

Summary of New Hampshire’s Source Water Protection Strategy Update New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (NHDES)

Background: NHDES’ Source Water Protection (SWP) Program periodically conducts a comprehensive review of drinking water *source protection* issues and SWP Program activities, in collaboration with key stakeholders to revise the program’s strategy. An Advisory Committee and working groups comprising 55 participants took part in the 2018-2019 strategy update and included public water suppliers, conservation organizations, municipal officials and staff from NHDES. Following internal research and discussions with agency staff key stakeholders participated in 11 group meetings facilitated by NHDES staff over a six-month timeframe.

Scope of the Source Water Protection Strategy: The strategy update included discussion of current protections, gaps and weaknesses, actions to address those gaps and weaknesses and how to take full advantage of new protection opportunities over the next three- to five-year period. The strategy update focused predominantly upon three areas: limiting catastrophic spills into sources, preventing and responding to Harmful Cyanobacteria Blooms (HCBs) and improving and expanding partnerships with federal, state, local and NGO partners. A recent ASDWA national survey (November, 2018) of source water protection programs identified these issues as top concerns for program managers.

The Strategy Work Plan: The strategy update process yielded a short work plan that described key issues, findings, actions, measures, and expected outcomes. The update was guided by *Elements of an Effective State Source Water Protection Program*. (GWPC, 2008) Examples from the work plan are summarized below.

NHDES Source Protection Strategy Work Plan (excerpts)

| Area of Work | Finding | Rationale | Actions |
|---|--|---|--|
| Support watershed planning in water supply watersheds where no plans exist | 29 of 50 active surface water sources in NH that serve 149,000 people do not have watershed plans. | Implementation of watershed plans is key to maintaining water quality and availability of drinking water resources. | Prioritize financial and technical resources to help develop watershed plan. Encourage a-i criteria content per EPA/NHDES guidance. |
| Prioritize technical assistance to PWSs experiencing CyanoHABs in source water | Few public water systems (PWSs) have a comprehensive approach to addressing the risks associated with CyanoHabs. | A source-specific summary of relevant information would be useful for water systems experiencing CyanoHABs to use to communicate public health risks and water treatment concerns. | Develop a source-specific document summarizing CyanoHAB history, water quality monitoring activity and treatment effectiveness relative to cyanobacteria cell removal. |
| Ensure compliance with best practices to prevent a release from large petroleum, non-petroleum chemical storage from reaching a PWS source. | In many cases Aboveground Storage Tanks (ASTs) are not regularly inspected by federal, state or local inspectors to ensure controls for a spill or release are in place and functioning. | Regularly scheduled inspections of large storage tanks will ensure compliance and minimize the risk of a large spill entering a source and negatively affecting public health or water treatment. | Focus inspections on large storage facilities located within SWPAs. |

Note: Poly and perfluorinated (PFAS) compounds are currently being investigated across the state. This issue was excluded from the strategy update at this point. An update to the strategy will be made once the investigation is complete.

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