

# Share Your Thoughts

## Clean Water Week 2026 – OPEN HOUSE April 12-18, 2026

Open houses are a powerful way to help the public better understand what your facility does every day, as well as the critical role you play in protecting the environment and public health through pollution control and prevention. It's an opportunity to turn a complex process into something tangible and relatable. Hosting an open house takes time, effort, and resources, and when it's well planned, promoted, and publicized, the payoff can be significant. A successful event can attract a wide range of visitors—from local officials and community leaders to students, educators, and residents curious about that building at the end of the road.

Visitors can see firsthand how wastewater is treated, learn about the science behind clean water, and discover simple ways they can help, such as protecting the collection system by properly disposing of fats, oils, grease, and wipes. Demonstrations, interactive displays, and guided tours can make the experience engaging and memorable. Customize this flyer to advertise your event and check out these resources from NEWEA - Open House Guidelines and Public Education.

Consider adding hands-on activities for families, Q&A sessions with operators, and informational flyers on topics like water conservation and sustainability. Offering refreshments or small giveaways (like reusable water bottles) can make the event more inviting. NHWPCA and NHDES have teamed up to distribute giveaways to each participating plant to hand out during your event.

An open house is also a great opportunity to build stronger connections. Inviting students can spark interest in environmental careers and lead to partnerships with local schools for extended learning programs or internships. Workforce development starts with awareness. Seeing a plant in operation firsthand can certainly be an inspiring experience. Involving other city or town departments—such as human resources, finance, capital improvements, or conservation—helps them understand what your team needs to operate effectively, from equipment and technology to staffing and funding.

By strengthening these relationships ahead of time, you build understanding and support, which is especially important when budgets are tight and every resource counts. A well-executed open house doesn't just educate; it fosters trust, transparency, and community pride in the essential work you do every day.

Clean Water  
Week 2026:  
Open House



*Continued on Page 3*

**NHWPCA Board**

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# Editor's Words



Stephanie, Somersworth WWTF

As I'm writing these editor's words for the spring edition of The Collector, I really wish that I could say that I'm enjoying some spring weather! On my most recent trip to South Carolina, I even had to pack a winter coat. It wasn't my BIG winter coat that I've been wearing for way too long this season, but it was still a winter coat. My daughter was still at work on the day I arrived, so I rented a car and made a stop at the Cypress Wetlands. There's a wonderful little diner in an old schoolhouse right at the entrance to the Wetlands called Griddle & Grits so I stopped there first. Then I stubbornly walked the Wetlands wearing just a sweater because darn it I was in South Carolina! It was chilly, with a light drizzly rain. I didn't see any alligators. I didn't see any turtles. But there were several species of birds that I enjoyed watching and there were other friendly people out walking.

My winter coat got plenty of use in South Carolina, there was only one time that it was warm enough to walk my daughter's dog wearing just my sweater. When I got back to Logan Airport it was cold and windy and I was really wishing that I had packed a winter hat and mittens. Luckily the bus from the airport was nice and warm and I had a friend waiting for me at the bus stop to bring me back to my vehicle.

Maybe by April 10th when it's time for NHWPCA's annual trade fair, there will be some true spring weather! I hope to see y'all there and please reach out to me or any other newsletter committee member to Share Your Thoughts!

Cheers! Stephanie

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## Upcoming Events

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

*Save the Dates*

**March 5, 2026** – "Water's Worth It" Legislative Breakfast, The Concord Hotel, Concord

**March 13, 2026** – Board Meeting, Concord WWTF

**March 19, 2026** – 17<sup>th</sup> Annual Ski Day at Saddleback Mountain in Rangely, ME

**April 10, 2026** – Annual Trade Fair with Board Meeting

**April 12-18, 2026** – Clean Water Week 2026 – Open House

**May 8, 2026** – Board Meeting, Concord WWTF

**NEWSLETTER COMMITTEE**

Stephanie Rochefort, Mary Jane Meier, Dylan Delisle, April Sargent, Ariel Wright, **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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**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

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

Open House Guidelines for Public Water Facilities:



Public Education page on the NEWEA Website:



Advertise your Open House at your local schools, at the library and town hall. Invite your public officials. To get in touch with your Career and Technical Education Centers, find your local CTE on the “CTE Programs in New Hampshire” page on the NH Department of Education website:



**Check out our map of plants that have said, Yes!**

**Will you join us and your fellow wastewater professionals in this important initiative? Let us know by taking our survey:**

<https://nhwPCA.org/survey.php>



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.

## Clean Water Week 2026 OPEN HOUSE



**Provide Awareness and Education to Your Community**

### President’s Corner

#### Message from the New President of the NHWPCA

*Nate Brown, President, NHWPCA*

Dear NHWPCA Members, Colleagues, and Friends,

It is both an honor and a privilege to address you for the first time as President of the New Hampshire Water Pollution Control Association. I am deeply grateful for the trust you have placed in me, and I look forward to serving this community of dedicated operators, engineers, educators, scientists, managers, and public stewards who work every day to protect one of our state’s most essential resources: clean water.



As I step into this role, I want to extend my sincere appreciation to our outgoing leadership and to everyone who contributes to the strength of this Association. NHWPCA has long been a place where professionals come together to learn, collaborate,

and support one another—and it is that spirit of shared purpose that will guide my work in the year ahead.

## Our Focus for the Year Ahead

After speaking with many of you, reflecting on our challenges, and looking ahead to the opportunities before us, I have identified four core priorities for my term as President:

### 1. Strengthening Workforce Development

Our industry is facing real challenges in recruitment and retention. As experienced operators retire and new responsibilities continue to emerge, we must do more to elevate the visibility and value of our profession. Together, we can create clearer, more accessible pathways for the next generation of water professionals—through outreach, mentorship, partnerships with schools, and stronger support for those entering the field.

### 2. Fostering Collaboration

Whether it's collaboration between utilities, state agencies, training providers, or academic institutions, our success depends on breaking down silos. NHWPCA is in a unique position to bring voices together, facilitate information sharing, and strengthen the networks that make our work more efficient, more resilient, and more innovative.

### 3. Continuing Education & Training

The world of wastewater is evolving rapidly—technologically, environmentally, and regulatory-wise. NHWPCA must remain a hub for learning and professional growth. I am committed to expanding our training opportunities, enhancing operator support, and ensuring that members at every stage of their careers have access to the education they need to succeed.

### 4. Advocacy and Awareness

Every person in New Hampshire benefits from clean and reliable water services, yet the work behind it often happens out of sight and out of mind. We must continue telling our story. That means raising public awareness, engaging legislators, and highlighting the critical role our members play in protecting public health, the environment, and community well-being.

## Working Together

I believe deeply that the future of our profession

is bright. The challenges we face are real, but so is the dedication, expertise, and passion within this association. I encourage each of you to stay involved—attend events, participate in committees, share your experiences, and connect with your peers. The more voices we bring to the table, the stronger and more resilient NHWPCA becomes.

Thank you again for the opportunity to serve as your President. I look forward to working with you in the year ahead to advance our mission, strengthen our workforce, and continue protecting the waters of New Hampshire for generations to come.

Warm regards,  
Nate Brown, President, NHWPCA

## Blurbs, Blurbs, & More Blurbs

### Public Education & Outreach Award 2026



*Daumanic Fucile receives the Public Education and Outreach Award from Education Committee co-chair, Krista Larsen.*

Daumanic Fucile, Seabrook WWTF was recognized at the Winter Meeting as this year's recipient of the Public Education and Outreach Award. Daumanic conducted an effective public outreach campaign using a series of short videos shared on social media to highlight the impacts of aging infrastructure and the need for critical upgrades. Leveraging drone footage performed by Daumanic and photographs, he visually documented deteriorating conditions providing the public with a clear, aerial perspective of the issues. The videos were released in the weeks

leading up to a spring town meeting, aiming to educate residents and build support for funding proposals on the ballot. The campaign successfully increased community awareness and engagement ahead of the successful vote. Check out Daumanic's videos on Seabrook's Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/seabrookwwtf>.

The NHDES & NHWPCA Joint Public Education & Outreach Program Award recognizes wastewater operators and community leaders for significant accomplishments in promoting public awareness and the understanding of water environment issues, such as the importance of wastewater treatment plants and their role in protecting public health and the environment, through the development and implementation of outreach, education and/or communication programs that others can follow and build upon.

Nominations are now being accepted for 2026.

Scan the code for more information and evaluation criteria.



## Operator certification changes in December 2025

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

New operators 23 by exam and 5 by reciprocity, increased certification 20, expired 25.

### December Exam Results:

Overall Average = 74%, Pass Rate = 72% (43/60)  
 Grade I Average = 73%, Pass Rate = 70% (19/27)  
 Grade II Average = 78%, Pass Rate = 85% (17/20)  
 Grade III Average = 64%, Pass Rate = 33% (2/6)  
 Grade IV Average = 74%, Pass Rate = 71% (5/7)

### Grade I

Mark Adamczyk  
 Erik W. Ames  
 Kyle R. Andreoli  
 Stephen Castellani  
 Kala R. Chen  
 Erica S. Douglas

Joseph M Elick  
 Marco R. Giannozzi  
 Eric L. Haley  
 Timothy R. Littlefield  
 Tyler D. Macconnell  
 Wayne A. Robinson  
 Gregory J. Root  
 Michael Sanborn  
 Evan Shea  
 Mason M. Trottier  
 Justin T. Waniski  
 Noah T. Williford  
 Tyler J. Witfoth

### Grade II

Drew P. Armstrong  
 James G. Barlow  
 Merle Branconnier  
 David A. Burrows  
 David J. Felix  
 Paula J. Fronce  
 Jeremiah Haynes  
 Matthew R. Kalina  
 Patrick J. Mackey  
 Scott Madaglia  
 Peter T. Neary  
 Cannon O. Poland  
 Riley Saladino  
 Maxwell N. Schneider  
 Dylan J. Smith  
 Raven H. Solomon  
 Kyle S. St Pierre

### Grade III

Darren M. Candello  
 Patricia L. Chesebrough

### Grade IV

Bruce K. Bain  
 John Dubiansky  
 Christopher P. Pelletier  
 Daniel T. Rydel  
 Albert J. Vanasse

### Reciprocity

Joel Dsouza - I  
 Kaitlyn Kentel - I  
 Donald Champagne - II  
 Ross Grube - II  
 Marianna Coombs - III

## Extending our Gratitude to Mario Leclerc



Your Board of Directors extends heartfelt appreciation to Mario Leclerc for his outstanding volunteer services as Association Treasurer over the past 6 years from 2020 through 2025. Mario volunteered his service at a time when no others would officially run for the office. He willingly performed the vital duties pursuant to financial matters and kept current with all committees and with NEWEA. His constancy provided a smooth transition each year for the changing slate of officers. Mario continues to support many of the Committees' actions. His consistent support for the Summer Meeting activities has made the event a great success year after year. His generosity knows no bounds. Just ask him about trailering all those loads of supplies from Manchester to the Summer Meeting venues. Be ready, there are some hair-raising tales. In recognition of his ongoing reliable partnership The Board awarded Mario a Lifetime Membership to our NHWPCA. We ask all members please extend thanks to Mario for his volunteerism and loyal dedication to our Association.

## 2025 POTY Award

*By John C. Adie, NHDES WWEB, Operations Section*

Annually NHDES receives applications for the Plant of the Year Award. The application can be found on the NHWPCA website below.

[https://nhwpc.org/POTY\\_Award](https://nhwpc.org/POTY_Award)

The application is easy to fill out, the only major lift for information is the required years' worth of DMRs. This should not be bad considering they are filed electronically, so the records should be readily available. There are six categories that score points for the applicant. Those are as follows:

Compliance -35%  
 Safety – 15%  
 Employee Education – 15%  
 Public Outreach – 10%  
 Professional Participation -15%  
 Site Visit – 10%

In my many years of being involved with this award, I've noticed that one category consistently misses the full number of points, Professional Participation. The NHWPCA is always in need of volunteers, without the valuable work they do for our association it would not exist. I believe we can improve in this category in the coming year and the future. Please make the effort to apply, get involved and gain the recognition your plant and staff deserve.

I would like to extend a warm thank you to my co-worker John Muras, Design Review Supervisor, Wastewater Engineering Bureau, Water Division, NHDES. He has been instrumental in helping with the site visits and the associated scoring.

I would like to recognize all the applicants: North Conway POTW, Hinsdale POTW and runner-up (and past winner) Peterborough POTW. We really hope that they'll all apply again next year.

And without further ado, congratulations to the 2025 POTY award winner, Hooksett POTW. They have set the bar high for themselves and are a trend-setter in our industry.



*Recipient of 2025 POTY Award – Hooksett POTW*

## New Hampshire Water Pollution Control Association Scholarship Program

Abby King, NHWPCA Youth Outreach Chair

The New Hampshire Water Pollution Control Association (NHWPCA) is committed to promoting excellence in wastewater engineering and operations by investing in the next generation of water and environmental professionals. Through its Scholarship Program, the NHWPCA applies a portion of the Association's assets to support students and members pursuing education and training in water- and wastewater-related fields.

Each year, the Scholarship Committee awards a \$1,000 scholarship to a New Hampshire college or vocational student majoring in Water Pollution Control, Environmental Science, Civil Engineering, or a closely related environmental field. In addition, the Committee awards a \$1,000 scholarship to a promising New Hampshire high school senior preparing to enter a post-secondary or vocational program related to the water and environment fields.

Completed scholarship applications must be postmarked by February 28, 2026. Scholarship recipients will be announced in March 2026, with the option to receive their award at the NHWPCA Trade Fair on April 10, 2026.

Beyond student scholarships, the program also allocates funds to assist NHWPCA member operators seeking partial financial support to attend one-day seminars or short courses. The Scholarship Committee reviews all applications, selects recipients based on merit and eligibility, and presents its recommendations to the NHWPCA Board of Directors.

Through these efforts, the NHWPCA continues its mission to strengthen the water profession while supporting education, training, and professional growth across New Hampshire. For more information, visit [www.nhwPCA.org/Scholarships](http://www.nhwPCA.org/Scholarships).



## Safety Corner

### A Near Miss—Hot Work Permit? What's That?

*Brought to you by the NHWPCA Safety Committee*

First, a big "thank you" to the facility who submitted this near-miss. We are grateful for the opportunity to share this incident with our membership in an effort to educate them about policies and procedures that exist to prevent incidents such as this one from harming people and property.

#### The Incident:

Roofing contractors were performing hot work on the roof of a pump station supporting the secondary treatment units at the wastewater facility. The contractor was using a blow torch to dry the concrete prior to applying an adhesive for the roofing materials. A "hot spot" developed, which caused the fire alarm to go off. All staff, including the contractors, safely vacated to the established muster point and all were accounted for. The local fire department arrived and followed a smell of smoke into the secondary tunnel. Upon further investigation by the fire department, a board located under the station's roof-top air handling unit was smoldering. The fire department extinguished the smoldering board.

Although near-miss reporting is required by the employer, a report was not submitted because staff didn't think one was required due to the fact that in-house personnel were not involved in or responsible for the incident.

## FUN FACT

*By the year 1960, 50% of the United States population had access to some form of wastewater treatment. That means that 66 years ago, 50% of the United States population did NOT have access to any wastewater treatment.*

**The Corrective Actions and Lessons Learned:**

Investigation into the near- miss incident identified the following issues requiring corrective action:

- No hot work permit existed for the roofing project, and in fact, the wastewater facility did not have a hot work program or equivalent Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and had not trained staff on hot work. Management is currently drafting a written program and will train staff on the program once it is finalized.
- Staff stated during post-incident interviews that they did not have authority to direct the contractor in the matter of hot work. Staff have been provided with applicable standards and education on this matter (see below).
- Post-incident follow-up included discussions about the applicability of NFPA to a NH wastewater facility because this NFPA is federal. Facility management were provided with applicable standards and education on this matter (see below).
- The contractor did not follow requirements for hot work. At a minimum, the contractor should have come prepared with a hot work permit or requested one from the wastewater facility, discussed planned hot work with supervising staff at the wastewater facility prior to conducting it, and followed all requirements outlined on the permit (e.g., clearing the work area of combustibles, having a fire extinguisher in the immediate work area, etc.). The facility is now including NFPA language in their requests for proposals for any contracted work that may include hot work.

- The wastewater facility should have submitted a near- miss report because one was required by the employer, and because the incident occurred on their property, posed risk to people and property, and required revision of existing SOPs to prevent re-occurrence in the future.

**Additional Information and Resources:**

**More about “hot work”:**

- “Hot work” is activities like welding, brazing, cutting, grinding, or heat treating that produce sparks, flames, or intense heat, creating a fire or explosion risk by igniting combustibles or flammable atmospheres.

*1.2 Purpose. This standard shall provide minimum requirements for all persons who manage, request, authorize, perform, or supervise hot work.*

*[NFPA 51b, Chapter 1, Administration]*

- NFPA 51B is the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standard for fire prevention during hot work, providing guidelines and requirements to prevent fires and explosions from hot work activities. It emphasizes strict fire prevention measures including but not limited to hot work permits, designated work areas, combustible material controls, use of fire-resistant blankets/curtains, having fire extinguishers immediately available, and requiring trained fire watches after hot work is performed. Its core purpose is to safeguard property, life, and prevent injury by controlling ignition sources from hot work operations.
- Want to learn more? Download the NFPA hot work safety fact sheet: <https://www.nfpa.org/downloadable-resources/fact-sheets/hot-work-safety-fact-sheet>.



**Hot work permits and this near- miss:**

- NH wastewater facilities are subject to NFPA through the NH state fire code. See excerpt from RSA 153:1 below.

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NEED,  
THE SERVICE YOU  
DESERVE**

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*RSA 153:1 Definitions. VI-a. "New Hampshire fire code" or "state fire code" means the adoption by reference of the Life Safety Code, NFPA 101, 2021 edition, and the Uniform Fire Code NFPA 1, 2021 edition, as published by the National Fire Protection Association and as amended by the state board of fire control and ratified by the general court pursuant to RSA 153:5. The provisions of any other national code, model code, or standard referred to within a code listed in this definition shall be included in the state fire code unless amended in accordance with RSA 153:5.*

*[New Hampshire Revised Statutes Annotated (RSA)]*

- The permit must be signed by the person who will perform the work, as the intent of the permit is to prompt this person to review each requirement listed on the permit and check the box to confirm the requirement has been met at the time the hot work is to be performed.
- The permit must also be signed by the issuer of the permit, or permit-authorizing individual (PAI), which should be a designated and properly qualified person at the wastewater facility. The PAI's signature certifies that the PAI has reviewed the work to be completed, the area in which the work will be performed, and the written permit, and agrees that all requirements have been met prior to allowing the hot work to begin.

**Common misconceptions regarding hot work (see supporting excerpts from NFPA below):**

- Misconception #1: "We are specifically restricted from dictating means and methods for contractors and we cannot direct their work. We are not qualified to do the task, which is why we retained a contractor to do specialty work."

Clarification #1: Hot work is a task that can easily result in a catastrophic event, which is why NFPA 51b provides thorough instruction and specifies "inherent responsibility" of the "owner", including "owner" in the definition of "management", and detailing "management responsibilities". As such, the wastewater facility is not "directing" the work when requiring a hot work permit and associated requirements; rather, the facility is meeting the minimum requirements of NFPA 51b.

*A.3.3.5 Management. The owner of the property has an inherent responsibility to ensure that hot work is performed safely and does not cause a fire. The owner can designate an employee, such as a safety manager or plant manager, to fulfill the responsibilities of management. Similarly, by agreement, the owner can designate a non-employee, such as a construction manager or general contractor, to fulfill those responsibilities.*

*[NFPA 51b, Annex A – Explanatory Material]*

*A.3.3.8 Permit Authorizing Individual (PAI). The PAI is permitted to be, among others, the supervisor, foreperson, property owner or representative, or health and safety administrator. The PAI cannot be the hot work operator, except as permitted in Chapter 6. The PAI is aware of the fire hazards involved and is familiar with the provisions of this standard.*

*[NFPA 51b, Annex A – Explanatory Material]*

- Misconception #2: "Staff should make sure a complete permit is issued, provide input as needed related to site-specific conditions, and post a copy of the permit each day the hot work is being performed. Staff should not actually issue the permit for a contractor or grant 'permission' for the work."

Clarification #2: While the PAI can be designated/delegated by "management" to a contractor, the wastewater facility remains responsible for ensuring hot work activities are performed safely and in accordance with a hot work permit. At a minimum, the work area and permit must be reviewed and signed off on by wastewater facility staff prior to a contractor performing any hot work. In addition, facility staff need to verify that that a fire watch is conducted after hot work (a minimum of one hour after completion), and that a final walk through is completed prior to the contractor leaving for the day (or sooner if warranted) to ensure there are no residual "hot spots" that could ignite. In this situation, "management" can designate a member of the wastewater facility staff as the PAI responsible for ensuring that the fire watch is completed, and to conduct the final walk through (again, this is not 'directing' work; rather, complying with/ permissible per NFPA 51b).

4.1.6 Management shall ensure that all individuals involved in the hot work operations, including contractors, are familiar with the provisions of this standard.

4.5 Contractors. Before starting any hot work, contractors and their clients shall discuss the planned project completely, including the type of hot work to be conducted and the hazards in the area.

4.6 Mutual Responsibility. Management, contractors, the PAI, the fire water, and the [hot work] operators shall recognize their mutual responsibility for safety in hot work operations by complying with this standard and their specified responsibilities.

[NFPA 51b, Chapter 4, Responsibility for Hot Work]

This article is brought to you by the NHWPCA Safety Committee. If you or someone you know has experienced a Near Miss, please let us know by sending the incident to Patty Chesebrough at [Patricia.L.Chesebrough@des.nh.gov](mailto:Patricia.L.Chesebrough@des.nh.gov). **All submissions are strictly confidential.** Please do your part to keep a Near Miss at your facility from injuring someone at another facility. Tell us about it and we will get the word out to others! Thank you in advance for your submissions.



## Thoughts from the Bench

By Stephanie Rochefort, City of Somersworth WWTF

My two dogs, Jazz and Morty, love peanut butter. Jazz is fifteen years old, so her back legs don't work like they used to and she's deaf, but her nose and tail work fine. Recently, I opened up a jar of peanut butter to make myself a sandwich. Morty is a little guy, and he immediately materialized right under my feet. Jazz came thumping into the kitchen and started excitedly whipping me with her tail. As I was trying hard not to trip over a dog while making my sandwich, I dropped the lid to the jar of peanut butter. All three of us dove for the lid. Jazz's back legs splayed out and she landed on top of Morty, who started to growl. I took advantage of the distraction and grabbed the lid, feeling thankful that it had landed facing up instead of down.

And then I wondered if that really was the best way for it to have landed. If one of the dogs had gotten

to the lid before me, they would have started licking any residual peanut butter that was on the lid. And the top of the lid was in contact with the floor that is only ever clean for the amount of time that it takes the freshly mopped floor to dry before the dogs walk on it. I threw the lid into the kitchen sink to wash, gave the mutts a non-peanut butter treat (because they're both overweight and peanut butter has more calories than Crunchy O's), and realized that I have the perfect topic for my next Thoughts From The Bench!

I came to be a lid-up proponent after watching a training video from IDEXX. Obviously, you don't want to contaminate your sample when setting up an IDEXX tray for e-coli analysis. It always seemed to me that it would be kinda difficult to contaminate the sample. After all, you collect the sample wearing clean gloves and you're using a different pair of clean gloves to set up the sample. The training video didn't make a big deal out of it, but I noted that they took the lid off the sample bottle and set it down lid-up. The lab bench that you're working on is clean and even if it wasn't, any contamination would be on the top of the lid and so couldn't fall into the sample when you put the lid back on. E-coli is not going to fall from the ceiling – and if it did, would it really matter which way the lid was when the bottle was open?!

I work strictly in Team Lid-up for everything, but figured I'd do a little research and oh my, this is a controversial topic! I found a training video that describes a method where you don't put the lid down at all. Obviously, there's other contaminants that are easier to pick up than e-coli. Regardless of whether the lid is up or down, and regardless of how clean the bench is, and even regardless of how clean your gloves are, you could accidentally introduce a contaminate into the sample bottle.

For this method, you first loosen, but don't remove the cap on your sample bottle. It is recommended that you practice removing the cap by only using two fingers to touch the outside of the cap and to not pass your fingers over the open bottle as you remove the cap. You would hold onto the cap facing downward as you add whatever reagent you need to add to the bottle, in a way that doesn't have your fingers passing over the open bottle. Then you put the cap back on, while still making sure not to pass your fingers over the open bottle.

In our world of new NPDES permits, more stringent discharge limits, and “new” pollutants, it does seem like a fine time to up my game with sample handling so I’ve started practicing not putting the lid down at all. I quickly realized that there’s a lot of scenarios where I don’t have enough hands! I don’t have enough hands to hold the lid from the composite jug and the lid from the sample container while pouring a sub-sample from a big composite jug. I don’t have enough hands to hold onto a lid while using a pole to grab a sample. I have successfully done these tasks in the past while collecting IPP samples...with a helper! I’ve used a helper because it’s easier and more professional-looking than fumbling and dropping lids, but it turns out I’ve already developed a head-start on the better sample handling techniques that we’ll all need to be using.....**you think?**



## Residuals Report

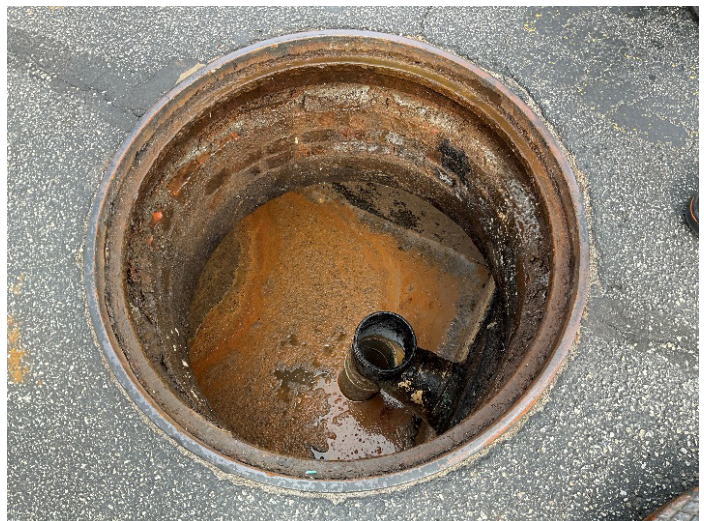
By Wade Pelham, Water Division – Wastewater Engineering Bureau, NHDES

Grease is a *slippery* subject. It enters the wastewater stream from numerous businesses and food preparation activities from restaurants, hospitality sector services, institutions, and supermarkets. Grease must be removed from the wastewater stream to protect and preserve the function of the wastewater collection systems, septic systems, and wastewater treatment plants. This brown grease is retained in grease traps and grease interceptors which must be pumped out routinely. Waste grease is often taken to a wastewater treatment plant for processing and treatment.

The challenge in New Hampshire is there is only one WWTF which routinely accepts grease year-round, the Allentown WWTF, which takes in a lot – over 5 million gallons of grease annually. Therefore, when Allentown needs to suspend grease receiving for maintenance or other activities, it poses a significant disruption throughout NH. Recognizing the limitations posed by the existing network, the NH Department of Environmental Services has partnered with a local engineering firm to study this issue. NHDES staff coordinated site visits with the engineers to visit the Allentown WWTF and another important grease receiving plant in the region, the

South Berwick, ME WWTF. The superintendents at both WWTFs were very generous with their time, explaining their grease receiving processes as well as the capital and operational factors that make grease receiving a successful, revenue-positive endeavor for their facilities.

The engineering firm will complete a grease receiving and capacity study with a report detailing operational and infrastructure factors, estimated costs, and a tipping fee structure needed to cover associated capital and operational costs while providing a long-term, positive revenue stream for the wastewater utility. The hopeful outcome of this report will be to provide a practical framework that other wastewater treatment plants in the state can utilize if considering the possibility of increasing revenue by implementing grease receiving. The results of the grease study will be included in a future newsletter article. If you have any questions please contact Wade Pelham, NHDES at [wade.pelham@des.nh.gov](mailto:wade.pelham@des.nh.gov).





## Retiree Rave

*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!*

### Celebrating Fred McNeill's Distinguished and Successful Career Serving the Water Industry

In January 2025, Fred McNeill retired after serving nineteen years as Chief Engineer of the Environmental Protection Division for the City of Manchester. Throughout his career, he focused on every facet of the changing challenges to provide clean, safe water. His pursuits literally took him around the world. He is a national leader with over 40 years' experience in the study, design, construction, and management of environmental infrastructure.

Many of us in the wastewater profession have knowledge of Fred's accomplishments while working at Manchester EPD. Let's recount and honor his collection of world experiences as well.

Fred started his career as a Peace Corps Volunteer managing a rural water supply program in Sierra Leone, West Africa. He then worked for 20 years as a consulting engineer including ten years

internationally executing major environmental infrastructure projects in Egypt, Jordan, Armenia, and Georgia. He has authored over 75 technical papers/presentations/articles on a wide range of environmental infrastructure topics. He has served in leadership positions in several professional organizations including NHDES's Rivers Management Advisory Committee, New England Water Environment Association, New England Interstate Water Pollution Control Commission, New Hampshire Water Pollution Control Association, and has participated on several NHDES regulatory/technical committees. Fred was recognized in 2021 for his long and distinguished career by being named the national Professional Manager of the Year in Water Resources by the American Public Works Association.

A large part of managing the Manchester EPD facility requires constant focus on upgrading the collection and treatment systems. Over the years, local industrial facility waste streams have complicated the treatment processes. These changes require constant attention, monitoring and revolutionizing of the treatment process. There have been numerous changes and upgrades to the facility made during Fred's years of managing EPD. Fred's support and willingness to educate the rate payers, the local government representatives, and the wastewater professionals from around the nation has had a positive effect for all. Countless tours and Open House events have been held due to Fred's efforts. This local source of education and hands on experience is invaluable.

Most of us know Fred from our membership activities in the NHWPCA. Fred truly makes every effort to literally 'Belong to our Association'.

Fred joined the NHWPCA in 1999. In 2003, as President of the Association, he helped start the "Plant of the Year Award" or commonly referred to as 'POTY'. Fred was instrumental in changing the bylaws of the Association's charter to expand the eligibility of the Presidency to non-operators in this field, serving as the first non-operator President of NHWPCA in 2003. He also helped to resurrect the Legislative Breakfast which has proven over the years to be instrumental in educating our elected representatives concerning the issues facing this industry. For 25 years Fred has been the chair of the very popular annual golf tournament which continues to grow in participation yearly.

Fred has taken a very active role and held the

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Highest Officer positions in several Organizations and Associations and received awards for his contributions as listed below:

- Member - NH Rivers Management Advisory Committee, 2008 – Present
- Commissioner – New England Interstate Water Pollution Control Commission, 2008 – Present
- President/Board Member - New England Water Environment Association, 2012- 2023
- President/Board Member – New Hampshire Water Pollution Control Association, 1998 – 2004
- Member – Senate Bill 121 Commission to study NPDES Delegation, 2017 – 2018
- Member - City of Manchester Joint Sustainability Committee, 2009 – 2014
- NHDES Fats, Oils, Grease (FOG) Task Force, 2006 – 2007
- NHDES Wastewater Rules Workgroup, 2004 – 2006
- NHDES Septage Task Force, 2003 – 2008
- NHDES Sludge Management Advisory Committee, 1999 – 2000
- WEF Standard Investigation Task Force, 1998 – 1999
- Member - American Water Works Association/ New England Water Works Association/New Hampshire Water Works Association
- Member – Water Environment Federation/New England Water Environment Association/New Hampshire Water Pollution Control Association
- Member - American Society of Civil Engineers/ NH Section of ASCE

**Awards**

- *Professional Manager of the Year in Water Resources Water - American Public Works Association 2021*
- *Alfred Peloquin Award – New England Water Environment Association 2015*
- *Daniel Mead Young Engineer Writing Award – Boston Society of Civil Engineers 1992*



*Most recently, Fred received the Water Environment Federation Willam D. Hatfield Award for 2025. NEWEA President Deb Mahoney presented Fred with the Award for Outstanding Performance and Professionalism*

*Criteria of the Award include: Documentation of a successful system of reports from the operator to his or her superiors that fulfill the information requirements and provide the operator with a forum for suggestions for improvements; Use of a good public relations program; and Contributing to the dissemination of information concerning advancements in the field*

**Sharing some history and insights in his own words:**

**Q. What inspired you to get involved in the wastewater treatment field?**

I fell into the environmental engineering field. I was a newly married carpenter in NH and we were looking for adventure, so we joined the Peace Corps. We were stationed in Sierra Leone, West Africa and we were given a rural water supply program to manage. It was a very un-Peace Corps like experience as we lived in a three bedroom/two bath house, had a staff of 25, a small fleet of vehicles, and an office/construction yard at the local municipality. The program was funded by the United Nations and we kept regular office hours while managing three construction crews installing wells in the field. It was such a positive, enriching, and educational experience I wanted to continue, but I did not have a college degree

which was required for an international career path, so I returned to the States, attended Northeastern, and within two years of graduation we were back overseas working in Egypt to continue our overseas adventures.

**Q. Total # of years of service & years of membership in NHWPCA?**

I joined NHWPCA in 1999 when we returned from our final overseas assignment in Amman, Jordan. CDM Smith had just opened an office in Manchester that I transferred to so we could raise our two sons in the New Hampshire culture as my wife and I did. I joined the board in 2000 and became Prez in 2003. I have since served as NEWEA State Director, have moderated the Legislative Breakfast for the past ten years, and have coordinated the golf tournament for 25 years.

Also, in service to New Hampshire, I served on DES's River's Management Advisory Committee and as a NEIWPC State Commissioner, both for over 15 years, along with several ad-hoc DES committees over the years.

**Q. What have you liked most about your work (i.e., environmental protection, variety of skills needed & challenges met, the operations staff camaraderie, etc.)?**

I was able to enjoy a 40-year career providing meaningful environmental stewardship not only to my hometown of Manchester, but around the world. My career was full of adventure, projects, contributions, successes, failures, laughs, and even a few tears. The friends and colleagues that I met along the way were the ones that enriched, enlightened, and entertained me on my journey.

**Q. Any words of wisdom or parting advice to others?**

Be passionate about our worthy and critical profession. The success of the Clean Water Act over the past 50 years is one of our country's greatest engineering achievements, similar to the NASA space program and the interstate highway system. We have cleaned America's waterways from literally catching fire in Cleveland in the 1960s to the Merrimack River being in its best condition in over 150 years in the 2020s...

**Q. Any interests you wish to pursue, or plans to travel, etc. in retirement?**

In retirement I plan to continue my passions of skiing,

golfing, gardening, and officiating basketball. I plan on adding fishing and writing industry articles to the retirement repertoire in the coming years.

## OUR BEST WISHES

It is a pleasure to present this acknowledgement of Fred's significant contributions to our Association, to his efforts to protect our Beautiful NH environment, and his positive impact on the Water Industry. Thank you for your inspiring leadership and unwavering support. Thank you for all the hard work, dedication and contributions you've made over the years. Please join me in wishing Fred a retirement filled with joy and new adventures.

## CONGRATULATIONS FROM NEWEA

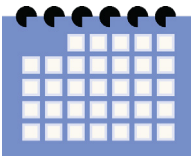
Jordan Gosselin, Communications/PR Manager:

On behalf of New England Water Environment Association (NEWEA), the NEWEA Office congratulates Fred McNeill on his retirement after a long and successful career, and extends our gratitude for his commitment to the water industry and our association. For more than 30 years, Fred has been an active NEWEA member, volunteering his time and expertise on a variety of committees and holding roles as the New Hampshire State Director and WEF Delegate on NEWEA's Executive Committee. Fred served as NEWEA's President in 2022, using his term to highlight the 50th anniversary of the Clean Water Act and recognize the progress and achievements of the water industry since the law passed. Additionally, Fred expertly plans and manages NEWEA's Spring and Fall Golf Tournaments, contributing significantly to the great success of these annual events.

We wish Fred the best in his retirement and hope that we continue to see him at NEWEA events for many years to come!

## FUN FACT

*In 1887, the first biological treatment, an intermittent sand filter, was installed in Medford, Massachusetts.*



## Save the Dates!



### NH Drinking Water Festival

#### Science Fair and Poetry Contest May 6, 2026 – Manchester, NH

Register at [nhwaterfestival.org](https://nhwaterfestival.org):



### NHWPCA’s Annual Trade Fair – Celebrating 59 Years!

#### Friday, April 10, 2026

Join NHWPCA for our Annual Trade Show that will take place on Friday, April 10, at the Sheraton Nashua Hotel.

- Check out the latest vendor displays for environmental products and professional services in the Wastewater Treatment Industry.
- Earn Technical Credit Hour (0.1 CEU) for Trade Fair Attendance and (0.2 CEU) for Technical Session Attendance for a total of 3TCHs!
- Attend two Technical Sessions
- Luncheon Buffet – featuring steak tips, chicken and more!
- Raffles!
- Award Ceremony – honoring NH’s finest water quality professionals

## A Year for Outreach and Awareness

*Justin Durant – Third-Director, Wright-Pierce*

As the first issue of The Collector for 2026, this is an ideal time to highlight a new public outreach campaign being undertaken by the NHWPCA, in collaboration with regional partners, to increase awareness, education, and interest in the wastewater industry within New Hampshire. The campaign aims to shine a light on the essential work performed by our industry and to share important stories of success and impact from the communities we serve.

Public outreach is often an important part of managing wastewater treatment works and collection systems and is frequently conducted through public meetings or similar forums. These efforts are effective for engaging users, stakeholders, and decision-makers, but they can sometimes be time-intensive, unintuitive, and may not reach desired audiences.

In today’s age, information and stories can be shared quickly and widely using social media platforms and digital news outlets. When used effectively, mass media can be a powerful tool in educating the public and stakeholders about the wastewater industry and the essential role it plays in protecting public health and our local environment. The Collector itself, as you read this, serves as an example of an effective way to communicate with the wastewater community and stakeholders within our state.

Over the next year, NHWPCA aims to enhance outreach efforts by using mass media to increase public awareness, generate interest, expand audiences and highlight the importance of wastewater services and careers in New Hampshire. To assist in this effort, NHWPCA, in cooperation with NEWEA and other New England State Associations, has partnered with Black Fly Media to develop and conduct a media outreach campaign. The focus of this campaign will be to showcase the critical services provided by wastewater infrastructure and the dedicated professionals who operate, maintain, and manage these systems.

The effectiveness of this campaign is impacted by participation from communities and treatment works willing to share local stories and accomplishments. Members are encouraged to reach out to the Association with stories or ideas to be incorporated

into the campaign and help amplify the collective voice while increasing understanding of the industry work performed every day.

## 2025 Drinking Water & Wastewater Managers School Graduation

At the NH Water Pollution Control Association (NHWPCA) Winter Meeting on December 5, 2025, graduates of the 2025 NH Drinking Water & Wastewater Managers School were presented with their certificates of completion, signed by NH Department of Environmental Services Commissioner Robert Scott. This graduating class is the largest so far in the history of the program. The NH Drinking Water & Wastewater Managers School, an extensive and well-established course, is a partnership between the NH Water Pollution Control Association, NH Water Works Association and NH Department of Environmental Services to help prepare drinking water and wastewater professionals for future management or supervisory positions, as well as for current managers and supervisors who wish to improve their management skills. This provides introduction to the skills needed

for the next generation of water utility leaders as well as the opportunity for candidates to develop an industry specific peer network. Applications are currently being accepted for the next session, which begins in 2027. You can learn more about the program and find the application forms on the NHWPCA website here: [www.nhwPCA.org/NH\\_Drinking\\_Water\\_Wastewater\\_Managers\\_School](http://www.nhwPCA.org/NH_Drinking_Water_Wastewater_Managers_School), or by contacting Wade Pelham, NHDES, at [wade.pelham@des.nh.gov](mailto:wade.pelham@des.nh.gov). You can also read more about the course straight from a graduate, on the following page.



*2025 DW&WW Managers School graduate Albert Vanasse receives his diploma*



*2025 DW&WWMS Graduates, left to right: Jimmy Casey – Dover WWTF, Nate Martin – Manchester WWTF, Jeffrey O’Neil – Berlin WPCF, Dean Costello – Hampton WWTF, Curtis Hodgdon- North Conway WP, Seth Thompson – City of Dover, Dylan Delisle – Concord WWTF, Anthony Shea – Epping Water & Sewer, Nathan Limric – Peterborough WWTF, Rich Laughton – Secondwind Water, Michael Scarpetti – Manchester Water Works, Matt Collins – Durham WWTF, Bob Bishop – Merrimack WWTF, Dan Perry – Concord WTP, Sean Donohoe - Concord WTP, Matt Solazzo – Newburyport WWTF, Jeremiah Haynes – Charlestown WWTF, Sam Wood - WRBP, and Albert Vanasse – Hanover Water Reclamation Facility*

## NH Drinking Water & Wastewater Managers School Experience

My name is Jeff O’Neil, I am the Assistant Chief Operator at the Berlin Pollution Control Facility. I have eight years of experience with the City of Berlin and a total of twelve years in the wastewater industry. As I continue to advance my career in Berlin, this class put me on the right path toward understanding what effective management is all about.

Attending the Water and Wastewater Management School provided practical, real-world management tools that I was able to apply immediately in my role. The training strengthened my leadership, communication, and operational decision-making skills, and I would highly recommend it to others in the industry.



*Jeff O’Neil, Assistant Chief Operator, Berlin Pollution Control Facility (DW&WWMS class of 2025 graduate)*

To learn more about the NH DW&WW Managers School visit the NHWPCA website: [www.nhwPCA.org/NH\\_Drinking\\_Water\\_Wastewater\\_Managers\\_School](http://www.nhwPCA.org/NH_Drinking_Water_Wastewater_Managers_School)



or contact Wade Pelham, NHDES, at [wade.pelham@des.nh.gov](mailto:wade.pelham@des.nh.gov).

## Outreach: Helping Your Community Help You

*As presented by Lara Hooper, NHDES & Jason Randall, Plymouth Village Water & Sewer District on September 16, 2025 for the NH Drinking Water & Wastewater Manager School*

*We only protect what we love,  
We only love what we understand and  
We only understand what we are taught.*

–Jacques Cousteau

### Is your system doing outreach / education?

#### If so, what?

- Consumer Confidence Reports (CCRs)
- Lead & Copper notifications
- Treatment change notifications
- Plant Tours (colleges, high schools, general public, politicians, businesses, fire dept)
- College research projects
- Host trainings

- Daily customer interaction
- Social media
- Water main break notifications

**Results?**

- Helps politicians understand infrastructure and financial scenario
- Helps customers too!
- Builds trust and buy-in

**Difficulties?**

- Ways to effectively reach audience(s)
- Accurate contact info limitations
- Optimize staffing and messaging (ensure the right person is delivering the right message)
- Staffing/time limitations
- Competing priorities
- Solutions
- Change internal mindset about value of education/outreach (internal education opportunity)
- Staff skills – develop them as educators/tour leaders - integrated in training process

**If not, do you have any plans or ideas in the hopper?**

- Improving website
  - More info generally

- Add a plant tour video
- PSA videos
- Rate calculator
- StoryMap
- Open house(s)
- Plant tour videos; before and after improvements

**More ideas for outreach/education opportunities:**

- Identify key partners or groups of people in your community to partner with or to direct outreach toward
  - Real estate professional trainings
  - Senior Center
  - Local teachers
  - Conservation Commission
  - Town organizers who work on various public events (see next bullet)
- Leverage partners and non-related community events as a place to get your message out w/ out having to do all the organizing yourself!
  - Make theme connections to local events – you clean/protect water and how it impacts that event/organizer/the public
  - Old Home Days
  - Host road race around watershed – 10k run – audience is support teams/family
  - Apple harvest festivals
  - Earth Day
  - Farmers markets
  - Conservation days
  - Parades – Christmas, Halloween
  - School career days
  - Historical societies
  - River Fire
  - Prouty cancer fundraising race – your table will most likely inform the support people/family
- Identify professional development opportunities to contribute to
  - Drinking water expo / field day – professional ed
- Build your presence by publishing your partner’s work - that you participated in or have a stake in and encourage them to do the same for your work.
- Sponsor Water Science Fair with teachers to get water into curriculum every year; see flyer below and <https://nhwaterfestival.org/>

# FIELD SERVICES



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**Topics/methods:**

- The best way to communicate is to LISTEN!
- Have a hands-on component! Hands-on = good attention & memorable message. Engaging students, public, decision makers in these activities can help them better understand the terminology and concepts that we as Operators are well aware of but the public or decision makers may not be.
- Make your message personal to them
- BIG topic: Hidden water
- Always recognize partners
- Touch-a-truck
- Cut away hydrant
- Can you tell the difference tap/bottled? demo
- Sponsoring events/infrastructure – baseball dugout add water/sports factoids/info w/ your logo
- Info on cyanobacteria where people recreate - at lakes/impacts to drinking water, recreation
- Get community/high school theater group involved in making PSA videos
- Open house – leverage campaigns/national holidays, i.e. National Drinking Water Week
- Classroom presentations
- Request a Project WET teacher workshop in your community; pay for your community’s teachers to attend
- Schools can be hard to engage – DON’T GIVE UP!

**Frameworks for communicating:**

- LISTEN
- Best way to communicate technical information:
  - Clarity
  - Context
  - Creativity
  - KISS
- Use Project WET, and other hands-on activities, to make your message active, visible & physical!
- Tips & tricks:
  - Know your audience – age, concerns, knowledge level
    - Kids and adults learning materials for the first time aren’t that different – they want to understand, want to have fun and they will automatically find some personal connections to the material

but they appreciate your helping them understand even more/not obvious connections.

- Give your name, ask for theirs or leading questions to gain info about them
- Explain why you are talking with them/why your work is important
- Use simple, familiar situations to convey info
- Use words they understand; limit technical terms/acronyms
- Highlight solutions to our environmental problems and how they can help!
- Use encouraging and guiding words: That’s close. vs No, that’s wrong.

**Bonus! An idea that occurred after training ended.**

Find a connection to a goofy/fun Unofficial Holiday and use it as a campaign vehicle to get your message out; make it an annual event/open house:

- Fun at Work Day - Jan 28/April 1
- Beverage Day - May 6 (make the connection of where all the water comes from!)
- National Poop Day - Feb 9
- Website: [www.timeanddate.com/holidays/fun/](http://www.timeanddate.com/holidays/fun/)
- Website: [nationaltoday.com/weird-national-holidays/](http://nationaltoday.com/weird-national-holidays/)



**Water. It’s what we all have in common.**

**Join us in inspiring young people to have a passion for clean water!**

The NH Drinking Water Coalition has been helping students understand water for 32 years. **Bring the Science Fair program to your community** to increase community awareness & support for your water resources!

## Long-term Benefits to Your System and Community

- Positive public image.
- Community involvement.
- Fewer customer water quality complaints.
- Faster sample turn around for lead & copper compliance sampling.
- Improved citizen awareness of local reservoirs and watersheds, and the importance of conservation and protection.
- Future interest and support for utility projects and upgrades.
- And possibly...future employees!

## Who Does What to Facilitate a Science Fair?

The Drinking Water Coalition will supply for your town's science fair:

- Support for you every step of the way.
- All documents to coordinate the program including event timeline guide, Teacher Guide, sample letters, judging materials and website for more resources.

Your system will supply:

- Staff time to organize and run your local event(s).
- Local prize packages, trophies/ribbons.
  - Prize packages could be assembled at **low or no cost** to your system through a collection of donated prizes – gift certificates/tickets/food/trophies, etc. This is a great opportunity for community engagement.

## Steps & Timeline to Make a Science Fair Happen

### Sept-Nov:

- Collect teacher/principal contact information.
- Start talking to schools (teachers, principals, curriculum coordinators, STEM teachers, librarians) – explain the program, offer Teacher Guide and sign them up!

### Jan:

- Sign teachers up for a plant tour or in-class presentation. Explain program to students. (Once your program is known, teachers may reach out to you to schedule.)

### Feb:

- Send out solicitation letters for prize donations and monetary sponsors, if applicable.

### Feb-March:

- Do tours / in-class presentations.
- Arrange for location of school/town science fairs, as appropriate (school(s), library, community center, etc.)
- Sign judges up for school and/or town level competition(s).
- Order any support materials, i.e. trophies, educational materials, etc.

### March:

- Schedule school / town level competitions in April.
- Prepare judging kits.

### March – early April:

- Request student roster for scheduling school science fair.

### April:

- Hold school science fair (and town finals, if applicable) before April vacation.

### April, end of:

- Send student finalists info to Coalition for scheduling.

### May:

- Water Science Fair State Finals at the State of NH Drinking Water Festival during National Drinking Water Week.

## Have Questions? We'd Love to Hear from You!

Lara Hooper, Drinking Water Coalition Chair  
lara.hooper@des.nh.gov  
(603) 271-4071

Visit our website at <https://nhwaterfestival.org/>.

## Inspiring the Next Generation of Wastewater Professionals

**Attracting young minds to consider a career pathway to the Wastewater treatment field by Exploring New Opportunities for High School Students to Participate in Extended Learning Opportunities in the Wastewater field**

The 2025 Winter meeting provided Mary Jane Meier an opportunity to catch up with Tim Babkirk,

Superintendent of the Town of Kittery, ME Sewer Department. He spoke about his two sons, Jake and Brady and their interest in joining the WW field. His account is presented below. Please visit the web link provided to learn more about these fantastic opportunities for learning.

**Introduce yourself as the Wastewater Superintendent and a bit of background on yourself and your current work duties.** I am Tim Babkirk Superintendent for the Town of Kittery Sewer Department. We operate an Aqua Aerobic SBR system where we average 1 MGD and dewater with an Andritz Centrifuge. Our collection system is comprised of 24 pump stations in Kittery, and 5 pump stations in the town of Eliot, 35 miles of sewer lines and over 400 manholes. I started my career in wastewater in 2010 as the sludge truck driver for the City of Portsmouth and that is where I really became interested in how the process works and decided this was something I wanted to do.

**Introduce your sons and how their interest in learning about wastewater came about.** My son Jake currently works for the Town of Epping Wastewater. He used to come visit me at work on the weekends when he was younger and watch me do daily lab testing and walk around the treatment plant as I explained how everything worked. He was always very interested and asked a lot of great questions which has led him into a career he loves.

My younger son Brady is currently a senior in high school and is enrolled in an Extended Learning Opportunities program which allows him to leave school early three days a week and come to the treatment plant to work with us and to see if this might be something he wants to do when he graduates. His interest started a couple of years ago after hearing countless stories from his older brother and myself about how much fun we have at work.



Left to right: Brady, Jake and Tim Babkirk

**What is the Nature of the Extended Learning Program?**

**Marshwood High Schools ELO Website:**

<https://sites.google.com/rsu35.org/hawks-elo/home>



Marshwood High School’s **Extended Learning Opportunities (ELO) Program** provides hands-on, personalized learning outside the traditional classroom, connecting students with career exploration, internships, community service, and specialized instruction for credit or enrichment, supported by state funding and partnerships with local businesses and organizations. The program aims to offer authentic experiences to build real-world skills, with community partners who sought to share expertise.

**What Are ELOs:**

- Community-Based: Learning happens in real work or community settings.
- Credit-Bearing: Students can earn elective or core credits.
- Career-Focused: Emphasis on exploring future professions through practical experience.
- Personalized: Tailored to individual student interests and goals.

### Examples of ELO Activities:

- Internships & Apprenticeships
- Community Service
- Private Instruction & Independent Study
- Specialized Programs

### How it Works:

**Student Interest:** Students identify passions or career interests.

**Partnership:** The ELO Coordinator connects students with community partners (businesses, organizations).

**Experience:** Students engage in hands-on learning, mentorship, or projects.

**Credit:** Learning is structured to fulfill academic requirements.

### Key People & Resources:

- **ELO Coordinator:** Helps facilitate opportunities
- **Community Partners:** Local organizations needed to provide experience.

### To Get Involved:

- Students interested should speak with their ELO Coordinator or counselors.
- Community members can contact the school to offer expertise.

### How did you learn of the program?

My son Brady learned about the program at the beginning of school this year and brought the information home for me to look at and see if it was something I'd be interested in doing.

### What part did you play in getting this opportunity approved by the School System?

I really didn't have to do much, I talked with the ELO Coordinator and explained what we do in wastewater and what types of things my son would be learning, signed some paperwork and I meet with them every so often to discuss what he's been doing and learning so they know Brady isn't just going home to play video games.

### How do the education credits work?

The ELO Is based on competencies that guide a student's learning and translate the learning into Credit. All the ELO programs are custom built around the student's school schedule and availability to work off campus and the amount of time spent working/learning will determine how many credits they will receive.

### What advice would you give to others to start an internship opportunity in their communities?

My advice would be to get out there and talk to the local schools and find out what programs they have and let them know what it is that we do and that we're always looking for people that are interested in a rewarding career. I feel that public outreach is very important because most people just don't know what we do or how important this line of work really is.

### What is your favorite part of the job?

I love that this job is filled with great people that all love what they do, and being able to protect our environment to make sure future generations can enjoy everything we have now is what keeps me coming back every day and really enjoying what I do.

### Please share your ideas on the value of future outreach and education that would benefit school kids, and rate payers, etc.

I think the value of future outreach is very high, we need to get the word out and let people know exactly what it is we do, how important it is, and that this is a great career choice for a lot of people.

## Congratulations to NEWEA/ WEF/EPA Awardees!

NEWEA is pleased to announce the 2025 NEWEA/ WEF/EPA Award Recipients, who were honored at the Awards Ceremony and Luncheon on January 28, 2026 during the 2026 Annual Conference & Exhibit in Boston, Massachusetts.

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PO Box 218, 74 Suncook Valley Rd, Alton, NH 03809

**Alex Matarozzo**

Applications Mechanical Engineer

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Office: (603) 875-7000 or (800) 582-7231 / Fax: (603) 875-6999

Congratulations to all!

## NEWEA Recognitions

### Stockholm Junior Water Prize

Dongeun Rhee, Watertown, CT  
Yuxuan Zhang, Boston, MA  
Danha Park, Fryeburg, ME  
Aadi Kulkarni, Nashua, NH  
Donghyun Kang, Portsmouth, RI  
Kyle Ni, South Burlington, VT

### NEWEA Scholarship

Emily Grunes, University of Vermont  
Caleb Hagner, Northeastern University  
Alejandro Mendez, University of New Haven

### NEWEA Kate Biedron Memorial Scholarship

Jessica Kamal, University of New Hampshire  
Max Matteus, University of Massachusetts Amherst

### Terry Campbell Memorial Scholarship

Samuel Robinson, University of Maine Orono

## NEWEA Awards

### Alfred E. Peloquin Award

Jeffrey Bowers, Hartford, CT  
Philip Pickering, Ogunquit, ME  
Adam Yanulis, Westwood, MA  
Stephanie Rochefort, Somersworth, NH  
Patrick McShane, East Providence, RI  
Ryan Peebles, Fairlee, VT

### Asset Management Award

South Essex Sewerage District, Salem, MA

### Biosolids Management Award

Charlie Alix, Burlington, MA

### Clair N. Sawyer Award

Dr. James P. Malley Jr., Durham, NH

### Committee Service Award

Zach Henderson, Portland, ME

### Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Leadership Award

Dr. Victoria Verlezza, Bloomfield, CT

### E. Sherman Chase Award

David C. Bowen, Cumberland, RI

### Elizabeth A. Cutone Executive Leadership Award

Janine Burke-Wells, Hope, RI

### Energy Management Achievement Award

Torrington WPCA, Torrington, CT

### Founders Award

John F. Hart, Buxton, ME  
James J. Courchaine Collection Systems Award  
Peter Connell, Cranston, RI

### Operator Award

Edward Abel, Derby, CT  
Jeff Warden, Bethel, ME  
Bradley Furlon, Williamstown, MA  
Jamie Wood, Somersworth, NH  
Richard Emery, South Kingstown, RI  
Dean Rheaume, Middlebury, VT

### Operator Safety Award

David S. Dane, South Portland, ME

### Past President's Plaque and Pin

Scott Goodinson, Narragansett, RI

### Paul Keough Award

Michelle Clements, Portland, ME

### Green Steps Award

Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority,  
Boston, MA

### Wastewater Utility Management Award

Town of Lexington, MA

### Youth Educator Award

Stacy Thompson, Saco, ME

### Young Professional Award

Sara Vargas, Gloucester, MA

## WEF-MA Awards

### Arthur Sidney Bedell Award

Mary Barry, Woburn, MA

### Laboratory Analyst Excellence Award

Daniel Sullivan, New Haven, CT

### WEF Operations Challenge Division II, Second Place\*

Rising Sludge

### William D. Hatfield Award

Eddie Davies, North Kingstown, RI

### WEF Life

Gregory Heath, Chelmsford, MA  
Paul Desrosiers, West Warwick, RI  
Steve Clifton, Portsmouth, NH  
William Powers, Chatham, MA

**WEF Public Official**

Joseph Shekarchi, Warwick, RI

**WEF Operator Scholarship\***Johnathon Whetton, Stafford, CT  
Dustin Watkins, Torrington, CT**George W. Burke, Jr. Award**Woodard & Curran, University of New England  
Biddeford, ME WWTF**WEF Fellow\***

James Barsanti, Boston, MA

**WEF Delegate Award**

Janine Burke-Wells, Hope, RI

**WEF Water Heroes**

Veolia North America, Smithfield, RI

*\*Presented at WEFTEC 2025***US EPA - Region 1 New England Awards****Charles Conway Award Wastewater Trainer of the Year**Elijah Lemieux, Vermont Rural Water Association  
(VRWA)**Wastewater Treatment Plant O&M Excellence Award**

Rockland Pollution Control Facility, Rockland, ME

**Wastewater Treatment Plant Operator of the Year Excellence Award**

Nick Thompson, Warwick Sewer Authority, Warwick, RI

Walt Arsenault, Shelbourne WWTF, Shelbourne, VT

Edward Abel, Derby Water Pollution Control Facility,  
Derby, CT**Industrial Pretreatment Program of the Year**

City of Northampton, MA

Kevin Gillette, Industrial Pretreatment Coordinator

Town of Westborough, MA

Dante Calarese, Industrial Pretreatment Coordinator

# FUN FACT

*The Plymouth Valley Water & Sewer District's water system was started in the late 1800s to not only create a pure drinking water system for the town as well as for fire protection, but local historians believe the new water supply helped to end a typhoid outbreak in Plymouth around that timeframe! The first water source in Plymouth was created along what is now Reservoir Rd. Reservoir Road is named after the two water reservoirs that once sat where the current water tank is. One was near the old brick booster station on Reservoir Road; the other is deeper in the woods near the low-system tank. Built in the 1870s–1880s by James Fogg Langdon and his son Woodbury Langdon, the upper reservoir no longer holds water, but the stone walls still stand as a relic of our early water system.*





# Photo Gallery

## 2025 Winter Meeting





# 2026 NHWPCA Affiliate Members and Newsletter Sponsors



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