



**Title:** Residential Pollution Prevention for a coastal community

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**Region:** New England

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**Theme:** Pollution Assessment and Prevention

**Situation:** Beach closures, stream degradation and invasive species in Malletts Bay, part of Lake Champlain, have resulted in conflict on how to resolve the situation. While public sewers were originally suggested, environmentalists, concerned about increased development pressure, successfully opposed the sewer bond vote. A local Water Quality Committee was then created to address the water quality issues. Extension and Sea Grant have collaborated with the citizen Water Quality Committee to evaluate the impact of residential pollution on Malletts Bay.

**Objectives:** We wanted to define conditions and practices in homes and properties of seasonal coastal residents and full-time shoreline residents that may contribute to degradation of water quality. We would then design awareness programs. Since the community had experienced conflict over the conversion of coastal homes to municipal sewer, we needed to hear from key leaders who had been involved in supporting or opposing the proposed sewers in order to learn how to start addressing public education. Both quantitative and qualitative research methods were used.

**Methods:** We first conducted key leader interviews utilizing qualitative research methods. Interview questions were developed and individuals were interviewed for 1 or more hours. We wanted to learn about issues or values in common from those that opposed sewers and those that supported sewers. A mail survey of seasonal and permanent coastal residents was conducted to learn about residential practices that could lead to water pollution. We developed activities for the town summer camp, which runs 7 weeks each year. We developed a parade float with the theme: "Lake Champlain -- Let's Treasure It!!" and a youth poster contest on Lake Champlain pollution. We helped the Water Quality Committee improve its web site and had a student intern help organize a private collection of water quality educational materials donated to the local library.

**Partnerships:** Partnered with the local Water Quality Committee. We provided funds to upgrade their web page and a student to organize a donated private collection of water quality educational materials. We partnered with the local Recreation Department to provide educational programming to youth in their 7-week summer camp program and to provide a float for the local July 4th parade. We partnered with the local library to sponsor a youth poster contest.

**Research:** The project relied on qualitative research using key leader interviews to learn of issues and values in common within a community in conflict on how to prevent pollution. This process informed us that youth education would be important, supported and valued by all members of the community. The qualitative research component informed us and the members of the Water Quality Committee about potential sources of residential pollution in order to target educational programming. The survey results were made available June 2003. These results will be utilized by the Education Committee within the local Water Quality Committee.

**Resources:** Extension, Sea Grant, and local resources were utilized in this project. Extension conducted the key leader interviews and developed and implemented the youth summer camp activities, parade float, poster contest and residential survey. Sea Grant implemented and evaluated the residential survey and provided funds or support for the local Water Quality Committee web site upgrade and organizing of water quality materials donated to the library. The local Recreation Department worked with Extension to develop 3 years of summer camp activities, a parade float, an adult/youth snorkeling activity during their town July 4th celebration, and distributed poster contest rules. The local Library supported the youth poster contest and housed the new water quality materials.

**Results:** Key leader interviews resulted in the decision to first focus on youth programming to include summer camp activities, parade float, adult/youth snorkeling activity and poster contest. Youth gained awareness on pollution issues. 85% of youth learned at least one new fact or skill. One girl was so moved by all the trash at the local beach that she wanted to start a clean up day. This project has just completed the residential survey and presented results to the local Water Quality Committee. This committee has an Education Committee that will develop programming. The survey has sparked community discussion and a desire to learn how to prevent pollution.



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