

PRESS RELEASE

To: *The Valley Reporter*
The Times Argus
From: Waitsfield Municipal Water & Wastewater Systems Taskforce
Date: November 5, 2001
Subj: Village Water & Wastewater Systems Survey

The Waitsfield Municipal Water & Wastewater Systems Taskforce is conducting a survey of property owners within the proposed service area for public water supply and wastewater disposal. The purpose of the survey is to identify the locations and types of existing systems serving the properties in Waitsfield Village and Irasville. This information will help the community to plan the right size and type of systems with the best economic value.

The survey cover letter emphasizes that information gathering and not enforcement is the intent of the questionnaire. Taskforce member Anne Marie DeFreest noted that "We are not seeking this information to identify problem systems or call attention to any one person's system. The purpose of the project is to avoid the possibility of more costly enforcement by federal and state agencies ten to twenty years into the future."

According to town administrator Bill Bryant, "The survey will help us identify properties with the greatest need for what is expected to be a limited size public sewage system and help us better understand how many private wells and springs are in harm's way because they are too close to sewage disposal systems." He emphasized the importance of the project to protect drinking water, to lessen the level of pollutants in the Mad River, and to provide fire protection for the Town's village areas.

The survey questionnaire asks property owners to describe and sketch the locations of their water supply and wastewater disposal systems. Assistance in completing the survey is available from the taskforce. The taskforce is requesting completed surveys to be returned to the town office by November 20th.

The taskforce was appointed by the Selectboard to assist Phelps Engineering, Inc. of Middlebury in the current feasibility studies being funded through a revolving loan program of the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources. Members of the taskforce are Anne Marie DeFreest, Ted Joslin, Charlie Nagelschmidt, Dee Pierce, Susan Roy, Pat Thompson, Mary Schramke, Selectman Roy Hadden, Planning Commissioner Jeff Knight, and Town Administrator Bill Bryant.

The feasibility studies seek to identify a source for a public water supply, the location and treatment process for wastewater disposal, and the costs and financing options for the systems. Selectman Roy Hadden explained "The most commonly asked question about this project is 'how much will this cost me.' We will work hard on the funding aspect to assure that user fees are affordable and that property tax support is limited."