A new day for New Hampshire’s lakes

Keeping up the fight for our lakes in 2013

Short-sighted legal decisions have left more than half of New Hampshire’s streams—including the ones that feed our lakes—vulnerable. Now, polluters are trying to block the Environmental Protection Agency from restoring vital safeguards.

If you’ve been to Lake Winnipesaukee, Lake Ossipee or another beautiful New Hampshire lake, you know what’s at stake. So many of us have spent summers enjoying our lakes. They are a part of our heritage and the natural legacy we want our kids to inherit and enjoy.

Though we can continue to expect a tough political climate in 2013, we will be working with new lawmakers in Congress for a renewed opportunity to protect our lakes.

On the verge of the biggest clean water victory in decades

We have been urging Congress to protect our lakes by simply declaring that the Clean Water Act applies to all of New Hampshire’s waters. But, stymied at every turn by industry lobbyists and powerful special interests, we turned instead to the EPA for action.

For the last two summers, we have spoken with thousands of New Hampshire residents at their door steps and together with our allies across the country submitted more than 170,000 petitions to the EPA, urging the agency to restore protections to all of our waters and cut sewage pollution. In April of 2011, the EPA announced a plan to do just that. In February last year, the Obama administration announced that it was in the last stage before officially finalizing these protections. Once they are final, this will be the biggest victory for our waterways in the last decade.

But polluters’ allies in Congress won’t give up—and now they’re threatening to stop the EPA from doing its job. At the same time, powerful corporate interests are preparing for battle: ExxonMobil threatened “legal warfare” if the EPA moves forward with its plan to restore Clean Water Act protections.

But with a new Congress in session, a new day is dawning for our lakes in 2013. Environment New Hampshire will keep up the fight until all our lakes have the clean water protections they deserve.

Learn more about our work to preserve New Hampshire’s waters at: www.EnvironmentNewHampshire.org

more online

Environment New Hampshire canvassers building public support for preserving our lakes.

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Whether it’s cross country skiing in our backwoods, enjoying a snowy hike in Mt. Kearsarge State Forest or taking in the sights from your backyard next to a warm fire—winter is a special season in New Hampshire.

Yet, our beautiful state parks, forests, waters and climate continue to face threats from encroaching development, global warming and toxic pollution.

But the winds are changing in Concord. We have exciting plans to work with our Legislature to save our crucial conservation program, establish oil reduction goals for New Hampshire and shift to clean, renewable sources of energy like solar.

It won’t be easy. But it is your support that reminds me of the importance of defending the water we drink, the air we breathe and the places we treasure for years to come.

Thank you for all that you do, and here’s to the start of a new year for New Hampshire’s environment.

Sincerely,

Jessica O’Hare
Advocate

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**Recent action**

**Our legislative agenda**

This year, we are setting out to work in the statehouse to protect our environment. From conserving our state’s special places like Mt. Monadnock, to expanding clean energy in the Granite State, to getting New Hampshire off oil, we have our work cut out for us.

But we are ready for the challenge.

In 2013, we will work to repower New Hampshire with clean energy by expanding access to solar; conserve our forests, rivers and parks by saving our top program for conservation—the Land and Community Heritage Investment Program; and get New Hampshire off oil by exploring policies across our transportation, electrical and home heating sectors in a bill to create a New Hampshire energy plan.

**Heeding Sandy’s wake-up call**

When Superstorm Sandy slammed the Mid-Atlantic in late October, it claimed dozens of lives and caused tens of billions of dollars in damage. It also brought more attention to scientists’ warnings that global warming will cause intense storms like Sandy to become more frequent.

To slow this trend, it is critical that we stop creating the carbon pollution that fuels global warming. The Obama administration is on the verge of taking a critical step in that direction as this newsletter goes to print. The Environmental Protection Agency is expected to soon finalize the first-ever carbon pollution standards for new coal-fired power plants. Environment New Hampshire and our allies helped demonstrate historic support for these standards, and will continue to push to limit carbon for existing plants, as well.
Wind power for a cleaner New Hampshire

In November, as the fate of critical wind incentives faced the approaching “fiscal cliff,” Environment New Hampshire released our latest report on wind energy. The report, “Wind Power for a Cleaner America,” outlines the core environmental and economic benefits that wind energy yields.

The report called on our lawmakers to commit to renewable energy by renewing the wind incentives that have helped grow wind significantly in the United States. Thanks in part to the advocacy of Environment New Hampshire and our supporters, Congress saved the incentives—and the future of American wind energy—in 2013.

Like taking 9,000 cars off the road
Coal- and natural gas-fired power plants that pollute our air are major contributors to global warming, and consume vast amounts of water—harming our rivers and lakes and leaving less water for other uses. Wind energy has none of these problems. It produces no air pollution, makes no contribution to global warming, and uses no water.

America has more than doubled its use of wind power since the beginning of 2008 and we are starting to reap the environmental rewards. In New Hampshire, wind energy now displaces about 44,000 metric tons of global warming pollution each year—as much as is produced by 9,000 cars.

If construction of new wind energy projects continues from 2013 to 2016 at a pace comparable to that of recent years, New Hampshire could reduce global warming pollution by an additional 122,000 metric tons in 2016—equivalent to the amount produced by 24,000 passenger vehicles.

Saving 17 million gallons of water
In addition to eliminating air pollution, wind energy helps conserve water. Wind energy currently saves more than enough water nationwide to meet the needs of a city the size of Boston, and there is still plenty of room for growth.

If wind energy continues to develop at its current rate through 2016, we would save enough water to meet the annual water needs of 1,700 people.

Victory for wind tax credits
When key federal wind incentives were set to expire at the end of the year, Environment New Hampshire and its allies around the country went to work, and Congress renewed critical wind power tax credits as a part of the beginning-of-the-year deal to avert the “fiscal cliff.”

Without these tax credits, wind power projects would have been put on the sidelines this year, meaning less clean energy, more pollution, and the loss of 37,000 American jobs. Instead, these tax credits will continue to help make wind power a true American success story.

Offshore wind on the horizon
We are on the cusp of seeing the first offshore wind farms spinning in the United States off the Atlantic Coast. Offshore wind has the potential to be a major player in moving our country away from polluting fossil fuels.

The National Renewable Energy Laboratory estimates that we have enough feasible offshore wind potential off the Atlantic Coast to power 55 million households, the equivalent energy produced by more than 200 good-sized coal plants. But despite this potential, offshore wind power remains completely untapped in the United States.

However, thanks in part to our advocacy, the Obama administration made huge strides last year. The Department of the Interior announced in December the first two areas off the Atlantic Coast to be leased for wind development—an area off the coast of Massachusetts and Rhode Island and an area off the coast of Virginia—which together could produce enough wind energy to power 1.4 million homes.

In addition, the Department of Energy just announced seven award recipients that will be granted $168 million over the next six years for new demonstration projects to advance offshore wind. The projects will be in Tex., N.J., Ohio, Ore., Maine, and Va.
New Hampshire’s White Mountain National Forest is where some of our families’ most unforgettable memories are formed—our first childhood hikes, our first time sleeping under the stars, our first glimpse of incredible wildlife. From hiking the Appalachian Trail to viewing the gorgeous fall foliage from the Cannon Mountain Tramway, the White Mountains represent the best of New Hampshire’s natural landscape.

Yet many of our public lands—including the White Mountains—are broken up by patches of privately owned land that are at risk. These private lands could be scooped up by loggers and developers, putting protections and consistent public access to the White Mountains at risk.

We need to protect every acre of our public lands. So, Environment New Hampshire is bringing citizens together to convince Sens. Jeanne Shaheen and Kelly Ayotte to make protecting the White Mountains a top priority during their current terms, leaving a lasting legacy for New Hampshire.