Vermont Rural Water Association Adjusts to Funding Losses
by Shaun Fielder, VRWA

For those of you who attended the business luncheon at our annual conference in Fairlee you heard my comments on the potential loss of a significant source of our funding. Unfortunately we have a final decision on this issue. Due to a number of political factors and a very tight national budget, the administrator of EPA has made a determination not to fund the national rural water EPA programs. You need to know, our relationship and support from EPA Region 1 is very good and many folks working out of the Boston office are very concerned about this issue as we are. This funding cut has resulted in the loss of two of our field positions and associated services as of May 15. The two programs impacted are training and technical assistance as managed by Paula Jackson and source protection planning as managed by Eric Hanson.

This will affect the delivery of certain services we have offered for years. Water operator continuing education training and certain technical assistance as offered by Paula is being phased out now. Fortunately we will keep Paula on board. She will offer a limited amount of on-site assistance through June and finish her complement of training as scheduled through June 30. On July 1, she will move into the position to be vacated by Erik Peterson. Erik will be leaving our association for another opportunity out of state; we are sorry to see him go and wish him our best. Erik has been with us since July of 2003 and has worked closely with many community water systems in our southern service region. Paula is looking forward to continuing work with those systems. The EPA program loss will result in reductions of training hours offered for the remainder of this year. Phil Acebo will continue to be involved with water operator continuing education.

The other program affected is source protection planning as managed by hydrogeologist, Eric Hanson. His work focus has been to assist individual systems with source protection plans and updates of the noted items. He will continue to offer these services in the near future, but on a fee basis. In addition Eric will offer a number of other technical assistance services for a fee. Please contact Eric for additional details.

We all know change is a part of the water and wastewater industry. We are adjusting to the program losses accordingly and will do our best to keep critically needed services offered to you folks in the field. We know you need this assistance to keep up with all the demands of the Safe Drinking Water Act and Clean Water Act. Now more than ever we need your continued support. If you are not a member join us now. For all of you, please keep those letters of support and concern on this issue coming to me. We are involved in an ongoing effort at the national congressional level to ensure rural water funding is brought back to a full compliment for fiscal year 2008. That effort is proceeding in a very positive fashion. If you have any questions on this situation, please contact me directly at 802-660-4988 extension 315 or email me at sfielder@vtruralwater.org VRWA will get through this funding lag period and I am confident we will be stronger in the end.

Being Prepared at the Enosburg Falls Wastewater Treatment Facility
by Wayne Graham, VRWA

On August 28, 2006, a quiet summer day at the Enosburg Wastewater Treatment Facility quickly evolved into an emergency event. Alert wastewater personnel, Chief Operator Rodney Allen, Sr. and Operator Jody Benoit, noticed a fuel oil smell and red liquid on top of the water entering the wastewater facility’s treatment tanks. The fast acting operators immediately dropped oil-absorbing “booms” into the wastewater stream. These “booms” are long cylindrical floating filters, that are designed to capture petroleum-based liquids but not water.

The rest of the Enosburg WWTF’s Emergency Action Plan was rapidly implemented. Calls were made to the State of Vermont Emergency Response, VT DEC Wastewater Management, the Enosburg Fire Department and an environmental service company.

The Fire Department and wastewater operators deployed even more “booms” to capture all of the fuel oil. The environmental service company arrived onsite within a few hours and assisted in the clean up and monitoring of the tanks for residual oils. The estimated fuel oil spill to the wastewater facility was 100 gallons. The waste accumulated (fuel oil and oil saturated “booms”) filled 10 fifty-five gallon drums. Pristine

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I wanted to take some time to officially express my gratitude to the Vermont Rural Water Association for their continued efforts to assist the Village of Johnson in training and field support. As you know, the Village of Johnson underwent quite a project during the summer of 2006 with a $4.5 million dollar systemwide upgrade to our water supply. We had several minor complications throughout the project and are still dealing with a few technical issues, but overall this state-of-the-art water treatment plant, piping system, and water tank will provide a safe and reliable drinking water supply for years to come to the Village.

The Village unfortunately did not have good clear records of the existing infrastructure which lead to several headaches, as you know. With a water system upwards of 70 years in age or better, it was tough getting information on the whereabouts of the old pipes including water, sewer, and other various underground facilities. (In walks Brent Desranleau!) I want to express my appreciation on behalf of the Village for Brent’s assistance in these and other issues that came to pass last summer. He saved valuable time and money for our project with his help. I did not document the number of times we utilized his services and his common sense approach to these issues. He always treated the problem like it was his own; no matter what the weather, he was always there.

You can see that the employees at Vermont Rural Water take pride in their jobs and I hope Vermont Rural Water takes pride in these employees.

Sincerely,

Steve Towne
Public Works Superintendent, Village of Johnson

The Richmond Fire District #1 would like to thank your organization and especially Eric Hanson for preparing our source protection plan. We appreciate all the work that he did preparing the plan. We know that it took a lot of time and effort to prepare it and we never could have done it without him.

Thank you again,

Ann Root
Clerk/Treasurer, Richmond Fire District #1
Another Successful VRWA Conference

On April 25-26, VRWA held its Annual Conference at the Lake Morey Resort in Fairlee. Over 200 attendees enjoyed a day of sessions, exhibits, and good discussions with operators, managers, regulators, vendors and other attendees.

Although April’s poor weather prevented the golf tournament from taking place this year, the 25th Anniversary Barbeque was held Wednesday evening and a great time was had by all.

Floyd LaFoe of the Bellows Falls Water Department was this year’s recipient of the Tony Torchia VRWA Special Recognition Award. Floyd retired this year after many long years of service and many of his co-workers were on hand to honor his long years of excellent service. Congratulations to Floyd!

Floyd LaFoe receives the Tony Torchia Award at VRWA’s annual conference at Lake Morey.

During the conference luncheon on April 26, we honored our nine founding members: Fair Haven Water, Fairlee Water Department, Forcier, Aldrich & Associates, Montgomery Water Department, North Bennington Water Department, Springfield Water & Sewer, Town of West Rutland, Williston Fire District #1, and Wilmington Water District. These systems have been with us since the beginning and we are grateful for their ongoing support of our programs.

We also recognized 74 other systems who had reached their 20, 15, 10 and 5 year anniversaries as members of VRWA.

Many thanks to our members for making our work possible!

Friends of the Mad River & VRWA Host Groundwater Forum

The Mad River Valley, which includes the towns of Fayston, Waitsfield, Warren, Moretown, and Duxbury, is home to some of the most beautiful sites in Vermont. The river has its own group of passionate watchdogs, the Friends of the Mad River, that conduct yearly tests to determine water quality and promote recreation along the river. On the evening of April 2, the FOTMR and VRWA hosted a Public Forum on Groundwater in the Mad River Valley at the Waitsfield Elementary School.

Forum participants learned more about the relationship between groundwater and surface water in the area, as well as steps they could take to protect the local watershed and conserve water. Local residents were also encouraged to sign up for well testing as part of a survey of the area’s groundwater.

Both of our source protection specialists, Eric Hanson and Liz Royer, were on hand to explain the hydrogeology of the region and to help residents better understand how their water resources can be protected.

Residents of the Mad River Valley gathered at a packed forum to discuss their groundwater.

Vermont Celebrates Drinking Water Week: "Drinking Water--Past, Present, and Future"
by Elizabeth Walker, VRWA

Every year Vermont celebrates National Drinking Water Week and this year was no exception. During the week of May 5th, students throughout Vermont celebrated with performances by the National Theatre for Children and ended with the annual Drinking Water Fair on the State House lawn in Montpelier on May 11th.

The performances by the National Theatre for Children focused on drinking water. This year’s performance was titled 'Boat Load of Trouble' and taught children the importance of source protection and water conservation.

Another annual event that coincides with Drinking Water Week is the poster contest. Student's from grades 4-6 are asked to submit artwork based on the year’s theme. The artwork is judged and winners receive recognition and 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place winners receive a savings bond. In addition, the 3 winners get their poster printed and distributed. This year, Kerisha Dexter placed first, and Meagan McGrath placed second. Both are 6th graders at Barre Town Middle and Elementary School, and they received $200 and $100 savings bonds respectively. Third place went to Kayla Weeden, a fifth grader at Shrewsbury Mountain School, and she received a $50 savings bond.

Drinking Water Week concluded with the Water Fair held in Montpelier, where this year over 200 students enjoyed drinking water-related games, performances by the National Theatre for Children, the Count Bracey Orchestra, the WaterCycle, the American Society of Dowsers, several educational displays, and Morse Farm Maple Kettle Corn. This year Governor Douglas presented

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“booms” placed in front of the outfall structure showed no oil residue; therefore, no fuel oil was released to the Missisquoi River.

If the operators had not been prepared for this event, the outcome would have been very different. Several sensitive receptors were identified within the area around the wastewater facility, including water supplies, surface waters and sensitive ecosystems. This fuel oil spill, if not contained, would have definite effects on the environment and aquatic life.

The key to this great success story was emergency preparedness. The operators knew what to do and the proper agencies to call. This entire emergency response was activated immediately. A quote from Mr. Allen sums up the progressive and successful operations at the Enosburg Wastewater Facility, "We want to keep our treatment plant microorganisms healthy and, even more importantly, we are protectors of the waterways."

Royer Receives National Award Nomination

Liz Royer, a Source Protection Specialist with VRWA, has been nominated by the National Rural Water Association for a Peer Leadership Award. Nominees are chosen by their peers in other states and the nomination recognizes Royer’s outstanding efforts to protect drinking water supplies across Vermont.

Working closely with community stakeholders, Royer crafts community and watershed-wide protection plans that help ensure drinking water remains uncontaminated while balancing the concerns of residents, farmers, businesses and other stakeholders.

As a representative of VRWA, Royer handles the technical aspects of the plan, acts as liaison for the community’s steering committee, and assists with plan implementation. The Peer Leadership Award will be awarded at the National Rural Water Association’s annual training event on June 13 in Reno, NV. Good luck, Liz!

Liz Royer, VRWA
Understanding the Connection Between Groundwater and Surface Water

by Eric Hanson, VRWA

Lately, the Vermont Rural Water Association has been invited to speak at watershed association meetings regarding the interconnection between groundwater and surface water.

Historically, watershed groups have concentrated on surface water issues such as water quality sampling of rivers and the planting of stabilizing vegetation along rivers and streams to reduce erosion and promote healthier riparian areas. These are laudable pursuits, which should be continued.

However, many of these watershed groups have also become keenly aware of the interconnection between groundwater and surface water and have realized that the understanding of this relationship is a key element in furthering the goals of surface water quality and quantity protection.

All water on earth and within the earth’s atmosphere is part of the hydrologic cycle, also known as the water cycle. That is, water that exists now as vapor in a cloud may eventually become precipitation (snow or rain), soil moisture (how often is the soil bone dry when you dig a hole!), groundwater and also surface water. This is shown in a very simple way in the following diagram:

The Water Cycle.

Therefore, groundwater doesn’t always exist as groundwater, just as surface water (rivers and lakes) doesn’t always exist as surface water. The water cycle is constant, with no beginning or end.

Given Vermont’s moist climate, where rainfall and snowmelt are abundant, groundwater continues to be plentiful within the state. Groundwater in Vermont is also an important contributor to surface water bodies and streamflow, as many groundwater discharge areas (where groundwater once again becomes surface water) are along Vermont’s wetlands, lakes, streams, and rivers. Therefore, groundwater cannot continue to be looked at as a completely separate entity from surface water.

The vast majority of Vermont’s public water systems obtain their source water from groundwater, primarily through wells completed in fractured bedrock, sand and gravel or, in some cases, naturally flowing springs. Approximately two-thirds of all Vermonter’s rely on groundwater for their drinking water supply. As development increases, more and more demands are being placed on our groundwater resources. Because of the interconnection between groundwater and surface water, increasing care must be taken to ensure that groundwater withdrawals do not adversely affect surface water flows,
Stage 2 Rule: Disinfectants and Disinfectant Byproducts

by Phil Acebo, VRWA

The Stage 2 Rule for Disinfectants and Disinfectant Byproducts (DBP) is taking effect and will impact Community Water Systems (CWS) and Non-transient Non-community (NTNC) water systems that use water that is treated with a disinfectant other than ultraviolet light.

The Stage 2 Rule addresses disinfectant byproducts (DBPs) by focusing on two groups of DBPs:

1. Total trihalomethanes (TTHM), which include chloroform, bromoform, bromodichloromethane, and dibromochloromethane.

2. Five haloacetic acids (HAA5) including monochloroacetic-, dichloroacetic-, trichloroacetic-, monobromoacetic-, and dibromoacetic acid.

As many of you are aware, you have been testing for DBP’s under the Stage 1 Rule for the past few years. However, that testing looked at the average results across all the specific sampling sites and didn’t produce a snapshot of the entire system.

Now, under Stage 2, the rule will scrutinize DBPs at each compliance monitoring location and require each location to test under a maximum contaminant level (MCL) to better protect customers’ health. This new requirement will replace the system-wide averaging that was done under Stage 1.

Each system will complete an Initial Distribution System Evaluation (IDSE) to identify sites that may have high DBP. Once high concentration sampling sites are identified, each site will be monitored and a Locational Running Annual Average (LRAA) will be calculated. As I mentioned earlier, this is a change from using the Running Annual Average (RAA).

Monitoring each location individually will give us better data about DBP. For a system to be in compliance, all testing data must not exceed the MCL for that particular byproduct. The MCL under Stage 2 is 80 ppb for TTHM and 60 ppb for HAA5.

There are four types of IDSEs:

1. Very Small Systems Waiver (VSS), which in Vermont currently applies to groundwater systems serving less than 500
2. 40/30 Certification (40/30)
3. Standard Monitoring Plan (SMP)
4. System Specific Study (SSS)

Most surface water systems in Vermont will fall into the SMP category, whereas groundwater systems will likely qualify for either the VSS waiver or the 40/30 certification. The details for each IDSE vary and I won’t go into specifics here.

The important thing to remember is that systems serving a population between 10,000 and 49,000 (Schedule 3) must have their IDSE completed by October 1, 2007, and those systems serving a population of fewer than 10,000 (Schedule 4) must complete an IDSE by April 1, 2008.

And where do consecutive systems fit under the Stage 2 Rule? I’ll use my water system, Deep Rock Fire District #8 in Barre Town, to highlight the requirements for consecutives. We are a consecutive with Barre City; they are our wholesaler. Because we are a part of Barre City’s combined distribution system, we fall under Barre City’s due date for our IDSE report, which makes our deadline October 1, 2007. As you can see, there is a relationship between the wholesaler and its consecutives, so communication will be necessary for all involved.

Because due dates for the submittal of an IDSE report under the Stage 2 DBP Rule are fast approaching, Jeannine McCrumb of the Water Supply Division and I have been touring the state giving workshops on the new rule. The workshops have focused on the development of Standard Monitoring Plans. We’ve tried to cover all the regions of our state by offering classes in Burlington, St. Johnsbury, and Rutland.

If you have missed these classes, don’t panic; we’ll have one more class this fall. Keep an eye on our quarterly training calendar for details or visit VRWA’s website at www.vtruralwater.org for a current list of all upcoming courses.

For those systems looking for one on one help, contact Jeannine McCrumb at the Water Supply Division at 800-823-6500 or call VRWA at 800-660-4988 ext 337.
Vermont Celebrates Drinking Water Week: “Drinking Water-- Past, Present, and Future”

Drinking Water Week, Continued from page 3.

the drinking water week proclamation, shared his vision for the importance of clean drinking water, presented the awards to the poster contest winners and recognized the winners from the water tasting contest.

For this year’s Drinking Water Tasting contest applicants were placed in three categories; Surface Water Public Community, Ground-water Public Community and the “Best Overall Drinking Water in the State.” Our esteemed panel of judges chose the best tasting among the categories. Competition was tough, with overall best drinking water awarded to Flood Brook Union High School, operated by John Morse. Best Surface Water was awarded to Champlain Water District. Best Groundwater was awarded to Georgia Station, operated by Rocco Graziano and Claude Chevalier.


A special thanks goes out to the many volunteers who assisted this year. Without their help, this fair would not have been possible. If you wish to participate in or contribute to next year’s events or would like to help out in the planning process, please contact Elizabeth Walker at 800-556-3792 x 321 or email ewalker@vturalwater.org

Governor Douglas takes part in drinking water taste contest.

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