
1. INTRODUCTION

The Town of Waitsfield's Planning Commission received a FY10 Municipal Planning Grant from the Vermont Department of Housing and Community Affairs (DHCA) to update an existing survey of property owners and consider decentralized wastewater treatment options for the Waitsfield Village and Irasville areas, located along Vermont Route 100 (Figure 1).

The objectives of the study are to:

- Update the existing survey of water supply and wastewater treatment infrastructure;
- Re-evaluate wastewater treatment and dispersal capacity and needs in light of the municipal water project now under construction; and
- Evaluate wastewater management options and develop a summary report.

Stone Environmental Inc. (Stone) was selected by the Town of Waitsfield to conduct this study. This final report provides information on each of the objectives listed above.

1.1. Project Background

The Town of Waitsfield's Selectboard requested that the Planning Commission review the potential options for wastewater management in Waitsfield Village and Irasville, following a failed bond vote for a proposed centralized wastewater collection, treatment, and dispersal system to serve Irasville at Town Meeting in 2008. The Planning Commission appointed a Wastewater Committee to undertake this effort in the spring of 2010. The following paragraph, from the Town's Request for Proposals to complete this project, describes Waitsfield's ongoing search for wastewater management solutions:

For well over a decade, the Town of Waitsfield has explored options for providing wastewater needs in the town's center (Waitsfield Village Center and Irasville)...An organized wastewater system would replace currently inadequate and failing septic systems and increase capacity for new development within the Mad River Valley's commercial and residential core. Waitsfield's 2004 *Wastewater Facilities Plan* focused on a proposal for a centralized wastewater collection system providing significant wastewater capacity at a projected cost of \$12 million in two phases. Due to the Plan's capacity design, the feasibility of decentralized options to supply wastewater capacity did not receive detailed study. A town bond vote in 2008 for the proposed centralized collection and treatment system serving only Irasville failed by a significant margin due to concern over substantial initial and ongoing costs. Despite this setback, the need for wastewater management continues to be paramount... Examination of decentralized wastewater options as an alternative or part of a phased implementation of a centralized system is an important step in enabling Waitsfield to move forward.

1.2. Local Outreach

Although the scope of this planning grant did not require local outreach, it was nonetheless an important component of the work of the project. The Waitsfield Planning Commission's Wastewater Committee actively participated in and oversaw the project; the members are all residents of Waitsfield. The members of the Wastewater Committee are listed in Appendix A. The committee met regularly during the course of the project to take part in detailed discussions on the study scope and results. Members of the Wastewater Committee wrote columns and letters to the editor for publication in the Valley Reporter announcing the property owner survey and inviting participation (Appendix B), and contacted or met individually with key property owners to ensure that their opinions were reflected in the survey results.

The property owner survey questionnaire was the primary outreach tool utilized in this project. Two versions of the survey were developed and distributed to the study area property owners:

- Survey I was distributed to property owners who responded to the property owner survey regarding water and wastewater infrastructure distributed by Phelps Engineering, Inc. in November 2001. This version of the survey asked for information about any changes to water and wastewater systems since the last survey, and about the property owners' plans (or desires) for the future.
- Survey II was distributed to property owners who did not respond to the 2001 survey. This version of the survey asked for basic information about existing water and wastewater systems, and about the property owners' plans (or desires) for the future.

The results of the surveys are summarized in Tables 1 (Survey I) and 2 (Survey II). Question responses that were identical between the two survey versions are included in Table 1; these responses are also tabulated separately within the Survey II summary for respondents to that survey only. The overall response rate for the surveys was 44%, or 68 out of 154 surveys mailed. Figure 2 summarizes the geographical distribution of respondents to both version of the survey. Details of the survey responses are described further in Section 3 of this report.