



USDA-CSREES 2007 National Water Quality Conference

[Northern New England LEAP - New Audiences for Water Quality Programming](#)

The Northern New England Lake Education and Action Project (LEAP) combines the best elements of community based lake protection programs from the University of Vermont/Lake Champlain Sea Grant, University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension, and University of Maine Cooperative Extension. As we have developed LEAP, it became evident that the individual landowner's development, redevelopment and landscaping decisions have the potential to protect, mitigate or degrade the quality of our water resources. The traditional model for Extension was based on the reliance of a relationship between the agent/educator and a small pool of clientele who owned large tracts of farmland, rangeland or forested land. However, with the degree these lands are now subdivided for development this traditional model is simply not sufficient to adequately protect our waters; the potential watershed landowner audience is larger than we have the capacity to reach in a direct manner. As interest in ornamental horticulture is growing in northern New England, we found that we needed to develop new relationships with landscape professionals, master gardeners, and other audiences previously not directly connected with water quality programming to advocate low impact and sustainable practices. Therefore, we have focused on programs that reach a range of current service providers as well as interdisciplinary extension staff using both a "professional certification" and a "train the trainer" approach. Such programming must be developed and effectively delivered in order to protect our watershed resources into the future.

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