



*Our Program seeks to strengthen the capacity of the Land Grant Institutions to deliver an integrated water quality program that educates, empowers, and engages agricultural producers, residents, and communities throughout New England to become effective stewards of their local water resources. Our work builds upon the goals of the USDA-CSREES National Integrated Water Quality Program.*

To address the water quality challenges of rural New England, we create locally relevant programs focused on land and community management. At the local level we develop, test and refine programs with case studies that leverage other sources of support. At the regional scale, in cooperation with stakeholders and partner agencies, we identify needs and build upon successful local programs to create and disseminate new materials, tools and curricula for use throughout New England. Our program connects the research, extension and educational expertise of Land Grant Universities with federal, state and local partners to improve water quality management.

### **Regional Framework**

**The New England Region Water Quality Program is led by New England's six Land Grant Institutions – the Universities of Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont.**

The heart of the New England Program centers on 6 Focus Areas. These Focus Areas tailor the national themes to the strengths of New England Land Grant Universities' research, education, and Extension programs and capture the enthusiasm and energies of our partners and stakeholders. The Focus Areas are:

- New England Private Well Initiative
- New England NEMO
- Volunteer Water Quality Monitoring
- Sustainable Landscaping
- Nutrient and Pest Management on Organic Farms
- Reducing Phosphorus Impacts with Manure Management

In addition, the New England Region is home to two National Facilitation Projects: The National NEMO Project and the Volunteer Water Quality

Monitoring Project. Both of these National Facilitation Projects are integrated into New England's Focus Areas. Focus Area activities emerge from both locally-based and regional efforts and serve to:

- Identify opportunities to transfer and adapt successful elements of locally-based Extension programs to other states in the region.
- Strengthen the connection and integration of university research, education, and Extension experts to target Focus Areas' activities towards critical areas and techniques required to protect water resources.
- Conduct informational needs assessments and use the Logic Model to develop responsive and innovative programs directed to local stakeholder needs and water quality protection efforts.
- Develop new and maintain existing multi-agency partnerships to enable the New England Water Quality Program to leverage resources.

We focus on:

1. Facilitating the incorporation of the best available science in regionally developed water quality education and outreach programs that improve the quality of New England's surface and ground water resources in agricultural and rural watersheds.
  2. Encouraging the adoption of behaviors and activities that result in water quality improvement and protection through thematic programming in: Drinking Water and Human Health; Watershed Management; Pollution Assessment and Prevention; and Nutrient and Pesticide Management.
  3. Working with partners to identify, develop and disseminate research-based tools, curricula and educational programs that promote voluntary approaches to water quality management at the local level.
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### **Regional Contact**

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# Selected Regional Impacts

- **Internet Communications** ~ The Regional Water Quality website highlights the water quality research, education, and extension programs and activities of the New England Land Grant Universities and provides links to our program partners. In addition, the New England Program coordinates the development and hosts the National Water Quality Program webpage.
- **Regional Conferences and Trainings** ~ Regional coordination through both New England Program Steering Committee and Focus Area Activities have provided Extension faculty, staff, and volunteers with training opportunities in areas related to sustainable landscaping, private well water protection, geospatial tools for community watershed management, and agricultural BMPs.
- **Agricultural Research to Action in Extension** ~ The New England In-Service Training Program for Agricultural Service Providers Program provides Certified Crop Advisors with research-based training and recertification credits. Professionals keep up-to-date with new trends in crop production, nutrient management, soil fertility and conservation legislation. Nutrient management plans are being tested and implemented with agricultural producers to determine appropriate manure and fertilizer applications to reduce excess nutrients entering the region's surface waters. In Maine, plans have been completed for 411 dairy farms involving over 90,000 acres of cropland. In Connecticut, plans have been written for over 7,000 acres of farmland. These plans are helping farmers make manure spreading and fertilizer decisions based on the existing nutrient content of the soil and potential impacts to water quality.
- **Volunteer Water Quality Monitoring: Partnerships in Action** ~ Volunteer Water Quality Monitoring Programs within the CSREES New England Water Quality Program often serve as the critical first link to engage the public in watershed stewardship. These programs improve understanding of local water resources, encourage individual and community involvement in water quality protection and restoration efforts, and help communities make informed decisions that improve water quality. In addition to the support of CSREES, New England Volunteer Water Quality Monitoring Programs have been facilitated through collaborations with numerous partners, including Sea Grant, The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the U.S. Geologic Survey, various state agencies, conservation districts, local communities, residents and organizations.
- **New England Private Well Initiative: Teaching private well owners how to protect their drinking water** ~ The Initiative is a partnership with the CSREES New England Water Quality Program, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency New England, state drinking water agencies and the Water Systems Council. The Initiative offers training and education in private well water protection, develops educational materials, and shares programmatic resources and methods with private well water protection programs throughout the Region.
- **New England NEMO: The Use of GIS in Watershed Management** ~ NEMO and NEMO-like programming throughout New England train community leaders and others in the use of geospatial tools to assist in the protection and management of natural resources from inventorying natural resources, modeling existing and future pollution loads, and visualizing landscape changes. These programs apply cutting-edge research techniques and tools to help communities protect water resources and rural watersheds.

