

Chapter 2

WATER RESOURCES***Milford Water Resources Philosophy***

The community of Milford recognizes that protection of surface water and groundwater resources is fundamental to its continued health, safety and well-being, both at local and regional levels. The Town must continue to insure that water resources are protected for current and future residents, through *community supported* regulatory and education efforts that increase awareness and action on protecting water for drinking, conservation, the economy, and recreation.

As stated in the *Milford Conservation Plan*, water resources, including rivers, streams, lakes, ponds, wetlands, aquifers and floodplains, are among the most precious of a town's natural resources: Water is *the* most precious natural resource.

Not only are the Town's water resources among the most precious of its natural resources, it can be argued that water is the most precious.

New Hampshire RSA 4-C:22.I states that a municipality may include in its master plan a local water resource management and protection plan, or local water plan, as part of the municipal master plan (RSA 675:9). Implementation of local water plans must be through the adoption and enforcement of ordinances consistent with the plan and through such other measures lawfully available to a community. Milford's wetlands and aquifer protection ordinances, when utilized in conjunction with State and federal protection measures, provide a strong foundation for water resource management. However, there is no formally adopted water plan for the community that reflects a holistic approach to managing watersheds.

The 1999 *Master Plan Update* recognizes the need to continue strengthening water resource protection and management. To accomplish this, efforts need to be made at a regulatory level and through increased public education. This effort must be made by both the municipal government and by the individual citizen. To put the water resource philosophy into action, the following actions are recommended:

II: HIGH PRIORITY ACTIONS FOR 1999 / 2000**2.01 ACTION: A*****Develop and adopt comprehensive water resource protection and management policies and implementation measures.***

Although the Town currently has in place various ordinances and regulations or protecting surface and ground water, there is no overall plan to make sure all necessary steps and actions are considered for water resource management and protection for future generations. Development and adoption of comprehensive protection and management tools will serve to guide decision-making.

Responsibilities and Actions:

The Milford Planning Board, the Water Commissioners, and the Conservation Commission, shall develop, adopt and begin measures of implementing a Water Resources Management and Protection Plan, based on a watershed approach. The plan shall incorporate recommendations for regulatory and education action necessary for long range protection of water resources.

The Milford Conservation Plan contains a complete inventory and analysis of the Town's water resources.

Specifically, regarding regulatory policies, the Planning Board shall:

- a. *Evaluate Milford land use regulations, and incorporate where necessary and appropriate (Zoning Ordinance, Subdivision regulations, site plan regulations), the latest recommendations for stormwater management.*

Stormwater management has traditionally focused on storing and directing the volume of water expected in storm events of 25-, 50-, and 100-year magnitudes. Current thinking and regulatory trends also addresses treating the stormwater to improve the quality of the runoff before it enters either surface or groundwater.

- b. *Incorporate Site Specific Mapping Standards for New Hampshire and Vermont into Milford subdivision and site plan regulations.*

Site specific mapping standards for soil delineation have been officially approved and adopted by the Society of Soil Scientists of Northern New England, and are replacing the high intensity soil standards commonly utilized in the past fifteen years.

- c. *Further refine and modify, if appropriate, the Wetlands Conservation District regulations in the Zoning Ordinance.*

Such sources as the *Shoreland Protection Act (RSA 483-B)*, *Buffers for Wetlands and Surface Waters, A Guidebook for New Hampshire Municipalities*, and *Riparian Forest Buffers* provide the latest knowledge and research relative to the function of wetland buffer areas. Milford's wetland buffer requirements should be reviewed to incorporate appropriate community supported buffer requirements.

- d. *Further refine and modify, if appropriate, the Aquifer Protection District regulations in the Zoning Ordinance.*

The Aquifer Protection District regulations have not been analyzed and reviewed relative to advances and findings in methods to protect the aquifer in relation to various land uses and environmental hazard mitigation. The current regulations should reflect updated scientific findings to further protect the aquifer.

A **watershed** is a geographic area consisting of all that land that drains to a particular body of water.

"Watershed approach" refers to using a naturally delineated area - a watershed - as a unit of analysis and management

Point-source pollution: pollution whose source can be attributed to a specific location, land use, or event

Nonpoint-source pollution: pollution transported from a variety of sources (e.g., farms, construction sites, roadways, septic systems, parking lots) by rain and melting snow over the land or through the soil into a water body.

As responsibilities are outlined for groups that will promote the EDUCATIONAL components of water resource protection and management, specific recommendations include:

- a. *Educate the community about point-source and non-point source pollution within watersheds,*
- b. *Utilize the watershed model provided by the Hillsborough County Conservation Office for outreach at schools and fairs,*
- c. *Promote water protection concepts at Earth Day celebrations each spring,*
- d. *Expand local participation in the national and state level Coastal Cleanup each September to include an annual cleanup along the shores of the Souhegan River,*
- e. *Continue storm-drain stenciling efforts to create greater public awareness that stormwater discharges into local brooks, streams, rivers, and wetlands,*
- f. *Utilize local media to educate and inform the public on water resources, drinking water, and nonpoint pollution sources and impacts,*

- g. Continue to seek out and utilize opportunities for increased involvement of children and the schools in water resource management (e.g., KIDSNET, curriculum development),*
- h. Create a user-friendly and public accessible database (GIS mapping, parcel data) that locates point and nonpoint source pollution locations, land uses in the watersheds, wetlands, and other information related to water resource management,*

Recommendations on means to accomplish the AESTHETIC AND RECREATIONAL component of water resource protection and management, to be utilized by the Planning Board and the Conservation Commission include:

- a. Encourage conservation easements and public purchase of land along the Souhegan River and significant brooks and streams.*
- b. Develop a town-wide master plan for a trail system, with initial emphasis on obtaining trail corridors and usage rights along the Souhegan River.*
- c. Develop with the Downtown Ongoing Improvement Team (DO-IT), the Souhegan Watershed Association, and other civic groups in-town trails utilizing old railroad beds and established footpaths to link downtown parks and municipal facilities.*
- d. Plan and implement a street side park at the Fletcher's Paintworks Superfund site, that would incorporate the required environmental mitigation measures, and have universal access, take advantage of the oxbow view of the Souhegan River, be visually prominent, provide added parking and access to Keyes Field, and provide a positive community reuse and adaptation of the site.*
- e. Compile and publish a guidebook to the Souhegan River that emphasizes the recreational and aesthetic opportunities provided by River, similar to efforts accomplished by the Merrimack River Watershed Association.*
- f. Improve signage and availability of maps and guides for the Souhegan River Trail between the Milford Fish Hatchery and Fitch's Farm.*
- g. Implement an "Adopt-A-Stream" program similar to the "Adopt-A-Mile" highway stewardship program that will encourage groups and families to clean and maintain stretches of the Souhegan River and its tributaries.*