



New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services Strategic Plan

Prepared by:

NH Department of Environmental Services

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New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services Strategic Plan

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services is to help sustain a high quality of life for all citizens by protecting and restoring the environment and public health in New Hampshire.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- We foster environmental awareness and stewardship through education, outreach, and assistance.
- We are the New Hampshire lead on environmental and sustainability issues.
- We consider quality of life, public health, and economic vitality while pursuing our responsibilities.
- We are committed to scientifically-based, cost-effective, and environmentally-sound solutions.
- We consider the long-term, cumulative effects of our policies, programs, and decisions.
- We afford fair and equitable treatment of all individuals and groups in the implementation of federal and state statutes, regulations, rules, programs, policies, and in the management of the agency.
- We provide timely and consistent responses to all customers and meaningful opportunities for public participation.
- We strive for excellence in all operations and are committed to continuous improvement and innovative approaches.
- We promote mutual respect and effective communication.
- We strive for a positive work environment that attracts a dedicated and talented staff.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert R. Scott".

Robert R. Scott, Commissioner

08/24/2022

Date

NHDES STRATEGIC PLAN

Goal 1: NHDES protects New Hampshire's natural resources and its high quality of life.

1.1 NHDES will continue to support efficient land use that reduces energy consumption, encourages sustainability, and promotes the conservation of natural resources.

- *Support municipal efforts to adjust zoning and land use regulations for infill development.*
- *Look for opportunities to communicate to the public the environmental, social, and economic benefits of the efficient use of land and other best development practices.*
- *Support better development practices through integrated permitting and coordinated reviews of redevelopment projects.*
- *Pursue opportunities to improve the integration of transportation, environmental, and land use planning.*
- *Improve NHDES's capacity to collect and maintain geographically referenced data (for example, monitoring data and permit data) and conduct spatially based analyses of land use, permitted activities, and environmental quality (for example, watershed analyses).*

1.2 NHDES will maintain natural resource functions and support sustainability.

- *Explore appropriate mechanisms, including market-based approaches, to encourage natural resource conservation, ensure sustainable use of natural resources, support the use of lower impact alternatives, and support alternatives to the incremental conversion of farm and forest land to developed uses.*
- *Support local zoning, land conservation efforts, and state regulations that recognize and protect key natural resource functions.*
- *Assist the communities and other partners in the Great Bay Watershed to implement the Nitrogen General Permit and the other efforts to reduce nutrient pollution and protect coastal and estuarine resources.*
- *Work with stakeholders and the public through NHDES's programs and open communication to address the State's water resources management challenges.*

1.3 NHDES will support source reduction and the reuse and recycling of solid waste to optimize the efficient use of natural resources.

- *Identify and pursue opportunities to: conserve natural resources through waste reduction using life cycle analysis and other tools and approaches, increase waste reuse and recycling, and maximize the resource and energy recovery of waste management operations.*
- *Use social marketing and similar strategies to minimize resource consumption and waste generation from human activities.*

Goal 2: NHDES uses integrated approaches across its programs and operate in a cooperative manner with local, regional, state, and federal agencies.

2.1 NHDES will conduct unified and coordinated education and outreach.

- *Pursue opportunities for outreach to NHDES's partners to help them better understand its programs, statutory requirements, permitting processes, and compliance and enforcement programs.*
- *Identify mechanisms to improve internal resources to produce an interactive search program supported by*

integrated databases allowing for a coordinated, streamlined, and timely approach to providing services, investigating complaints, preparing permits, conducting inspections, and taking enforcement actions.

- *Coordinate with other state agencies to respond to outside requests for assistance to promote efficiency in state government. The other state agencies include but are not limited to the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), the Department of Transportation (DOT), NH Fish and Game (NHFG), the Department of Energy (DOE), the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources (DNCR), the Department of Business and Economic Affairs (BEA), and the Department of Agriculture, Markets and Food (DAMF).*
- *Expand outreach efforts to NHDES's customers to include online and remote information exchange and communication to better serve all members of the public.*

2.2 NHDES will provide coordinated pre-application assistance, licensing, permitting, and planning.

- *Assign project managers to complex or multi-disciplinary projects to facilitate meetings, promote coordinated reviews, and resolve internal issues (including potentially conflicting NHDES program requirements) to ensure smooth progression of project decisions and deliverables.*
- *Regularly review permitting processes to identify areas where greater consistency and coordination can be achieved and works to implement improvements.*
- *Pursue the creation of an online project screening and interagency coordination tool to assist permit applicants with environmental regulations and permit program requirements.*
- *Look for opportunities to integrate and standardize the various professional training and licensing programs it administers.*

2.3 NHDES will conduct unified and coordinated inspections and enforcement.

- *Work towards integrated and efficient inspection, enforcement, and appeals processes which includes staff communicating regularly to produce thorough and efficient cross-program coordination and cooperation.*
- *Develop an enforcement database and associated electronic document management system to facilitate efficient cross-program communications during all phases of the compliance assurance process (e.g., pre-inspection research, physical inspection visit, and post-inspection and enforcement activities).*
- *Pursue a web-based system that tracks permitting and enforcement trends which produces reports that summarize key trends such as backlogs, average review timeframes, and seasonal versus annual trends.*

Goal 3: NHDES strives to present information in an understandable and transparent manner.

3.1 NHDES aims for well-defined environmental outcomes and indicators.

- *Maintain a set of key environmental outcomes and indicators (for example, the New Hampshire Environmental Dashboard) for use in documenting trends and in regular reporting, including "dashboard" reports and geographical representation.*

3.2 NHDES ties data collection, analyses, and reporting to current environmental goals and objectives.

- *Conduct an agency-wide inventory and review of current data collection and reporting practices to help identify data collection gaps and eliminate redundancies and non-value-added collection and reporting activities.*
- *Link NHDES's goals and objectives to relevant outcomes and environmental indicators.*

3.3 NHDES endeavors to use clearly documented methods for environmental monitoring.

- *Evaluate monitoring stations, locations, data sources, and data partners necessary to adequately report on the agency's key outcomes and environmental indicators to ensure the department has the necessary resources deployed to properly conduct its monitoring activities at the appropriate data collection sites.*
- *Use procedures that produce data collection processes (including geospatial parameters, results, reporting, and record-keeping) that adhere to appropriate data quality standards.*

3.4 NHDES will share environmental information and trend analyses with local, state, and federal agencies, stakeholders, and the public.

- *Regularly analyze data and present it in a meaningful format, including increased geographical representation and analysis.*
- *Report key environmental trends and agency outcomes in NHDES's reports, newsletters, press releases, and other public communications and present up-to-date trend information on New Hampshire's environment and key agency outcomes on NHDES's website and the New Hampshire Environmental Dashboard.*

Goal 4: NHDES aspires for strong environmental compliance in New Hampshire which is supported by education, partnerships, environmental stewardship, and enforcement.

4.1 NHDES strives to increase environmental knowledge and awareness and instill a sense of environmental stewardship in the public-at-large.

- *Provide education and outreach to town officials so they can offer current and accurate information on state environmental requirements to their constituents.*
- *Provide education and outreach to the State's school-age population regarding environmental stewardship.*
- *Provide education, outreach, and training programs for the public to enhance their understanding of the value of environmental protection and of NHDES's programs.*

4.2 NHDES embraces alternative compliance assurance mechanisms, models, and approaches.

- *Expand the use of alternate compliance assurance mechanisms (for example, self-certification or third-party certification of compliance) that document the compliance of these regulated entities with their permits and applicable rules and by verifying that these certifications are true and accurate.*
- *Support greater accountability of environmental professionals and consultants that have or should have formal NHDES licenses or certifications.*

4.3 NHDES works to increase the knowledge of regulatory requirements within the regulated community.

- *Ensure the requirements of NHDES's regulatory programs are clear and unambiguous, and clearly explain the underlying policy reasons for those requirements.*
- *Inspections will be conducted in an efficient and effective way with the purpose of identifying potential environmental issues and compliance concerns.*
- *Enforcement processes will be efficient and effective and will use proven techniques.*
- *Provide on-going training for those who must comply with state environmental requirements in both the*

public and private sectors.

- *Evaluate the formal education and training requirements for those NHDES programs that currently do not offer continuing education opportunities.*
- *Make every effort to ensure its regulatory program staff has a sound foundation in their applicable statutes, rules, and procedures.*

4.4 NHDES encourages environmental behavior that is above and beyond minimum compliance.

- *Maintain an array of programs to encourage “beyond compliance” behavior.*
- *Announce positive public recognition of successful compliance practices and outcomes to promote such activities.*

Goal 5: Recognizing the state, national, and international emphasis on climate change reduction efforts, NHDES will follow all federal and state laws and regulations that promote cleaner and more efficient energy use in New Hampshire.

5.1 NHDES will monitor greenhouse gas emissions in New Hampshire and the New England Region and identify opportunities to cost effectively reduce emissions.

- *Review the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)’s annual greenhouse gas emissions inventory to evaluate and track changes in emissions by sectors and sources to support periodic reporting to policymakers and the public.*
- *Work collaboratively with the NHDOT and New Hampshire’s regional planning commissions to facilitate a cost effective and efficient transition of the transportation sector to cleaner forms of energy.*

5.2 NHDES will provide mitigation and adaptation education and outreach.

- *Continue to participate in the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RSA 125-O:20) to reduce emissions from the power sector and the Energy Efficiency and Sustainable Energy Board (RSA 125-O:5-a) to facilitate implementation of the State’s Energy Efficiency Plan.*
- *Provide information and technical assistance to communities and organizations that are seeking to incorporate mitigation and adaptation measures into their projects and plans.*
- *Explore ways to foster cost effective clean energy such as offshore wind and other renewable and non-carbon-based energy sources.*

Goal 6: NHDES will provide high-quality customer service.

6.1 NHDES strives for prompt, knowledgeable, consistent, fair, and clear responses to inquiries from customers and places a high value on providing top-notch customer service.

- *Customer service policies and procedures will be communicated to NHDES staff through customer service training.*
- *Conduct Lean training on a continuous basis, develop Lean management system procedures to improve our*

services, and undertake Lean projects when needed.

- *Regularly assess customer service expectations and performance for its employees and maintain NHDES's annual Exemplary Customer Service Award.*

6.2 NHDES will provide access to information of its programs and activities to the public.

- *Look for opportunities to better meet customer needs including providing opportunities for customer feedback and allowing customers to conduct online transactions.*
- *Redesign NHDES's current web-based OneStop System to be a customer-friendly, comprehensive, and geographically referenced enterprise environmental information system and create a centralized, web-searchable document library to include such items as quality assurance project plans, rules, grant information, site-specific information, key correspondence, and photos.*

Goal 7: For NHDES to be a desirable employer.

7.1 NHDES encourages and supports the career development of its employees.

- *Maintain employee programs for advancing through technical, scientific, and administrative careers, and provide opportunities for expanded intra- and inter-departmental staff cross-training and job-sharing to better serve the public, increase staff knowledge, and enhance cooperation among related state agencies.*
- *Maintain a formal orientation program for newly hired and promoted employees to provide access to the information, systems, and tools necessary for their success.*
- *Continue workforce analysis, planning, and development programs to better meet the specific needs of the department.*
- *Incorporate effective knowledge transfer procedures.*
- *Provide the opportunity to participate in biennial employee surveys producing data for NHDES senior leadership on employee satisfaction, potential process improvements, and strategic planning ideas.*
- *Continue to recognize and reward exceptional staff performance.*
- *Encourage staff to pursue career development and educational opportunities.*
- *Periodically test NHDES's Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) to ensure the agency can continue to carry out its mission-critical functions in the event of a major incident at its primary location.*

7.2 NHDES supports the health and well-being of its employees.

- *Provide educational initiatives and events focusing on healthy lifestyle choices, as well as opportunities for increased physical activity.*
- *Acknowledge the importance of work-life balance by authorizing flexible, alternative work schedules to help staff maintain balance.*

7.3 NHDES strives to be an environmental leader in its operations.

- *NHDES, in partnership with the Department of Administrative Services and other pertinent agencies, strives to reduce the cumulative environmental "footprint" of all its operations through such measures as energy efficiency, water conservation, and recycling.*