

# Maine Water Environment NEWS

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**FEBRUARY 2020 • Winter**

A Publication of the Maine Water Environment Association

## President's Corner

By Michael Guethle, P.E.



Happy Spring, MeWEA! I am hopeful that this newsletter serves as a brief interruption to our otherwise busy lives today. Within, we have several committee updates, government affairs updates, as well as reports on past events to help brighten up the day.

As with every other organization in our lives (including several retail companies that I did not know had my e-mail), MeWEA has been working to remain as effective as possible during the current coronavirus outbreak. We

are still active via e-mail and electronic board meetings, as well as additional coordination with regulatory, operations, training, construction, and design personnel. As the outbreak continues, MeWEA encourages that we all maintain a substantial level of coordination and communication between organizations and facilities. We are all front-line defenders of human health and environmental quality, and the coming months may require us to be much more proactive than reactive.

We encourage proactive discussions between facility staff and MaineDEP inspectors about staffing issues, or concerns in obtaining any materials and chemicals or other supply chain issues. Please talk to your friends at other facilities regarding how to best isolate crews, or which tasks are considered essential. Please coordinate with the public and your rate payers about impacts from flushables, and the limits of reduced-hours crews. Please review the literature MeWEA is sending to membership, as it often contains critical information from MaineDEP, EPA or WEF about impacts to facilities and recommendations to best prioritize the coronavirus response.

Some additional initiatives we are working on, directly related to the outbreak, and are listed below:

- Planning options for potential limits to operator staffing ability;
- Reviewing alternatives to provide our membership with training credits;

Cont'd on page 7

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Casella Organics

### NEWEA STATE DIRECTOR

Jeff McBurnie  
Casella Organics

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This is your newsletter – if you have news you would like to pass along or an opinion to express that would be of interest to the membership of MeWEA, we are always interested in receiving material and will make every effort to incorporate your submissions.

**Bryanna Denis:** [bryanna.denis@wright-pierce.com](mailto:bryanna.denis@wright-pierce.com)

**Mo Dube:** [Septagewoman@gmail.com](mailto:Septagewoman@gmail.com)

# Facility Survey

Alex Buechner, Treatment Plant Operators Committee

Last chance to submit facility data before I start interrupting your day with phone calls and emails! The Treatment Plant Operators Committee has been working on building a database of all wastewater facilities in the state that includes details about what processes and equipment exist out there and where they are located. Have you ever been faced with a process issue you just could not figure out on your own? Have you been considering an expensive purchase of equipment and want to learn about how it has worked in other situations without having to rely on references that come from the people that are trying to sell you something? Or maybe you have found yourself in an emergency situation in need of backup power or bypass pumping assistance from a nearby facility? Our goal is to put all this information into a centralized location and make it available to all MEWEA members so that you can easily find the info you need and how to contact the people that have it. Building this database requires your help. If you work at a wastewater facility and have not already completed our survey, it can be found directly at <https://arcg.is/qfCve0> or you can find a link on the homepage of the MEWEA.org website. We strongly urge everyone to complete this at your convenience. Starting next month, we will begin to contact facilities directly to fill in the missing data. I should warn you that lately I have gotten into slam poetry and am constantly looking for ways to crowbar it into conversations. You do NOT want to get a phone call from me. I have only received only negative reviews on my slam poetry. Do yourself a favor and fill out the data before you get that dreaded call from me...



The legislative breakfast was a huge success. We completed networking with legislators while providing them with critical information on the water quality professions in Maine. We wanted to thank all that attended as your participation is greatly appreciated.

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# 129th MAINE LEGISLATURE

## SECOND REGULAR SESSION-2020

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Legislative Document

No. 2006

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S.P. 708

In Senate, January 8, 2020

### **An Act To Amend the Laws Governing Waste Discharge Analysis by Laboratories Operated by Waste Discharge Facilities**

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Submitted by the Department of Environmental Protection pursuant to Joint Rule 203.  
Reference to the Committee on Environment and Natural Resources suggested and ordered  
printed.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Darek M Grant".

DAREK M. GRANT  
Secretary of the Senate

Presented by Senator CARSON of Cumberland.

Printed on recycled paper

1 **Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:**

2 **Sec. 1. 22 MRSA §567, sub-§1**, as amended by PL 2017, c. 407, Pt. A, §68, is  
3 further amended to read:

4 **1. Acceptable data.** Except as provided in this subsection, 6 months after the  
5 adoption of rules specified in subsection 2, certification is required of any commercial,  
6 industrial, municipal, state or federal laboratory that analyzes water, soil, air, solid or  
7 hazardous waste, or radiological samples for the use of programs of the department or the  
8 Department of Environmental Protection, except as provided under chapter 411, the  
9 Maine Medical Laboratory Act; Title 26, chapter 7, subchapter 3-A, Substance Use  
10 Testing; and Title 29-A, section 2524, administration of tests to determine an alcohol  
11 level or drug concentration.

12 A laboratory operated by a waste discharge facility licensed pursuant to Title 38, section  
13 413 may analyze waste discharges for total suspended solids, settleable solids, biological  
14 or biochemical oxygen demand, chemical oxygen demand, pH, chlorine residual, fecal  
15 coliform, E. coli, enterococcus, conductivity, color, temperature and dissolved oxygen  
16 without being certified under this section. The exception provided under this paragraph  
17 applies to a laboratory testing its own samples for pollutants listed in its permit or license;  
18 pretreatment samples; and samples from other wastewater treatment plants for up to 60  
19 days per year. The time period provided in this paragraph, which is a maximum period  
20 for each treatment plant for which analysis is provided, may be extended by  
21 memorandum of agreement between the Department of Environmental Protection and the  
22 Health and Environmental Testing Laboratory.

23 **SUMMARY**

24 This bill allows a laboratory operated by a licensed waste discharge facility to  
25 analyze waste discharges for enterococcus without being certified by the Department of  
26 Health and Human Services, Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention for the use  
27 of programs of the department or the Department of Environmental Protection.



# 2020 MEWEA CURRENT SCHEDULE OF EVENTS



<u>DATE</u>	<u>DAY</u>	<u>TIME</u>	<u>EVENT</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>
March 27	CANCELLED		Ski Day with NHWPCA	Sugarloaf Mountain Resort, Carrabassett Valley
* April 2	RESCHEDULED TO MAY 15		Clean Water Week poster contest judging Lunch & Executive Board Meeting/Strategic Planning Session	Black Bear Inn - Orono
April 3	CANCELLED		MEWEA Spring Conference	Black Bear Inn - Orono
April 25	RESCHEDULED TO JULY 20		Urban Runoff	Deering High School Portland
April 27 & 28	CANCELLED		Washington, D. C. Fly-In	Washington D. C.
May 15	FRIDAY	Varies	Southern Maine Children's Water Festival	USM Portland
May 15	FRIDAY	9:00 A.M.	Clean Water Week poster contest judging Lunch & Executive Board Meeting/Strategic Planning Session	York Sewer District
May 31 – June 3	SUNDAY- WEDNESDAY	Varies	NEWEA Spring Meeting	Lake Morey Resort Fairlee, VT
June 12	FRIDAY	9:00 A.M.	Executive Board Meeting	Maine Municipal Association
July 20	SATURDAY	9:00 A.M.	Urban Runoff	Deering High School Portland
August TBD		5:00 P.M.	Androscoggin Land Trust Paddle After Hours	Auburn – Gritty's
* August 21	FRIDAY	9:00 A.M.	Executive Board Meeting/Summer BBQ	Samoset Resort, Rockland
September 16	WEDNESDAY	11:00 A.M.	MEWEA Golf Tournament	Sunday River Golf Club, Newry
September 17 & 18	THURSDAY FRIDAY	8:00 A.M.	MEWEA Fall Convention	Sunday River Ski Resort, Newry
October 3 - 7	SATURDAY- WEDNESDAY	Varies	WEFTEC	Ernest N. Morial Convention Center New Orleans
October 7 & 8	WEDNESDAY THURSDAY	8:00 A.M.	MMA Convention	Augusta Civic Center, Augusta
October 16	FRIDAY	9:00 A.M.	Executive Board Meeting	Portland Water District

Date of last revision: April 14, 2020

# DON'T FLUSH YET: Toilet paper substitutes cause concern for Augusta, Gardiner wastewater systems.....

BY JESSICA LOWELL, KENNEBEC JOURNAL



Not everyone was lucky enough to have stocked up on toilet paper before concerns about the coronavirus prompted panic buying that has emptied store shelves across central Maine.

Now wastewater treatment plant operators are warning people not to flush any toilet paper substitutes.

“You should not flush anything but toilet paper,” Doug Clark, director of the Gardiner Wastewater Treatment Plant, said Thursday.

Even in the best of times, wastewater treatment plant operators urge people not to flush baby wipes and other wipes — even if they advertise themselves as flushable — or any other manufactured product.

Those items can clog sewer pipes from homes to sewer mains under the streets and sewer mains leading to wastewater treatment plants.

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Doug Clark, director of the Gardiner Wastewater Treatment Plant, explains Thursday how people should flush only toilet paper down the toilet. Speaking at the Maine Avenue pump station in Gardiner, Clark said the material visible inside the pipe is what was screened from the sewage. It was then dried and compressed so it can be disposed of at the Hatch Hill landfill in Augusta.

## FORCE MAINE

Force Maine needs a teammate for Operations Challenge! Do you know an individual that is hoping to gain more knowledge in the wastewater field? Operations Challenge presents a great opportunity to network with professionals in the field, all while having a great time competing against other NEWEA teams.

On the Maine operations team we have returning for his 2nd year, Dan Munsey, who has been working as an Operator/Safety Coordinator at the Brunswick Sewer District for 13 years. Our newest teammate Brandon Elwell is joining in for his first year and is also an Operator for Brunswick Sewer district who has been involved in the field for nearly 20 years. This will be my 4th year in operations challenge and have found this to be one the best learning experiences I have had in my 8 years of being in the field. Our coach Rob Pontau, Assistant Manager for Brunswick Sewer District for the past 10 years has more than 20 years' experience as an engineer, will be a valuable resource to help us along with the competition.

We are looking to improve on last years performance but continuing the focus of learning valuable information to help us along on our career path, while having fun along the way. This year looks like we will have a packed competition for NEWEA with only 3 of these teams advancing to WEF. This year's WEF event is being held in New Orleans, which is always a good time. If you are interested in joining or know of someone who is please reach out to either [Alex.Buechner@Biddefordmaine.org](mailto:Alex.Buechner@Biddefordmaine.org) or myself [rcobb@sacomaine.org](mailto:rcobb@sacomaine.org) for any questions you might have. Thank you!

### GET CONNECTED!

MEWEA now has a Facebook-based online discussion forum open to all water professionals. It is a great place to discuss water related topics, ask water treatment related questions and connect with other water professionals. To access the forum from you Facebook account, search for **Maine Water Professionals Discussion Forum**". Any questions can be directed to Paula Drouin ([pdrouin@lawpca.org](mailto:pdrouin@lawpca.org))

## President's Corner... (cont'd)

- Reviewing additional public relations support for impacts from non-flushables;
- Discussing additional coordination with government officials regarding anticipated impacts to the clean water industry;
- Coordinating with DEP and other utility associations on a weekly basis.

While I end every e-mail with a request to join committees or ad-hoc discussions, it is critical to note the association would appreciate anyone who would like to assist in the above initiatives.

### SAFETY RESOURCES FOR WATER ENVIRONMENT PROFESSIONALS

The COVID-19 virus outbreak has officially been considered a Civil Emergency in Maine as of Sunday, March 15, 2020. As such, MeWEA finds it prudent to continue to provide the general guidance for specific safety protocols for clean water facilities and water professionals as recommended by the CDC, WEF, and NEWEA.

The Water Environment Federation (WEF) has released materials to inform and update water professionals about the Coronavirus (COVID-19). Whereas we are aware this information is continually developing, we find it prudent to provide a link to WEF information, which will be updated with the most recent information available to them, from the MeWEA Website, [www.mewea.org](http://www.mewea.org)

Additional resources are available with CDC: [www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/prevention.html](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/prevention.html)

And not the least, but finally, through NEWEA as well: [www.newea.org/covid-19-updates/](http://www.newea.org/covid-19-updates/)

### Have you Joined the "Maine Water Professionals Discussion Forum" on Facebook?

Get your questions answered and help answer questions. <https://www.facebook.com/groups/778718278939822/>

### UPCOMING MEWEA EVENTS NOTIFICATION

- April events for MeWEA have been cancelled or postponed, with the following postponement dates:
- Urban Runoff 5K: Postponed to June 20
- Spring Conference: Postponed, future date or cancellation pending length of state of emergency.
- Committee meetings will be held electronically, by e-mail, or postponed at the discretion of committee chairs.
- Our May 15th Executive Board Meeting will be held at York Sewer District, with a backup plan to have the meeting by teleconference if the civil state of emergency is not lifted.

As always – be in touch if you have further questions or thoughts on the association's activities as we look toward an uncertain spring and hope for an eventful and fulfilling summer.

Michael Guethle, P.E.  
2020 MeWEA President  
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# Maine Water Environment **NEWS**

## FEBRUARY 2020 ISSUE

*please circulate and share with your colleagues*



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