

# Waitsfield Wastewater Planning Project

Update #5

To: Waitsfield Selectboard  
From: Joshua Schwartz, MRV Planning District  
CC: Waitsfield Wastewater Planning Project Team Members  
Annie Decker-Dell'Isola, Waitsfield Town Admin.  
JB Weir, Waitsfield Planning & Zoning Admin.  
Randy Brittingham, Waitsfield Town Treasurer/Grant Admin.  
Bob Cook, Waitsfield Planning Commissioner  
Chach Curtis, Waitsfield Selectboard Member  
Robin Morris, Waitsfield Water Commissioner  
Jon Ashley, DuBois & King  
Date: August 11, 2023  
Re: Waitsfield Wastewater Planning Project Update #5

This serves as the fifth update on the Waitsfield Wastewater Planning Project, a task I'm carrying out in my role as Planning Coordination Team Lead (as articulated in the *Memorandum of Understanding between the Town of Waitsfield and the Mad River Valley Planning District for the Waitsfield Wastewater Planning Project*). The purpose of these updates is to ensure the Waitsfield Selectboard and Waitsfield Wastewater Planning Project Team Members are abreast of project status and developments, summarizing activities over the preceding weeks. This update follows Update #1 (4.14.23), Update #2 (5.5.23), Update #3 (5.26.23), and Update #4 (7.5.23).

## Recent Activities

### Project Coordination Team (PCT)

- Meetings: 7.10, 7.17, 7.25, 7.31, & 8.9 (upcoming: 8.16, 8.23, 8.30)
- Activities:
  - Meeting weekly to coordinate various project tasks and team activities.
  - Awaiting, and encouraging, feedback from DEC in order to finalize PER.
  - On 8.7 submitted public comments on DEC Intended Use Plan (IUP)

### Engineering/Technical Team (ETT)

- Meetings: 7.12, 7.19, 7.26, 8.1, 8.9 (Upcoming: 8.16, 8.23, 8.30)
- Activities:
  - D&K submitted the 90% PER to DEC on 5.31. Corresponding and awaiting DEC comments.
  - Awaiting feedback from state archeology regarding Environmental Information Document (EID), to initiate Finding of No Significant Impact (FNSI) hearing and results to be incorporated in final PER.
  - ETT, PCT, & D&K are working to finalize PER, to include the items listed above.
  - Provided research and analysis for correspondence with DEC staff regarding proposed ESA questions.
  - Design Phase
    - Joshua developed a workflow for the project's Design Phase, to commence with conclusion of PER and ESA approval from DEC.
    - Developing a data collection strategy for the purpose of tracking property info/outreach/etc.
    - Exploring possibility of an income survey, while also inquiring with DEC about possibility of utilizing the Waitsfield Census Designated Place (CDP), for the service area's Median Household Income (MHI).
  - Coordinating with D&K who is exploring disposal area calculations with DEC staff.

- Met with Charlie Hancock on 8.1, who shared his experiences developing the Town of Montgomery’s wastewater treatment approach. They passed a bond vote in 2020, developing capacity of 65-70k gpd, currently in the Design (Step II) phase, and have secured approx. 93% funding via grants. Takeaways: broad community visioning project kicked off effort (VCRD), Selectboard Chair serving as primary champion and communicator, great relationships with funders and regulators, started project on the front end of wastewater project requests across the state.

#### Funding Team (FT)

- Meetings: 7.13, 7.26
- Activities:
  - Draft FFY23/SFY24 Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) Intended Use Plan (IUP)
    - On 7.13 met with DEC staff (Lynette & Hugo) to discuss questions about DEC’s Intended Use Plan (IUP). Received indication that 90% PER comments were “substantial” and “forthcoming,” possibility of new funding eligibility requirements, requested additional info on Waitsfield’s Priority List application ranking, insight on Act 250 jurisdiction, and clarified that the stated “Waitsfield Pollution Control Grant eligibility amount of \$3,358,413” is not a secured amount.
    - On 7.17 sent an email to DEC inquiring about potential eligibility requirements for Waitsfield’s wastewater final design subsidy. Received a partial response on 8.4.
    - Corresponded with DEC staff regarding Waitsfield’s Wastewater Project Priority List (PPL) application. Waitsfield’s PPL application, drafted with the assistance of DEC staff on 1/31, had 15 more points than what is included in the IUP. Inquiring as to the difference.
    - Drafted a follow-up letter on the “Waitsfield Water and Wastewater Project Funding Eligibility by Median Income memo” originally submitted to DEC by Alice Peal on 2.2 (which no response had been received). Christine Sullivan submitted the follow-up letter to DEC on 7.27.
    - On 8.7 Annie & Joshua drafted and submitted public comments on the IUP re:
      - Section 8.3.2. Planning Subsidy, Section 9.1. Affordability Criteria/Median Household Income, & Pollution Control Priority and Planning List
    - Final IUP anticipated to be adopted mid-August 2023 with new loan applications to be processed under the new IUPs.
  - Step 2 Funding: CWSRF - Final Design
    - Waitsfield’s application for Step 2 funding for 30% Final Design (including draft ESA) was submitted on 6.29.
    - On 8/3 DEC staff (Hugo) submitted an inquiry to Jon Ashley about elements of the proposed ESA. ETT & PCT members researched and provided a draft response to Jon Ashley on 8.11, to be submitted to DEC.
  - Norther Borders Regional Commission’s (NBRC) Catalyst Program
    - NBRC notification of awards and notice to unsuccessful applicants expected by 8.31.
  - Sen. Sanders FY24 Congressional Discretionary Funding Request
    - Notification anticipated after October and prior to Spring 2024.

#### Public Outreach Team (POT)

- Meetings: 8.4 (Upcoming: 8.18)
- Activity:
  - <https://www.waitsfieldvt.us/waitsfield-wastewater-planning-project/>
  - Developing a strategy to gauge project interest and collect relevant data from property owners within the proposed Wastewater Service Area. To interrelate with broader community outreach and communication.

#### **Near-Term Activities**

- Finding of No Significant Impact (FNSI) Hearing (*a component of the required environmental review of the project*)
- Finalizing ESA
- Finalizing 100% PER
- Outreach Strategy