

# SERVICE CONNECTION

The Maine CDC Drinking Water Program Newsletter

Working Together for Safe Drinking Water

Winter 2019 ◉ Volume 26, Issue 4

## Public Health Is Our Priority

*Nancy Beardsley, Director  
Division of Environmental and Community Health*

Nestled at the core of the State's public health agency, the Drinking Water Program has quietly and reliably worked as part of a remarkable and largely unseen public health system. Committed health professionals, including medical doctors, engineers, toxicologists, emergency responders, health inspectors, geologists, and epidemiologists work behind the scenes each day to keep Maine people safe and healthy. Together we manage routine work and respond to more serious incidents such as waterborne disease outbreaks, floods, power outages, and other natural and manmade disasters that can immediately affect the public's health.

Safe drinking water is paramount to human survival. That is why, over a century ago, wise leaders built a health system around drinking water and the proper disposal of wastewater. This remains true today as drinking water and subsurface wastewater are two of the foundational health programs in the Maine CDC's Division of Environmental and Community Health.

Through its decades of work, and with the support of many partners, Maine's Drinking Water Program has earned national, regional, and local respect for its effective operations, practical approach to regulation,

*Continued on page 7...*

## Be Salt Smart

*Sophia Scott, Source Water Protection Coordinator*

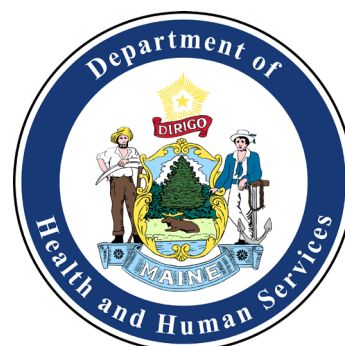
Some of us love it, some of us hate it, but regardless of your feelings about Maine winters, there's no denying that they can make for treacherous commuting. To protect public safety as we navigate around the State, salt (a lot of salt) is applied to our roads. Maine spreads about a billion pounds of road salt on its 23,450 miles of public roads each year. While safe winter driving is paramount in our rural state, problems arise when too much road salt enters the environment. As roads are plowed, salty snow banks build up along the roadside or in designated snow dumping areas. In the spring, when the snow melts, road salt that has accumulated along the roadsides dissolves in water and can enter groundwater (via infiltration) and surface water (via runoff.) Excess salt in groundwater or surface water sources of drinking water can result in unwanted impacts. Not only can road salt impact the taste of water, but increased salt intake can cause health problems for those with high blood pressure. It can also increase the corrosivity of water, potentially creating additional water quality impacts. Though we haven't seen any significant road salt contamination in most of our public drinking water wells, some private drinking water wells in the State have been impacted by road salt, forcing residents to use bottled water and drill new wells.

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Maine CDC Drinking Water Program

# DIRECTOR'S *Corner*

Michael Abbott, Director



“Everything comes to him [or her] who hustles while he waits.”

*Thomas Edison*

I was introduced to this quote through my grandfather, Everett Smith, my mother’s father. He struggled with some serious health setbacks throughout his life, but managed to support his family, become a respected member of his community, and, most of all, was known for always wearing a smile and looking on the bright side of every situation. Although he may not have been considered successful in terms of wealth or title, in my mind Everett was one of the most successful and happy people I have ever known.

In Maine, winter can be a time of waiting. We are waiting for the nice weather to come back. After all, people travel from all over the world to experience summer in Maine (every single one of them driving up Route 1 on Friday afternoons, I believe.) We are waiting to start or continue outside projects that we had to put on hold once the chilly weather arrived in the fall. We are waiting for the ice to thicken up for fishing or skating (and then, of course, waiting for it to thaw.) Sure, it's not all waiting - there's plenty to do in Maine during the winter, like plowing snow and shoveling the dooryard. And unfortunately, water lines don't break only in the warm weather, but a lot of things do slow down.

Winter is a good time to review planning documents like your master plan. Is everything up to date? How about the infrastructure improvements that you wanted to make in the ten years since the plan was written? Are you progressing according to schedule? Have you identified new areas that will need attention sooner than anticipated? You may already have a DWSRF project in the pipeline for 2019, what should be in the works for 2020?

Winter is also a good time to think about source protection and capacity development. Is your wellhead protection plan up to date? Should you be talking with your trustees or your local officials about implementing new protection measures? Remember the source protection, wellhead protection, and capacity development grant applications are due soon – are there projects that you can do this year under these programs to improve protection of your drinking water sources or build the overall technical, financial and managerial capacity of your water system?

And how about training for licensed water system operators, well drillers, and site evaluators? Schedule that now before life gets too busy again. After all, spring is just around the corner.

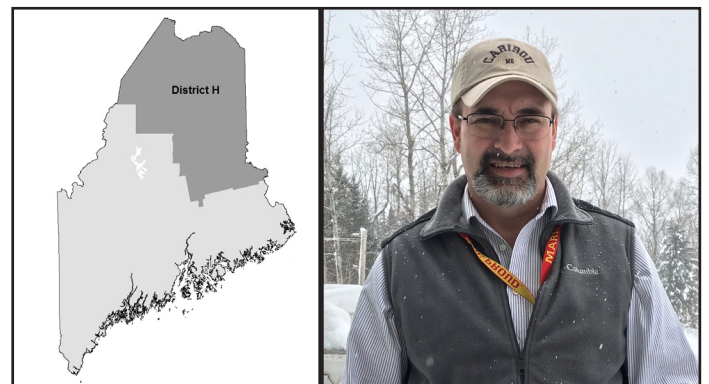
Yours for safe drinking water,

*M. Abbott*

## DWP Welcomes New Staff

Robert Jandreau joins the Drinking Water Program as the Public Water System Inspector for District H. Robert was born and raised in Caribou. He joined the US Marines out of high school and went on to spend ten years in the US Marine Corps. For the past 20 years, Robert has worked at the Maine Military Authority refurbishing military equipment. He has held a State of Maine Water Operator License for the past ten years. Outside of work, Robert volunteers as the Caribou High School wrestling coach and as a mechanic for the Down East Emergency Medicine Institute Search and Rescue.

The DWP is also pleased to welcome Ellen Daly, an Assistant Environmental Analyst, to the program. In her role, Ellen will be responsible for a wide variety of data



Robert Jandreau is the new Public Water System Inspector for District H, based out of the Presque Isle office.

entry and quality control tasks, including sanitary survey data. She is also assisting with the subsurface wastewater permit process. ■

## Maine CDC Drinking Water Program Staff Directory

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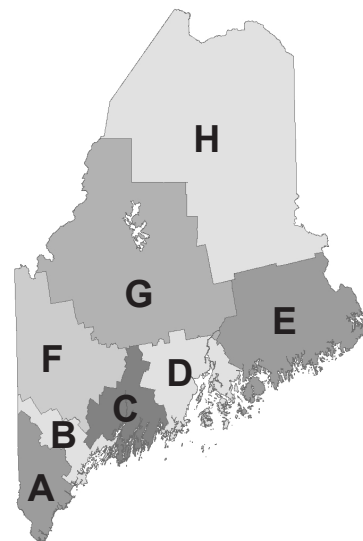
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## DWP Announces 2019 Grant Cycle

*Sara Flanagan, Capacity Development and Security Coord.*

Do you have a project that you need assistance funding? Consider applying for one of the Drinking Water Program's grants. Applications for the 2019 Capacity Development, Source Water Protection, and Wellhead Protection grant programs are available on the Drinking Water Program website, [www.medwp.com/pws/financialResources.shtml](http://www.medwp.com/pws/financialResources.shtml). Grant applications are due by March 29, 2019.

**Capacity Development Grants** are available to public water systems for documents aimed to improve technical, managerial, and financial operations. Some examples are a master plan, capital improvement plan, asset management plan, hydraulic model, emergency response plan, or vulnerability assessment. Capacity Development Grants may also be used to pay for hydrogeologic evaluation, such as exploring a new property for a potential new or supplemental water supply. Grant amounts are 50% of the project costs, with a maximum reimbursement of \$15,000.

**Source Water Protection Grants** can be used for public water system projects aimed at preventing contamination of a surface water source, such as developing a watershed management plan, ordinances or legal agreements for the source protection area, drinking water education and public outreach programs, or a lake monitoring program. Grant amounts are up to \$5,000 with a few grants available up to \$10,000 if the project demonstrates a significant commitment to ongoing source water protection.

**Wellhead Protection Grants** can be used for public water system projects aimed at preventing contamination of a groundwater source, such as preparing a wellhead protection plan, ordinances or legal agreements for the wellhead protection area, drinking water education programs, a source monitoring program, or removing potential sources of contamination from the wellhead protection area. Grant amounts are up to \$5,000 with a few grants available up to \$10,000 if the project demonstrates a significant commitment to ongoing source water protection.

For questions about the Capacity Development Grant contact Sara Flanagan at 287-5678 or by email at [sara.m.flanagan@maine.gov](mailto:sara.m.flanagan@maine.gov). For questions about the Source Water Protection Grant or the Wellhead Protection Grant contact Sophia Scott at 485-4058 or by email at [sophia.scott@maine.gov](mailto:sophia.scott@maine.gov). ■



*Since 2013, the York Water District has utilized approximately \$60,000 in source water protection grant funds to reduce erosion in their watershed and protect their drinking water source. The photos above show before (left) and after (right) the York Water District's 2017 source water protection grant project.*

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## Lead Sampling at Schools - Update

*Christina Trufant, Rules Specialist*

The 2014 Flint water crisis brought the issue of lead in drinking water to the national stage. Recent news out of Newark, NJ shows that lead in drinking water continues to be an ongoing problem for communities across the country. In our State, public water systems and regulatory agencies work together every day to ensure safe drinking water for Mainers.

School-aged children are particularly vulnerable to the harmful impacts of lead. Because children are at school for extended periods, it is vital that schools and childcare facilities implement programs for reducing lead in drinking water.

The Drinking Water Program is in the final year of conducting onsite reviews of lead/copper sample sites at the approximately 250 Maine schools that are regulated as public water systems. The goal of this initiative is to ensure that schools are collecting lead/copper samples at the correct locations – fixtures used for drinking and food preparation. Sample site location is prioritized and based on four factors: 1) frequency of use; 2) fixture type; 3) age of the plumbing and/or fixture; and 4) the age of the population served. In each school, every fixture is identified and ranked in order of highest to lowest priority for sampling sites. This information is outlined in a written sample site plan and given to each school with the expectation that the highest priority sites will be used for sampling.

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## \$23 Million for Maine's Public Water Systems

*Bill Dawson, Engineering and Water Resources Team Supervisor*

The Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) program will fund approximately \$23 million in capital improvement projects in 2019. There were 32 project applications amounting to a total of \$44.9 million in requested funds. The table below shows the breakdown of applications by project type.

Project Type	Amount Requested	Percent
Source of supply	\$2,246,000	5%
Water main replacement	\$18,224,000	41%
Treatment upgrades	\$19,915,000	44%
Water storage	\$3,487,000	8%
Meters	\$983,000	2%
	\$44,855,000	100%

The \$23 million will fund 14 projects at 12 public water systems, representing approximately 52% of the funding needed. This highlights the continued discrepancy between funding need and available funding, which is a nationwide issue.

Future funding increases may help close this gap. In 2018, the Environmental Protection Agency's Capitalization Grant increased 38% and in 2019, it grew an additional 7%. This means more money is available to help water systems deliver clean, safe, and reliable drinking water to Mainers.

The DWSRF program also funds many non-project related activities directed at technical assistance, capacity development, and source protection. See page 4 for details on how to apply for the Drinking Water Program's source water protection, wellhead protection, and capacity development grant programs. For additional information on how your public water system can benefit from DWSRF dollars, contact Bill Dawson at [william.dawson@maine.gov](mailto:william.dawson@maine.gov) or 287-6196. ■

## Ensuring Credibility in Maine's Labs

*Jennifer Jamison, Lab Certification Officer*

Every public water system in Maine uses a testing laboratory to analyze water samples. But how do we know the labs are employing best practices and using approved, up-to-date procedures and equipment? How do we know the results are correct? The Maine Laboratory Certification Program (MLCP), housed within the Drinking Water Program, oversees certification of all laboratories in the State, including industrial, commercial, academic, and governmental facilities. The MLCP regularly reviews laboratories that analyze water, soil, solid/hazardous waste, or radiological samples and ensures the labs meet the rigorous standards set forth in Maine's laboratory certification rules. MLCP's authority to regulate laboratories across the State provides an important extra layer of public health protection.

All laboratories in Maine are assessed on a biennial schedule. Facilities that do not meet a reasonable level of proficiency under the standards sometimes need extra attention and may be assessed on a more frequent timetable.

The MLCP also responds to issues raised by outside interests, typically customers of the lab, including public water systems. Quite often, these issues come to the MLCP as complaints, ranging from concerns about timeliness and accuracy to the defensibility of procedures and results. MLCP takes these matters very seriously and will investigate all complaints as quickly as possible. Before this step is taken, however, we request that the complainant first reach out to the lab to try and resolve the issue. All labs are required to have procedures in place for handling customer complaints; the number and nature of complaints are factors in a laboratory's regular assessment.

The proposed laboratory accreditation rule, to replace the 2010 version, is expected to be finalized in early 2019. This will allow laboratories that analyze drinking water to use methods under the 2015 version of the Code of Federal Regulations, as amended up to July 1, 2017. The new rule will also permit the use of the 22nd Edition of Standard Methods.

By the way, we are changing our name. With the approval of the updated rule, the Maine Laboratory Certification Program will become the Maine Laboratory Accreditation Program. The term "accreditation" is the customary term used nationally and internationally.

If you have questions or complaints, please contact Jennifer Jamison at [Jennifer.jamison@maine.gov](mailto:Jennifer.jamison@maine.gov) or 287-1929. ■

## Salt Smart

*Continued from page 1...*

What does this mean for public water systems? There are no federal regulations for maximum concentration levels for sodium or chloride (the two main ingredients of road salt) in drinking water. The Environmental Protection Agency has set a secondary drinking water standard of 250mg/L for Cl ions and 250 mg/L for sulfate ions; this is an aesthetic standard for salty taste. However, as mentioned above, salt can create serious problems with water quality, customer satisfaction, and in some cases, can cause negative health impacts.

So, what can you do to decrease the potential for road salt to impact your source?

- **Know your salt-spreader:** Find out who is salting your roads. Is it the Department of Transportation, the city or town, or is it a private owner? Talk to them as ask what type of road salt they are using. Would they be willing to decrease application around your source? Find out.
- **A little goes a long way:** Are you responsible for clearing the road or parking lot near your source? Be mindful of how much salt you apply – a little goes a long way! A small handful of rock salt for every square yard is a safe application rate. Plow snow away from your source, not towards it.
- **Smart storage:** If you store salt on site, make sure that it is properly contained to prevent infiltration or runoff when things start to melt in the spring.
- **Salt – not the only option:** There are de-icing alternatives that are less impactful to water quality. Do some research first to find the best option for your source and operations. Learn more about smart salt use here: <http://bit.ly/roadsaltreport> ■

Researchers have found that public water systems save money when they invest in natural infrastructure. What is natural infrastructure? Forested landscapes and wetlands! Whether in large swaths throughout a watershed or as riparian buffers, forests promote infiltration and storage of rainwater, filter out contaminants, and reduce runoff and nutrient loading to surface water. These benefits ultimately reduce treatment costs. Scientists determined that a reduction in a watershed's forested landscape from 60% to 40% meant a 57% increase in annual treatment costs. An additional 20% decrease in forested landscape corresponded with a total increase in treatment costs of 151%<sup>1</sup>. Another research group found that for every \$1 spent in source water protection, an average of \$27 was saved in future water treatment costs<sup>2</sup>!



*Photo credit: Mark Hunt*

*The Portland Water District benefits from forested land around its drinking water source, Sebago Lake. Approximately 82% of the Sebago Lake watershed is forested.*

You can't deny the dollars and cents of maintaining and furthering natural infrastructure in drinking water supply areas. If independently purchasing land is not financially possible, there are many other land, animal, and avian conservation groups in the State who may be interested in leveraging their resources to jointly purchase land for the mutual goal of keeping the land in its natural state. Another option is conservation easements on forested land. Easements may restrict development and land uses, helping to limit land degradation and future increases in water treatment costs.

## Want to Save on Treatment Costs? Invest in Trees!

*Jessie Meeks, Hydrogeologist*

We all know that the delivery of clean, safe drinking water to our taps costs money. Public water system managers are constantly seeking to minimize costs, maintain economic viability, and limit rate increases for water users. We also know that the cleaner the water, the easier (and cheaper) it is to treat. So how can we help ensure that the water entering our treatment facilities remains easy and affordable to treat? The answer: by investing in natural infrastructure.

For more information on the economic benefits of natural infrastructure visit:

- American Water Works Association's Protecting Forested Watersheds is Smart Economics for Water Utilities: [bit.ly/watershedeconomics](http://bit.ly/watershedeconomics)
- Environmental Protection Agency's Economic Benefits of Protection Healthy Watersheds: [bit.ly/EPAhealthywatershed](http://bit.ly/EPAhealthywatershed)

<sup>1</sup>Postel, Sandra L., and Barton H. Thompson Jr. "Watershed protection: Capturing the benefits of nature's water supply services." *Natural Resources Forum*. Vol. 29 No. 2. Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishing Ltd. 2005.

<sup>2</sup>Winiacki, E. "Economics and Source Water Protection." Presentation. US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)(2012). ■



## Talk SWP in Your CCR

*Sophia Scott, Source Water Protection Coordinator*

Last month, I was talking with a friend who had recently moved. She knew my job was related to drinking water and said to me, “The water in my new house is so much better than the water in my old one!” When she saw the smile on my face she realized her folly and exclaimed, “Oh my goodness. It’s the same water!” (She was receiving water from the same public water system.)

Is this surprising? Not really. How often have you heard the response, “From the tap” when you ask someone where their water comes from? Unfortunately, it is not uncommon for some consumers to be unaware of the source of their drinking water. (Another friend of mine believed that you couldn’t swim in one of Maine’s surface water supplies of drinking water because it was polluted.)

Outreach and education is an important part of source water protection, so how do we help people learn more about their drinking water?

Because it is designed to reach every water customer, the Consumer Confidence Report (CCR) is a unique opportunity to connect with your drinking water consumer base.

The American Water Works Association (AWWA) recently released a guidance document on how to use your CCR to spread the message of the importance of drinking water protection. The four main takeaways are:

- **Describe the source:** Don’t just list your source’s name and location. Use personal stories, maps, and photos or illustrations to help paint a picture of how the drinking water source is connected to the community.
- **Say why protection is important:** Talk about all the reasons protecting drinking water is important. From protecting public health to saving money on water bills to preserving habitat for hunting, fishing, and recreation – make the connection between the high-quality water you’re serving and the excellent work you’re doing in source protection. Use specific examples.
- **Emphasize your commitment to drinking water protection:** Let people know about the proactive approach you’re taking to keeping your consumers’ drinking water source clean and safe. Talk about your source protection goals and/or share examples of the work you’ve done to protect your source.
- **Tell them how they can do their part:** Offer clear ways consumers can help protect their drinking water source. What are some actions that individuals, households, or businesses can do to keep pollution away from the source? Do you have specific events or projects that could use extra hands? People love to feel included, involved, and that they’re making a difference. It helps you to have consumers who care about your efforts to keep their drinking water safe.

To read the full report, visit: [www.awwa.org](http://www.awwa.org). ■

## Lead in Schools

*Continued from page 4...*

It is possible that high priority sites will have elevated levels of lead or copper even when overall sampling results (90th percentile) are satisfactory. The Drinking Water Program encourages schools to remove fixtures that are found to have high concentrations of lead or copper. If an old fixture is replaced with a lead-free fixture, a follow-up lead sample should be collected from the new fixture. In many cases, fixture replacement will change the priority of a sampling site. Before a school makes any changes to their sampling plan, they should contact their public water system inspector.

For additional information and resources, schools should refer to the Environmental Protection Agency’s newly revised: “3Ts for Reducing Lead in Drinking Water in Schools and Childcare Facilities” (<http://bit.ly/3ts-toolkit>) for more information and resources to reduce lead in drinking water. ■

## Public Health Priority

*Continued from page 1...*

trusting relationships, prudent fiscal management, and innovative ideas to best assist public water systems and the people they serve.

Much work remains to be done in this fast-moving field. New contaminants emerge, federal rules tighten, maximum contaminant levels are reevaluated, and water infrastructure continues to age at a rate that exceeds available funding. Staying true to its mission, the Drinking Water Program continues to commit all of Maine’s federal funding to drinking water safety and ensures no funding is diverted toward other projects or purposes.

In response to these and other challenges, our competent public health system is here to support Maine’s Drinking Water Program to best protect and serve Maine people and continue the vital work that began over a century ago; the purpose remains as important now as it was then. ■

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## Service Connection

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**Sophia Scott, Editor**

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