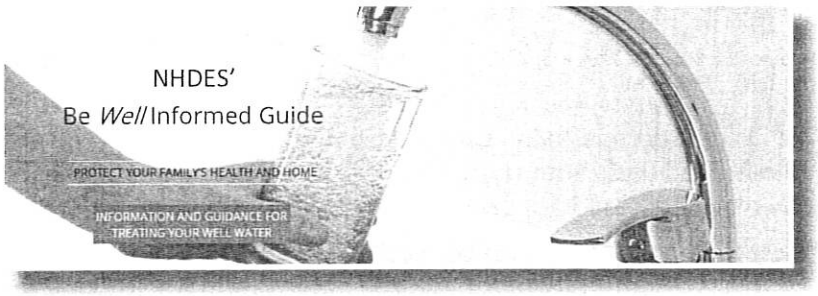
# SUPPLY LINES WITH THE SOURCE

Newsletter of the NHDES Drinking Water & Groundwater Bureau
*on the web at www.des.nh.gov*

Fall 2015


## New Web Application Helps Private Well Owners Navigate Water Treatment Decisions

Private well owners have a new tool to help them make better informed decisions about water treatment systems. NHDES' "Be *Well* Informed" web application enables well owners to enter test results for common well water contaminants from a lab report. After clicking "submit," users find out whether their water meets drinking water standards (or guidelines), possible health implications of drinking untreated water, and treatment options. While other web-based tools provide treatment information for one contaminant at a time, "Be *Well* Informed" evaluates test results for multiple contaminants simultaneously, providing water treatment recommendations tailored to the user's overall water quality results. The application is a big step forward in terms of enhancing NHDES' capacity to assist private well users to select the right treatment technology to avoid exposure to arsenic and other common groundwater contaminants. "Be *Well* Informed" was built around the testing parameters that NHDES recommends all well users have tested – 14 in the "Standard Analysis" package and three radiological parameters, but users do not have to enter all 17 parameters. The web application will provide results based on whatever information the user enters. Users are urged to consult with water treatment professionals after reviewing their results.




*Be Well Informed website*

The web application addresses a key stumbling block encountered by private well users in their efforts to ensure that their drinking water is safe. In May 2014, Dartmouth College's Toxic Metals Superfund Research Program conducted a statewide survey of private well owners for NHDES, and found that nearly 1 in 4 private well owners that tested their well water did not initially understand their lab reports while approximately 1 in 3 did not understand what actions to take based on their lab results.

Visit www.des.nh.gov and search "Be *Well* Informed" to use this new online tool. Funding to complete the statewide private well survey and the Be *Well* Informed web application was provided by a grant from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Contact Pierce Rigrod at (603) 271-0688 or pierce.rigrod@des.nh.gov if you have questions or comments about the Be *Well* Informed web application.

## Are You Prepared for a Potential Cyanotoxin Event?

To help water systems prepare for potential problems with toxins produced by cyanobacteria (blue-green algae), USEPA published "Recommendations for Public Water Systems to Manage Cyanotoxins in Drinking Water" in June 2015. The document details five steps to prepare and respond. The first step is to conduct a system-specific evaluation for vulnerability to cyanobacteria blooms, and the second is to prepare and observe for potential blooms. Subsequent steps involve monitoring of raw and finished water for toxins, modifying treatment and communicating with the public. The report details specific monitoring, treatment and communication approaches, and includes potential language for use in public notification and social media.

(Cyanotoxin, continued on pg 2)

(Cyanotoxin, continued from pg 1)

A new "Water Utility Manager's Guide to Cyanotoxins" published in April 2015 by American Water Works Association and the Water Research Foundation includes a quick self-assessment to help water systems determine whether they should be preparing for possible cyanotoxin problems in their reservoirs and how prepared they are. Factors that indicate "high concern" include the following:

- Lack of a source water monitoring program.
- History of cyanobacteria blooms.
- History of taste or odor problems during summer.
- Pronounced stratification of the reservoir during summer.
- Lower water levels and higher temperatures due to drought.
- Treatment processes exposed to sunlight.
- Filter backwash is often green.

Both guides cover why cyanotoxins are a concern, conditions leading to cyanobacteria blooms and treatment approaches. (Downloads available at http://www2.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2015-06/documents/cyanotoxin-management-drinking-water.pdf and http://www.waterrf.org/PublicReportLibrary/4548a.pdf)

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# Renewal Year for Certified Water Works Operators

A reminder to New Hampshire Certified Water Works Operators that this is a renewal year for your certifications. Individuals with grade 1A certifications will need to have accrued at least five training contact hours, and those with grade 1 through 4 certifications will need to have accrued at least 20 contact hours, between January 2014 and the end of 2015. Continuing education is available most of the year so please don't put yourself at a disadvantage by waiting until the last minute when options become more limited. For those ahead of the game, the renewal form has been posted at http://des.nh.gov/organization/divisions/water/dwgb/op_cert/index.htm, under "Forms/Applications." Please contact Wade Pelham at (603) 271-2410 or wade.pelham@des.nh.gov with any questions about water works operator certification.

*Marco Philippon directing a tour of the Concord Water Treatment Plant*

# Small Public Water System Operator: Grade 1A Training

In September of 2015, a Small Public Water System Operator Grade 1A Training course will be offered by NHDES. This course is for owners, operators and other persons involved, or interested in becoming involved, with the management and operation of small public drinking water systems. The course is designed to provide fundamentals on the theory and practical knowledge required to maintain and operate a small public water system. The course is specifically geared toward individuals interested in becoming certified water works operators in New Hampshire. No prior experience is required to attend the class. For more information, contact Wade Pelham, NHDES at (603) 271-2410 or wade.pelham@des.nh.gov.

# Staff Updates at DWGB

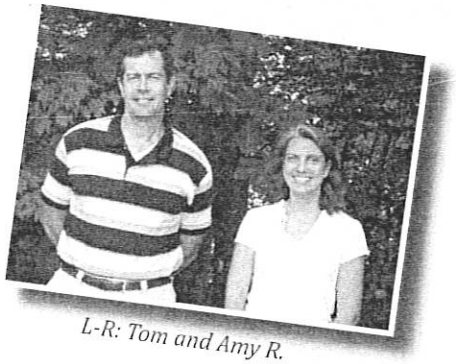
Four new staff joined DWBG over the last few months:

- Kathy Rodgers is now a Water Supply Field Inspector. Kathy performs sanitary surveys for public water systems. Previously, Kathy provided technical assistance to public utilities in Illinois.
- Tom Willis is now a Small Systems Engineer. He reviews engineering plans for small public water systems. Previously, Tom reviewed designs for and inspected petroleum storage tank systems for the Waste Management Division (WMD) of NHDES.
- Lara Hooper is the new Drinking Water and Groundwater Education Coordinator. She works with educators to increase public awareness of the importance of clean drinking water. Formerly, Lara worked as an Online Training Specialist for the WMD.
- Amy Hudnor is now a Program Planner for the Planning, Protection and Assistance section. She administers the Local Source Water Protection Grant Program and coordinates source protection training, public education and outreach. Amy formerly worked as a program manager at Kennebec Valley Community College in Fairfield, Maine.

*L-R: Kathy, Kelsey, Amy H., Bethann, Stacey and Lara*

Additionally, there are four staff members who accepted new positions within DWGB.

- Bethann McCarthy is now the Sanitary Survey Program Manager. She manages the small systems sanitary survey program and provides technical assistance in the small systems engineering sub-section.
- Stacey Herbold is now the Water Conservation and Water Use Registration and Reporting Programs Manager. She oversee the water conservation plan approval and compliance process and coordinates the gathering and tracking of water use data.
- Kelsey Vaughn is now the Water Efficiency and Use Specialist. Kelsey works with partners, public water suppliers, and water users to promote water efficiency.
- Amy Rousseau is a new Sanitary Surveyor. She inspects small water systems and provides technical assistance to seasonal systems.



*L-R: Tom and Amy R.*

Contact information for all DWGB staff is available online at http://des.nh.gov/organization/divisions/water/contactus.htm.

# June Workshop Focuses On the "Next Steps" to Protect the Salmon Falls River

Over 65 people attended a workshop on June 2, 2015 to mark the fifth anniversary of the Salmon Falls Watershed Collaborative (SFWC), established to work across state lines to protect the Salmon Falls River as a source of clean drinking water. The river forms the state boundary with Maine and is the primary source of drinking water for Somersworth, New Hampshire and Berwick, Maine. In 2009, a U.S. Forest Service study identified the Piscataqua-Salmon Falls Watershed as the most threatened watershed in the nation based on the potential for declining water quality due to the likely development of private forests. Since then, the SFWC has been working to protect water quality through land conservation, improving land and water management practices, water quality monitoring and public education.

(Salmon, continued on pg 4)

(Salmon, continued from pg 3)

The workshop brought together a wide array of stakeholders to assess progress made since 2010 (when the SFWC formed) and establish priorities for the future. Speakers presented examples of important protections achieved over the last five years including conservation of important resource areas, installation of innovative stormwater practices, adoption of groundwater and aquifer protection ordinances, replacement of substandard home heating oil tanks, and expanded voluntary water quality monitoring within the watershed. Participants formed small groups to explore ideas generated earlier in the day to improve protection and address threats to drinking water in the watershed. The most popular ideas from these groups included:

- Helping forest landowners keep their forests economically productive to reduce the need or temptation to convert or develop the land.
- Strengthening municipal ordinances to better manage stormwater to protect water quality.
- Improving emergency response when events along roads and railways threaten the river.
- Engaging and inspiring local leaders and the public through local river-based events, such as a competition to develop a video tour of the river and document its unique features.

The results of the event will be used to update the Salmon Falls Action Plan (2011). For more information about the SFWC, visit http://prepestuaries.org/ and click on "Initiatives" at the top of the page.

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