

NEWSLETTER

NH WATER WORKS ASSOCIATION

NHWWA.org



Welcome Chris Countie - NHWWA's New President

Chris has been in the water industry for nearly 30 years and has been with Pennichuck Works for all of those years. He has served in many roles within the company and has been the Director of Water Supply and Community Water Systems since 2001.

Chris has a B.S. in Business Administration, and an A.S. in Civil Engineering Technology; both from the University of New Hampshire. He is a grade IV Treatment and Distribution Operator in New Hampshire and Massachusetts.



Chris Countie

Chris lives with his wife, Holly in Nashua and has two adult children, Charlie and Grace. In his spare time, he enjoys golf, hiking, boating and spending time with friends and family.

ATTENTION MEMBERS AND ADVERTISERS

To increase our outreach and reduce costs, this will be the last printed issue of our Newsletter. Starting in 2021, the newsletter will be provided virtually to our members and then shared with our wider email audience. The Journal will be printed in color and mailed to members twice a year. For advertising information please visit our [website](#).

New Board Voted in at Annual Meeting

The New Hampshire Water Works Association membership voted in the following Board of Directors at the Annual Meeting on November 5, 2020.

NHWWA Board of Directors

November 1, 2020—October 31, 2021

OFFICERS

President: Chris Countie, Pennichuck Water

Vice-President: Chris Albert, CSA Environmental Consultants, LLC

Treasurer: Sarah Lescault, Manchester Water Works

DIRECTORS

Rene Pelletier, NH Department of Environmental Services

Robyn Descoteau, NH Public Utilities Commission

Chris Vaughn, Secondwind Water Systems, Inc.

Chris Berg, Wright-Pierce

Jason Gagnon, North Conway Water Precinct

Jamie Stevens, City of Dover

Jennifer Mates, Town of Exeter

Carl McMorran, Aquarion Water Company, Past President (Ex-Officio)

Meet Our Newest Board Member—Jennifer Mates

Jennifer Mates, PE, Assistant Town Engineer in Exeter, NH was voted in as a new member of the NHWWA Board of Directors in November.

Jen grew up in the Chicago suburbs and graduated from Southern Illinois University with a BS in Civil Engineering in 1998. After college, she worked as a consultant for several small engineering firms in Connecticut and NH, primarily providing site plan and subdivision designs for private developers. Her work with public utilities began in 2007 at Wright-Pierce, Inc. She joined NHDES's DWGB in 2011, providing technical assistance, design review, and conducting sanitary surveys for small public water systems. In 2013, she began working as the Assistant Town Engineer in Exeter. In this position, she is responsible for project management and design review of water, sewer, drainage, road, sidewalk, and bridge projects.

Jen and her husband Mike live in Greenland, NH. She enjoys hiking, reading, cooking, and playing frisbee at the beach with her dog, Laney.



From the Executive Director - “Prepared for the Future”

Much has happened since I joined the Association in February, with the past few months being challenging, worrisome and rewarding – sometimes all on the same day! Challenging due to the COVID pandemic and drought, worrisome as the political climate has darkened, yet rewarding as drinking water system operators and partners rose to the occasion and continued to provide safe and dependable drinking water to hundreds of thousands of customers.

Thanks to the resilience of the drinking water community, the leadership of our Directors, and the dedicated efforts of our staff and professional partners we took 2020 in stride with the rest of you. We switched to a remote communications platform and delivered professional trainings, technical meetings and our Water Is Essential fall seminar series. Association finances were carefully managed to maintain a strong

financial position and the ability to deliver critical, high-quality services.

We developed an innovative and powerful strategic plan, using a scenario-planning approach guided by the leadership and professional commitment of our facilitating partner Tom Burack, Esq., former NHDES Commissioner currently with Sheehan Phinney Bass & Green PA. We expect to complete our communications strategic plan, being led by Susan Kaplan of Sustainable Futures Consulting by the end of the year.

Looking ahead, our top three strategic priorities are workforce development, communications, and organizational effectiveness. Professional recruitment, retention and advancement to address retirements and advances in technology are at the top of our list. We will tailor our communications to reach prospective workers about the benefits of a career in drinking water, and create career paths through partnerships, scholarships and work

opportunities (job shadowing, internships, job postings). We will also provide our members with tools to advocate for themselves locally; reach out to the general public to create allies for the public water sector (see article by Steve Del Deo below); and provide actionable information to State and federal policy makers to support infrastructure funding. The Association will revise our governance structures to more effectively implement our strategic goals and build a solid foundation for the future.

I am both impressed by and immensely grateful for the many people that generously contributed their time and expertise to help me learn about the drinking water sector. I welcome any and all questions, comments and concerns that you care to share with me. Together, we will continue to deliver safe, reliable and affordable drinking water, whatever the future may hold!

Boyd Smith, Executive Director

The Value of Public Drinking Water

by Steve Del Deo

Walking out the Concord Walmart a while back I did a double take of an advertisement for “Primo” bottled water. Upon second glance I caught the ad statement – “Your Tap Water Can Hang Out In Some Pretty Seedy Joints”, with a photograph of a length of metal pipe with mechanical joints. It was the smaller print that really made me think. And I wasn’t pleased. So I asked to speak to the store manager. I explained to her that Walmart is supplied with high quality, frequently tested, and continually monitored water, and with abundant volume and pressure from the City of Concord Water Department. And that all this is provided with uninterrupted service – 24/7! Finally, I told her right out

that this advertisement is offensive to public water suppliers. The manager told me that she fully understood my concerns, and that although there was nothing she personally could do about it she would bring my concerns up to Walmart Corporate. More recently I took note of this same “Primo” ad at Lowe’s Hardware.

Last winter while walking in the Steeplegate Mall in Concord I counted seven ads for bottled water at various locations in the mall – in fact, bottled water ads are the most frequent advertisements in the mall. At least none of these ads put down public water.

Getting back to the Primo Water ad, as public water suppliers I believe we need to do a better job of promoting



Store display

our product to the public at large. Better promotion of public drinking water has long been on the minds of public water suppliers, and a [continued on page 7]



Legislative Update

The 2020 Legislative session ended with Representatives meeting in the field house at UNH to maintain COVID-restrictions, and voting on several “omnibus bills” that contained multiple pieces of legislation. House Bill 1264 (HB1264) contained the new maximum

contaminant levels / ambient groundwater quality standards (MCLs / AGQS) for four (4) PFAS compounds, as well as authorization for a \$50,000,000 remediation loan fund to pay for costs incurred by public drinking water systems. This bill was signed in to law by Governor Sununu, and the NHDES was assigned the responsibility to create implementing regulations.

NHDES Rule Env-Dw 1400 was released in October and open for public review and comment through 4:00 PM on November 16. The Association, in consultation with Marco Philippon (Concord), John Boisvert (Pennichuck) and Jason Gagnon (North Conway) reviewed the draft rule and coordinated a response. Our main concerns are: reducing the burden of the preapplication, as the eligibility threshold in the law is very simple; ensuring that all costs associated with PFAS treatment are covered, including fund application preparation through disposal of treatment residuals; and ensuring all impacted systems will receive adequate funding to address their PFAS remediation needs.

We worked closely with the NHDES to address supplies of PPE in the early days of COVID, and continued our partnership – ably led by NHDES Water Division Director Tom O’Donovan – to expand federal CARES Act funding for water systems that lost revenue due to the pandemic. This partnership, which included our Association, NHDES, Granite State Rural Water Association, NH Municipal Association, and the NH Water Pollution Control Association, met with New Hampshire’s Congressional representatives to advocate for substantial federal support of our water sectors under both the CARES Act and future infrastructure legislation. We expect this partnership and advocacy to continue, as federal funds are required to address New Hampshire’s critical and growing infrastructure requirements.

NH Drinking Water Festival to be offered virtually in 2021!

The New Hampshire Drinking Water Festival has educated and inspired fourth graders to conserve and protect our water resources for 27 years. To keep everyone safe, the 2021 festival is moving online. And, to support teachers, students and parents, these free online resources will be available March through July.

Students in grades 3-5 are invited to participate in this year’s Water Poetry Contest. This is a great opportunity to incorporate the language arts and water science.

To learn more about these events visit the [NH Drinking Water Festival](#) page on our website.



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Young Professionals Committee Happenings

Though in-person events continue to be canceled due to COVID-19, the NHWWA Young Professionals Committee has been actively making efforts to engage the water works community.

In August, the YPs coordinated with Pennichuck Water Works Inc. to host a virtual tour of their treatment facility. The popular event had over 40 attendees, and due to its success the YPs are in the process of planning another virtual tour for the winter season – stay tuned!

September and October were busy months for our YPs. In September, the YPs participated in the Source to Sea River Clean Up and were able to pull several bags full of trash from the river. In October, members from the YP Executive Board joined students from Plymouth State University for a virtual career panel discussing opportunities for careers in the water industry. To wrap up October, the YPs hosted a virtual luncheon in place of their annual Fall Expo lunch meeting and discussed the value of mentorship.



In the coming months, the YPs look forward to hosting another virtual treatment plant tour, continuing to grow their student outreach efforts, and finding more exciting ways to keep our water works folks connected!

(L to R) Sophie Ricard, Kevin Eyring and Crystal Eyring at this fall's Source to Sea River Clean Up.



NHWWA Calendar		
When	What	Where
Jan.-March 2021	Water Operator Basics Course	Zoom Platform
January 21, 2021	NEWWA/NHWWA Joint Meeting	Virtual
Spring—TBA	1A Small System Water Operator Course	Zoom Platform
Spring—TBA	Exam Prep Course	Zoom Platform
Spring—TBA	Basic Water Works Math	Zoom Platform
August 4, 2021	Construction Field Day	TBA
October 20, 2021	NH Drinking Water Expo & Trade Show	Grappone Center Concord, NH

Events and trainings will be posted on our website at www.nhwwa.org and email notices will go out via Constant Contact. Be sure to allow our Constant Contact emails in your emails.

WATER IS ESSENTIAL Fall Seminar Series - A Great Success

Though COVID prevented us from meeting in person for our annual trade show in October, we were able to share the spirit of our event through a series of interesting and relevant webinars featuring leaders in emerging contaminants, infrastructure management and funding, emerging technologies, state-of-the-art equipment, drinking water regulations, and more. The three webinars were very well attended and links to the slides from the presentations can be found on our website under [WATER IS ESSENTIAL Seminar Series](#).

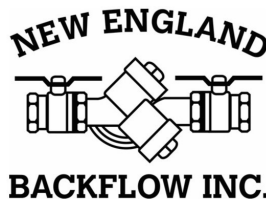
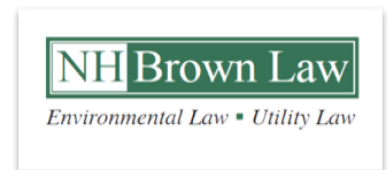
One-hundred and fifty people attended the webinars, some only one or two sessions but most sat in on all three!

Thank you to all our presenters who did an awesome job—Tom Bohrer, Nighthawk; Dave Crawford, Champlin Associates; Brian Goetz, City of Portsmouth, Steve Guercia, Secondwind Water Systems; Brett Johnson, Clow Valve; Cynthia Klevens, NHDES; Chip Mackey, NHDES; Johnna McKenna, NHDES; Mike Metcalf, Underwood Engineers; Stephanie Nistico, NHDES; Amy Rousseau, NHDES; and Lauren Thistle, Wright-Pierce.

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Member News

Stiles Co announced the successful transfer of ownership from the original founding family to long-term employee Ian Kasowitz, his wife Katie, and their family. Ian and Katie bring new energy, vision and innovation to this family owned business, known throughout New England as a leading distributor of smart water meters and waterworks products.



Katie and Ian Kasowitz

Parker and Carole Stiles started the Stiles Co out of their garage in 1983 and built the company on their core values of exceeding customers' expectations, and providing superior knowledge and service. Prior to his passing earlier this year, Parker arranged for the transfer of ownership with the goal of building on these values that have been planted and help guide it to another 40+ years of success.

Katie will assume the role of president, while Ian runs the sales and client facing organization. All employees are staying on with the newly owned company post-closing. Stiles Co. would like to thank their valued customers, vendors, and peers and are excited to see what the future holds.

This summer saw a shift at the NHDES Drinking Water and Groundwater Bureau when longtime administrator **Sarah Pillsbury** retired and **Brandon Kernen** took the reins. Sarah dedicated her sign-off letter to NH's water operators and all they do to ensure we have safe drinking water.



Sarah Pillsbury at
NHWWA's 2012 Annual
Meeting.

Brandon had been working with the Bureau as Supervisor of the Hydrology and Conservation section. A licensed professional hydrologist, Brandon has presented at NHWWA trainings on emerging contaminants and contributed to our Newsletter and Journal.

NHWWA extends its thanks to Sarah for her years of dedicated commitment to the Association and we wish her all the best in her retirement. We also thank Brandon for participating in our strategic plan process and look forward to our continued partnership.

NHWWA YPs Offer Management School Scholarships

NHWWA Young Professionals are pleased to offer two (2) scholarships for 2021 Water Managers School tuition (value \$650/scholarship).

The **Water Managers School** program is for operators and other water system employees preparing to become candidates for future management or supervisory positions. The program is also open to current managers and supervisors who wish to improve their management skills. For more information and to apply to the Water Managers School visit the NHWPCA website. Application deadline is December 31, 2020.

To apply for a scholarship, please send an email with your **name and age, water system, current position, and where you want to take your career (500 words max.)**, and the words "Water Managers School Application" in the subject line to NHWWA Young Professionals nhwwayp@nhwwa.org. Please attach your acceptance letter from NHWPCA.

[continued from page 2]

frequent discussion at meetings and events at the local, state, and regional levels. From these discussions public water suppliers have positively responded in a number of ways. Examples include billboard and bus signs, creating documentaries, and providing outreach to students such as the annual Drinking Water Festival. We need to continue to do this, but also look at new ways of getting our message out. These, to name some, should include:

- More frequent communication directly with our customers, emphasizing the advantages and value of public drinking water.
- Additional training of our staff in responding to inquiries and complaints.
- Additional and continual use of the media to get our word out. (Brag a little).
- Additional use of advertising in media print, on-line ads, TV and radio.
- Talks with the Walmarts and Lowes of the world – we do provide them with a safe and reliable product.

All of the above is important, and these efforts need to be frequent, continual, and yes sometimes forceful.

The bottom line here is this: As public water suppliers we need to control the narrative and change it from “It’s Time To Rethink Water”, to “It’s Time To Appreciate And Value Public Drinking Water”.

Thank you to our contributor:

Steve Del Deo (article)

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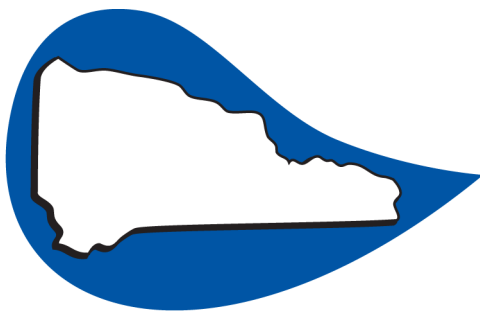


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