Wastewater Solutions for Vermont Communities

Technical and Funding Options
Steps for Problem Solving: Getting your ducks in a row...

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**Step 0: Definition**

What is the problem?

- Order from ANR: CSOs, Illicit Discharges
- Order from Health Officer
- Failed Systems
- Poor Water Quality or Contaminated Water
- Poor Soils, High Ledge, High Groundwater
- No Capacity for Growth or Redevelopment
- Cost of Repairs
- New nutrient loading requirements (N & P)
- What’s your problem?
Who can help?

- Facilities Engineering Division (FED) of ANR
  - Assistance to get you going.
- Planning Loans and Grants.
- RCAP Solutions – Robert Morency Jr., PhD
- The Right Consultant
  - Use your own consultant
  - Put out an RFP or RFQ (FED or RCAP can help you.)
- Town Staff – if you have them...
- Your Regional Engineer at ANR
  - Knows your area and can make suggestions.
- Other Funding Agencies
Stepping Up: What do we need?

- a sewer committee or commission
- active, dedicated volunteers
- help from your planning commission
  - solutions need to be in line with your town plan and your local ordinances
- help from your regional planning commission
- support from your selectboard
- support from your community
  - public approval and a bond vote are required
Project Team

Planners

Consultants

You!

State Officials

Selectboard

Sewer Committee

Town Staff

VERMONT
Step 1: Planning
What can we do?

- Get funding: grant, loan, or other $$
- Get your consultant going
- Identify the good soils & town-owned properties
- Inventory existing wastewater systems
- Explore complementary projects (water, sidewalks)
- Figure out the alternatives
- Figure out what the deal-breakers are
- Gain public support
- Complete a Preliminary Engineering Report (PER)
  - Not just any old study
What are the alternatives?

- Best Fix solutions for individual land owners
- Community decentralized wastewater options
- Community centralized wastewater options
- Policy options?
- What fits our community?
- Pick the solution that best solves the problem
Decentralized Solutions: What are they?

- Soil based wastewater disposal systems
- Shared systems, 2 or 3 users
- Clustered systems, multiple users and multiple fields in a neighborhood
- Community systems, for whole village or subdivision

Graphic by WEF.org
Indirect Discharge Systems

- Soil based: (leachfields or sprayfields) for 6,500 gpd or more

- Community solution: centralized approach or decentralized approach

- Indirect systems designed for future growth must meet specific stringent environmental standards protecting water quality
On-Site and Cluster Options

http://wastewater.vt.gov/powhatisaww.htm

Regional Engineer’s Office, ANR:
http://wastewater.vt.gov/poregionaloffices.htm#romap

Ernie Christianson, Reg. Office Mgr.
Ernest.Christianson@state.vt.us

John Akielaszek, Indirect Discharge Mgr.
John.Akielaszek@state.vt.us
Complementary Projects: Thinking Outside the Box...

- Public drinking water system – where there are good soils, replacement of many wells with a public drinking water system will free up land for use in wastewater disposal

- Policy Changes –
  - Community pump out program
  - Pretreatment requirements
  - Grease traps and interceptors
Yikes! What about growth?

What can you do to have a successful project?

- Have an up to date & RPC approved town plan
- Have written, planned growth areas: village, downtown, neighborhood, or growth center
- Have a sewer ordinance with defined boundaries
- Have a coordinated zoning ordinance
- Identify opportunities to reduce loading to the system (i.e. green stormwater infrastructure)
- Decide what works for your community
Step II: Design
What should we do?

- Bond vote to ensure local support and funding
- Work out the design details with your consultant
- Work out final design details with individual landowners, including easements and legal issues
- Maintain public communication about the project: public meetings, articles, etc.
Step III: Construction
Let's do it!

- Get ready for construction.
  - Dust, noise, traffic.

- Keep community members informed and engaged with the project:
  - Front Porch Forum, Twitter, List Serve
  - Remind folks to be flexible & patient

- Going live with your project
  - Education about the new system
Step IV: Repayment
It’s not over yet...

- Loan payments
- Audits
- Budgeting to cover your financial needs
- Asset management for long term financial health
- Maintenance to keep costs down
Funding Options
Show me the money!

There are a number of project funding options available.

Your consultant will help you to navigate the funding requirements.
Facilities Engineering Division
State Revolving Fund (SRF)

- Clean Water SRF (CWSRF) – January P-List
  - Sewer & Stormwater (MS-4)
  - Drinking Water SRF (DWSRF)
- State & Tribal Assistance Grants (STAG)
  - Require US congressional earmark
- Planning Advances
  - May require VT legislative earmark
- State Grants: CSO, Phosphorus, Dry Weather Flows
  - Require VT legislative earmark
- On Site Water & Wastewater Loan Program

http://www.anr.state.vt.us/dec/fed/fed.htm
Facilities Engineering Division
Drinking Water SRF

- All public community water systems & non-profit non-community water systems are loan eligible
- Priority List is developed on an annual basis to prioritize projects based on public health risk and compliance with the Safe Drinking Water Act Regulations
- Standard rate and term is 3%, 20 years but systems qualifying for the disadvantaged system program may qualify for a rate and term as low as negative 3% over a 30 year period
- Planning loans are also available for municipal public community systems with populations <10,000, municipal non-transient, non-community (NTNC) water systems, private non-profit community water system with populations <10,000
- Currently there is no priority list for planning loans and loans are available on a first come first serve basis
- Planning loan rate and term is 0%, 5 years with delayed repayment provision so this loan can be consolidated with construction financing
For communities with populations of 10,000 or less according to the last census

Have both loans and grants for water and wastewater projects, however, not all communities and projects will qualify for grants

- Must have Median Household Income (MHI) below statewide MHI

User rates “post project” must support need for grant

Loan interest rate is lower if MHI is below the statewide MHI
Community Development Block Grant (ACCD)

- Gap funding for municipal infrastructure projects
- Must directly benefit Low & Moderate income (LMI) persons
- Federal compliance (NEPA, Davis Bacon, Procurement) and timing considerations
- Competitive Grant Process

http://accd.vermont.gov/strong_communities/opportunities/funding/vcdp
## Municipal Planning Grant (ACCD)

- **Annual grants up to $20,000 with small cash match**
  - up to $8,000 with no match
- **Eligibility:** RPC confirmed planning process
- **To be competitive:**
  - The need for the project is clearly articulated in town plan
  - Project includes public participation and outreach
  - Facility/infrastructure planning is in support of compact centers (villages/downtowns/walkable neighborhoods and not sprawl)
- **Contact MPG staff before beginning work plan/scope**
- **Applications due Sept 30. Grants awarded in December for 18 month projects**

[http://accd.vermont.gov/strong_communities/opportunities/funding/municipal_planning_grants](http://accd.vermont.gov/strong_communities/opportunities/funding/municipal_planning_grants)
**Other Funding or Co-Funding Sources:**

- VT Municipal Bond Bank
- VT Dept of Public Safety – Flood Hazard Mitigation Grants (for infrastructure damaged 3 or more times by storm event flooding)
- Efficiency Vermont (efficiency upgrades for existing infrastructure)
- VT Ecosystem Restoration Program Grants (green infrastructure)
- VT Home Ownership Centers (VT NeighborWorks) – loans & grants to low income households for onsite water and septic repairs
- USDA Rural Development Home Repair Loan and Grant Program [www.rurdev.usda.gov/NHVTHousing.html](http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/NHVTHousing.html)
How do we get started?

Let’s roll!

- Get selectboard to appoint a committee
- Identify the problem
- Meet with FED to make a plan
- Secure funding for planning

Contact: Winslow.Ladue@state.vt.us
### Contact Information Recap

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Email</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Winslow Ladue, FED Financial Program Mgr.</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Winslow.Ladue@state.vt.us">Winslow.Ladue@state.vt.us</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lynnette Whitney, FED PC Design Chief</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Lynnette.Whitney@state.vt.us">Lynnette.Whitney@state.vt.us</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emie Christianson, Reg. Office Mgr.</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Ernest.Christianson@state.vt.us">Ernest.Christianson@state.vt.us</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Akielaszek, Indirect Discharge Mgr.</td>
<td><a href="mailto:John.Akielaszek@state.vt.us">John.Akielaszek@state.vt.us</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert Morency, Jr., RCAP Solutions</td>
<td><a href="mailto:morency@rcapsolutions.org">morency@rcapsolutions.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhonda Shippee, USDA Rural Development</td>
<td><a href="mailto:rhonda.shippee@vt.usda.gov">rhonda.shippee@vt.usda.gov</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faith Ingulsrud, ACCD</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Faith.Ingulsrud@state.vt.us">Faith.Ingulsrud@state.vt.us</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Josh Hanford, ACCD</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Josh.Hanford@state.vt.us">Josh.Hanford@state.vt.us</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bryan Redmond, FED On Site</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Bryan.Redmond@state.vt.us">Bryan.Redmond@state.vt.us</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eric Law, FED DWSR</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Eric.Law@state.vt.us">Eric.Law@state.vt.us</a></td>
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