

Very Productive Rally Event

by Shaun Fielder,
Executive Director

As has been the trend these past couple years it was an interesting and exciting time to be taking part in the National Rural Water Association Rally in Washington on February 5 to 7. VRWA President Ed Savage and VRWA Vice President Harry Hinrichsen joined me and it was a very productive event. The main objective for VRWA, as is the case with all other rural water affiliates from across the country, is to seek out support from given Congressmen and Senator's for rural water program appropriations. These appropriations allow VRWA to continue many important activities ongoing to the benefit of the Vermont water sector.

(Continued on page 7)

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Yankee Ingenuity: Continuing Stories of System Innovations

by Wayne Graham, Wastewater Specialist

Do you have pump impellers and volutes that experience heavy wear? After receiving training from their machine shop, St. Johnsbury operation specialists coat the inside of volutes and entire impellers with a ceramic protectant. They have been doing this for years and see a huge difference in pump component life. See Pic below:



Another cheap and very effective fix from the operators in St. Johnsbury was finding a way to keep their 1.2 MG sludge holding tank mixed once the level was below the 4 mixers. The staff set up a portable blower on a skid and now blow air into the bottom of the tank cone through a sludge line. A very effective way to ensure that well mixed biosolids are being applied to farmer fields. Pics show blower assembly and holding tank being mixed by blower.



The staff at the Village of Swanton WWTF found a unique way to ensure their pump station was working during the recent severe winter flooding. They could not safely get to the station due to 4 feet of ice and water surrounding it, so they flew a drone over the open channels and were able to verify that the pump station was indeed performing and keeping up with wastewater flow. Talk about thinking out of the box and staying safe.

(Continued on page 7)

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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

Town of Chelsea
P O Box 266
Chelsea, VT 05038

November 13, 2017

Shaun Fielder, VRWA
20 Susie Wilson RD
Essex Junction VT 05452

Dear Shaun, I am writing this letter of support to thank Vermont Rural Water Association for years of technical assistance and training. I also want to take this opportunity to thank Wayne Graham of your staff for the assistance he provided today. I have been trying to solve a major operator certification issue here in Chelsea for over a year. Wayne, with his connections with the State of Vermont and lots of calls/emails was able to get the issue straightened out. He has saved me a lot of hours in solving this!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nolan LaFrancis'.

Nolan LaFrancis
Chief Operator Chelsea WWTF
Town of Chelsea
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News on Tap

Annual Conference & Trade Show

VRWA looks forward to our annual conference and trade show event at the Lake Morey Resort in Fairlee on May 9 and 10. Registration info has already been released and can be found at this link:

<http://vtruralwater.org/industry/conference.php>

There is a top-notch slate of training sessions planned and it will be a full house of industry vendors taking part to showcase their products and services. The highlight of the business luncheon on the 10th will be our awards presentations and we have a confirmation from Vermont DEC Commissioner Boedecker as our keynote presenter. VRWA is also looking forward to hosting the Vermont Drinking Water Week Taste Contest to award the best tasting water in the state. The winning product will be entered into the National Rural Water Association Great American Taste Contest taking place in Washington in February 2019.

NRWA Scholarship Award

Congratulations to Ethan Fielder (son of Shaun and Laurie Fielder) for recently being awarded a National Rural Water Association College Scholarship. He was one of 14 national recipients to receive this scholarship award. Ethan is a ceramics major in his junior year at the Massachusetts College of Art and Design in Boston. Ethan states, "It is opportunities such as this NRWA Scholarship, which have granted me the financial ability to pursue my goals as they pertain to my education and my passion for art."



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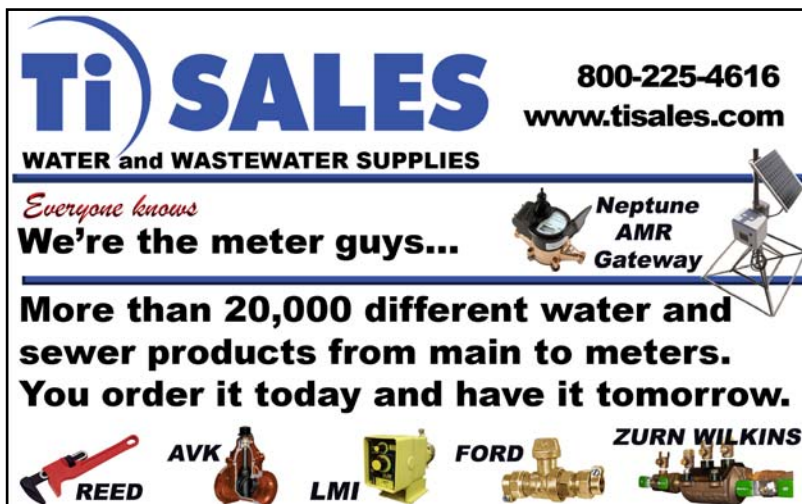
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UPDATES FROM THE VERMONT GROUNDWATER COORDINATING COMMITTEE

by Liz Royer, Source Protection Specialist

Deep within the Vermont Statutes, Chapter 48 calls for the Secretary of the Agency of Natural Resources to establish a Groundwater Coordinating Committee. The Vermont Groundwater Coordinating Committee (GWCC) was established by the General Assembly as part of a comprehensive groundwater management program. The Secretary established the GWCC with representation from the Agency of Agriculture, Department of Forests, Parks, and Recreation, and the Department of Health. The purpose of the Committee is to provide advice in the development and implementation of a management program to protect the quality of the state's groundwater resources. In carrying out his or her duties, the secretary gives due consideration to the recommendations of the GWCC. The secretary may request representatives of other agencies and the private sector to serve on the committee.

Vermont Rural Water has been participating in the GWCC since its creation.

Over the years, topics of discussion have included road salt contamination, source water protection, health advisory standards, nitrates in private wells, and reclassification of groundwater (Class II and Class IV). Currently, the GWCC is reviewing the implementation plans associated with the soon to be released Groundwater Management Plan. The overall goal of the Groundwater Management Plan is to "Make actionable suggestions that ensure groundwater resources are sustainable both in quantity and quality and that groundwater use does not harm water quality or unreasonably limit future Vermonters access to these groundwater resources." The implementation plans include tasks falling under three main objectives:

- 1) Improve Information Available for Groundwater Management Decisions

- Continue studies of groundwater resources
- Interagency collection and compilation of data
- Identification and mapping of groundwater resources

2) Protect Public Health and Safety and the Environment

- Adoption of technical criteria and standards
- Integration of groundwater protection consideration into regulatory programs

3) Expand Communications

- Technical assistance and planning for municipalities
- Compilation of information and educational materials for the public and cooperate with federal agencies

In coming months, the GWCC will be discussing the best approaches and methods to accomplish these objectives. Strategies and timelines are being developed along with the Drinking Water and Groundwater Protection Division.

Other upcoming topics for 2018 are likely to include: contaminated urban groundwater management, radionuclides, stormwater and surface water interactions with groundwater, and determination of allowable risk to human health for groundwater.

If you are interested in attending a meeting of the Committee, or have thoughts or questions on any groundwater related topics, please contact Scott Stewart, GWCC Chair, in the DEC Drinking Water Program (Scott.Stewart@vermont.gov). ●

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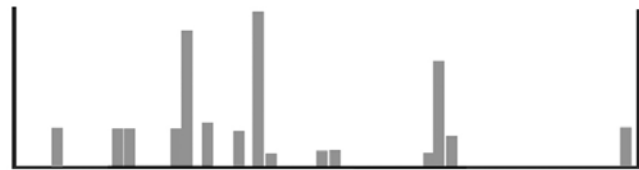
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Small Water Systems Initiation

by Diana Butler, Water Systems Specialist

After six years away from the industry I had forgotten the intensity of the operator's responsibilities. Only a few months on the job and I can directly attest to their overworked & underappreciated role. Specifically working with the small systems I see that the resources are often slim and the operator's duties are massive. The especially cold weather had these folks working long hours chasing leaks, fixing breaks, defrosting pipes, as well as conquering a million other daily tasks. Many of these folks in addition to their water related duties are responsible for snow removal, building maintenance, custodial duties, landlord responsibilities, various projects, endless paperwork and sometimes even animal care. Their

dedication to their work is astonishing. It is an exhausting, complicated, stressful, and dangerous job. Every day that I am introduced to a new small water system and the people who run them I find myself amazed. Seriously how do you do it?

What an educational re-introduction to the water world. It has been more answer hunting than I ever anticipated. Vermont is so unique that instead of finding answers I have mostly found more questions. It is often difficult to fit Vermont's small water systems into the big regulations. Thank you all for your patience in my answer searching expeditions. There is so much to know and so so much to learn. As we all know the expectations and requirements are ever evolving.

I want to send a special thanks all the folks who have let me visit their system sites and taken the time to talk with me. If I haven't been to visit yet please reach out and I'll visit you at your convenience. I also want to express my appreciation to my fellow VRWA co-workers; their knowledge is endless and their contributions to the industry unmeasurable. Their support has rescued me and kept me positive during this sometimes discouraging initiation period. The DWGWP branch is probably tired of my phone calls and emails but have been very tolerant and extremely helpful. Overall it has been a positive few months despite the cold and I am very hopeful to be more helpful as I move forward. ■

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“Finally a thank you to Senator Leahy, Senator Sanders and Congressman Welch for their ongoing support of VRWA and rural water programs.”

“Very Productive Rally Event” continued from cover

In 2017 VRWA conducted 2050 hours of onsite, offered 122 classroom training sessions which resulted in issuance of 6,065 training contact hours, and in addition VRWA completed 21 source protection plans. My personal thanks to VRWA’s team members who are focused on getting things done day in day out and providing a top level of service to the Vermont water and wastewater industry.

In addition a thank you to all of you that provided VRWA commendation items this past year. These emails and letters of support were showcased in our accomplishments package as presented to Senator Leahy, Senator Sanders and Congressman Welch.

These grassroots items are consistently referenced by professional staffers in the noted offices and give the information needed to show, rural water appropriations are extremely valuable at your local level and are a good return on the federal investment.


Budget discussions are ongoing at the Congressional level as you all have heard from various news sources and we are in a good position in regards to securing support for FY2019 rural water appropriations. We appreciate the time staff members in Senator Leahy, Senator Sanders and Congressman Welch took out of their busy schedules to meet with Ed, Harry and me to discuss the good work of Vermont Rural Water Association. Finally a thank you to Senator Leahy, Senator Sanders and Congressman Welch for their ongoing support of VRWA and rural water programs.

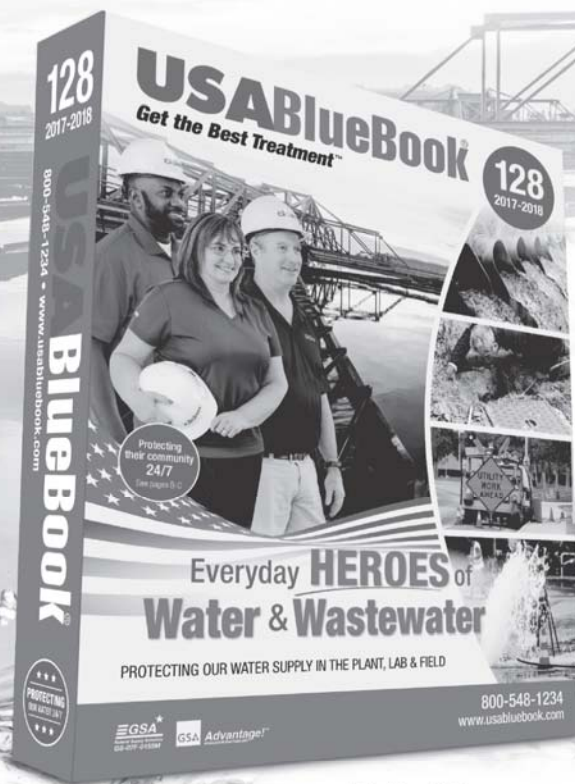


1. To r. Ed Savage (VRWA President), Harry Hinrichsen (VRWA Board Member)

“Yankee Ingenuity” continued from cover

Finally, in this age of smart phones and high quality photos that they take, our cell phones have become great tools. It’s really handy to be able to take a picture of something and email or text it to a coworker, equipment supplier or even your State Inspector. With my continually failing eyesight I can even take a picture of a nameplate and then enlarge it! Also pretty nice to be trouble shooting equipment in the field and be able to go to the internet and find the operation and maintenance manual to assist in the repair. The list of possibilities goes on – You Tube videos on Flygt Pump rebuilds, the notes function on your phone takes the place of pen and paper, alarm clock reminders for shutting that pump off, your phone takes the place of 2 way radios when communicating with a coworker, all the way to maintenance program apps and monitoring your plant with scada! As I write this I am realizing that I may be relying on my phone too much!

If you have interesting ideas that you want to share, send them to me; we will include them in News Leaks in the future. I also encourage you to tour other facilities and share ideas; you will find that networking with other operators can be very beneficial. Several organizations can also help; GMWEA, VT Watershed Mgmt. and of course, VRWA! 



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