



The Municipal EcoLink

An e-bulletin from the
NH Department of Environmental Services

August 2008

The Municipal EcoLink, is a monthly e-bulletin designed to inform you of the latest environmental ideas, trends, grants, rules and more from the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (DES).

We respectfully request that the following is read into the minutes of your municipal committees, councils and boards. Please feel free to post it on your municipal website as well.

Tornado Aftermath and Shorelands

Over 150 homes and structures were damaged or destroyed during the tornado that struck New Hampshire on July 24, which has resulted in considerable demolition debris. Debris removal and the repair or reconstruction of structures within the protected shoreland area do not require a shoreland permit, provided the reconstruction is contained within the original building footprint and will not result in an increase in the area of impervious surfaces (driveways, buildings, etc.). Trees that have been downed or damaged that will pose a hazard to the safety of people or property are exempt from any cutting restrictions established in the Shoreland Protection Act and may be removed. Stumps that remain in the ground within 50 ft. of surface waters may not be removed. Stumps uprooted by the weather event may be removed and the hole backfilled without a permit. For more storm recovery information from the Department of Environmental Services, go to www.des.nh.gov/storm_recovery/ or call (603) 271-3503.

Model Ordinances for Landscape Water Efficiency

Landscape irrigation may account for as much as one-third of all residential water use. To assist municipalities, DES is developing a model ordinance for landscape water efficiency. The model ordinance may recommend limits on the amount of turf grass area in new developments, utilization of xeriscaping (landscaping with minimal waste and water) principles, retention of mature trees and adequate loam, water conservation controls on in-ground irrigation systems, and limitations on when daily irrigation can occur. Similar ordinances have been enacted elsewhere, and the EPA WaterSense program has a draft water efficiency specification for new homes and landscapes that may be viewed at www.epa.gov/-watersense/pp/new_homes.htm. To read the full article, please see www.des.nh.gov/dwgb/newsletter/-2008summer_source.pdf. If interested in learning more or participating in development of the draft ordinance, please contact Derek Bennett at (603) 271-6685 or email derek.bennett@des.nh.gov.

Municipal Responsibility for Septage

Pursuant to RSA 485-A:5-b, municipalities are responsible for providing septage disposal for their residents or securing a DES-approved alternative disposal facility through a written agreement. DES maintains a map of all communities that are in compliance with this statute, available at www.des.nh.gov/wwe/DisposalMap/SEPTWeb.pdf. If your community is not in compliance with this statute, DES can assist you. DES administers a grant program that provides up to 50% of eligible costs to municipalities to construct or upgrade an existing facility to increase septage disposal capacity. DES can also assist communities in securing a written agreement to provide septage disposal capacity at one of the many established, in-state disposal sites. For more information or to obtain the FREE, six-minute DVD "Septage Management for Municipalities," please contact Ray Gordon at rgordon@des.state.nh.us or (603) 271-3571.

Comments? Please send them to editor@des.nh.gov, so that we can best serve your needs. To sign up to receive press releases and other publications of the NH Department of Environmental Services, please go to www.des.nh.gov/enews/.