



USDA-CSREES 2005 National Water Quality Conference

[The Northern New England Lake Education and Action Project](#)

Abstract: Non-point source (NPS) pollution caused by lakefront development, agricultural production, and soil erosion from various watershed land uses threatens northern New England lakes. While our existing efforts have made a successful start in addressing rural road runoff, septic treatment and the need for resource monitoring, we need to focus our attention on low impact, low maintenance landscaping activities and promoting vegetative buffers on shoreline properties. The threat of misuse or overuse of inputs increases as agricultural and forested land is converted to residential property. Landowner objectives change from improved efficiency in production, or sustainable forest management, to visual and aesthetic concerns with home horticulture, lawn care and landscaping.

We are developing a formal New England regional Lake Education and Action Program (LEAP) built on the best elements of University of Maine Cooperative Extension's, University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension's and University of Vermont Extension/ Lake Champlain Sea Grant's education, outreach and implementation programs. To address these needs, we are developing LEAP by merging proven techniques developed individually in each state, and creating a flexible, demonstrably successful program that can be readily initiated by other agencies and stakeholders, and in other parts of New England and beyond. Our efforts are focused to provide the necessary research-based training and support to affect positive landowner behavioral change regarding their NPS impacts.

LEAP received funding in 2003 from the USDA through a CSREES Water Quality (406) grant. The primary participants responsible for the success of this program are team leaders from the University of Maine Cooperative Extension, the University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension, and from the University of Vermont Extension/Lake Champlain Sea Grant. Early results include youth corps (to install buffers) implemented in Maine and Vermont, outreach training for lakefront landowners in Maine, and a Watershed Academy developed for New Hampshire.

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