MAINE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
MAJOR INITIATIVES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS
2003-2010

Over the past eight years, the Maine Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has continued to protect Maine's air, land and waters to safeguard the state's environment, natural resources and public health. At the same time, DEP has streamlined the permitting processes for the 4,000+ permits it issues each year. In the last 8 years DEP has permitted $5.2 billion dollars in capital investments in the state - exceeding any other comparable time period. For the year ending 2009, the average DEP permitting time was 44 days.

DEP responds daily to the public. During the last quarter of 2008, DEP received 3,736 requests for service ranging from citizen complaints to requests for technical assistance. Of these, 97% were either handled at once, or the requester received a follow-up call or other communication by the close of the following business day to assure them that the matter was being addressed.

For more than 10 years DEP has operated pursuant to an extensive and comprehensive Quality Management System. Ongoing checks of system performance are in the form of internal audits. Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) are in place for all licensing programs to ensure consistency, standardized permit language, and the use of common forms and templates. DEP is audited by the EPA routinely. Our programs perform better than similar programs in other states in terms of timeliness and effectiveness.

DEP's initiatives and accomplishments over the past eight years cover all areas of process improvement and environmental protection, including:

STREAMLINING OF PERMITTING

From 2007 through May of 2010 $5.2 billion in capital investments in Maine's economy have received environmental permits from DEP.

Permit-By-Rule (PBR). Many categories of smaller scale development and simple activities are now routinely permitted using a reduced Permit-By-Rule (PBR) procedure, which provides a permit in 14 days. 20 specific types of activities are eligible for permit-by-rule, resulting in over 3,000 licensed development activities using this streamlined approach. This process typically involves completing a simplified application with an accurate sketch and photos of the area to be disturbed. At the end of a project, only pictures showing completed work must be submitted (for many activities) so DEP staff can confirm compliance.

The new Penobscot Narrows Bridge, one of the largest construction projects in Maine, was permitted in 2003 using PBR. Through a 2008 rulemaking, the air emissions from rock crushers are eligible for licensing by PBR, eliminating individual licensing for a number of sources.

Maine Air Inventory Reporting System
In 2005, DEP consolidated the data collection processes, forms, formats and storage for each of the three air emissions inventories (criteria pollutants, hazardous air pollutants (HAP), and greenhouse gases (GHG)) into an electronic system that removed duplication for regulated sources and resulted in the collection of the most complete and accurate air pollutant HAP and GHG inventories ever. DEP has developed of a web-based air emissions reporting system, now known as MAIRIS (Maine Air Inventory Reporting System) which will allow Maine's 200 reporting facilities to efficiently report pollutant data annually to the DEP. MAIRIS will be opened to Maine's regulated community in January 2011.

Clean Water Permit Backlog Eliminated. In 2005, DEP eliminated a longstanding backlog of Clean Water Act wastewater discharge permits. Now no more than 10% of the 400 permits are expired at any one time. This was accomplished with only 1/3 of the staff recommended by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

Wastewater General Permits. DEP has developed a streamlined wastewater licensing procedure. Separate, yet nearly identical, discharges of pollutants qualify for a general permit, which currently is available for important growing industries like aquaculture, widespread activities like stormwater control, and potential public health emergencies involving mosquito control.

Wastewater Discharge Electronic Data Submission. In 2008, wastewater treatment facilities began electronic submission of required discharge monitoring data. This is accomplished via the internet using a computer program developed with federal grant money by DEP with input from the dischargers. Electronic submission reduces costly and duplicative data entry for license holders and increases the accuracy of the data by minimizing the number of times it is keyed into a database.

Stormwater Rule Flexibility. In 2005, Maine's stormwater rules (created after much public and stakeholder input) were amended to allow for improved stormwater control structures that in many instances require less "real estate" space to install. This allows more room for development and at the same time provides better environmental protection. Redevelopment projects in urban areas can avoid expensive treatment systems in certain cases under this new stormwater rule flexibility. Maine's stormwater rules have undergone review recently and amendments have been proposed.

Underground Storage Tanks. A recent change to Maine's UST rules allows third-party certified inspectors to conduct minor repairs during required annual inspections. This change saves the UST facility owner the money it previously cost to hire a separate private certified installer, minimizes the time a portion of a facility is out of operation, and brings the facility back into compliance sooner, thereby reducing the risk of a costly discharge.

Maine's nearly 5,000 underground storage tanks and thousands of operators need cost-effective training to help them prevent petroleum releases to the environment. DEP has developed a comprehensive, easy to access on-line training program for UST operators. This free program is being designed to enable operators to receive the training, take a test and print out a certificate using a computer, without the need to travel to a specific location on a specific day and time. Other New England states have asked to copy Maine's innovative program and DEP received national recognition and an award from the Center for Digital Government for this innovation.

Wetland In-lieu Fee Program. To provide more flexibility in permitting, the "fee-in-lieu of wetland compensation" program allows applicants seeking to permanently alter significant amounts of wetlands to pay a fee instead of performing traditional wetland compensation when wetland impacts are unavoidable. Before this program was initiated in 2007, each significant wetland loss required an individual mitigation project provided by the applicant. The fee is deposited in a compensation fund and can be combined and directed to priority wetland projects with greater regional conservation value. The in-lieu fee program can save considerable time and expense and will improve freshwater wetland conservation in Maine.

Ground and Surface Water Analytical Database. Licensed entities and DEP together monitor the condition of surface and groundwater at many locations throughout the state in order to detect pollutants and remediate problems. The database developed by DEP to record and analyze these records allows entities to electronically submit raw data, which then enables DEP staff to perform automated analysis and graphic presentation of data and statistics. This database cuts costs for regulated entities by allowing electronic submission and vastly improves the availability of data for a better scientific understanding of Maine's water quality.

CLEAN WATER

Long Creek Restoration

Long Creek is a freshwater stream that winds its way through the Maine Mall area in South Portland. As a result of urban development Long Creek does not meet state and federal water quality standards and is listed as 1 of 31 "urban impaired" streams in Maine. DEP organized the Long Creek Restoration Project, which is a first-in-the nation collaborative, community-based initiative to clean up an urban impaired stream using the Clean Water Act's "residual designation authority."

The City of South Portland received a grant from DEP and EPA to partner with representatives from the three other Long Creek watershed municipalities (Portland, Westbrook and Scarborough), area businesses, non-profit organizations, and state agencies to implement the plan. Restoring the health of Long Creek will have extended benefits that go beyond improving water quality – it will improve quality of life by providing opportunities for natural enjoyment and recreation of an urban stream, and allow native fish and wildlife to rebound in this watershed. We intend it to be the first restored urban impaired stream in the U.S.

Improved Shellfish Harvesting

In 2008 legislation was passed to require that septic systems in coastal shoreland zones be inspected, and fixed if needed, at property transfer. The law also creates a new state/municipal partnership to improve inspections of failed septic systems that have impacted shellfish harvesting areas. A no discharge designation protects Maine harbors and coastal waters by prohibiting the discharge of treated and untreated boat sewage in these areas. Boat sewage can lead to health problems for swimmers, closed shellfish beds, and the overall degradation of Marine habitats. DEP crafted a plan to prevent discharges of sludge and bacteria-laden waste water from large cruise ships visiting Maine in 2004-2005. Maine has designated more than a dozen "No Discharge Areas" up and down the coast

Eliminating Overboard Discharges

There are more than 1,300 overboard discharges licensed and monitored by the state. Implementation of a 2010 law will better protect water quality in Maine and allow the state to re-open shellfish beds that are routinely closed due to OBD pipes, which release wastewater into coastal waters and rivers. This legislation tightens the rules and provides for financial assistance to replace the overboard systems for those homeowners and businesses that qualify. Marinas must keep their sewage disposal tanks accessible, functional, and affordable so boaters are less apt to empty their holding tanks into coastal or inland waters. As a result of law changes and bond packages enacted in the Baldacci Administration, DEP has worked to remove more than 350 residential, commercial, or institutional OBDs. Those removals have resulted in the opening of more than 2,000 acres of shellfish harvesting areas, previously closed because of OBDs. DEP plans to continue operation and maintenance support of existing pump out stations and install approximately 10 new or improved pump out systems along the coast of Maine.

Increasing Protection for Certain Rivers and Streams

DEP gathered and presented to the Legislature the scientific evidence justifying an increased level of protection for several sections of river, including the Crooked River, Alder Stream, and the Basin. The Crooked River provides valuable spawning habitat for landlocked salmon in Sebago Lake as well as drinking water to some 200,000 Maine people. Since 2002, more than 750 miles of rivers and streams have been upgraded in classification due to water quality improvements.

Androscoggin River Cleanup

In June 2010, the final waste discharge license and water quality certification was issued, and when implemented Gulf Island Pond will be brought into attainment with Class C water quality standards. Upgraded and additional infrastructure installed by private companies during the summer of 2010 allowed for evaluation of success in meeting the modeled water quality parameters during the summer.

Lakes/Ponds Water Clean-up

Since 2002, EPA-approved clean up plans have been created for 27 lakes and ponds and 12 different river segments. In addition, Maine played a leading role in initiating the creation of the nation's first regional clean-up plan for all mercury impaired waters in the six New England states and New York. Maine has now removed six lakes from its impaired waters list with EPA approval – the first removals ever for impaired lakes beginning with Cobbosseecontee Lake in 2006.

Safe Drinking Water

In 2005-2006, the Administration successfully introduced legislation that will ensure better safeguards for the state's underground drinking water supplies. While Maine has been a national leader in reducing the threats due to leaks from underground petroleum storage tanks, similar protections at facilities using above ground storage have been lacking. In recent years, the most extensive and expensive spills have involved motor fuel retail facilities near residences with private wells, and near public drinking water supplies, posing an unreasonable threat to public health and the environment. The new law has siting, protective equipment and inspection requirements that will reduce these risks.

CLEAN AIR

Reducing Regional Haze

Sulfur emissions are the greatest contributor to poor visibility and particle pollution on bad air days in the Northeastern U.S., including Maine. A 2010 law establishes incremental reductions in the sulfur content of all fuel oils sold in the State of Maine beginning in 2016. Final reductions will take place in 2018. By 2018, Maine's sulfur emissions will be reduced by an estimated 50 percent from today's levels - improving Maine's air quality and visibility, avoiding nearly $150 million in health care costs and saving an estimated 23 Maine lives every year.

Reducing Mercury Emissions

In 2005, Governor Baldacci introduced a bill to reduce mercury air emissions. By 2010, a Maine licensed source can emit no more than 25 pounds of mercury annually. In addition, all sources emitting more than 10 pounds must develop mercury reduction/ pollution prevention plans for review and approval by the state.

Ozone

Federal re-designation to "attainment" for ozone in Maine recognizes significant reductions in air pollutant emissions in Maine as well as those transported to Maine from upwind states. Maine nonetheless has testified on the need for stronger Clean Air Act standards that will result in Maine being re-designated as "nonattainment," in an effort to further force upwind states to reduce air pollutants. Maine has supported Clean Air Act standards recommended by EPA's Clean Air Scientific Advisory Committee which would lower the ozone standard to somewhere between 60 to 70 ppb to ensure attainment in Maine. EPA expects to make an announcement of their decision on a new standard before the end of this year.

Diesel Emissions Reduction

Since 2003 the DEP has received funds from the Diesel Emission Reduction Act (DERA), EPA's national clean diesel campaign to reduce harmful diesel emissions, including funds from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (Stimulus Funds). To date the DEP has received nearly $5 million dollars in DERA and stimulus funds, which has helped reduce diesel emissions from school buses, marine vessels (including lobster boats and ferries), off-road vehicles (including snow plows and ports equipment), locomotives, and trash trucks.

Maine Air Toxics Initiative

The Maine Air Toxics Initiative (MATI) is a facilitated stakeholder process to identify which air toxics are the most responsible for creating health risks in Maine, the source of those pollutants, and creation of cost effective solutions to reduce the risk. This holistic assessment of air toxics risks will enable Maine to target available resources for maximum risk reduction.

In 2003, Maine DEP convened the Air Toxics Advisory Committee (ATAC), composed of community organizations, government organizations (local, state and federal), industrial organizations and environmental organizations. In 2007, the ATAC reached agreement on recommended strategies to reduce air toxic emissions in Maine. The report contains an Air Toxic Priority List, and notes that most air toxic emissions in Maine are combustion by-products. After evaluating pending regulations, the ATAC recommended a number of air toxic emission reduction strategies. The Bureau of Air Quality is in the process of implementing these recommended strategies.

TOXICS REDUCTION/ELIMINATION

Removing Toxic Chemicals from Children's Products

In 2006 Governor Baldacci established a Task Force to examine toxic chemicals found in children's products, which produced a comprehensive report from a broad business/environmental group/state agency stakeholder process. In 2008, the Baldacci Administration submitted, and the Maine Legislature enacted,

Speaker Hannah Pingree's Toxic Chemicals in Children's Products Law to improve the chemical safety of children's products and encourage the use of safer alternatives, giving DEP authority to require disclosure of chemical information for chemicals of high concern, to require a safer alternatives assessment, and to ban sales of children's products containing a designated priority chemical when exposure to the priority chemicals is likely and safer alternatives are available.

In 2009, DEP and the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) published Maine's List of Chemicals of High Concern, a list of more than 1,700 chemicals known to governments as causing cancer and other health concerns. This list is the first step toward implementing Maine's Toxic Chemicals in Children's Products law. Maine was the first state to publish a List of Chemicals of High Concern.

The DEP and CDC are looking more closely at these chemicals, the extent of their use, the level of exposure to children, and documented presence in the human body or environment. The law requires DEP to identify at least two priority chemicals for further scrutiny and possible regulatory action. DEP has identified Bisphenol-A and nonylphenol (NP) and nonylphenol ethyoxolate (NPE) as the state's first two priority chemicals.

The Toxics Use Reduction Act

Maine's Toxics Use Reduction Act (TURA) was enacted in 1989. In 2010 legislation was enacted to repeal and replace TURA in two years. Developed by a group of stakeholders that represented government, industry, public health, the environment and labor, the new law is modeled after Maine's safer chemicals in children's products law. The law requires DEP to identify and adopt by rule a list of up to 10 priority toxic chemicals by July 2011. The list can be revised every 3 years. Beginning July 2013, any business that uses in excess of 1,000 pounds (unless a lower threshold is established) of any of these chemicals will report on usage to the DEP, and will file a pollution prevention plan to reduce the amount of the chemical used. The DEP will target technical assistance to these entities to find safer alternatives and production changes to reduce or eliminate usage of priority toxic chemicals by commercial and industrial entities in Maine.

Flame Retardant Bans

The Maine Legislature has enacted bans on a number of consumer products that contain harmful chemicals or metals. With studies showing a dramatic build up in humans and animals of chemicals in certain flame retardants, Maine enacted a law five years ago banning sales of products containing two types of these PBDE chemicals, penta and octa – with a clear intention of banning the most common brominated flame retardant (deca). In 2006, the Legislature passed a law banning products (mattresses, computers and TV's) containing deca. In 2010, the deca ban was extended to include plastic pallets. That ban takes affect January 1, 2011. The DEP is currently overseeing a study of safer alternatives to this chemical.

Mercury Emissions and Mercury Product Bans
In 2005, the Maine Legislature enacted tough mercury emission and discharge limits and took steps to reduce the potential for exposure and contamination from mercury. Products containing the metal were identified and their sale banned where appropriate alternatives are available. Recycling was promoted to keep mercury out of the waste stream. Specific initiatives have targeted: waste or unwanted dental amalgams; agricultural manometers; mercury thermostats; vehicle switches; school labs; batteries and other consumer products; and hospital equipment. Maine has banned mercury from approximately two dozen products.

Arsenic
In 2003, Maine banned the sale of arsenic treated wood for residential use, most notably exterior housing work (decks) and children's play sets.

Lead Poisoning Prevention
The administration has implemented regulatory standards for lead inspection and abatement, offered training and technical assistance to contractors, landlords and homeowners in safe lead renovation. This program is a major factor in the reduction in the number of children diagnosed with lead poisoning from about 1200 to less than 200 annually.

HoltraChem
Heavily contaminated with mercury, DEP presented its recommended complete clean-up of the former HoltraChem site which is in Orrington to the Board of Environmental Protection. Mallinckrodt proposed a partial clean-up plan, which would leave more than 80,000 pounds of mercury on site. The BEP issued a decision on the clean-up that adopted portions of DEP's recommendations and portions of the company's plan; an appeal by the company of BEP's order is currently pending at Superior Court.

Eastland Woolen Mill
The federal government designated the Eastland Woolen textile mill in Corinna as a superfund site in 1999; it had operated from 1909 to 1996. The mill used chlorobenzenes, an industrial solvent, which were discharged directly to the river and lead to heavy contamination of the East Branch of the Sebasticook River and area drinking water wells. EPA has spent over $60 million to clean up the town and river, and the site now hosts senior citizen housing. The town has a public water system paid for by DEP and clean-up bond funds. Negotiations with EPA on the early clean-up saved Maine taxpayers over $5 million. The state is responsible for future operation of the ground water treatment system.

Callahan Mine, Brooksville
The federal government designated the Callahan Mining Corporation as a superfund site in 2002; it operated an open-pit mine between 1968 and 1972 in a drained portion of the Goose Pond Estuary in Brooksville, Maine. The site and surrounding sediments are heavily contaminated with lead, arsenic and other heavy metals.

EPA named the State a Responsible Party at this site because we owned the property and received royalties for leasing the property to the mining company. EPA agreed to pay 90% of the $30 million clean-up costs, provided the Maine Department of Transportation undertakes the remedial design, and DEP funds 10% of the clean up costs and undertakes long-term operations and maintenance. EPA is providing $3 million in federal superfund money in 2012 to take early action at the site to remove lead contaminated soil from residential areas and PCB contaminated soils that threaten public health.

Eastern Fine Paper/CIANBRO facility, Brewer

In January 2004, Eastern Fine Paper's parent company filed for Chapter 7 bankruptcy and abandoned the mill. Maine DEP stepped in immediately and operated the boilers in the mill building to prevent a potential environmental release from the freezing of chemicals in the manufacturing lines and stored in the buildings.

The City of Brewer and South Brewer Redevelopment (SBR) working together received $2.25 million in Brownfields Grant money from USEPA. SBR working closely with Cianbro and Maine DEP utilized a highly unique approach to the Eastern Fine Paper redevelopment integrating site development and environmental remediation in order to satisfy a highly compressed timeline. Cianbro needed the site designed, permitted, demolished, remediated, and ready for work in less than 12 months. Cianbro and DEP completed the design and permitting in two months. Innovative techniques were used which resulted in not only schedule efficiency of about six months, but also minimized the amount of soil required to be managed offsite and helped to save approximately $1 million on overall remediation and construction costs.

Cianbro's new Eastern Manufacturing Facility has created approximately 500 new, high paying jobs with excellent benefits. The project is estimated to be generating over $50 million in local investment for the community. The taxes generated by Cianbro's investment in the site serve as a significant boost to the City of Brewer tax rolls, helping to replace the void left by Eastern Fine Paper's closure. This project the received the 2009 USEPA Region I Phoenix Award for excellence in Brownfield Redevelopment.

E-Waste/Product Stewardship

Enacted in 2004, Maine's landmark electronic waste law has diverted 22 million pounds of waste and more than 2.4 million pounds of lead from our landfills. Many states have now copied or built on Maine's law and approach. The law was amended most recently in 2009 to include desktop printers and video game consoles. It also requires manufacturers of computer monitors, televisions, desktop printers, and video game consoles to register with DEP. In 2009 Maine also enacted legislation requiring manufacturers of mercury-added lamps to implement a recycling program for lamps sold or distributed in the state for household use.

In 2010, Maine passed comprehensive product stewardship legislation. This law provides incentives to recycle and reuse more consumer products, and creates opportunities for Maine businesses to collect, recycle, and remanufacture old, unwanted products into new ones. Building on Maine's existing product stewardship programs for electronic waste and mercury-containing products, the recently enacted law sets criteria by which the DEP will address certain products for stewardship, and enables manufacturers and others to provide input.

Effective January 2011, Maine law bans the use of lead or mercury wheel weights when replacing or balancing a tire on a vehicle to be registered in Maine. It also bans the sale of lead or mercury wheel weights, except on new motor vehicles sold prior to January 2012. In 2008 Maine became the first state to remove leaded wheel weights from its state fleet by executive order.

CLIMATE CHANGE

In 2003, Maine became the first state to enact into law the goals established by the 2001 Agreement between the New England Governors and Eastern Canadian Premiers. These goals call for specific greenhouse gas emission reductions: to 1990 levels by 2010; 10% below 1990 levels by 2020; and, the long-term reductions necessary to stabilize the climate [estimated at 75-80% by mid-century]. In 2004, Maine became the second state to adopt a Climate Action Plan.

Maine is now on track to meet the 2010 interim Greenhouse Gas reduction goal of reducing emissions to 1990 levels – these reductions were calculated prior to the economic impacts of the recession. DEP is the main coordinator on implementing the 54 measure Plan. In its October 2009 report, *Environment America* recognized Maine as the state with the most improved state carbon footprint for years it analyzed (2004-2007).

The 2003 law also directed the DEP to develop agreements with businesses and non-profit organizations to accomplish the law's greenhouse gas reduction goals. More than 70 businesses participate in the Governor's Carbon Challenge, and collectively have reduced Maine's carbon footprint by 130,000 metric tons, while at the same time saving money through energy efficiency investments.

In 2005 Maine was the first state to establish mandatory GHG reporting for the six GHG gases from large air emissions sources. As a result, Maine has the best GHG inventory in the U.S. with reported facility data, five years in advance of EPA's less comprehensive reporting program. Maine was a founding state behind joint efforts by 10 Northeastern and Mid-Atlantic states to establish the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) for the electricity generation sector. RGGI is the first U.S. cap-and-trade program designed to reduce carbon dioxide emissions. Allowances to emit carbon are auctioned, and the funds benefit Maine consumers and reduce greenhouse gases through investments in energy efficiency programs.

In 2009 the DEP introduced a legislative resolve to authorize a stakeholder group to evaluate the options Maine people and businesses have in adapting to the most likely and now unavoidable impacts of climate change. The result of the group's work was outlined in a report delivered to the 124th Maine Legislature entitled "People and Nature: Adapting to Climate Change." DEP was authorized in 2010 to continue the stakeholder effort for two more years to develop comprehensive recommendations for the Legislature and to implement those not requiring legislative action.

RENEWABLE ENERGY

Wind Power

To implement The Wind Power Act of 2008, DEP and LURC have developed well-defined permitting standards and thorough project review, including requirements for pre-and post-construction bird and bat studies, and demonstration that the project will meet all legal requirements, including the DEP's noise standards. The Baldacci Administration and the 123rd Legislature set a goal for Maine to host at least 2,000 MW of installed wind power capacity by 2015, and at least 3,000 MW by 2020. The Administration, DEP, and LURC have permitted 450 MW of land based and power, with another 650 MW undergoing permitting review by DEP or LURC, or in planning. Maine now represents 95% of wind power generation in New England.

Offshore Wind

The Governor submitted two bills to implement the recommendations of his Ocean Energy Task Force, formed to advance renewable ocean energy projects in an environmentally responsible manner. In 2009 the state enacted legislation establishing a 60-day DEP General Permit for projects to test new offshore wind and wave technologies in sites identified by the state as appropriate for such testing and demonstration. After an extensive public outreach process, the state established three sites in state waters.

In 2010, the legislature enacted a bill to clarify and simplify the environmental permitting and submerged lands leasing processes for offshore wind in state waters. The law set a goal to develop 5,000 MW of offshore wind by 2030 and recognized the potential for this vast clean energy resource to power emerging efficient heat and transportation technologies. Pursuant to this legislation the Maine Public Utilities Commission issued an RFP for up to 5 MW of tidal power and 25 MW of deepwater floating offshore wind greater than 10 miles from shore in September 2010, and set a price cap on what ratepayers will be asked to pay for energy generated from these "stepping stone" projects. Efficiency Maine Trust was asked to further explore more efficient heating options such as ground and air source heat pumps that can be powered with cleaner electricity and reduce the state's oil dependence, and report back to the legislature in early 2011.

Tidal Power

In 2009 the State of Maine and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission signed a Memorandum of Understanding to coordinate the review of tidal powered electricity generation projects off the coast of Maine. The MOU, the first of its kind on the East Coast, provides that the federal and state regulators will coordinate – and streamline – the permitting process for tidal energy projects.

VOLUNTARY POLLUTION PREVENTION

Environmental Leader Program

This voluntary program encourages Maine's restaurants, hotels, and other businesses to reduce their environmental footprint through adoption of sustainable business practices and energy efficiency. In 2010, the program was expanded to include grocery stores, with a significant focus on taking action to reduce stormwater discharges from parking lots. To date, DEP has certified 137 businesses as Environmental Leaders. EL program participants conserved a total of 17.5 million gallons of water, saved 10 million kilowatt hours, and reduced solid waste by 2.6 million pounds.

Governor's Energy Efficiency Conference

In 2007 DEP was the primary organizer behind the very successful Governor's Conference on Energy Efficiency held in Augusta. NRCM, the Maine Chamber, and other groups helped with the organization efforts to make this conference, attended by almost 400 hundred business and individuals, a widely heralded success.

WILDLIFE AND AQUATIC HABITAT RESOURCE PROTECTION

Significant Wildlife Habitat

Since the 1980s, Maine law has defined significant wildlife habitat as a protected natural resource. Between 2006 and 2010, rules were adopted under Maine's Natural Resource Protection Act to reflect the best available science regarding protection of these resources. Maine now has clear and workable protections for the most important habitats, including: vernal pools and waterfowl, shorebird and wading bird habitat.

Sand Dunes

Maine sand dunes and coastal areas have long been recognized for their importance as well as their fragility. DEP engaged in more than 18 months of stakeholder effort to update and improve the rules governing activity in these resources. Working with a broad representation of interests, DEP instituted changes that allow for appropriate building and repair while affording added protection and improvement of Maine's beaches and the habitat they provide.

Water Levels

After more than 10 years of discussions, during which drought conditions highlighted competing interests and inconsistent policies, rules regarding water withdrawal were adopted and successfully implemented. These rules provide a basis for planning and avoiding future conflicts, while providing for the reasonable use of all waters that provide valuable habitat as well as a source of livelihood for many Mainers. These rules put in place the most comprehensive plan in the United States to regulate stream, brook, river, and seasonal lake water levels based on natural levels to protect the entire eco-chain of life from plankton and aquatic insects to top predators (e.g. brook trout, salmon, otters, osprey, and eagles).