

New England Extension Water Quality Program: Applying Knowledge to Improve Water Quality

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Abstract

The New England Extension Water Quality Program works to improve water quality management through educational knowledge and extension programming that emerges from research. The program builds on the strengths of the Extension Water Quality Programs at New England Land Grant Universities. The objectives are to: 1) Enhance integration of water quality efforts within the New England region, 2) Increase the accessibility of research, education, and extension resources of the Land Grant University system to federal, state, and local water quality improvement efforts, 3) Facilitate multi-partner efforts that minimize duplication of effort and leverage multiple funding sources into a collaborated effort, 4) Enhance progress toward place-based water quality goals, and 5) Improve Extension's capacity to draw on resources throughout the nation to address water quality issues.

Our approach creates and implements an effective region-wide, multi-partnered, water quality program in four focus areas: Volunteer water quality monitoring, Community-based watershed protection, Agricultural best management practices, and residential pollution prevention. Impacts, success stories, and partnerships will be highlighted within each focus area. For example, Extension volunteer water quality monitoring data in New England has been used to move lakes, ponds, and streams onto 303D Lists of Impaired Waters, make changes within watersheds to correct water quality problems, and document water quality improvements as a result of corrective actions. Extension volunteer monitoring is educating and engaging New Englanders in water quality issues. Through CSREES partnerships, New England Extension volunteer monitoring programs are designing and sharing watershed assessment tools and expanding their training network.