Purpose

To address the fast-changing landscape of the Internet and to inform more people about Commission activities, the New England Interstate Water Pollution Control Commission (NEIWPCC) is using social media tools to reach a broader audience. This policy establishes guidelines for the use of social media. It applies to social media accounts for which NEIWPCC is the sole manager; any social media accounts managed by a NEIWPCC-affiliated organization that is viewed by the public as having its own separate identity or brand are the responsibility of the managing organization and are subject to its social media policy.

General

No comments posted on social media networks shall represent the opinions of NEIWPCC, its Commissioners or Executive Committee members, its employees, its funding agencies, or the signatory bodies of NEIWPCC: Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, Rhode Island, and Vermont, or the United States. Any references to commercial entities, products, services, or other nongovernmental organizations or individuals that are approved for publishing are provided solely for the information of individuals using social networking sites. These references are not intended to reflect the opinion of NEIWPCC, its Commissioners or Executive Committee members, its employees, its funding agencies, or the signatory bodies of NEIWPCC, concerning the significance, priority, or importance to be given the referenced entity, product, service, or organization. Such references are not an official or personal endorsement of any policy, product, person, or service, and may not be quoted or reproduced for the purpose of stating or implying endorsement or approval of any policy, product, person, or service.

Social networking media sites may be subject to public disclosure. Any claims made regarding NEIWPCC social networking postings shall be governed by Massachusetts law. Any person posting to social networking sites monitored or moderated by NEIWPCC hereby consents to the jurisdiction of the Massachusetts state courts and venue in Middlesex County, Massachusetts.

NEIWPCC assumes no liability for any content posted on or emails originating from social networking sites and shall not be liable for any damages of any kind resulting from the use of or inability to use the sites, the content of the postings, or the operation of the social networking sites. Any person posting to or authoring and disseminating emails using mailing lists associated with the social networking sites shall
indemnify and hold NEIWPCC harmless for all claims resulting from that person’s use of the social networking sites, its operation, and/or its contents.

NEIWPCC makes no representations, guarantees, or warranties and disclaims all warranties, express or implied, regarding the poster’s operation or that any content posted or emailed and disseminated by individuals on the social networking sites is correct, and shall not be liable for any errors or omissions, loss or damage of any kind incurred as a result of reliance on the use or operation of the social networking sites, or any content posted on sites. Any person posting to the sites or authoring and disseminating emails warrants and represents that he or she either owns or otherwise controls all of the rights to the content posted, and shall indemnify and hold NEIWPCC harmless for all claims resulting from such content.

NEIWPCC recognizes that the Web is a 24-hours-a-day, 7-days-a-week medium and comments posted on and emails originating from social networking sites monitored or moderated by NEIWPCC staff are welcome at any time. However, given the need to manage NEIWPCC resources, monitoring and replying to comments will occur during regular business hours. Comments and emails posted after hours or on weekends are not monitored, but will be reviewed as soon as practicable, in most cases, this means the next business day.

In order to promote open and honest discussion, a full name and verifiable e-mail address is required for each comment posted to NEIWPCC social networking sites (as required by hosting sites). Comments posted under false names, from unverifiable e-mail addresses or duplicate comments submitted from multiple e-mail addresses will be deleted as soon as practicable; in most cases this means the next business day.

To protect your own privacy and the privacy of others, please do not include personal information, such as Social Security numbers, phone numbers, e-mail, or resident addresses in the body of your comment. Comments that contain such personal information will be removed as soon as practicable. In addition to this policy, users will be subject to all applicable regulations, policies, and terms of NEIWPCC monitored or moderated social networking sites.

NEIWPCC reserves the right to modify this policy at any time. Each social media tool approved for use by NEIWPCC will be listed in the NEIWPCC Social Networking Media Standard which further describes establishment and content of new social networking media tools.

Specific

1. All NEIWPCC social media sites created and maintained by staff members will be subject to approval by the Communications Manager and Deputy Director.
2. The best, most appropriate uses of social media tools for NEIWPCC fall generally into two categories:
   a. As channels for disseminating time-sensitive information as quickly as possible (example: emergency river conditions information).
b. As educational channels that increase NEIWPCC’s ability to broadcast its mission and relevant information to the widest possible audience.

3. NEIWPCC’s website (http://www.neiwpcc.org) will remain the organization’s primary and predominant Internet presence.
   a. Wherever possible, content posted to NEIWPCC social media sites will also be available on http://www.neiwpcc.org.
   b. Wherever possible, content posted to NEIWPCC social media sites should contain links directing users to specific pages of interest on http://www.neiwpcc.org.

4. NEIWPCC Communications staff will be responsible for the content and upkeep of any social media sites.

5. Wherever possible, all NEIWPCC social media sites shall comply with all appropriate NEIWPCC policies and standards, including but not limited to, the NEIWPCC Social Networking Media Standard. Any exceptions will be approved by the Communications Manager and Deputy Director.

6. Users and visitors to NEIWPCC social media sites shall be notified that the intended purpose of the site is to serve as a mechanism for communication between NEIWPCC and members of the public. NEIWPCC social media postings, comments, or emails containing any of the following forms of content shall not be allowed:
   a. Language or content that is spam or not topically related to the particular post being commented on.
   b. Vulgar, abusive or unlawful content.
   c. Libelous or defamatory content.
   d. Personal attacks or threats of any kind.
   e. Content that promotes, fosters, or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, national origin (including those for whom English is a second language or who are legal immigrants), gender, sexual orientation, gender identification, marital status, physical and mental disability, ancestry, age, pregnancy, political or union affiliation, or veteran status.
   f. Content that violates a legal ownership right or interest including without limitation, a copyright, trademark or patent.
   g. Comments in support of or opposition to political campaigns or ballot measures.
   h. Promotions, advertisements, or endorsements of commercial services, products, or entities.
   i. Anonymous content.
   j. Sexual content or links to sexual content.
   k. Conduct or encouragement of illegal activity.
   l. Information that may tend to compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems.
   m. Content that violates a legal ownership interest of any other party.
   n. Personal information (addresses, social security numbers, etc.) of any person.
Submission of any claim, demand, informal or formal complaint, or any other form of legal and/or administrative notice or process, or for the exhaustion of any legal and/or administrative remedy.

7. NEIWPCC reserves the right to block future postings by a user if any of the above forms of content are utilized.

8. NEIWPCC reserves the right to remove any content that is deemed in violation of this social media policy or any applicable law or considered not to be in the best interest of the Commission.

9. All new social media tools proposed for NEIWPCC use will be approved by the Communications Manager and Deputy Director.

10. Administration of NEIWPCC social media sites:
   a. The Communications Division will maintain a list of social media (list is included in the Social Networking Media Standard) that are approved for use by NEIWPCC staff.
   b. The Communications Division will maintain a list of all NEIWPCC social media sites, including login and password information. It will inform the Deputy Director of any new social media sites or administrative changes to existing sites.
   c. The Communications Division will add, edit, or remove content from social media sites within the confines of normal business hours.

**SOCIAL NETWORKING MEDIA STANDARD**

**Purpose**

Social networking sites are growing in popularity. Businesses and governments have joined individuals in using sites such as Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn to promote activities, programs, projects, and events. These standards should be used in conjunction with NEIWPCC’s Social Media Policy. As selected social networking sites change these standards may be updated as needed.

**Establishing a Page**

When a NEIWPCC staff member determines he or she has a business need for a social media network account, the staff member will submit a request to the Communications Manager. Once approved, the Communications Division staff will create the standardized organization page for the work unit. Applications are not to be added to a social networking site without approval of the Communication Manager.

**Content**

1. Standardization
a. The Communications Division will standardize and provide appropriate images for social networking site pages, where possible consisting of a picture and NEIWPCC logo.

b. Where possible, a statement shall be listed on the site detailing NEIWPCC’s purpose: Since 1947, NEIWPCC has been a leader in the work for clean water. As a not-for-profit interstate agency, we serve and assist our member states—Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, Rhode Island, and Vermont—by coordinating activities and forums that encourage cooperation among the states, developing resources that foster progress on water issues, representing the region in matters of federal policy, training environmental professionals, initiating and overseeing scientific research, educating the public, and providing overall leadership in water management and protection.

c. An alternative short version is: The New England Interstate Water Pollution Control Commission, a not-for-profit interstate agency, provides leadership and support in the work for clean water.

2. Link to the NEIWPCC Website
   a. A link to http://www.neiwpcc.org/ will be included on any introductory/information pages.

3. Page Naming and Style
   a. The Communications Manager and Executive Director will approve proposed names.
   b. Images for social networking pages and groups will be based on a template that is consistent with NEIWPCC standards.
   c. Staff members using social network media on behalf NEIWPCC will use proper grammar, avoiding jargon and abbreviations. Social network media is more casual than most other communication tools but still represents NEIWPCC at all times.

4. Page administrators
   a. A successful page requires "babysitting" by a site administrator. Site administrators will be trained and coordinated by the Communications Division for consistency across platforms.

5. The Communications Division is responsible for ensuring content is up to date.

6. In the event technical knowledge is required to respond to a post, the Communications Division will consult with other staff members to construct and post the most accurate and scientifically sound response.

7. Other staff members requesting a post understand that they are responsible for supplying answers to ensuing inquiries.

8. Applications
   a. There are thousands of Facebook applications. Common applications can allow users to stream video and music, post photos, and view and subscribe to RSS (Really Simple Syndication) feeds. While some may be useful to the page's mission, they can cause clutter and security risks. Therefore, an application should not be used unless it serves a business purpose, adds to the user experience, comes from a trusted source, and is approved by the Communications Manager.
b. An application may be removed at any time if there is significant reason to think it is causing a security breach or spreading viruses or if deemed to be not in the best interest of NEIWPCC.

Currently Approved NEIWPCC Social Networking Media Tools:

- Facebook
- Twitter
- LinkedIn

Additional tools may be added as approved by the Communications Manager and Deputy Director.