

Waitsfield Community Wastewater Loan Program Development and Implementation

STONE
ENVIRONMENTAL
100% EMPLOYEE-OWNED

Services / Expertise

Water Resources Management
Hydrogeologic Investigations
Decentralized Wastewater Management
Community Wastewater Feasibility
Permitting Support
Public Outreach and Facilitation
ArcGIS Analysis

Markets

Municipal Clients
Regional Planning Commissions

Project Location

Waitsfield, Vermont

Duration

2010-2016

Project Owner

Town of Waitsfield, Vermont

Project ID#

10-2345, 11-2503, 14-204

Project Manager

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The pilot community wastewater treatment system's leachfield under construction in Irasville

FOLLOWING a failed bond vote at Town Meeting in March 2008 for a proposed centralized wastewater collection, treatment, and dispersal system to serve Irasville, the Town of Waitsfield's Planning Commission appointed a Wastewater Committee to undertake a decentralized wastewater study funded by a FY10 Municipal Planning Grant from the Vermont Department of Housing and Community Affairs (DHCA). Stone was retained by the Committee to update an earlier survey of property owners and to consider decentralized wastewater treatment options for the Historic Waitsfield Village and Irasville areas. This effort was undertaken in recognition that a centralized wastewater treatment solution was unlikely to move forward, but that significant wastewater treatment and capacity challenges still existed in the two village areas. With the committee members, Stone explored options for using a decentralized approach to wastewater management in a situation where the high costs of sewers created barriers to implementation.

Following the planning project, Stone worked collaboratively with Town representatives, engineers, and Birchline to create a community loan fund that passes Clean Water State Revolving Fund (SRF) loans to groups of property owners for use in constructing decentralized wastewater treatment systems to solve problems and create capacity. Our team's support led to successful bond votes funding a pilot project in 2012, and a second phase for up to five additional projects in 2014. A partner developed the financial program and 20-year financial plan, which enabled US EPA State & Tribal Assistance Grants and the Vermont Clean Water State Revolving Funds to be passed through the Town to construct fund wastewater improvements on private property.



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Stone staff supported development of an update to the Facilities Plan required for the Town to receive CWSRF and State and Tribal Assistance Grant (STAG) funding. Stone developed NEPA compliance documentation including an Environmental Information Document (EID) with a partner's coordination of required engineering, archaeology, growth impact, and natural resource evaluations. The pilot project received a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) from U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region 1 in 2014.

The pilot project was constructed in 2015-16, as were improvements to four additional properties. The final design engineering, permitting, and construction oversight of these improvements were primarily completed by Peter Lazorchak prior to his joining Stone in early 2019. At Stone, Peter continues to support system owners with permit reporting, compliance, and engineering oversight.

Through the Waitsfield Community Loan Fund Program, the Town, its Committee, and the planning, consulting, and engineering team was successful in funding, permitting and building significant decentralized wastewater capacity, enabling local businesses to expand and redevelop their properties. This expanded capacity serves two new breweries (Lawson's Finest Liquids including a 25,000 SF brewery and tasting room, and Cousins Brewing), the Mad River Food Hub (a small processing facility supporting the local food industry), a restaurant, the local movie theater and café, a new Town Office, and several smaller office-based businesses. We believe that the challenging work completed in Waitsfield will serve as a model for similar smaller, unsewered communities throughout Vermont.



Infographic summarizing the Waitsfield Community Wastewater Loan Fund Program, courtesy of Birchline Planning.

