find any operators; what are you going to do to fix the situation?" it isn't really our problem to fix—it is a societal problem with a more local fix. To understand what I'm getting at consider that contributing to the crisis is the difficulty of attracting new operators because of the nature of the job (Operators need to be highly skilled in many disciplines, self-motivated, willing to work with hazardous waste, in aging facilities, in all kinds of weather, 24 hours a day/7 days a week/365 days a year) and the fact that society doesn't properly value the profession (seen by the relatively low compensation provided to operators, the inadequate staffing levels at plants, and age and condition of equipment and facilities operators need to operate). Added to those issues are the level of skills needed by today's wastewater treatment plant operators are the same skills much sought after by other professions which provide a much better

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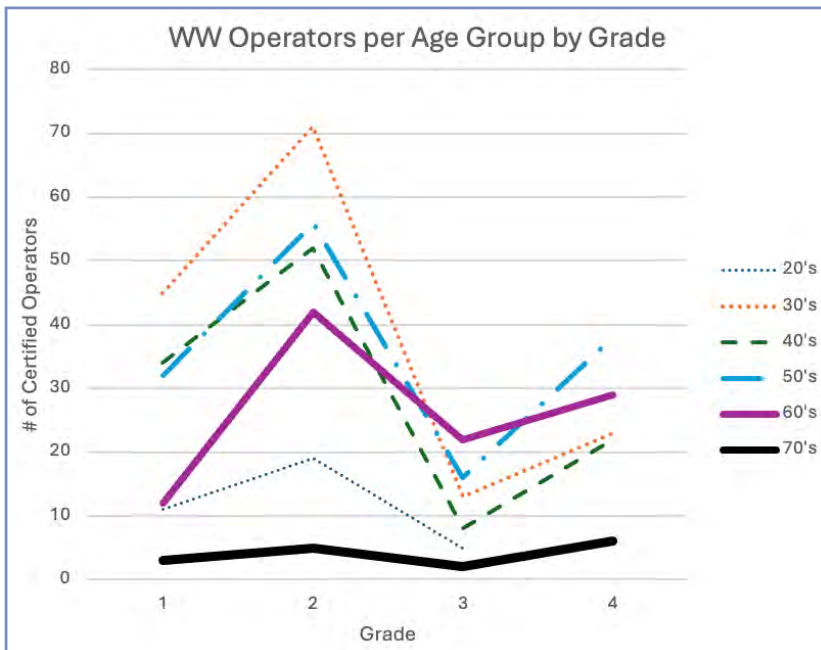
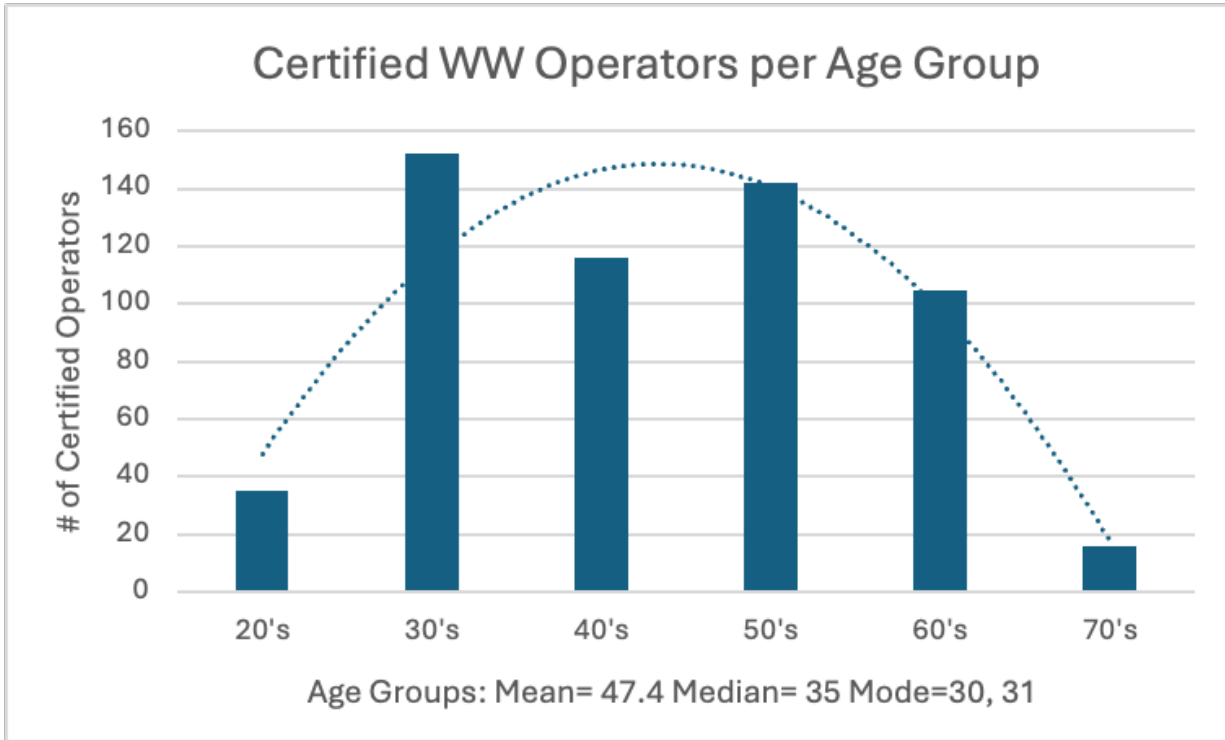
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work/life balance, work environment, level of public esteem and compensation level.

The good news is we are beginning to see signs of a positive change which is bringing an influx of younger individuals who have the requisite skills for the profession (See the number of thirty-year-olds in the graph below). Nevertheless, the higher grade levels will still be difficult to fill as it takes time for new operators to move up to the higher grade levels (3 and 4) where more than 60% of the certified operators are over 50 years of age and soon to age

out. Ultimately, the crisis can be avoided/averted by every community investing ahead of time in the human asset of the wastewater treatment plant by having a succession plan for the wastewater treatment plant Operator-In-Responsible-Charge (OIRC), which plan includes developing inhouse personnel (even hiring extra staff long before the transition) so when the time comes for the long-time operator to leave there is a seamless transition to the next generation without any loss of institutional knowledge.



Grade	Age 50+	Total	% 50+
4	73	118	62%
3	40	66	61%
2	103	245	42%
1	47	137	34%
<b>Total</b>	<b>263</b>	<b>566</b>	<b>46%</b>

## 32nd Annual New Hampshire Fourth & Fifth Grade Water Science Fair and Poetry Winners Announced

### Winners from Rochester, Keene, Hampstead, Durham and Canaan

ROCHESTER, NH – Water was the topic of the day for over 400 students at the **New Hampshire Drinking Water Festival**, State Science Fair and Poetry Contest held on May 8, 2025. Students from 10 communities congregated at the Rochester Drinking Water Facility for this event to celebrate National Drinking Water Week.

During the event, academic awards were presented to students who competed in the State Water Science Fair and Poetry Contest.

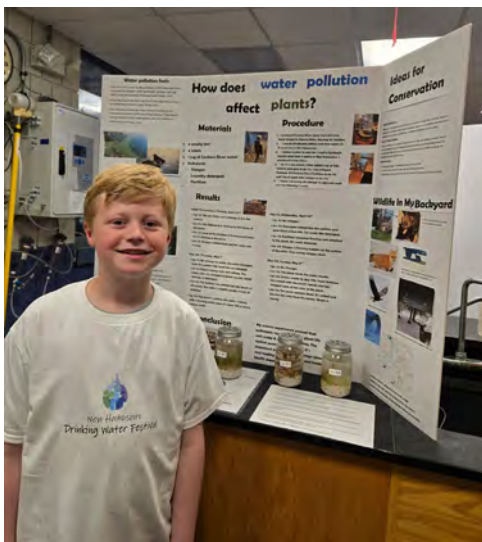
#### 4th – 5th Grade Water Science Fair:

Students presented their science research projects to panels of judges. Congratulations to:

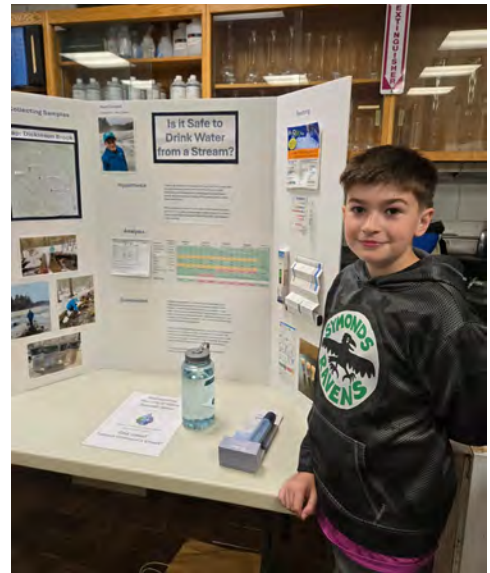
First Place: Hollis Magee, 4th grade, Rochester, for the project "Effects of Pollution on Wildlife on a River"

Second Place: Reid Connell, 4th grade, Keene, for the project "Natural Filtering of a Stream"

Third Place: Quinn Vieth, 4th grade, Keene, for the project "Pitch Perfect: Exploring Sound Waves with Water"



Hollis Magee, 1st place



Reid Connell, 2nd place



Quinn Vieth, 3rd place

#### 3rd - 5th Grade Water Poetry Contest:

Students from across the state submitted 145 thought-provoking poems. The theme of the contest this year was "Water and Me." Congratulations to:

First Place: Liv Marino, 4th grade, Hampstead, for her poem "Beautiful Sights of Water"

Second Place: Miriam Talcott, 5th grade, Durham, for her poem "The Ways of Water"

Third Place: Soren Lavoie, 5th grade, Canaan, for his poem "Saving the Seasons"



Poetry winners: Left to Right - Soren Lavoie and Mieriam Talcott (Liv Marino missing)

To read the poems, visit <https://nhwaterfestival.org/poetry-contest/> or <https://www.facebook.com/NHEnvironmentalServices/>.

In addition to acknowledging academic excellence, students at the water festival learned about the complexity of the natural and human water cycles through participation in a variety of professional-lead activities and interactive exhibits. Students explored dozens of water topics and current issues facing New Hampshire and the world. A sampling of topics includes managing water equitably, water conservation and access, watersheds, wetland ecosystem services, macroinvertebrates, dams, water quality and pollution issues. Lessons were taught by experts from a wide range of water-related career fields, offering students a peek into possible future paths to meaningful professions.

Each year, students vote to award the Best Tasting Water Award. Several municipal water supply systems compete for student votes to win this coveted award. This year, Concord Water Department was chosen by the students as having the best tasting water.

Through generous donations, all participating teachers won raffle awards of their choice of classroom sets of science equipment and grand prizes of water well tests.

This annual event is sponsored by the New Hampshire Drinking Water Coalition in conjunction with the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services to encourage future leaders and scientists to learn about one of the world's most precious resources - water!

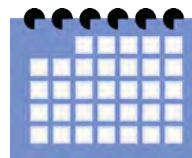
The water festival is generously supported by the following organizations:

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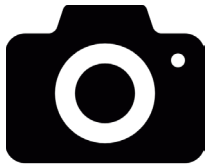
**Save the Date!**

**NHWPCA's Winter Meeting**

**When:** Friday, December 5, 2025

**Tour Location:** Hooksett WWTF

**Meal Location:** The Puritan (with its famous chicken tenders!)



# Photo Gallery

## 2025 Summer Meeting





## 2025 Summer Meeting

*Abby King, Wright Pierce Project Engineer*

Under a cloudless sky on the shores of Lake Winnepesaukee, members of the NHWPCA gathered for their highly anticipated annual summer meeting at Ellacoya State Park. The day was filled with good food, good fun, and most importantly, good people.

Members of the Activities Committee and numerous other volunteers made for a seamless event filled with activities from start to finish. Their dedication and thought-out preparation made all the difference, creating a fun, relaxing experience for all attendees. Of course, those manning the grill made sure to hang up the apron occasionally to show off their skills in the cornhole tournament taking place throughout the day.

By mid-morning chili dogs were served as well as batches of John Hart's (Russell Resources, Inc.) homemade fried dough dusted with sugar, adding an element of summer nostalgia to everyone's morning. By lunchtime, the grills were working overtime, sizzling with steak and chicken. Classic sides such as pasta salads, potato chips, corn on the cob and more rounded out the feast. Lunch provided a time

for members to catch up with familiar faces and make connections to new faces around the picnic tables. An ice cream bar, provided by Wright-Pierce, capped off the lunch with three flavors and a variety of delicious toppings.

Of course, the outing would not be complete if there wasn't a competitive cornhole tournament that pitted seasoned bag throwers and brave novices against each other. A total of thirty games rotated throughout the day. Some teams surged up the winner's bracket, while others were relegated to the "non-winners" bracket for a shot at redemption. The tournament ended after the finalists of the "non-winners" bracket beat out the winner's bracket finalists through two games of double elimination. Seasoned throwers and comeback champions, Mike Theriault (Wright-Pierce) and Mario Leclerc (Ret. Seabrook WWTF) secured the title of Cornhole Champions for the 2025 NHWPCA Summer Outing Cornhole Tournament!

A few members and attendees found the opportunity to reflect on the tradition of these summer gatherings and the wastewater community in New Hampshire as a whole. For some, this event has marked the passage of many professional seasons, and its significance is clear. The outing serves as a meaningful opportunity to bring together members from across the industry in New Hampshire and strengthen the sense of community while recognizing the importance of the work we do.

Whether it was your first time attending or your thirtieth, this year's summer meeting at Ellacoya State Park proved once again that the best networking happens when you mix good people, good food, and good fun under the summer sun.

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