

## Top Notch Event for VRWA Conference and Trade Show

Shaun Fielder, Executive Director

It was another successful conference and trade show for VRWA on May 6 & 7 at Lake Morey Resort in Fairlee. We kicked it off with a great weather day for our golf tournament on Wednesday afternoon. What a great day of sun following the tough winter conditions we all faced.

On Thursday we were pleased to host the 2015 Vermont Drinking Water Week Taste Contest. The overall winner was Champlain Water District. VRWA looks forward to assisting CWD with entry of their water into the Great American Taste Contest in February 2016 in Washington. An inaugural event for us was our meter toss and congrats to the following winners for their long distance tosses; Brain Fletcher (Derby Line) and Ashley Lucht (VT DEC Facilities Division). Thursday showcased a series of training sessions focused on building community sustainability. Thanks to the following for their involvement leading training sessions; Eric Fitch (Purpose Energy), Rod Lamothe & Eileen Toomey (Endyne), Jim Plouffe (VT USDA Rural Development), Eric Law & Winslow Ladue (VT Facilities Engineering Division), Bob Giroux (Vermont Municipal Bond Bank), Ellen Parr Doering &

*(Continued on page 7)*

## Preparing for a Sanitary Survey: Inspecting your Tank/Reservoir

Matt Guerino, Training Specialist

Part of the Sanitary Survey Process is to inspect your storage facility, tank or reservoir. For this article let's just identify your storage facility as a tank. It's the day before the Sanitary Survey and what do you do? You inspect your source(s), you visit your treatment facility and you inspect your tank(s). This article will specifically talk about what you may want to inspect at your tank.

First things first, after a long, cold winter the last thing you will want to do is slug through two plus feet of snow. Make sure the path(s) to the tank(s) is clear, that includes brush and tree growth. You don't want to have to discuss with the Sanitary Surveyor how you would clear a path to your tank(s) if you had an emergency.

Now that you made it to your tank(s), walk the entire perimeter. Look for anything that is out of place, could cause damage to your tank(s), and or could cause long term issues to the stability of your tank(s). You should make sure you can access each hatch for your tank(s).

The gaskets should be intact and have no signs of outside intrusions (make sure that insects haven't found their way past your gaskets). Here's a lesser known fact, the Water Supply Rule identifies that there should be "ease of access into your tank(s)"; 48 bolts attaching your hatch is not ease of access. If you are upgrading your tank make sure you get a hatch with hinges and a locking mechanism (see Appendix A, Section 7.0.9 of the VT WSR). The Surveyor will want to see into each hatch. This can become difficult on very cold days as the gasket could freeze to itself and crack. Either way, don't be surprised when they ask you to open the hatch to the tank(s).

The other area of concern that regularly comes up during a sanitary survey is the overflow. There is a section in Appendix A Section 7.0.8 of the VT Water Supply Rule (go ahead look it up!) that discusses how overflows shall be constructed. First, and I say this because it has happened before, know where your tank overflow is located. Next, make sure there is a 24 mesh screen at the end of the overflow pipe, and that it is tightly secured to the overflow pipe.

*(Continued on page 7)*

## Who We Are

Since 1982, Vermont Rural Water Association has supported water and wastewater systems across the state. We provide many services, including training, source water protection planning, and onsite assistance.

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# Letters

Good morning Shaun,

On Tuesday, March 24th, I had the pleasure of attending Waste Water Collection Systems Maintenance. Although I typically don't take the time to acknowledge these courses. I thought this course was so outstanding that I commented to Wayne Graham at the end of the seminar that this was by far the best and most informative seminar I have attended in many years. Thanking Wayne and yourself for the work that Rural Water has done in providing good informative and affordable training.

Thanks again,  
Gregg Casey, Chief Operator  
Sunrise Mountain Village WWTF

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# News on Tap

## Wastewater Operator Certification Fee Increase

To all interested parties of the Wastewater Operator Certification Program: Effective July 1, 2015, the fee for all original (includes upgrade) and renewal wastewater operator certification applications will increase from \$110.00 to \$125.00. More info at

[www.watershedmanagement.vt.gov/www/html/opcert.htm](http://www.watershedmanagement.vt.gov/www/html/opcert.htm)

## WaterPAC Donation Request

Please note we have included a donation request form to support WaterPac in this issue of News Leaks. Donations to WaterPac are important and help support elected officials that support rural water. Please consider making a donation and thanks for your consideration.

## Vermont awaits Lake Champlain TMDL from EPA Region 1

After many years of debate—and extensive action plan development from multiple sectors instate—many anxiously await the release of the Lake Champlain Phosphorus TMDL by EPA Region 1 in mid-July. For more info and update to date notices on status of the TMDL please visit:

[www.watershedmanagement.vt.gov/erp/champlain/](http://www.watershedmanagement.vt.gov/erp/champlain/)

Water quality discussions and specifically how the state will fund efforts to cover costs for given pollution reduction plans including the Lake Champlain Phosphorus TMDL dominated this most current legislative session and led to the passage of H. 35; now codified as Act 64. Let's hope the final TMDL plan is practical, affordable, and allows prioritization of investments that give the best reduction in pollution per dollar invested.



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# VERMONT RECLASSIFICATION OF GROUNDWATER – CLASS II DESIGNATION

By Liz Royer, Water Systems Specialist

## What is Class II Groundwater?

Class II is defined as suitable for public water supply with a uniformly excellent character but exposed to activities that may pose a risk to its current or potential use as a public water supply. Reclassification of groundwater is not a permit, instead it is a designation assigned to a geographic area. Classification is designed to manage and protect Vermont's groundwater resources. Most groundwater in the state is currently Class III. Class II is considered an upgrade with an enhanced degree of protection.

## What are the benefits of reclassification?

- Adds authority to evaluate and monitor land uses through state permitting programs, and the evaluation of risks associated with these permitted land uses
- Heightens awareness and citizen involvement with local groundwater quality protection efforts
- Sets a sound basis for local planning and land use regulations
- Provides a mechanism for groundwater quality protection in areas not currently used for public water system sources, but which have a high probability of such use by a municipality as demonstrated through specific steps to develop future public water supply sources

## Who is eligible to submit a petition?

Generally, a municipality or municipal water system will petition. Municipal officials and water systems have the best understanding of the current and projected future drinking water needs of the citizenry and are equipped to understand the local development pressures and groundwater protection needs faced by local communities. In addition, 25 or more potentially affected people may submit a petition.

## What are the criteria for reclassifying groundwater?

Groundwater can be reclassified by the Secretary of the Agency of Natural Resources (ANR) based upon a petition. The petition may include criteria such as: use or potential future use as a public water supply source, activities which pose a risk to the groundwater, availability of alternative sources of water if contamination occurs, current groundwater quality, and classification of adjacent surface waters.



Governor Shumlin presenting a Class II Groundwater Proclamation to Ray Counter, Brandon Fire District #1



### Are there any Class II groundwater areas in Vermont?

As of July 2015, Brandon Fire District #1 is the only Class II Groundwater in the state. Brandon has found that the Class II designation and the associated drinking water quality has become a source of local pride. In addition, anecdotal evidence points to businesses such as a new brewery being attracted by the fact that groundwater protection is a priority for the town.

### What information do I need to include?


Petitions for groundwater reclassification must include a written report and maps. For existing water sources, the information required in the report (e.g., public water system

yield and demand, potential sources of contamination, water quality characteristics) is information that the water system may have already provided for a Source Permit or their Source Protection Plan. Therefore, systems with scientifically-delineated source protection areas, which include most public community water systems in Vermont, likely have much of the information required for a petition. For Class II designations for potential future use as a public community water supply, documentation for future use must be provided (i.e. included in the town plan, designated in zoning districts, a Source Application has been submitted, planning funds have been accepted for water system or source development, etc.).

### How do I submit a petition?

Petitions must be submitted to the Director of the Drinking Water and Groundwater Protection Division. After review by the Groundwater Coordinating Committee and ANR personnel, the public comment period will commence. In addition, a public meeting may also be requested. The Secretary of ANR will make the final decision to approve or deny the petition.

More information is available at:  
[www.drinkingwater.vt.gov/gwreclass.htm](http://www.drinkingwater.vt.gov/gwreclass.htm)



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# Freeze-Ups and Finances

Aaron Perez, Water Systems Specialist

Vermont water operators have had their hands full this winter with many towns experiencing record numbers of water line freeze ups, frost depths that reached six and a half feet or more in places and dramatic frost heaving and settling.

Another challenge water systems faced this winter was determining financial responsibility between water systems and customers who had to run their water to prevent freezing. When an operator responds to a call for assistance on a freeze up, often the customer is not only concerned with the return of their service but with the associated costs. The more information that can be given at the time of first assistance call, the less conflict tends to arise after the issue has been addressed. Having a clearly written policy in place to deal with these issues can be helpful not only for the people who run the system but also for the customer.


I have been asked by some operators how other towns handled this issue, and here are a few of the most common examples I found. Some metered systems calculated the average use for a given address, either for the same time period last year or by using an average of several months. Other metered systems calculated the amount of water that would be used if the recommendations to the customer were followed (usually running one tap per residence at a pencil lead size stream) and deducted that amount from the water bill. Given the budget strains produced by the increased costs of much higher than average water

production, overtime for operators and the use of outside contractors, some system have decided generally not to abate bills at all. Still others chose to only abate bills for those customers who were asked specifically by the water department to run their water.

As far as a policy on who is responsible for the cost of thawing water service lines, I have also seen a few different approaches. This can vary depending on the man power and equipment limitations of a given system. One approach is that the system is responsible only to a curb stop. If the freeze in the line is determined to be past this point, it is the property owner's full responsibility to hire a contractor and pay all associated costs with returning service. In some cases the water department also charged a fee for turning the curb stop on and off. Another approach is, if the water department has the resources in house, they will thaw the line and either bill

the customer (usually at below the average contractor costs) or do it as a part of their regular customer service. I also saw examples of systems who shared the contractor cost with the customers especially when the exact location of the freeze up could not be determined. There were many examples of lines that froze multiple times because customers did not follow the water department's recommendations. Usually if the water department did thaw the line at no, low or shared cost they would only do so once.

I spent a lot of time in the field with systems in southern Vermont locating valves and assisting operators who were trying to return service in what felt at times like inhumanly cold conditions for water customers that were fairly distraught. I was sincerely impressed with the level of professionalism, ingenuity and kindness that these operators displayed. This difficult job was made a little easier for the towns that had clear policies in place that the operators could refer to when dealing with the public. ■










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**... it was our honor to present The Tony Torchia Lifetime Achievement Award to Ray Solomon. Ray has many years of service with VT DEC assisting public water systems with chemistry and troubleshooting.**

*"Preparing for a Sanitary Survey" continued from cover*

*"Top Notch Event" continued from cover*

Ben Montross (VT DEC Drinking Water & Groundwater Protection Division), Lynn Gilleland (EPA Region 1), Paul Sestito (VRWA). The trade show floor was very active and attendees had some great opportunities to interact with all our vendors taking part. To all those firms and partners on our trade floor, your involvement is appreciated.

During our business luncheon we honored an extensive list of long-standing system and company members. In addition it was our honor to present The Tony Torchia Lifetime Achievement Award to Ray Solomon. Ray has many years of service with VT DEC assisting public water systems with chemistry and operations troubleshooting. His work on surface water operations in particular is well known. Ed Savage (VRWA President) announced the results of our recent director election; Rod Lamothe (Castleton Meadows), Harry Hinrichsen (Town of Barre), and Margaret Dwyer (Winhall - Stratton Fire District) were all elected to three year terms. Ed also relayed the 2014 audit was recently completed and the results were favorable and there were no findings.

Thanks to all our event sponsors: Platinum level, Engineering Ventures, E.J. Prescott, and Ferguson Waterworks. Gold Sponsors, DN Tanks, Otter Creek Engineering, and Ti-Sales. Silver sponsors, Associated Electro-Mechanics, Ford Meter Box.

Mark your calendars and be sure to save the date for next year. We are looking forward to returning to the Lake Morey Resort on May 4 & 5, 2016. To all who took part in this year's event, we enjoyed catching up with you!

Let's discuss other basic information you should be able to answer. Does your tank have an alarm? The answer should be yes, and you should be able to discuss how the alarm works (ie: it calls out to your pager, the light comes on at the treatment plant and the neighbor notifies you, etc.) When was the tank(s) last inspected and cleaned? The VT WSR requires that a tank be inspected and cleaned (if necessary) within the first ten years and then inspected and cleaned every five years after the initial inspection and cleaning.

Finally, you may be asked about fire protection. How much water is allocated to fire protection, which depends on your calculated Average Day Demand of your customers. You should be able to find this information from your engineer. All of these questions are to help you identify potential pathways for outside intrusions or to help you to start budgeting for a new tank. Please pay attention to upcoming courses that pertain to the articles in News Leaks. See you all in class!



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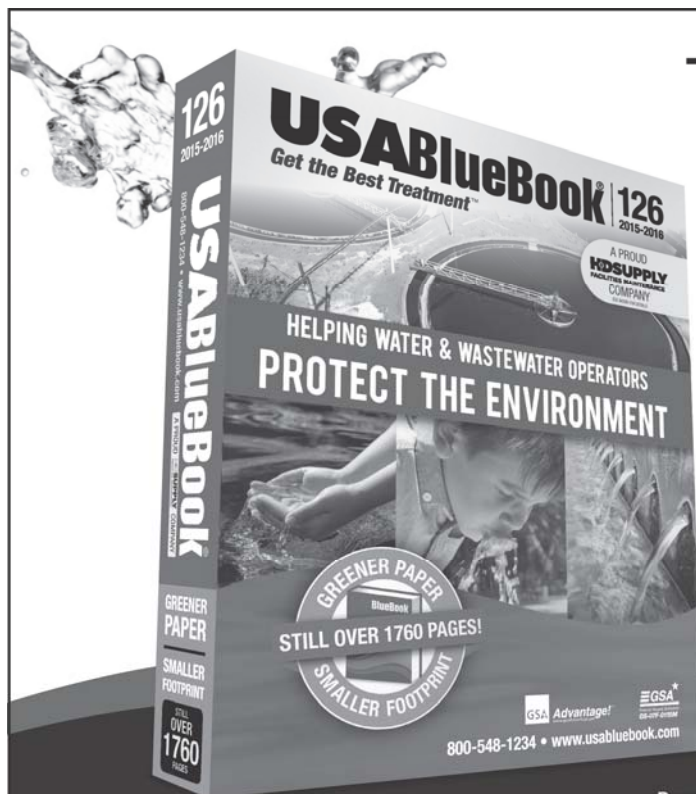
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