

# Waitsfield Wastewater Planning Project

Update #6

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: September 8, 2023  
Re: Waitsfield Wastewater Planning Project Update #6

This serves as the sixth 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), Update #4 (7.5.23), and Update #5 (8.11.23).

## Recent Activities

### Project Coordination Team (PCT)

- Meetings: 8.16, 8.23, 8.29, & 9.5 (upcoming: 9.11, 9.18, 9.25, & 10.2)
- Activities
  - Meeting weekly to coordinate various project tasks and team activities.
  - Met with DEC Water Investment Division Engineering Section staff on 8.23 for the purpose of ensuring understanding of the state's wastewater planning structure, permitting, design, & funding process. Resulted in better understanding of how to navigate the wastewater process as well as increased efficiency and coordination with state partners.
  - Awaiting finalization of the Draft FFY23/SFY24 CWSRF Intended Use Plan (IUP), of which Waitsfield submitted public comment on 8.7.
  - On 9.7 forwarded the *Waitsfield Water and Wastewater Project Funding Eligibility by Median Income | Follow-up* document, originally submitted to DEC Water Investment Division Financial Management & Loan Section on 7.27, to DEC Water Investment Division Engineering Section staff (per their request).
  - Upcoming Online Workshop
    - *Managerial & Administrative Aspects of Decentralized Community Wastewater Systems | 10.20*
      - Presented by RCAP Solutions & the VT Village Wastewater Solutions Initiative, this free event will provide a general overview of the steps and responsibilities when developing or operating a community wastewater system, administrative aspects of the VT Indirect Discharge Program, and will provide some lessons learned in the land acquisition process for infrastructure projects. This training is intended for active and potential board members, volunteer "task force" members, managers, and administrative staff, and wastewater operators.
      - <https://attendee.gototraining.com/r/4443059850797036804>

### Engineering/Technical Team (ETT)

- Meetings: 8.16, 8.23, 8.30, & 9.6 (Upcoming: 9.20, 9.27, & 10.4)
- Activities
  - On 8.28 DEC provided written comments on the Waitsfield 90% PER (submitted to DEC on 6.1).
  - After consolidating all comments, developing a strategy for responding, and providing initial responses to each, the ETT held a meeting with DEC Water Investment Division Engineering Section staff on 9.6. The meeting resulted in clarity on all outstanding items and insight on DEC's process.
  - Project engineer Jon Ashley (D&K) and PCT members are developing suggested edits to DEC's comments for review by the ETT at its meeting of 9.20. In addition, Jon Ashley is undertaking additional analysis and approaches on specific items to address DEC comments.
  - Learned about VT Department of Historic Preservation's (VDHP) new process for review of archeological and historic significance as it pertains to the development of municipal wastewater system. The new process will result in VDHP review through the project's design phase (Step II), previously Planning/PER phase (Step I). As such, the project can now proceed with the Environmental Information Document (EID) and initiate Finding of No Significant Impact (FNSI) hearing and results for inclusion in the final PER.
  - After the 8.28 selectboard discussion and action regarding funding for dataset management, ETT members are working on next steps (incl. clarifying elements of the proposed dataset and working with the vendor to ensure project delivery).
  - On 8.16 the ETT met with RCAP Solutions to explore the possibility of an income survey of residents within the proposed wastewater service area.

### Funding Team (FT)

- Meetings: 8.23
- Activities
  - *Town of Waitsfield Wastewater Project 2024 Funding Landscape*
    - Document developed by the Funding Team listing relevant funding avenues, including description, timing, key contacts, and links for more information. Attached.
  - FFY23/SFY24 Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) Intended Use Plan (IUP)
    - On 8.7 the Town of Waitsfield submitted public comments on the IUP.
    - On 8.23 DEC staff informed FT that the final IUP was "imminent."
  - 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. Discussion with DEC staff about proposed ESA elements has continued through the month of August.
    - Received feedback from DEC staff on 9.7 stating provisional ESA approval for Waitsfield's Step II loan. However, the amount of available subsidy is lower than anticipated. Based on 9.6 feedback from DEC staff regarding potential changes on the PER, exploring possibility of amending the ESA accordingly (with the goal of increasing subsidy amount).
  - Median Household Income Memo
    - Heard response from DEC staff at 9.6 meeting regarding the *Waitsfield Water and Wastewater Project Funding Eligibility by Median Income | Follow-up Document* submitted to DEC staff by Christine Sullivan on 7.27. DEC provided insight of their internal discussions. Anticipate a response in the near-term.
  - VT Pollution Control Grant
    - Scheduling a meeting with DEC staff to discuss 90% PER and VT Pollution Control Grant eligibility.
  - Northern Borders Regional Commission's (NBRC) Catalyst Program
    - On 8.22 informed that Waitsfield project wasn't selected for NBRC's Catalyst Program.
    - Followed up with Melissa Bounty, Exec. Director of Central VT Economic Development Corporation (CVEDC), on 8.24 to explore future funding options.
  - Sen. Sanders FY24 Congressional Discretionary Funding Request
    - On 8.18 notified that the Senate Appropriations Committee did not approve all of Sen. Sanders proposal, and as such Waitsfield's request didn't make the final cut. As stated by Sen. Sanders staff: "Please know that this had nothing to do with the quality of your application or its merits. We encourage you to consider applying in the future if there are opportunities to do so."

- USDA RD
  - On 8.18 reached out to VT USDA RD State Director and related staff to explore funding opportunities.
  - As recommended by DEC staff, submitted the 90% PER to Jon Harries, USDA RD State Engineer, on 9.7 for feedback and comments.

#### Public Outreach Team (POT)

- Meetings: 8.18 (Upcoming: 9.11)
- 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.
  - On 9.7 Joshua met with Linda Blasch, Planning & Development Coordinator with the Town of Jericho. Linda is serving as lead for her town's wastewater planning project, which is currently in the Feasibility Study stage.
  - Setting up meetings with communities across VT involved in wastewater planning projects (as encouraged by DEC staff).

#### **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

#### **Attachments**

- *Town of Waitsfield Wastewater Project 2024 Funding Landscape, 9.8.23 Document*
- *Managerial & Administrative Aspects of Decentralized Community Wastewater Systems | 10.20 Flyer*

# TOWN OF WAITSFIELD

## WASTEWATER PROJECT 2024 FUNDING LANDSCAPE

### Central VT 2024 Regional Project Priority List

- Central VT Economic Development Corporation (CVEDC) / Central VT Regional Planning Commission (CVRPC) joint effort to rank and score projects which contribute to economic development in the region. Ranking is part of NBRC Catalyst Grant scoring criteria.
- <https://www.cvedc.org/regional-project-priority-list>
- Timing
  - Oct/Nov. 2024 Application
- Key Contacts
  - Melissa Bounty, CVEDC Executive Director
  - Christian Meyer, CVRPC Executive Director

### Northern Borders Regional Commission (NBRC), Catalyst Program

- Federal appropriations in support economic development and infrastructure that align with NBRC's 5-Year Strategic Plan. Projects can't be more than 80% federal funded. One awardee per County. Award ceiling: \$1/\$3 million.
- Scoring criteria includes Regional Project Priority List for 2024
- <https://www.nbrc.gov/content/Catalyst>
- Timing
  - Letter of Interest and associated requirements due in early May. If invited to apply, portal opens in mid-May. Grant applications due in early June.
- Key Contact
  - Kristie Farnham, NBRC VT Program Manager

### Congressionally-Directed Spending (CDS)

- Senator Sanders
  - <https://www.sanders.senate.gov/congressional-directed-spending-requests/>
  - Timing
    - Application portal opens early February; inclusion on Sanders's list by early May;
  - Key Contact
    - Haley Pero, Office of U.S. Senator Bernie Sanders Outreach Director
- Senator Welch
  - <https://www.welch.senate.gov/congressionally-directed-spending-requests/>
  - Timing
    - Survey response due mid-March;

### Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) Priority List for Intended Use Plan (IUP)

- To obtain funding for all construction (Step III) work and certain CWSRF final design activities (Step 2), a project must either be included on the CWSRF priority list. Listed in Draft FFY23/SFY24 CWSRF IUP.
- <https://dec.vermont.gov/water-investment/water-financing/srf/priority-list>
- <https://dec.vermont.gov/water-investment/water-financing/srf/intended-use-plans>
- Timing
  - Application due early March; annual reapplication required for each funding cycle
- Key Contacts
  - Tom Brown, DEC Water Investment Division, Financial Management & Loan Section, Engineering Planning Advance Project Lead
  - Lynnette Claudon, DEC Water Investment Division, Engineering Section, Engineering Planning Advance Project Lead

# TOWN OF WAITSFIELD

## WASTEWATER PROJECT 2024 FUNDING LANDSCAPE

### CWSRF Step 2 Design Subsidy/Loan

- The Final Design phase is referred to as Step 2, where a project is developed from the conceptual stages (Step 1) to a point where the project is permitted and ready to be put out to bid (Step 3). The focus of the final design is the creation of the final design plans, the technical specifications, and the contract documents as well as the permit approvals and eligibility determinations.
- <https://dec.vermont.gov/water-investment/water-financing/srf/srfstep2>
- Timing
  - Design funding application due in late June/early July;
- Key Contacts
  - Tom Brown, DEC Water Investment Division, Financial Management & Loan Section, Engineering Planning Advance Project Lead
  - Lynnette Claudon, DEC Water Investment Division, Engineering Section, Engineering Planning Advance Project Lead

### VT Pollution Control Grants

- Grants amounts are established through a set of public health, environmental, and affordability-based criteria that are used to determine state grant funding up to a maximum of 35% of eligible cost. The funding source for these grants is appropriated at the discretion of the legislature and cannot be guaranteed by the program. If sufficient state capital funds cannot be secured to meet full grant eligibility, other funds may be provided to offset the shortfall in grant dollars, such as a CWSRF loan. The PC Grant budget for SFY24 is \$8M, as listed in the Draft FFY23/SFY24 CWSRF IUP.
- <https://dec.vermont.gov/water-investment/water-financing/vt-pollution-control-grants>
- Key Contact
  - Lynnette Claudon, DEC Water Investment Division, Engineering Section, Engineering Planning Advance Project Lead

### USDA Rural Development

- Grants and loans for public waste disposal infrastructure in rural communities. Various potential funding options.
- <https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/water-environmental-programs>
- Key Contacts
  - Sarah Waring, VT & NH State Director
  - Misty Sinsigalli, Area Director
  - Eric Law, Community Programs Director
  - Jon Harries, State Engineer

### VT Agency of Commerce & Community Development (ACCD) Community Recovery & Revitalization

- Linked to 2022 ARPA money; unsure how much money remains or if it will be refunded. Best suited to construction funding – previous discussion resulted in feedback that the project design stage we were in did not fit their criteria.
- <https://accd.vermont.gov/economic-development/funding-incentives/community-recovery-and-revitalization-program>
- Timing
  - Rolling application process until funds gone. 4<sup>th</sup> round of funding announced 9/7/23
- Key Contact
  - Angela Farrington, VT Economic Progress Council (VEPC) Programs Manager

# RCAP Solutions Online Workshop with the Vermont Village Wastewater Solutions Initiative

This virtual workshop is being offered through the  
GoToTraining platform. There is no cost to attend.

## Wednesday, September 20, 2023

6:00 PM – 8:00 PM

### Managerial & Administrative Aspects of Decentralized Community Wastewater Systems

#### Registration Link:

<https://attendee.gototraining.com/r/4443059850797036804>

**This course is pending approval for 2 Training Contact Hours (TCHs) for Vermont Wastewater Operators**

#### **Workshop Description**

Development of a decentralized community wastewater solution involves a significant amount of technical work by hydrogeologists, engineers, and environmental specialists to determine the overall layout and physical components of such a system. Small communities tend to rely heavily on consultants to guide them through the steps in this process, but the community should also be active in many of the "non-technical" actions and decisions required - such as choosing a management structure, understanding the permit conditions to be followed, and negotiations for land or easements. This session will provide a general overview of the steps and responsibilities when developing or operating a community wastewater system, administrative aspects of the Vermont Indirect Discharge Program, and will provide some lessons learned in the land acquisition process for infrastructure projects.

This training is intended for active and potential board members, volunteer "task force" members, managers, and administrative staff, and wastewater operators.

#### **Questions? Contact John Kiernan**

Phone: (802) 377-5938

Email: [jkiernan@rcapsolutions.org](mailto:jkiernan@rcapsolutions.org)

**Before the workshop, please review the attached "[Guidelines of Attendee Participation](#)" for earning TCHs.**

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*These workshops are made possible through funding provided by the US EPA.*

*RCAP Solutions, Inc. is an equal opportunity provider and employer and does not discriminate against qualified disabilities.*

## **Guidelines of Attendee Participation**

*RCAP Solutions offers virtual training using the GoToTraining Platform.  
The following is a guideline for virtual attendees:*

### **TROUBLES SIGNING IN?**

- **Open Google Chrome, Microsoft Edge or Mozilla Firefox** browser (GoToTraining is designed to work with these only)
- Navigate to <https://www.goto.com/training/join> and Enter the 9-Digit ID from your reminder email, and your email address
- You MAY need to click the “OK, I’m all set button” which hides at the bottom of the screen or hit the TAB button a couple of times
- You can download the GoToTraining app on your PC or smart device:
  - <https://support.goto.com/training/help/how-do-i-download-gototraining>
- Respond to the reminder email to ask for help

### **TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS:**

- Log-in using your unique join link that is emailed to you (this is how you are recognized by the platform)
  - **Do not share this link or use someone else’s link**
- Only 1 attendee per device (The platform keeps track of ALL participation)
  - Prior permission must be granted for exceptions by the Organizer
  - *(Contact the Organizer by Responding to the registration confirmation or reminder email)*
- Device must have speakers (can use headphones if speakers do not work)
  - Only some classes require a microphone, you can always communicate by chat
  - Ask for assistance in the chat if you need to troubleshoot audio issues
  - If no audio, click **settings** (gear icon)>**Audio**> and try each of the options under “**Speakers**”

### **TCH REQUIREMENTS:**

- Log-in to the session from your unique JOIN button that is emailed to you
- One person per device (prior permission must be given for exceptions if allowed by the board)
- Attend at least 90% of the schedule time
- Submit at least 75% of the polls and or tests that are launched
- Complete the evaluation (launched after the session AND sent in a follow-up email)
- Let an organizer know if you have technical difficulties with any of the above
- **TCH Certificates will be emailed to you within 2 weeks (if you are eligible)**

**If you are not familiar with the GoToTraining platform, sign on early so there is plenty of time for troubleshooting. Once in the session, the webinar organizers can answer any questions.**