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New England Freshwater Forum Advances Ideas to Achieve Integrated “One Water” Management

BOSTON, Mass. (May 30, 2012) –How can New England improve the management of its freshwater resources and systems in order to make them more resilient, efficient and responsive to consumers’ needs and demands?

That question will be at the heart of a two-day forum convened today in Boston by The Johnson Foundation at Wingspread. The forum brings together more than 30 experts representing diverse regional and national interests to help identify practical and powerful ideas to address the region’s freshwater challenges.

Participants at the “New England Regional Freshwater Forum” will examine the challenges from the perspective of “one water” management — integrated planning and management of public drinking water supply, ground water, stormwater and wastewater.

“The New England watersheds provide prime case studies for considering the application of a more holistic ‘one water’ management system that solves multiple problems simultaneously, rather than solving one problem while exacerbating another,” said Lynn Broaddus, Director, Environment Program at The Johnson Foundation. “This type of integrated planning can help provide a more sustainable, efficient and resilient freshwater system that can support our 21st century water needs while protecting the environment.”

The Forum will discuss freshwater management problems and solutions found in three key New England watersheds — Great Bay, N.H.; Cape Cod, Mass.; and Charles River, Mass. — that exemplify the myriad of challenges that many U.S. regions are facing, including intensifying storms, aging infrastructure, combined sewer overflows, dropping water tables, increased operating costs and stretched public budgets. Participants will discuss how existing regulatory structures and obligations, inter-agency coordination and collaboration, financing strategies, and communications and public messaging could be adapted to support a “one water” freshwater management system.

Experts at the Forum will also compare and review lessons learned from successful integrated water management projects in other regions of the country. By directly engaging top water experts and “on-the-ground” stakeholders in a dialogue about regional freshwater challenges, the New England Regional Freshwater Forum will provide a platform to exchange regional and national experience on these issues that can be applied in New England and also brought to other regions of the United States.

The Forum is part of the [Charting New Waters](#) initiative focused on finding innovative solutions and practical policies needed to address our numerous freshwater challenges. Charting New Waters aims to bring together experts to examine freshwater challenges, successes, innovations and potential solutions that can bridge geographies and inform national policy.

In October 2011, The Johnson Foundation brought together water and other experts for a similar [Forum](#) in Denver, Colo., covering the Rocky Mountain states. The focus of that dialogue was on water conservation and efficiency, the water and energy nexus, and balancing agricultural, municipal, industrial and environmental water needs.

The Johnson Foundation formally launched the Charting New Waters initiative in 2010 as an effort dedicated to catalyzing new solutions to U.S. freshwater challenges. Charting New Waters is the work of a diverse group of leaders from business, agriculture, academia and environmental organizations that have publicly committed to improving U.S. freshwater resources by advancing the principles and recommendations of the group. These recommendations were captured in a consensus report: *Charting New Waters: A Call to Action to Address U.S. Freshwater Challenges* issued on Sept. 15, 2010. Download the report [here](#).

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[The Johnson Foundation at Wingspread](#) is dedicated to serving as a catalyst for change by bringing together leading thinkers and inspiring new solutions on major environmental and regional issues. For additional information about *Charting New Waters*, or to learn more about The Johnson Foundation at Wingspread, please visit www.johnsonfdn.org.