

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT



2005 Targeted Watersheds Grants: Lake Hopatcong New Jersey

WHY IS THIS WATERSHED SPECIAL?

Easily accessible by railroad to vacationers from the northeast in the 1880s, Lake Hopatcong was historically an important tourist destination. It is the largest inland waterbody in New Jersey at 2,686 acres with a watershed encompassing over 13,500 acres. With the expansion of interstate highways, development pressures increased as tourists and permanent residents alike flocked to the area. Today, more than half a million people visit Lake Hopatcong each year or live in its watershed. It remains a popular recreational resource and one of the best freshwater fisheries in the State, with more than 10,000 registered boats.

ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGES

Water quality has become a concern in the Lake Hopatcong watershed as development pressures increase. The Targeted Watersheds Grant will focus on the following environmental problems:

- Septic systems contribute over half of the total phosphorus load to the lake. Currently, of the four towns in the watershed, one has no plans to connect to municipal sewer lines; although local officials are evaluating a septic management program.
- The watershed's urbanized landscape is associated with extensive impervious coverage, generating large quantities of stormwater runoff. This surface runoff has contributed significantly to excessive phosphorus in the lake, which threatens fisheries and recreational use.

RESTORATION ACTIVITIES

As the lake's state-appointed steward, the Lake Hopatcong Commission works to restore the water quality and will use the EPA Targeted Watersheds Grant funds to:

- Address the stormwater-based phosphorus loads by installing Best Management Practices (BMPs), including converting detention basins to wetlands and installing other retrofits.
- Implement innovative iron oxide retrofits and compare effectiveness at removing phosphorus.
- Install an "alternative" on-site wastewater treatment system (OWTS) at a municipal daycare facility.
- Provide training for the Lake Hopatcong Commission on monitoring and collection of stormwater samples, identification and collection of aquatic plants for analysis, and collection of groundwater samples.
- Conduct and evaluate outreach to watershed stakeholders, including publications, workshops and a "phosphorus-free fertilizer" campaign targeted to local residents.



Installation of Best Management Practices devices will address stormwater runoff, as shown in Jefferson Township. Credit: Lake Hopatcong Commission

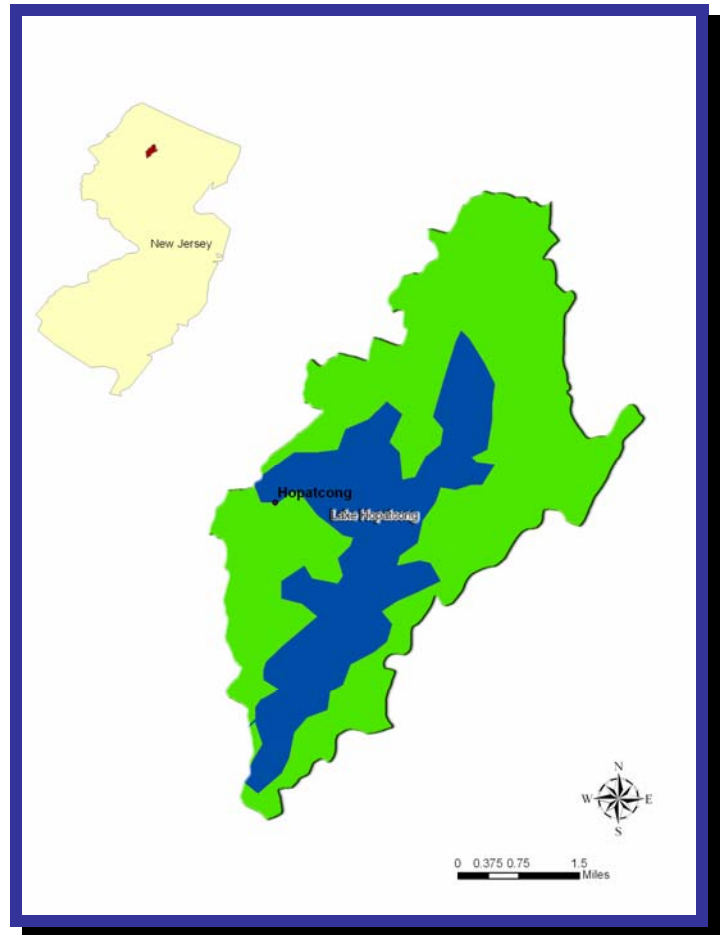


A STRONG PARTNERSHIP FOR CHANGE

Since its creation in 2001, the Lake Hopatcong Commission has partnered with the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, the four lakeshore towns and two counties in the watershed and the Commission's environmental consultant, to improve the lake's water quality.



Stores around the Lake Hopatcong Watershed display signs to promote the sale of lake-friendly fertilizer. Credit: Lake Hopatcong Commission.



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Innovative retrofits using iron-oxide sleeves to reduce the phosphorus load will be installed in catch basins alongside Ingram Cove in Hopatcong Borough to protect the fishery and recreational use of the lake.

EPA's Targeted Watersheds Grants

EPA's Targeted Watersheds Grants program is a competitive grant program designed to encourage collaborative, community-driven approaches to meet clean water goals.