
NJDEP

Strategic Plan

1998-2001



New Jersey
Department of Environmental Protection



From the Commissioner

That adage about a journey of a thousand miles beginning with a single step isn't quite right. You risk walking a thousand miles in the wrong direction if you don't know before that first step exactly where you want to go and what landmarks will tell you if you are on course or not. This Strategic Plan, developed over the past two years by a broad array of stakeholders both within the department and from the wider community, is the map and compass that will guide our work for years to come.

In 1970, when the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection was founded, our air, water and land were dumping grounds for unrestricted pollution. Now, at the beginning of the new century, unchecked point-source pollution is a thing of the past and we are enjoying measurable improvements in the health of our environment. We are making steady progress cleaning up contaminated sites, and industry and waste disposal no longer create new contaminated sites as a matter of routine. Our understanding and appreciation of the value of watersheds, wetlands and other natural systems have grown immeasurably.

The environmental challenges we face today are increasingly complex. We are tackling an air toxin problem that originates, in large part, from millions of gasoline and diesel engines, thousands of small businesses and common household products. We have successfully controlled wastewater discharges from factories and sewage treatment plants but we still have to stem the deterioration of water quality from nonpoint source pollution.

The tools we'll use to fashion solutions to these challenges are clear goals, credible benchmarks, sensible environmental indicators and effective partnerships. The Strategic Plan, along with our NEPPS agreement, Annual Report and bi-annual State of the Environment Report, will allow stakeholders and the general public to know our goals and measure the success of our programs.

The Strategic Plan charts our course toward a sustainable New Jersey. It is an enormous undertaking but we will all be proud of the results.

Table of Contents

	Page
Foreword	2
Terms and Definitions	5
I. Strategic Direction	
Vision	7
Mission	7
Strategic Goals	7
What Will It Look and Feel Like When We Get There?	8
II. Strategic Focus	
Building on a Legacy of Achievement	10
Preparing for a New Era of Environmental Protection	10
Designing Place-Based Approaches to Environmental Management	11
Employing Performance Incentives for Continual Improvement	11
Building and Strengthening Partnerships	12
Managing For Environmental Results	12
Investing in Our Workforce	13
III. Strategic Actions	
Clean Air	15
Clean and Plentiful Water	17
Safe and Healthy Communities	21
Healthy Ecosystems	23
Abundant Open Space	25
Open and Effective Government	27
Appendices	
Summary of Changes to the June 1998 Draft Strategic Plan	32
Comments Considered, But Not Included in the Strategic Plan	34

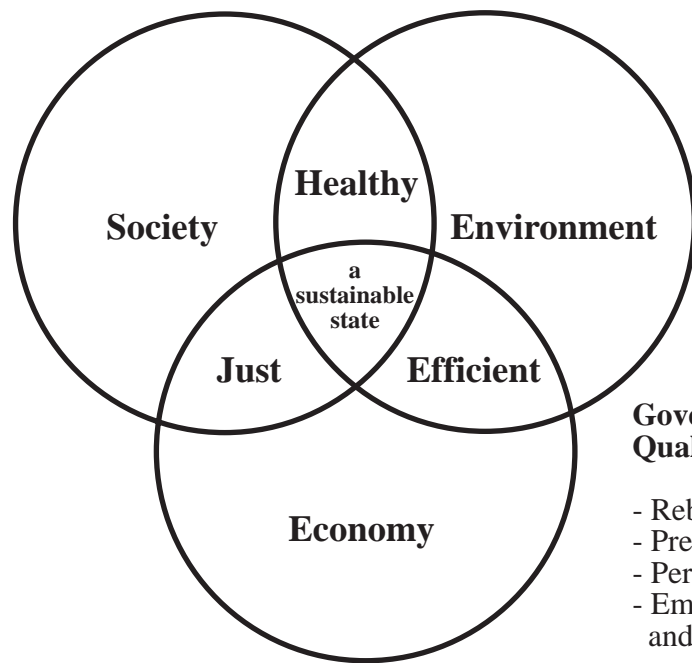
Foreword

In the 28 years since the Department of Environmental Protection was created, many of its programs have developed and implemented management plans to improve air and water quality, protect our natural resources, manage wastes and address other areas of environmental concern. As we reflect on the past 28 years of environmental stewardship and prepare for the new millennium, the need to identify and express agency-wide priorities and direction at this critical juncture has become ever more apparent.

Following is the Department's first agency-wide Strategic Plan. It sets forth the Department's vision and mission, six broad goals, milestones that mark progress toward meeting these goals, and the strategies the Department will emphasize over the next four years in order to improve the environment and our delivery of public services. The full range of strategies to be employed is published in the 1998-2000 Performance Partnership for New Jersey.

Through these strategies to revitalize our cities, preserve open space, enhance personal responsibility and improve our environment, the Strategic Plan begins to focus the Department's efforts and resources toward achieving the Governor's vision for a sustainable New Jersey. The Strategic Plan also commits the Department to better understand how the issues of Society, the Economy and the Environment interrelate, and to pursue strategies that simultaneously improve the quality of life in all three areas.

Sustainable State



Governor's Quality of Life Agenda

- Rebuild our cities
- Preserve our open space
- Personal responsibility
- Emphases on partnerships and results-based planning

This Strategic Plan conveys six broad goals that reflect the environmental concerns, needs and responsibilities of the more than 8 million people who work, live and raise families in New Jersey. These goals are:

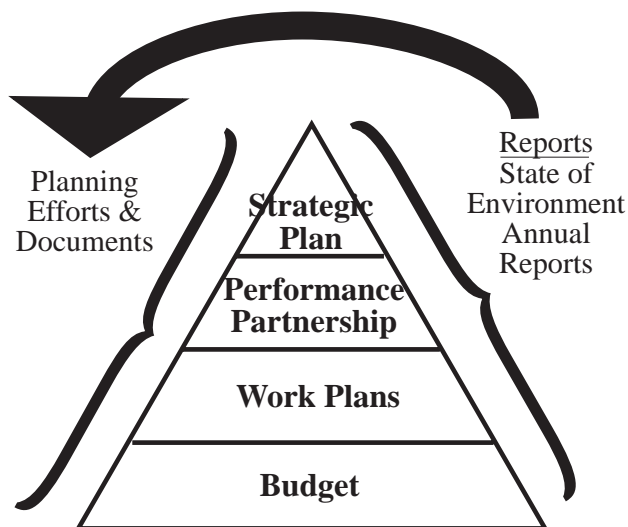
- Clean Air
- Clean and Plentiful Water
- Safe and Healthy Communities
- Healthy Ecosystems
- Abundant Open Space
- Open and Effective Government

For each of these goals, the Plan outlines key milestones against which we will measure progress through indicators, as well as strategies that will be emphasized.

The Strategic Plan is one of a series of interrelated documents that describe New Jersey's achievements, current priorities, future directions and ongoing efforts to measure our progress into the next century. Each is part of the complete picture of where the Department is headed in integrating high environmental quality, public health and economic vitality in the pursuit of a sustainable state. A brief summary of the purpose, primary audience and term of each document follows.

Strategic Plan: This document expresses the Department's vision, mission and six broad goals. The vision and mission express the Department's purpose and provide the basis for the six broad goals; their scope is long-term without a specific endpoint. The Strategic Plan also expresses the primary milestones and strategies to be emphasized to advance these goals over the next four years. The Plan does NOT provide an exhaustive list of short- and long-term milestones or all of the strategies we will be implementing to achieve our goals, nor does it provide a complete summary of historical accomplishments made to date.

The intended audience is each resident of the state. It is anticipated that the strategic planning process will cycle on a four-year basis. The goals and milestones reflect far longer-term environmental planning, with progress to be monitored at different intervals using indicators.



Managers and staff throughout the Department developed this Strategic Plan, building upon stakeholder planning and goal-setting involvement undertaken through the National Environmental Performance Partnership System (NEPPS) Performance Partnership Agreement (see below). Before finalizing this initial Strategic Plan, the Department obtained public input and feedback, including input from environmental advocacy and public interest organizations, the business community, local governments, other state agencies and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

Performance Partnership Agreement (PPA): The Performance Partnership Agreement, developed under NEPPS, provides a detailed outline of the Department's goals and includes milestones, strategies, activities and indicators for each. This document serves two purposes:

- It is a comprehensive, cross-program planning document, providing more detail than the Strategic Plan, and
- It guides the relationship between the Department and EPA Region 2 in federally funded or delegated programs.

The Performance Partnership is geared toward an audience that is familiar with environmental management. The time frame for the NEPPS document is two years. The most recent draft PPA was prepared in October 1998 and will be effective through September 2000.

Department Program Work Plans: The Department's Divisions and Bureaus prepare internal work plans to guide day-to-day operations in a prioritized fashion based on available resources. Work plans are developed annually and will be revised in future years to reflect the priorities of the Strategic Plan and the PPA.

Department Budget Planning: The annual Department budget planning process was modified for Fiscal Year 2000 (7/1/99 - 6/30/00) to better integrate the goals, milestones, strategies and indicators developed through the Strategic Planning and NEPPS processes. This integration will be continued and enhanced in subsequent budget planning cycles.

Annual Report: This document provides the public with an assessment of the programmatic progress, as well as any strategy alterations, made in the preceding year. In the future, as more indicators are developed and put to greater use, this annual report card will provide a more quantified picture of how the Department is progressing in achieving its goals.

State of the Environment Report: In December 1998, the Department released its first State of the Environment Report. This report provides an assessment of the current quality of the environment and the historic progress made by the residents, regulated community and Department in improving the environment and quality of life in New Jersey. It is intended for the general public and relies heavily on the use of environmental indicators to report progress toward our goals. It provides the baseline against which future progress will be measured. The Department will publish a State of the Environment Report every two years.

Environmental Indicators Report: In June 1998, the Department released a detailed technical report on selected environmental indicators. This report provides the data sources, analyses and data limitations for the environmental indicators used in the NEPPS Performance Partnership Agreement. It is intended for interested stakeholders and environmental managers.

Terms and Definitions

Goals: Goals establish a desired result that the Department is working to achieve.

Key Issues: Key issues identify and characterize an environmental or operational problem or an impediment to achieving a goal. Key issues are supported by evidence, are important on a statewide or regional scale and are in some way under the Department's influence or control.

Milestones: Milestones provide short- and mid-range targets against which we measure progress toward environmental and operational goals. Milestones are by design reasonably ambitious targets for improvement within a specified time frame.

Strategies: Strategies are multiple activities and tasks that are organized and employed to address one or more key issues. Strategies sometimes involve more than one program and often affect multiple environmental media (i.e., water, air)

Indicators: Indicators summarize large amounts of complex information in a concise, easily understood format to provide tools that measure progress toward achieving milestones.



Strategic Direction

Strategic Direction

This Chapter presents the Department's vision, mission and six strategic goals that furnish the environmental management foundation for a sustainable state.

Vision

The vision expresses our long-term goal as an organization.

The Department of Environmental Protection is committed to promoting a sustainable high quality of life for the residents of New Jersey.

Mission

The mission defines our organization's purpose.

To assist the residents of New Jersey in preserving, restoring, sustaining, protecting and enhancing the environment to ensure the integration of high environmental quality, public health and economic vitality.

Strategic Goals

The Strategic Goals express the long-term goals we are striving to achieve.

Clean Air

The air throughout the state will be healthful to breathe, and air pollutants will not damage our forests, land and water bodies.

Clean and Plentiful Water

New Jersey rivers, lakes and coastal waters will be fishable, swimmable and support healthy ecosystems. Surface and ground water will be clean sources of water. Every person in New Jersey will have safe drinking water. Adequate quantities of surface and ground water will be available for all uses.

Safe and Healthy Communities

Every New Jersey community will be free from unacceptable human health and ecological risks due to direct exposure from hazardous substances and other potentially harmful agents. Natural resources will be managed to protect the public from floods, fires and storms.

Healthy Ecosystems

The health, diversity and integrity of New Jersey's ecosystems will be restored, protected, enhanced and sustained.

Abundant Open Space

Natural and scenic landscapes will be preserved and every person will have the opportunity to visit an abundance of well-maintained parks, forests, wildlife areas and historic sites. The public will learn about natural and cultural resources, and have access to a wide variety of recreational experiences.

Open and Effective Government

The Department will fulfill its vision and mission and achieve its goals through the involvement of citizens and stakeholders as critical partners and through a commitment to quality principles and methods as a means to continuous improvement of its operations.

What Will It Look and Feel Like When We Get There?

The following section describes what it will be like when the vision is achieved.

By the year 2002, decisions affecting natural resource systems will be guided by the understanding that all aspects of life in New Jersey are interconnected, interdependent and cumulative. The Department is mindful of the needs of this generation and future generations when it sets goals and policies to promote plentiful supplies of clean water, healthful air quality, safe and nurturing communities, vibrant ecosystems and sufficient open space to occasionally enjoy solitude in a densely populated state. Progress toward achieving our goals will be measured by environmental results, not by counting permits issued or fines collected.

These changes will work a powerful and positive influence on New Jersey's environment. Planned, compact growth will help curtail the destruction or irreversible altering of natural resources. Throughout New Jersey, we all understand and appreciate that our state's natural resource systems are fundamental to our economy, communities and quality of life. We have learned that the choice between jobs and the environment is a false one. When we destroy or irrevocably alter our natural systems, we inevitably end up paying a much greater price, such as when we suffer flooding because we have built on flood plains and destroyed wetlands. We are learning how to design with nature, to match our needs with essential natural processes.

Financial incentives and regulatory reform are resulting in green businesses and technologies that will provide jobs and profits while improving the environment. We are making the transition from a system of strict regulations to one of cooperative goal-setting and flexible means of achieving those goals. Conservation incentives and regulatory strategies will increase competition and harness private markets for the public good and will reduce energy costs. At the same time, emissions trading will reduce the cost of restoring and maintaining air and water quality. Cooperative planning, often based on watersheds, will more effectively protect environmental resources and the maintenance of large contiguous tracts of open land and healthy ecosystems. Many of New Jersey's indigenous species have rebounded and will continue to flourish. Eco-tourism continues to grow in popularity and importance to local economies.

New Jersey's waterways and coastal areas are prospering and will prosper in the future, supporting a healthy commercial fishing industry and attracting large numbers of visitors throughout the year. Careful planning along New Jersey's coast will continue to avert irreparable damage to the delicate beach environment and will contribute to the protection, restoration and enhancement of coastal land and water habitats. Planned recreation areas along rivers and adjacent cities, towns and rural areas will provide a wealth of opportunities for nature lovers as well as sports enthusiasts.



Strategic Focus

Strategic Focus

This Chapter outlines the Department's main focus for the next four years. It describes the two fundamental ways the current approach to environmental management must evolve to position the Department to succeed in the 21st Century, and the three principal attributes the Department will imbue or strengthen within each strategy and program.

Building on a Legacy of Achievement

Since its inception in 1970, the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection has worked with New Jersey's residents to achieve dramatic improvements in environmental quality. Today, 586,684 acres, or 87 percent of waters where shellfish breed, are available and safe for harvesting, as compared to only 499,000 acres, or 74 percent, in 1978. In 1988, we endured 803 beach closings; in the summer of 1998 we had 3. Our drinking water supplies are wholesome and it is safe to fish and swim in far more rivers, streams and lakes than when we first started to tackle water pollution.

Despite increases in the number of cars on our roads and the number of miles each car is driven every day, the air we breathe is cleaner. The number of unhealthy air quality days, as measured by the one-hour ozone standard, has declined sharply from 60 in 1983 to 4 in 1998. New Jersey industry has grown but the quantity of hazardous waste has declined from 29.5 million tons in 1991 to 10.3 million tons in 1995. We have returned 15,800 previously contaminated sites back to productive use since 1978. Equally important, and seldom noted, our economy no longer creates contaminated sites as a routine outcome of doing business.

We have doubled the number of acres of wetlands we have protected since 1994, preserving their natural capacity to clean and replenish our water supplies. Since the Green Acres Program began in 1961, we have acquired or assisted in the acquisition of 410,000 acres of open space. These efforts preserve critical habitat for many threatened and endangered species while increasing recreational opportunities for New Jersey's residents.

Preparing for a New Era of Environmental Protection

New, more complex challenges face us at the dawn of the 21st Century. We achieved many of our past gains by focusing on the largest or most obvious sources of many environmental problems. We established and enforced requirements that prescribed not only the results but also how they were to be achieved. This Strategic Plan aims to match our past successes by developing new strategies rooted in our understanding of the causes of environmental problems. Over the next four years, the Department will evolve our current approach to managing the environment in two important ways:

- Through place-based approaches, such as watershed management, we will place greater emphasis on contributors to environmental impacts that include motor vehicles, residential use of pesticides and other household products, agricultural use of pesticides and fertilizers, haphazard development and the activities of our federal, state and local government partners.
- We will move the current regulatory framework for regulating industrial and commercial activity toward a performance-based system that recognizes environmental leaders, provides new incentives and increased technical assistance to improve

environmental performance, and increases oversight and enforcement for those not meeting minimum compliance and performance standards.

In addition, within each of our strategies, we will increasingly seek to:

- Strengthen and expand partnerships to multiply our effectiveness;
- Measure and publicly report our performance based upon the results we achieve; and
- Invest in the development of our workforce.

Designing Place-Based Approaches to Environmental Management

Whether we are evaluating the cumulative impact of air emissions from a dozen facilities on the people in a single community or considering the effects of diffuse or nonpoint sources of water pollution on a watershed, place-based management means taking account of the entire geographic area. This involves understanding the sources contributing to the problem and the opportunities for improvement, and then designing strategies accordingly.

The State Development and Redevelopment Plan (State Plan), a statewide framework for sensibly managing growth and development, is another example of a place-based approach. Based on the Governor's directive that each state agency align its planning objectives with the State Plan, the Department's rules and policies, funding and regulatory programs will be reoriented to more fully support the objectives of the State Plan.

A key component of this reorientation will include partnerships, especially with local governments. Local governments have the ability to plan and manage land use to protect the environment but require greater access to information and technical resources. The Department has the information and technical resources they need, and making it available, spatially/geographically displayed through computerized mapping using the Geographic Information System (GIS), will be a high-priority strategy for the next four years. GIS overlays of crucial environmental features such as wetlands, wildlife habitat, streams, water outfalls and intakes, recharge areas and known contaminated sites, can assist municipalities in making environmentally-sound planning decisions.

Employing Performance Incentives for Continual Improvement

Much of our progress over the past 28 years was achieved by regulating changes in industrial practices. The corporate culture of industry has evolved to the point that we now work with many in the industrial and commercial sectors as partners. Over the next four years we will evolve the current regulatory framework toward a performance-based system that fosters continual improvement. The new regulatory framework will feature:

- New methods to evaluate a facility's environmental performance (facility-wide, multimedia basis) that allow the public, the Department and the firms themselves to assess their performance and progress over time;
- Incentives to engage local government and community organizations in facility environmental planning;
- Performance partnership agreements with our industrial partners that establish facility-specific environmental goals and targets corresponding to those of the watershed, community or state;
- Public recognition programs for top performing facilities;

-
- Integration of pollution prevention (P2) strategies into the mainstream of permits and regulations;
 - Different degrees of regulatory flexibility and oversight for facilities based upon their demonstrated capability and environmental performance;
 - The highest recognition and the most flexibility in our oversight for top performing facilities;
 - Greater incentives and technical assistance to encourage the majority of facilities in the middle tier to improve their performance; and
 - Closer scrutiny, enforcement and technical assistance for facilities not meeting compliance and performance standards.

Building and Strengthening Partnerships

The Department provides leadership and assistance in environmental management, but improving the quality of life for all New Jerseyans requires the active participation of the people who live, work and raise families in New Jersey. Strategies based on strong partnerships will therefore be among our most effective tools.

Throughout this Strategic Plan are examples of partnerships we are establishing. We are developing strong partnerships with community watershed associations, farmers, local governments and businesses to identify both the sources of water quality impairment and opportunities for improvement within a watershed. Other examples include the Pollution Prevention Partnership and cooperative efforts with local governments to advance the use of resource-based planning, while evaluating common goals in the State Plan.

Managing for Environmental Results

Historically, we measured our success by counting the number of permits we issued, inspections conducted and dollars collected. In the past, we reasonably believed that the more we did, the more improvement we would achieve. The challenges we face today are more complex, requiring more sophisticated solutions. Simply doing more of the same will not achieve the continued increases in environmental improvements that we seek. We have therefore begun measuring our progress based on the outcomes of our work, the results we achieve, not how much work we do.

Three years ago in 1996, through the integration of Quality Management principles into our operations (See Open and Effective Government section) and our participation in the National Environmental Performance Partnership System (NEPPS), we began a transition to a results-based management system. For the first time, we systematically established goals and milestones, linked our strategies to the achievement of these goals and developed indicators to measure our progress. While it will take several more years to fully integrate this system, this Strategic Plan is an important step in that transition and signals our commitment to focus on results.

To help ensure that the Department's results-based management system succeeds, it will be supported by a scientifically sound environmental indicators system. The Department will continue to use the best available science, technical analyses and data to better understand current and future environmental problems, as well as to develop efficient, effective and innovative solutions to these problems. Credible results will depend on the Department's

technical information, methods and evaluations being as reliable, accurate and timely as possible.

In the next four years, we will continue developing and using indicators to help us understand and evaluate:

- The causes of problems we must address;
- The current status of the environment, progress in improving it and the quality of life for New Jersey residents; and
- The effectiveness of our strategies.

In addition, we are taking a number of other steps that will facilitate a transition to a results-based management system. We will develop indicators to evaluate constituent satisfaction and how to best enhance the skills and productivity of our workforce. We have expanded the NEPPS process to include the entire Department, including functions and programs with no direct link to our federal partners. We are improving the budget planning process to better align it with strategic planning and NEPPS. We will be developing ways to improve our understanding of the root causes of environmental problems. These and other strategic actions are discussed later in this document under Open and Effective Government.

Investing in Our Workforce

Whether it involves building partnerships, measuring results, employing place-based approaches or reinventing the regulatory framework, none of these happen without the talents and dedication of the Department's workforce. Since 1995, the Department has been investing in the professional development of its already highly skilled workforce through technology skill courses, leadership and teamwork training, and by establishing a recognition/award program for outstanding accomplishments. The Department will continue to invest in these areas and take additional steps over the next four years to improve recruiting, career paths and continuous professional development for its employees, aligning these investments with the new directions outlined in this Strategic Plan. These and other strategic actions are outlined under the Open and Effective Government Goal section.



Strategic Actions

Strategic Actions

This Chapter contains a description of the Key Issues associated with each Goal, Milestones for marking progress toward the Goals, and the Strategic Actions the Department will emphasize over the next four years.

Goal: Clean Air

The air throughout the state will be healthful to breathe, and air pollutants will not damage our forests, land and water bodies.

Key Issues

Nationally, air quality standards have been set for six of the worst air pollutants that damage the respiratory system and other organs as well. These pollutants include carbon monoxide, sulfur dioxide, oxides of nitrogen (NO_x), lead, particulate matter and ozone. New Jersey is especially concerned about two of these pollutants, ozone and fine particulate matter. Exposure to



ozone can cause coughing, chest pain and throat irritation in healthy individuals and can trigger asthmatic reactions in sensitive individuals. Using epidemiological data that suggest that increased illnesses, and even deaths, are associated with exposure to ozone and the tiny particles that result primarily from combustion, in the summer of 1997 the USEPA set new standards for ozone and fine particulates.

Many of the air pollution problems faced by New Jersey are regional, national or even international in scope. Some pollutants like ozone and the pollutants that form ozone are transported by wind from other parts of the country. Nitrogen oxides and mercury become problems when they fall to the ground and pollute the water, threaten aquatic life and, in the case of mercury, accumulate in fish. Carbon dioxide contributes to global warming and related problems such as sea-level rise. These problems require a dual effort on the part of the state to act responsibly and reduce emissions within the state as much as feasible while working with others to reduce upwind emissions.

Milestones and Strategic Actions

Milestone: By 2007, air throughout the state will meet national Clean Air Act standards for ozone and other air pollutants.

As required by the federal Clean Air Act, New Jersey has prepared a series of State Implementation Plans (SIP) that describe the actions needed to meet the national standards. In the SIP for ozone, dated December 31, 1996, the Department committed to a number of strategies that will result in lower ozone concentrations in our state. The major strategies are:

- The reduction of ozone precursor emissions from stationary sources such as industrial boilers; and

- The reduction of ozone precursor emissions from mobile sources through the use of reformulated gasoline and preventive maintenance that results from the state vehicle inspection program.

In addition, the Department has strongly supported broader regional emission reductions, including those recommended by the multi-state Ozone Transport Assessment Group. With the adoption of the more stringent federal ozone standard in July 1997, the Department is developing new strategies to meet this new standard by 2007, three years ahead of the statutory deadline. These strategies will include utilization of incentives, including the aggressive use of emission banking and trading to facilitate cost-effective emission reductions. The EPA also set new standards for fine particulates (PM_{2.5}) in July 1997. It is expected that parts of the state will not meet the new standard. The near-term strategies to address the new fine particulate standard well in advance of the statutory deadline include:

- The recent adoption of a heavy-duty diesel truck inspection and maintenance program to reduce fine particulate concentrations in the state;

- Air quality monitoring for PM_{2.5}, beginning in FY98, to identify areas of high concentrations and possible local sources;

- Performing regional and local fine particulate transport analyses to determine the major sources of the problem for New Jersey; and

- Identifying and evaluating regional and local emission reduction strategies.

Milestone: By 2005, major industrial facilities will meet national toxic emission standards.

Since 1979, the Department has worked to reduce outdoor exposure to toxic air contaminants. Two broad strategies to address air toxics are already in use. They are:

- Encouraging voluntary risk reduction through public disclosure, compliance assistance and pollution prevention education; and

- Performing technology reviews and risk assessments of air permit applications for new and modified air toxic emission sources.

In spite of these efforts, there are still areas of the state where exposure to air toxics is of concern. Additional strategies to be implemented in the next four years include:

- Developing and applying risk assessment tools to identify facilities where total air emissions result in hot spots of exposure to air toxics. Once identified, pollution prevention and add-on control measures will be developed and implemented to reduce emissions that lead to those exposures; and

- Developing a Community-Based Risk Evaluation pilot project to evaluate, in a comprehensive manner, air emissions from large and small stationary sources as well as motor vehicles. The purpose of this pilot project is to develop an approach for determining cumulative health risks from inhalation of toxic emissions within a community.

Milestone: *By 2010, total air deposition loading to land and water will be reduced below 1998 levels.*

Efforts to address deposition of air pollutants are focused on:

- Reducing emissions of large sources of sulfur dioxide to reduce acidic rain;
- Working with the Mercury Task Force to assess the contribution of air deposition on the levels of mercury in fish and to develop strategies for reducing overall exposure to mercury in the environment;
- Reducing emissions of nitrogen dioxide for ozone control and emissions of metals for air toxics control, which also has the side benefit of reducing air deposition; and
- Establishing a network of monitoring sites throughout the state to measure the deposition of toxic metals, organics and nutrients. This will provide valuable information about deposition on watersheds and will help identify the contribution of long-range transport from both out-of-state sources and local sources.

Milestone: *By 2005, the total amount of greenhouse gas emissions will be reduced to 3.5 percent below 1990 levels.*

Climate change is global in scope and stems from fuel combustion in everything from power plants to automobiles. The Department has been studying the sources of greenhouse gases in the state to understand how we are contributing to global warming that will lead to damaging sea level rise. The New Jersey Greenhouse Gases Emission Inventory found that carbon dioxide is by far the largest component of the state's greenhouse gas emissions, although methane and halogenated gas also contribute. Strategies to address greenhouse gases include:

- Establishing incentives that encourage voluntary reductions, such as a banking and trading system for carbon dioxide emissions;
- Promoting energy efficiency through the Open Market Emission Trading Program and requiring power suppliers in the forthcoming deregulated electricity market to disclose energy efficiency information;
- Addressing the mobile source contribution to carbon dioxide emissions;
- Reducing the emission of landfill gases; and
- Promoting and establishing incentives for the use of renewable energy technologies, including geothermal, fuel cells, wave, solar, methane from landfills, biofuels and biomass used in the transportation, heating/cooling and energy production sectors.

Goal: Clean and Plentiful Water

New Jersey rivers, lakes and coastal waters will be fishable, swimmable and support healthy ecosystems. Surface and ground water will be clean sources of water. Every person in New Jersey will have safe drinking water. Adequate quantities of surface and ground water will be available for all uses.

Key Issues

Over the past two decades, surface water quality has remained excellent in some areas and improved significantly in other areas. However, many watersheds have one or more water quality problems that must be addressed. Nutrient enrichment is causing eutrophic

conditions in lakes and estuaries. Metals and organic pollutants are detected in the waters, sediments, and plant and animal life of some water bodies. In some water bodies, poor water quality impairs ecological health and limits the uses of water for recreation and for fish and shellfish harvesting.



Although most ground water in New Jersey is of naturally high quality, some ground waters are affected by chemicals and bacteria that may be present at levels that would be detrimental to human health. Elevated levels of nitrates and naturally occurring radioactivity have been found in some areas. Microbial contamination, which occurs in some areas, is of concern when ground water is used for human consumption. Violations of the standards during the routine testing of public water systems result in notification of the affected public.

Private (homeowner) wells are sampled if water quality problems are suspected. Generally, these suspected problems are associated with a contaminated site or as a result of an ongoing investigation into a specific contaminant (e.g., mercury). If problems are found, the Department, working with local and county authorities, can facilitate a solution. However, a statewide assessment of water quality for private wells is not currently available. Strategies to capture existing data, including that generated by county and local agencies, and to evaluate the feasibility of generating new data to fill in gaps in the Department's knowledge regarding the quality of water in these wells, are being considered.

The Department has undertaken some activities to educate private well owners about water quality and testing. For instance, the DEP prepared a homeowner's guide to radioactivity in drinking water in order to make people aware of the issues and solutions. Additionally, we have funded positions within the Department of Health and Senior Services to educate private well owners in Atlantic County regarding testing of such wells. Furthermore, the DEP has funded a study by the Rutgers Cooperative Extension Service to examine who is managing private well data, and how this data is being used. The Department is exploring the future use of this data and how it may better serve private well owners within New Jersey.

Although there are sufficient quantities of water to meet statewide needs, some areas of the state are projected to experience shortages of water. These deficits may worsen as population and demand for water increase. In some coastal areas, ground water has been overused and saltwater has intruded into the ground water. This limits potable use of ground water supplies and has led to the designation of two critical areas where allocation of water must be strictly monitored and controlled. Land development and the associated impervious surfaces that come with this development have reduced the ability of aquifers to recharge themselves.

Milestones and Strategic Actions

The Department is implementing a watershed management approach to improve protection of New Jersey's surface and ground water resources. Watershed management fosters continuous improvements based on sound science through integrated, holistic management of

water resources and environmental programs within a watershed management area. Its key features include:

- Comprehensive resource-based planning;
- Broad-based stakeholder partnerships;
- An action-oriented approach to address non-point sources of pollution;
- Integration of related strategies, such as open space preservation, and management of forests, wetlands, fisheries and wildlife resources; and
- Use of indicators to evaluate performance over time and to foster continuous improvement.

The Department, in partnership with the residents, community watershed associations, natural resource conservation organizations, farmers, local governments, businesses and industries from each watershed, will assess existing information to identify key issues and problems specific to their watershed management area. The significant causes of water quality problems, including point and non-point sources of pollution, will be evaluated and the opportunities for improvement identified. Then, based on this evaluation, a set of strategies tailored to that particular watershed management area will be implemented to achieve water resources goals and milestones, including water quality standards, in each watershed management area.

Milestone: By 2005, 95 percent of the public water systems (and 95 percent of the population served) will provide water that meets chemical and microbiological drinking water standards.

A new federal Safe Drinking Water Act program, entitled Source Water Assessment and Protection (SWAP), will be implemented to evaluate the susceptibility of ground and surface water supply sources to current and future contamination. The Department will integrate this information into watershed management planning, enabling the Department and its local partners to prioritize monitoring and management strategies.

In 1997, the larger water utilities in the state began participating in a nationwide monitoring program that will help determine:

- The occurrence of Giardia, Cryptosporidium, viruses and bacteria in source waters;
- The effectiveness of current treatment practices; and
- Source water characteristics that may influence formation of chemical byproducts by virtue of the disinfecting process.

Milestone: By 2005, the Department and regional interests will cooperatively address all regional water supply deficits projected through the year 2030, to ensure that such deficits are not realized.

In 1996, a revised water supply plan was published, entitled Water for the 21st Century: A Vital Resource. Implementation of the strategies in the plan that will be emphasized over the next four years include:

- Source water assessment and protection for surface and ground water, protecting aquifer recharge areas from pollution, wellhead protection and acquisition of critical water supply protection areas; and

-
- Improved management efforts, including interconnections among several users, use of two or more sources, desalination, and coordinated wastewater and water supply development under the watershed management process.

In addition, the federal Safe Drinking Water Act Amendments of 1996 established the opportunity for states to leverage existing state loan funds through the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund program, to improve drinking water infrastructure facilities. Initial funding under this program is \$27 million, with annual availability to purveyors thereafter at around \$18 million. These funds will be targeted to those facilities that need capital improvements to provide drinking water that meets standards.

Milestone: By 2005, 50 percent of assessed non-tidal river miles will support healthy, sustainable biological communities.

New strategies are being developed to address pollution caused by both discrete point sources, such as wastewater treatment plants, and diffuse or non-point sources, such as stormwater and runoff. Most notably, as discussed earlier, the Department is employing a watershed management approach with locally based partners to improve water quality. This approach includes:

- Adopting Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) for all appropriate water bodies by the year 2007;
- Developing long-term control plans, implemented at the local level, to address combined sewer overflow (CSO) discharges that contribute to non-compliance with the state's Surface Water Quality Standards;
- Implementing appropriate redundant facility equipment inventories to be kept on site at sewerage treatment facilities to address equipment breakdowns faster and minimize their environmental impact;
- Developing stormwater management plans and NJPDES permits for the state's watersheds and municipalities, emphasizing pollution prevention, stormwater system rehabilitation and maintenance, and education;
- Developing and implementing innovative strategies to address pollution from non-point sources that are not regulated, including agriculture, residential and commercial land uses, golf courses and government activities; and
- Developing watershed assessments in such a manner as to inform and coordinate with site remediation priorities at contaminated sites and historical landfills.

Milestone: By 2005, 90 percent of New Jersey's classified waters will provide shellfish safe to harvest.

Currently, 87 percent of the state's marine waters support shellfish harvesting. In fact, New Jersey is the only coastal state that has consistently been able to open up new areas for shellfishing. Much of this results from the state's comprehensive monitoring efforts and its efforts in enlisting local and federal partners through public education and cooperative agreements.

- Watershed efforts will be focused through estuary programs to address combined sewer overflow discharges, failing sewerage infrastructure and septic systems, municipal storm water, and animal waste runoff.

Milestone: By 2000, 100 percent of New Jersey's recreational lake beaches will be assessed and prioritized for improvement projects. By 2005, 100 percent of New Jersey's coastal recreational beaches will be safe for bathing.

■ The main strategies to be employed include public education regarding individual responsibility to minimize impacts on lake and coastal waters, infrastructure improvements for combined sewers and municipal sewerage facilities, and programs to address municipal storm water and animal waste runoff.

■ Efforts to compile and assess local and county data on water quality at public lake bathing beaches will be completed and an initial data set will be assessed. Through watershed management and other programs, improvement projects to reduce lake contamination and bathing beach closings will be developed and implemented.

Goal: Safe and Healthy Communities

Every New Jersey community will be free from unacceptable human health and ecological risks due to direct exposure from hazardous substances and other potentially harmful agents. Natural resources will be managed to protect the public from floods, fires and storms.

Key Issues

The industrial growth that occurred after World War II left us with numerous contaminated sites that have to be addressed to reduce the risks to current and future generations. While many sites have been cleaned up, many more are still in need of attention. This is especially true in urban areas, where contaminated sites can create a barrier to redevelopment.

Our growth also ushered in a throw-away society mentality, which led to the generation of unprecedented quantities of solid waste and made safe, long-term management far more difficult. While there have been great advances in solid waste management, we need to maintain and increase recycling efforts and work through the pending deregulation of the solid waste industry.



To prevent the creation of new contaminated sites, continued efforts are needed to ensure the proper management and disposal of solid and hazardous wastes and hazardous substances that are generated by businesses and individuals. The number of individuals and companies utilizing source reduction and pollution prevention should be increased substantially.

Risks to the public also occur due to natural events, such as forest fires, floods and storms. In addition, the improper handling and use of pesticides can create risks to anyone in the vicinity of the application of those chemicals. Exposure to naturally occurring radiation and that generated by human activity, can result in an increased risk of cancer in the state's population. There are also concerns that minority populations are experiencing a greater impact

from pollution than other communities. This issue is receiving considerable attention from the U.S. EPA and states.

Milestones and Strategic Actions

Milestone: By 2005, through pollution prevention techniques, industrial facilities will reduce the quantity of toxic chemicals generated as production-related waste by 50 percent from 1993 levels.

Pollution prevention, as opposed to waste control, is a proactive approach that relies on the examination of production processes to minimize or eliminate the creation of waste. This approach not only brings obvious environmental benefits but also in many cases is far more cost-effective than the measures companies must take to control wastes once they are created.

■ The Department will reinvigorate the Pollution Prevention Partnership established with the New Jersey Institute of Technology, major corporations and the Economic Development Authority that is aimed at mentoring small- and medium-sized businesses in the techniques and skills necessary to prevent or reduce pollution at the source.

■ As part of the One Stop Program, the Department will provide incentives to encourage voluntary strategies to reduce waste created in industrial and commercial processes.

Milestone: The remediation of hazardous discharge sites will be accelerated, especially in urban areas throughout the state.

■ Under the Brownfields law enacted in January 1998, the Department will focus its efforts on encouraging commercial interests and local officials to identify contaminated sites that can be cleaned up and redeveloped as a resource to the community.

■ The Department will develop a priority listing of landfills that require remediation, and these remediation efforts will be addressed in the context of watershed management activities.

Milestone: Exposure to environmental risks will be controlled and minimized.

Natural resources management, emergency response, cleanup and regulatory actions will be directed toward elimination or management of all exposure risks.

■ The success of flood control preventative measures will be enhanced through watershed management approaches and the expenditure of \$15 million for the purchase of flood-prone properties.

■ The public will be educated about Integrated Pest Management and schools will be provided with teachers guides that fulfill core curriculum standards to promote reduction in the use of pesticides.

■ To improve X-ray image quality and reduce radiation doses to patients, the Department will develop a quality assurance program in partnership with hospitals, and medical and chiropractic offices. In addition, a self-inspection program allowing hospitals to inspect their own X-ray equipment, developed through a pilot program last year with the support of the N.J. Hospital Association, will be formalized in regulations.

■ Financial assistance from Corporate Business Tax proceeds will be provided to owners of regulated underground tanks. In addition, information will be provided to the owners of non-regulated tanks concerning conscientious management.

■ Soil and ground water contamination will be characterized on a regional basis and results provided to the public through the Geographic Information System. A report will be provided to the Legislature regarding large areas of historic industrial contamination and a plan developed to cost effectively achieve appropriate remediation.

■ To address environmental equity issues in minority areas, a process that utilizes front-end active stakeholder involvement is being developed. This process will provide a forum for a thorough discussion of the concerns of a community and a mechanism for reaching consensus and mutually acceptable approaches between a community and regulated activity.

■ Strategies will be continued to prevent accidental releases of hazardous chemicals and to address and reduce the risk of exposure to mercury in the environment.

Milestone: By 2000, recycling rates of 65 percent of the total solid waste stream and 50 percent of the municipal waste stream will be achieved throughout the state.

■ The Department will pursue with the Legislature the reinstatement of the recycling tax to provide municipal governments the funding that underpins many local recycling efforts.

■ This Administration will continue, in light of the court decisions that have disallowed waste flow regulation, to support the vital role of the county-based planning system, exclusive of waste flow, in maintaining the integrity of sound solid waste management.

Goal: Healthy Ecosystems

The health, diversity and integrity of New Jersey's ecosystems will be restored, protected, enhanced and sustained.

Key Issues

The state's ecosystems (forests, lakes, rivers, wetlands, agricultural lands, coastal estuaries, pinelands and grasslands) are vulnerable to disturbance, pollution, degradation and destruction as a result of human activities. Land use development patterns are a cause of stress on ecosystems. In addition, road building, trail blazing, industrial discharges, backyard gardening, house building, recreational boating and many other activities alter the natural environment. The impacts may be dramatic or subtle, abrupt or gradual. The cumulative impact from many small, unnoticed changes can significantly diminish the capacity of an ecosystem to renew itself.



The state has 2,117 known native plant species. Approximately 30 percent of these are categorized as species of conservation concern, meaning they are becoming increasingly rare within the state's ecosystems. About 15 percent of the plant species are listed as endangered. New Jersey has a diverse mix of mammals, reptiles, amphibians, fish and birds, with nearly 900 vertebrate species inhabiting the state. However, about one-third of the known vertebrate animal species are classified as either rare or endangered.

Milestones and Strategic Actions

Milestone: By 2005, there will be a net increase in wetland acreage and quality.

Among the more important habitats for threatened and endangered species are areas of freshwater wetlands. Aside from the stormwater retention and filtration value that wetlands serve, their contribution to fostering biodiversity is important to the maintenance of healthy ecosystems.

To assure no net loss of wetlands in the short-term, the Department will:

- Enhance land use compliance and enforcement actions by implementing a place-based, priority-driven system that will target increased compliance monitoring of regulated activities within critical wetlands areas based on their habitat and functional value; and
- Minimize the impacts of increased impervious cover on the quantity and quality of wetlands by expanding the implementation of best management practices for stormwater control from new development through the development of watershed-based stormwater management plans, through partnerships with local and regional agencies, regulatory mechanisms and incentives.

To increase and enhance wetland acreage by 2005, the Department will:

- Accelerate use of credits held by the Wetlands Mitigation Bank;
- Continue to require mitigation in Individual Permits and expand mitigation requirements into certain General Permits; and
- Coordinate with other state and federal agencies to acquire funding to create and enhance wetlands in areas impacted by agricultural, transportation and other development activities.

Milestone: By 2005, identification and mapping of the state's critical habitats (for plants and animals) will be completed and available for public use.

- The Department will accelerate its efforts to bring information to decision-makers, including local government agencies. This will assist them in making well-informed decisions regarding land use and natural resources, using integrated, geographically-based information through the Geographic Information System (GIS).
- The Non-game and Endangered Species program will expand its Landscape Project to identify those habitats, in particular physiographic regions, which are the most critical blocks for preservation of biological diversity.
- The Department will expand its use of estuary-wide planning by developing a Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan for the Barnegat Bay Estuary.

-
- Through the Coastal Zone Management Program, Delaware Estuary Program and cooperative efforts with Delaware and Pennsylvania, critical habitat for coastal species, including heron, will be identified and protected.

Milestone: By 2008, the state's rare, threatened and endangered species populations will be stable or have an improved status.

- Through the acquisition of large blocks of open spaces, individual species and ecosystems will be protected from the direct threats and impacts of development and human activities.
- Through the use of supplemental environmental projects as part of the settlement of enforcement actions, the Department will seek opportunities to preserve critical lands, through acquisitions and other means.

Goal: Abundant Open Space

Natural and scenic landscapes, habitats and historic resources will be preserved. Every person will have the opportunity to visit an abundance of well-maintained parks, forests, wildlife areas and historic sites. The public will be given ample opportunity to learn about natural and historic resources and to have access to a wide variety of recreational experiences in both urban and non-urban settings.

Key Issues

The loss of open space and the loss and degradation of important natural and historic resources continue at a rapid pace in New Jersey. Though the state's population has not increased significantly in recent years, many suburban and rural communities are continuing to experience the pressures of sprawl development. In some areas of the state, more than 90 percent of lands are already developed and open spaces are extremely limited. In other areas, there are many acres of open land; some is forested, some is wetlands, some is farmed and some of it is protected as open space. However, most of the open lands in New Jersey are not protected. Whether farmland or forest lands, more acres are developed into other uses each year than are set aside for open space preservation. Many of the state's historic resources continue to be lost due to lack of adequate resources to protect and preserve them.



The preservation of open space protects land from future development, but far more importantly, preservation efforts provide the foundation for maintaining healthy ecosystems and sustainable communities in New Jersey. Moreover, the land is often preserved for the use and enjoyment of all New Jerseyans and visitors to the state. In urban settings, parks are important to the quality of life for city neighborhoods. The strength of New Jersey's tourism industry depends in large part upon New Jersey's unique and beautiful natural and historic resources. The Department strives to both protect and interpret these natural and historic

resources and to provide outdoor recreation opportunities, facilities, public access to state lands and waters, and education programs in a variety of settings. These needs have not been adequately addressed over the last decade and must be in order for the public to receive the full benefits of open space and historic resource preservation.

Milestones and Strategic Actions

Milestone: By 2008, one million more acres of open space will be protected.

In November 1998, New Jersey voters approved a referendum to dedicate \$98 million per year to open space and farmland preservation, park development and redevelopment, including urban areas, and historic resource preservation. This stable source of funding will allow greater long-term planning and provide predictable funding for acquisition and recreation-related capital development on public lands.

■ The Department will work with the Legislature, the Department of Agriculture, local governments and nonprofit land conservation groups to accelerate land preservation efforts to reach the goal of protecting an average of 100,000 acres of open space annually over the next ten years. The Department will also work with local government and nonprofit groups to maintain and develop recreational facilities, particularly in urban areas.

■ Increased emphasis will be placed on those programs that provide technical expertise and assistance to local communities, public agencies, private organizations and nonprofit groups for natural and historic resource stewardship on properties not owned by the state.

■ The Department will better target acquisitions and improve both land management practices and species management programs through the use of GIS and an enhanced understanding of animal and plant species distributions, characteristics and their adaptations to changes in their surroundings.

Milestone: By 2005, the backlog of capital projects for the state's recreation lands and facilities will be eliminated.

■ The Department will provide improved facilities, better and more routine maintenance, capital reinvestment and enhanced constituent service over the next four years within its state parks, forests and recreation lands. Commitment of \$15 million per year from stable funding for capital reinvestment coupled with an additional commitment of operating funds would result in much needed improvements to stewardship and visitor services.

Milestone: Every year the state will increase the number and quality of recreation facilities and interpretive programs offered.

■ The Department will increase the number and quality of natural and historic resource interpretive facilities and public education programs offered statewide, and thus increase the number of persons served.

■ A recently completed statewide interpretive plan will be implemented to provide a statewide system of interactive, experiential and curriculum-based programs at state parks, forests and natural areas as well as in school classrooms.

■ A statewide Wildlife Viewing Guide was published in May 1998 to promote the appreciation of wildlife and the understanding of ecosystems.

-
- A new interpretive center on the Maurice River will be created to showcase the unique natural resources and wildlife of southern New Jersey.

Goal: Open and Effective Government

The Department will fulfill its vision and mission and achieve its goals through the involvement of citizens and stakeholders as critical partners and through a commitment to quality principles and methods as a means to continuous improvement of its operations.

Key Issues

To achieve its vision, mission and goals, the Department must continuously evaluate, adapt and improve its operations, including its delivery of services, business processes and systems, and responsiveness to constituents. Using the Quality New Jersey (QNJ) Achievement Criteria, which identify the attributes of a quality organization to help organizations improve their performance, the Department examined its operations in seven categories to identify areas of success and opportunities for improvement. The key attributes of each category as outlined below are the areas in which the Department will focus its strategies in the next four years.



- **Leadership** - A key role of the Department's management is not only to set clear directions for the organization, but also to foster a culture that seeks to continuously improve the Department's performance through partnerships.
- **Strategic Planning** - To be effective, the Department must integrate the strategic direction into a clear action plan for deploying and aligning resources.
- **Constituent Focus** - To be an effective organization, it is important for the Department to understand the needs of its constituents and to recognize that the Department's front-line employees are key to constituent partnerships.
- **Information and Analysis** - The information/ data that the Department collects must be carefully selected, managed and used in an integrated fashion to help achieve the Department's goals.
- **Human Resource Development and Management** - Through education and training, the Department will provide employees with the knowledge and skills that they need and foster professional growth and thus, help achieve success.
- **Process Management** - It is important for the Department to evaluate its processes and continuously improve how its day-to-day work is carried out.

-
- **Results** - To properly manage the Department, it is necessary to measure the results that are being achieved. (What gets measured gets done.)

Milestones and Strategic Actions

Milestone: The Department will improve its performance each year in evaluations based upon the Quality New Jersey Achievement Criteria.

Leadership

- The Department's Management Team will serve as a Quality Council to pursue quality improvements that cut across programs and nurture similar activities at all levels of the Department. The Core Team will serve as Quality Advisory Board to assist the Management Team in developing and implementing quality improvements.
- Through development and implementation of an accountability system for both leadership and staff, the Department will continually review and improve its performance and progress.
- The Department will work in partnership with the Department of Education, educational organizations and individual school districts to design creative programs for educators with emphasis on the state's environmental priorities. Programs will enable educators to better teach the environmental content and skills that must now be taught statewide in K-12 Science and Social Studies.
- Citizens will be surveyed to determine their current understanding of how their individual, routine activities impact the environment. This information will be used to design outreach and education strategies to foster increased awareness and personal responsibility for actions citizens can take to minimize those impacts.
- The Management Team will develop workforce diversity mechanisms to incorporate diversity into long-range plans, goals and objectives, practices and processes.

Strategic Planning

- To ensure that daily work activities are aligned with the direction set forth in the Strategic Plan, the 1998-2000 Performance Partnership for New Jersey document will identify the major tasks and activities to be undertaken over a two-year period.
- Division or Bureau level work plans will be developed and revised annually to ensure our day-to-day activities and tasks reflect the directions and actions in the Strategic Plan.
- To ensure accountability, the implementation of the strategies in the Strategic Plan, along with other performance indicators, will be tracked and evaluated quarterly, as part of a comprehensive results-based management system.
- To improve the strategic planning process, the Department will more effectively integrate the best available scientific analysis available with public values through a Comparative Risk Project. This will help organize and advance the Department's understanding about the risks to human and ecological health and quality of life posed by numerous and diverse causes.
- The Department will place a high priority on improving its understanding of the sources or root causes of environmental problems and deficiencies in the delivery of services.

Constituent Focus

■ The Department will develop, publish and implement a framework for constituent service and institute a consistent, Department-wide feedback process for constituents to rate the Department's service. Information gained from this feedback process will be used throughout the Department to improve constituent satisfaction over the next four years.

Information and Analysis

■ The Department is creating an Information Technology infrastructure (see diagram on Page 30) that will provide managers and staff throughout the Department, and our federal, state and local government partners, with easy and effective access to information to foster the best environmental decision making.

■ To improve the data acquisition process, the Department will develop an integrated One Stop Reporting approach that eliminates duplicative data requirements and reporting methods, and makes the data submission less costly and easier to manage and use.

■ To enhance the use of data and information in decision making, the Department will: i) implement an environmental data exchange clearinghouse, to be called ENDEX, to aggregate, analyze and report information throughout the Department, (ii) expand access to the Geographic Information System (GIS) by establishing data-sharing agreements with local governments and state agencies and distributing GIS software packages to nonprofit organizations, and (iii) increase public access to information via the Internet.

Human Resource Development and Management

■ The Department will invest in the development of its diverse workforce through a process to identify the skills that are critical for successful performance. These valued skills will be linked to employee development and used to build career paths that provide dual/alternative paths and allow for job enrichment.

■ The Department will collect information regarding employee values and expectations as it focuses on quality of work-life issues. The information gathered will be used in human resource planning.

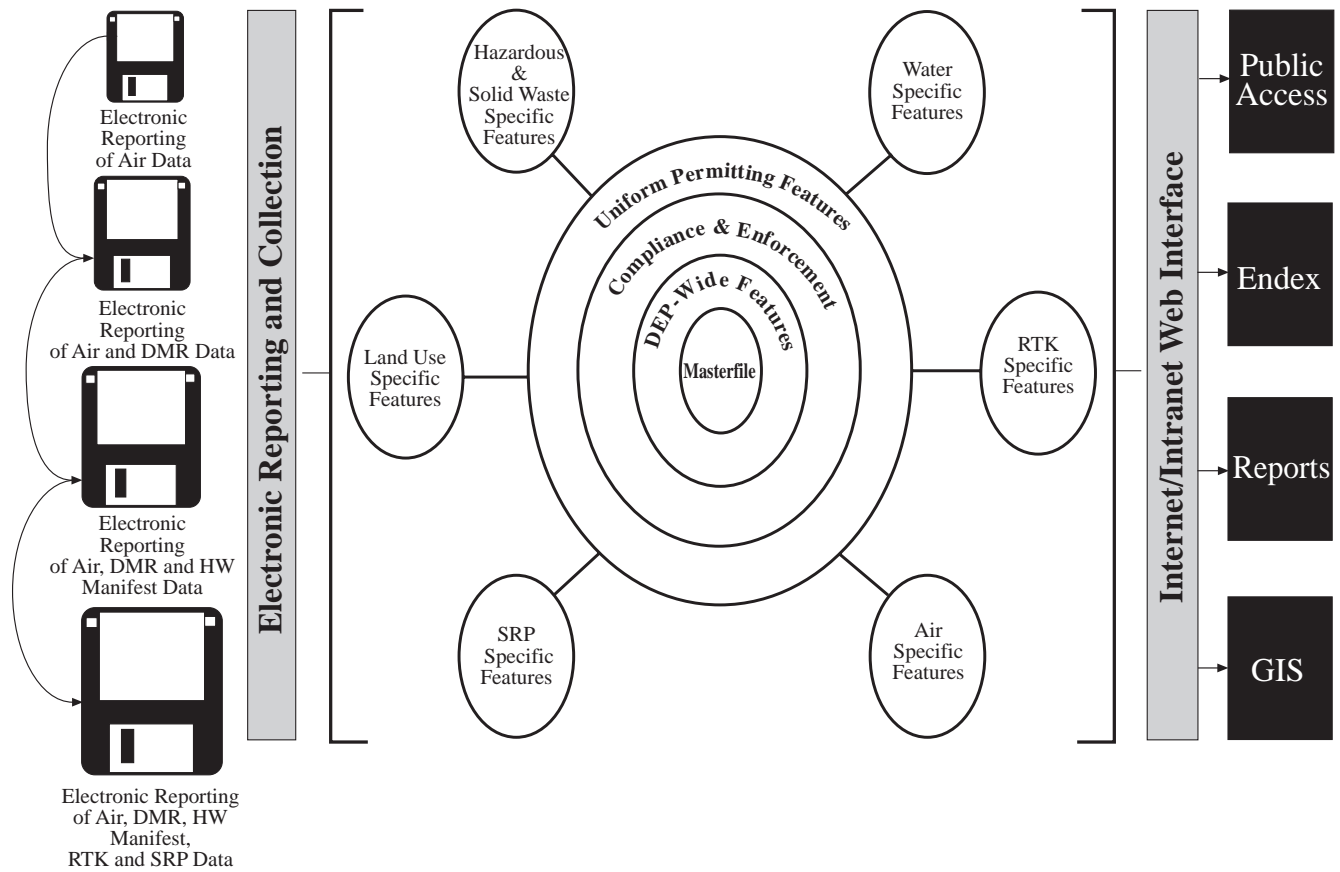
■ The Department will develop formal and informal strategies and methods to recognize and reward meritorious employee achievements.

Process Management

■ Core business processes will be changed to reflect the direction set forth in the Strategic Plan, including the increased emphases on: (i) building partnerships, (ii) providing performance incentives and flexibility, (iii) advancing the objectives of the State Development and Redevelopment Plan, (iv) investing in employee development, and (v) measuring results.

■ The role of the support organizations and process teams within the Department will be strengthened and their link to the effective implementation of strategies and achievement of the Department's goals will be clearly defined.

DATA/INFORMATION LIFE CYCLE



Results

■ The Department will further develop an environmental indicators system to understand and evaluate: (i) the pressures or causes of problems affecting the environment, (ii) the status of and trends in environmental conditions, and (iii) the effectiveness of strategies deployed to respond to environmental pressures.

■ To foster accountability and reinforce performance expectations, the Department will develop and implement a quarterly reporting system that will monitor and respond to constituent feedback, employee satisfaction and development, and business process effectiveness and efficiency.

■ The Department will publish on a two-year basis a State of the Environment Report to share with the public information about the status of and trends in environmental conditions in the state. The report will be complemented by a more detailed and comprehensive Environmental Indicators Report.

Appendices

Summary of Changes to the June 1998 Draft Strategic Plan

1. The Introduction has been re-titled Strategic Focus and moved to follow the Strategic Direction (Vision, Mission, Goals) chapter.
2. In the Strategic Direction chapter, the Vision has been modified to use the verb promote instead of provide, making it consistent with the Mission statement, and adding the term sustainable before high quality of life.
3. The Mission statement has been modified by adding the term restore and deleting all of the principles that follow the statement of the actual mission. Comments were received stating that many of the principles were either confusing or out-of-date (i.e., references to an Environmental Master Plan), and it was noted that all of the principles are adequately expressed elsewhere in the Strategic Plan.
4. Minor language changes were made to several other goal statements.
5. Chapter III, formerly titled Goals, Milestones and Strategies, has been re-titled Strategic Actions. Also, under each goal area, there is a sub-heading titled Milestones and Strategies. The use of the term Strategies here has led to confusion, especially during the budget planning process this summer. Many of the statements expressed in the draft plan as strategies are more accurately characterized as activities, tasks or something less than a strategy. These headings and sub-headings, therefore, have been re-titled Strategic Action.
6. The discussion under the sub-heading titled Preparing for a New Era of Environmental Protection has been re-drafted to more clearly express the two major ways that we are changing the current environmental management framework, and the three critical attributes that will be imbued in each of our strategies. Also, at least one stakeholder commented that the Strategic Plan does not place enough emphasis on the need for strong enforcement efforts to complement highlighted changes in process and attitude. Accordingly, the role of compliance and enforcement activities has been expressed more clearly in this section.
7. In Strategic Focus, under the sub-heading Employing Performance Incentives for Continual Improvement, the discussion has been re-drafted to more clearly express the major changes to the regulatory system we are pursuing.
8. In the Strategic Focus chapter (formerly the Introduction), a sub-heading titled Investing in Our Workforce, with a short accompanying paragraph, has been added to complement Partnerships and Results as attributes of strategies that are critical to our success.
9. In the Air Goal area, a sentence has been added to underscore the Department's commitment to emission banking and trading as a strategy for reducing emissions.
10. In the Water Goal area, a paragraph describing the watershed management approach has been modified to, among other things, better express the integration of environmental strategies, such as open space preservation and wetlands regulation, to improve water quality.
11. Several milestones have been modified to more clearly or accurately express the nature of the environmental improvement that is projected.

12. Under the Safe and Healthy Communities Goal area, references to EMAP have been changed to One Stop to reflect its current title. Radiation strategies have been re-drafted to more accurately express the quality assurance and self-inspections initiatives, deleting references to contracting out radon certification functions.

13. Under the Abundant Open Space Goal area, the text was substantially re-drafted to reflect the passage of the referendum dedicating sales tax revenue to open space preservation purposes.

14. Under the Open and Effective Government Goal area, the education curriculum strategy has been re-drafted to reflect the fact that the state now has mandatory curriculum, and that we are now working to provide educators with tools and assistance in implementing this curriculum.

15. A strategy expressing the Department's commitment to diversity and a diverse workforce has been added.

Comments Considered, But Not Included in the Strategic Plan

1. Several comments expressed the view that the Draft Strategic Plan does not provide any implementation plan or mechanism for assigning accountability for that implementation.

Response: The Strategic Plan is one part of an integrated Results-Based Management System. As stated in the Foreword to the Strategic Plan, the integration of the Strategic Plan into the NEPPS PPA, the budget planning process and our Bureau and Division level work plans will help ensure the implementation of new directions articulated in the Plan. Also, as stated in the Strategic Plan under the Open and Effective Government Goal, an accountability system is being designed to ensure periodic evaluation of our progress.

2. Several comments expressed the view that there is limited or no mention of impediments or limitations that may stand in the way of meeting the goals and objectives laid out in the Strategic Plan. In many cases, statements in the Strategic Plan seem too broad and are not cognizant of the fact that current law may limit their implementation. It was suggested that qualifiers be inserted.

Response: The Strategic Plan is intended to be a forward-looking document that outlines the Department's priorities over the next four years. Implicit in this Plan is the commitment to overcome obstacles to implementing priority strategies.

3. One of the stated objectives of the Strategic Plan is to provide a template that will guide reallocation of resources to better address Department priorities. However, one thing that is absent from the Plan is descriptions of programs that are no longer important and from which resources can be shifted to the priority strategies.

Response: The budget planning process should ensure that our resources are aligned with our stated priorities. The budget planning process has been modified this year to better relate our priorities in the Strategic Plan with the annual allocation of resources. This modified process will be refined in future budget planning cycles, based on our experience this year. The Department anticipates a gradual but steady migration of resources (as opposed to sudden and dramatic shifts) toward the priorities reflected in the Strategic Plan. In most cases, the Department anticipates that less effective strategies or programs will not be eliminated, but will receive less emphasis and resources.

4. Several people suggested that, given the explicit emphasis on the development and use of Indicators, the Strategic Plan should include several Indicators, at least as illustrations.

Response: The Strategic Plan, under the Open and Effective Goal, expresses the Department's commitment to develop and use a comprehensive set of Indicators. The NEPPS PPA, a companion document to this Plan, provides more information about the development and use of specific indicators. It will be possible to include Indicators and supporting information in future Strategic Plans.

5. It is good that the concept of sustainability is highlighted at the beginning of the document. The Department should ensure that theme is reflected in all of its goals, milestones and strategies throughout the Plan and its implementation.

Response: The Department has established a work group to promote a better understanding of sustainability and its potential applications within the Department and among its stakeholders. The work group will also help identify specific opportunities to apply sustainability principles to specific strategies. Future Strategic Plans may reflect the results of this work.

6. The inclusion of a separate Open and Effective Government Goal area has resulted in a number of redundancies that should be eliminated. For example, different goal areas have education strategies that are better off being covered exclusively in Open and Effective Government.

Response: The redundancies are minimal and appropriately strengthen the emphasis placed on important activities such as outreach and education.

7. Many of the milestones contained in the Strategic Plan are either too far in the future, or not quantifiable enough for strict measurement and tracking. They need to be refined and broken down.

Response: Over the next two years, the Department anticipates reviewing and improving the milestones in the Strategic Plan and in the NEPPS PPA, in some cases to make them more quantifiable or shorter in term. To establish more quantifiable milestones, the Department must first establish baseline conditions. Developing short-term milestones will, in many cases, require the Department to first develop a better understanding of current contributions to environmental conditions.

8. Several people commented on the “free from unacceptable risks” language in the Safe and Healthy Communities Goal statement, stating that it is not clear what degree of risk is unacceptable.

Response: The language is intentionally broad to cover the wide variety of risks and methods to evaluate them.



State of New Jersey
Christine Todd Whitman, Governor

New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection
Robert C. Shinn, Jr., Commissioner

Acknowledgements

This Strategic Plan was developed over an 18-month period (June 1997 to December 1998) through a strategic planning process that directly involved hundreds of managers and staff throughout the Department. This process was led by the Strategic Planning Group, composed of the following tenacious individuals appointed by the Commissioner, representing a diverse mix of managers and staff from all areas of the department:

John Spinello, Strategic Planning Group Leader	
David Barth	Lee Cattaneo
Nick Finamore	Bonny Fraser
John Hazen	Joann Held
Lance Miller	Pilar Patterson
Kerri Ratcliffe	Karen Schaffer
Fred Sickels	Bette Sovinee
Bob Stern	Dave Sweeney
Mary Sue Topper	

The Strategic Planning Group gratefully acknowledges the contributions of all those who contributed to this effort, in particular the substantial contributions of the Core Team, chaired by David Barth, and the NEPPS Steering Committee, co-chaired by Bryan Ianni and Leslie McGeorge. The Group further acknowledges the unyielding support and sage counsel of its sponsor, Deputy Commissioner Mark Smith.

NJDEP welcomes comments on this Strategic Plan, which may be submitted to:
Office of the Commissioner
Department of Environmental Protection
P.O. Box 402
Trenton, New Jersey 08625-0402

Photo Credits:

Page 6 — Great Bay Boulevard Wildlife Management Area, by J.J. Raia
Page 9 — Island Beach State Park, by J.J. Raia
Page 14 — Tillman Ravine, Stokes State Forest, by J.J. Raia
Page 18 — Photo by George Pierson
Page 21 — Wildflowers and young girl, Somerset County, by J.J. Raia
Page 23 — Red fox, by Scott Longfield
Page 25 — Ramapo Reservation Lake, by Michele Seligman
