EPA urged to protect New Hampshire’s lakes

As Congress stalls, staff pushes EPA to lead on clean water

For more than a year, big polluters have blocked legislation to restore the Clean Water Act. With action at a standstill on Capitol Hill, Environment New Hampshire is pushing the Environmental Protection Agency to step in and restore full protections to the streams and wetlands that feed New Hampshire’s lakes.

55 percent of streams unprotected

Recent Supreme Court decisions have weakened the Clean Water Act and cast doubt on protections for more than half of New Hampshire’s streams, including waters upstream that feed Lake Winnipesaukee, Lake Sunapee and our other lakes. Without these protections, polluters can dump waste with impunity, and developers are free to pave over critical wetlands. Ultimately, our lakes pay the price.

And it’s a price our lakes can ill afford to pay—our waters are already threatened by skyrocketing development, and the runoff pollution that goes with it. In the past 30 years, the population of the Lakes Region has risen 77 percent.

Thousands support EPA action

With the health of New Hampshire’s lakes at risk, it’s more important than ever that our leaders in Washington, D.C., restore the Clean Water Act. But with no Congressional action in sight, our staff and members are pushing the EPA to get involved.

EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson is currently considering a new clean water initiative, saying that the EPA would “consider administrative action to restore the Clean Water Act protections to wetlands and headwater streams that provide clean water for human and ecological uses.”

But with the new Republican majority in Congress itching to hamstring the EPA, and well-connected polluters lobbying against strong protections, the EPA needs all the public support we can muster. We’ve banded together with our sister groups across the country to rally thousands of people nationwide to send the EPA a message: Americans support strong protections for our waters.

We’re urging the EPA to protect New Hampshire’s lakes.

EPA urged to protect New Hampshire’s lakes.
Recent action

Solar jobs on the rise... but not in N.H.

While other states are reaping the rewards of growth in the solar power industry, New Hampshire still has plenty more work to do.

A recent report shows nearly 100,000 people employed in the solar industry nationwide, with 26 percent growth projected. But when it comes to a state-by-state comparison, New Hampshire is way down on the list.

The report, produced by the Solar Foundation and Green LMI Consulting, projected that 24,000 net new jobs would be created by August 2011. We need to do more to spur solar in New Hampshire—so we can create thousands of those new jobs right here in our state, and bring clean energy that doesn’t pollute and never runs out to our homes and businesses.

Report: March floods just the beginning

Last year’s destructive March floods caused $1.8 million in damages in New Hampshire—and they were just the latest example of the strange weather that has pummeled our state and the entire country for several years. Extreme weather events lead to billions of dollars in economic damage and loss of life each year, and scientists project that global warming could affect the frequency and severity of such events in coming decades. Environment New Hampshire released a report, “Global Warming and Extreme Weather,” that outlines what could become the new normal if we see the worst effects of global warming.

Building on the attention our report won, Environment New Hampshire has continued our work to reduce global warming pollution. We’re pushing to start with the simple steps, such as stronger efficiency standards for appliances and buildings, as well as larger-scale efforts to increase the amount of electricity we generate from the sun and the wind.
First, the good news: In 2009 more than 150,000 more people visited Acadia National Park, the only national park in the Northeast, than in years past.

What’s the bad news? Even as the number of visitors to Acadia and America’s other national parks is on the rise, these great places face budget cuts in the coming year—leaving them with fewer resources for maintenance, upkeep and stewardship. A new Environment New Hampshire report, titled “The Best of America Under Threat from Underfunding,” exposed the growing threat that funding shortfalls pose to national park sites like Acadia, and New Hampshire’s own Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site.

“Last year, visitors poured into these great parks to learn about our history and to go hiking, camping and kayaking,” said Environment New Hampshire’s Federal Preservation Associate Nancy Pyne. “Yet just as their popularity grows, they are under threat from underfunding.”

### Acadia National Park: Up 150,000 visits, down $80,000

Acadia and other special places have taken on renewed importance for Americans as the recession squeezes family vacation budgets—leading to the nearly 150,000-person increase in visits to Acadia in 2009. But despite the growing number of visitors, the National Park Service’s proposed budget for the coming fiscal year would cut the park’s operating budget by $80,000. Acadia relies on these funds to hire park rangers, keep park facilities like the carriage roads and trails like the Beehive properly maintained, and pay for popular programs like camping—so budget cuts will make it even harder for park stewards to keep the park in good shape.

“Now is the time for protecting these great places,” said Pyne. “Instead, they face painful cuts which could delay maintenance, lead to fewer rangers being hired, or force cutbacks on programs.”

### Growing popularity, shrinking budgets

The threats confronting Acadia are being replicated around the country. Environment New Hampshire’s report reveals that nationwide, two-thirds of national parks saw their visitorship climb in 2009, including parks in nearly every state. However, almost three-quarters of these increasingly popular parks are facing budget cuts in 2011.

State parks are also facing a pinch. As New Hampshire decision-makers try to cut costs, programs that protect our state parks, shoreline and open spaces are on the chopping block. Environment New Hampshire and our allies will remain vigilant against cuts to these key conservation programs.

“Just like Acadia, New Hampshire’s parks and open spaces offer families affordable vacations and are ideal places for people of all ages to explore the great outdoors,” said Program Associate Jessica O’Hare. “We need to give our shoreline and cherished open spaces the resources they need to ensure that our children’s grandchildren can enjoy them in the future just as we do today.”

How many turkeys can you buy at 60 mpg?

With the Obama administration considering a new round of fuel efficiency standards for cars and trucks as millions of us took to the road last Thanksgiving, Alex Wall, an associate with Environment New Hampshire’s Washington, D.C., office, got to wondering: How much money would Americans save if we drove ultra-efficient cars that traveled 60 miles per gallon, instead of the current 26.4 mpg average?

After crunching the numbers, Alex came up with an answer. Cleaner cars would cut our oil use by 80 million gallons, more than five times the amount the United States imported from Saudi Arabia last year—saving American families a cool $234 million. That’s enough money to put another 13 million turkeys on holiday tables.

And that’s just one more reason—along with our desire to help get New Hampshire off oil and reduce our state’s carbon footprint—that New Hampshire is joining the members of our national federation and other environmental advocates in calling for new government rules that will ensure that by 2025 the average car sold in the U.S. will go 60 miles per gallon.

After 14 states decided to adopt Clean Car standards over the last decade, the Obama administration raised current standards to 35 miles per gallon between 2012 and 2016. Now it’s time to take the next step.
Winter Report
VOLUME 5 | NO. 1 | 2010

Environment New Hampshire

Our mission
We all want clean air, clean water and open spaces. But it takes independent research and tough-minded advocacy to win concrete results for our environment, especially when powerful interests stand in the way of environmental progress.

That's the idea behind Environment New Hampshire. We focus exclusively on protecting New Hampshire's air, water and open spaces. We speak out and take action at the local, state and national levels to improve the quality of our environment and our lives.

Drilling ban declared for 450 million acres of ocean

In December, Interior Secretary Ken Salazar announced the Obama administration’s intentions to protect the Atlantic coast, Pacific coast and eastern Gulf of Mexico from new oil and gas drilling.

After nine months of our campaigning to protect America's shores, more than 450 million acres of our coastal waters—an area three times the size of California—are finally “off the table” for drilling from 2012 to 2017.

“Anyone who loves our beaches, fishes in the ocean, depends on a healthy coastal economy or cares about reducing our oil dependence can thank the Obama administration for protecting the Atlantic and Pacific coasts and the west coast of Florida from oil drilling,” said Margie Alt, the executive director of Environment New Hampshire's national federation.

Read more about the benefits of a sustainable coastal economy on our website:

www.EnvironmentNewHampshire.org