

Drinking Water & Groundwater Protection Division

January, 2019

General

- The mission of the Drinking Water & Groundwater Protection Division is to protect human health and the environment for this and future generations by managing Vermont's drinking water supplies; protecting the quality and quantity of Vermont's groundwater resources; and regulating wastewater disposal activities that could adversely affect groundwater. The Division accomplishes this mission through its outreach, education, assistance and regulatory activities.
- Major Programs: Indirect Discharge, Underground Injection Control (UIC), Wastewater and Potable Water Supply Program (WW), and Public Drinking Water.
- FY19 budget \$7.4M.
- 50 FTEs.

Groundwater Protection Rule

- The Groundwater Protection Rule and Strategy was last comprehensively updated in 2005. This rule amendment incorporates the legislative directive of making groundwater resources in the State held in trust for the public and creates standardized requirements for ensuring activities permitted by the Agency of Natural Resources will not adversely affect public trust uses of groundwater, including use for drinking water.
- The amendment also updates the list of Groundwater Enforcement Standards to reflect current numeric guidelines generated by the Vermont Department of Health, and
- Clarifies the process for reclassifying groundwater.
- The amended rule is currently in the APA process and statewide public hearings will begin later this month.

Wastewater System & Potable Water Supplies Regional Office Program (WW)

- Statutory authority is granted in 10 V.S.A. Chapter 64. Focus of the program is to protect human health and the environment through the proper treatment and disposal of wastewater and siting of potable water sources (non-public). Approximately 55% of Vermonters rely on soil based wastewater disposal, which is one of the highest percentages Nationally.
- Issues permits for soil based wastewater systems <6,500 GPD, connections to municipal sewer and Indirect Discharge systems, and assigns design flows for buildings, structures or campgrounds. Permits run with the land.
- Issues permits for potable water supplies including drilled and shallow wells and springs that are not under the jurisdiction of the Public Water System programs, connections to public water systems, and assign design flows for a buildings, structures, or campgrounds.
- WW program is administered through five Regional Offices; Essex Junction, Montpelier, Springfield, Rutland, St. Johnsbury and three staff in the Central Office.
- The program issues approximately 2,500 permits per year. Additionally, program receives approximately 30,000 inquires per year from the public.
- The current WW Rules were adopted 9/29/2007. An amendment to the rules is currently in the APA process and LCAR hearing is anticipated in February.

- This program is not a Federally-mandated program and is financed by state general funds, some DWSRF funds, and permit fees.

Indirect Discharge Program

- Statutory authority granted in 10 V.S.A. Chapter 47.
- Issues permits for soil based sewage wastewater systems >6,499 GPD, including large leachfields, wastewater treatment plants discharging to leachfields or large spray irrigation systems (ski areas), and (e.g. Town of Warren – large soil based system, Sugarbush – spray disposal system)
- Issues permits for non-sewage wastes, typically related to food process wastewater, that is discharged into manure pits or anaerobic digesters, or that is land-applied. Examples include brewery and other high strength wastewater to pits and digesters, and cheese-producer washwater that is land applied. (e.g. Cabot Cheese, Ben and Jerry's).
- Approximately 215 active Indirect Discharge Permits.
- Rules were last updated 4/30/2003. Revising the Indirect Discharge Rules is priority in the upcoming year.
- This program is not a Federally-mandated program and is financed by general funds and permit fees.

UIC Program

- Statutory authority granted in 10 V.S.A. Chapter 47 and the Safe Drinking Water Act.
- Issues permits for soil based non-sewage systems having a moderate risk due to specified activities, many related to industrial process wastewater, including airport de-icing fluid mixed with stormwater, and mine processing wastewater. High risk activities are prohibited from being discharged into a subsurface system. (e.g. Burlington Airport, Emery's Talc Mine)
- The current Rules require permits on a limited number of projects. Much of the program efforts over the last two years have been outreach to facility owners, such as town maintenance garages and vehicle repair or maintenance facilities. There is a well closure process whereby the landowner should contact the UIC program to provide information on the well closure. EPA requests reports related to how many UIC wells have been closed.
- The UIC program is a Federally-mandated program and revenues include Federal, General Funds and permit fees.

Public Drinking Water Program

- Statutory authority granted in 10 V.S.A. Chapter 56 and the Safe Drinking Water Act.
- Vermont is a primacy state for implementation of the Safe Drinking Water Act. The Public Drinking Water Program is funded by federal funds (PPG and DWSRF) and permit fees.
- Three sections containing approximately 30 staff in total focus on source protection (Water Resources), operational and engineering concerns (Engineering & Operations), and compliance (Compliance & Support).
- Water Resources: Issues public water system source permits for community systems and NTNCs to assess water quality and quantity, and determines source protection areas. Also, reviews Source Protection Plans. Issues bottled water approvals for sale in Vermont. Approves/ renews Well Driller Certifications, well construction, and evaluates well completion reports. Issues

Large Groundwater Withdrawal permits and oversees reporting of withdrawals. The program issues approximately 35 permits annually.

- **Operations & Engineering:** The operations team performs sanitary survey inspections of NTNCs and community water systems and issues permits for these water systems to operate. Permits often contain compliance schedules to compel capital improvements. The core function of the engineering team is to issue permits for the construction of new water systems or major modifications to existing systems. The engineering team also review engineering agreements and engineering reports for infrastructure projects funded through the State Revolving Fund program. They also serve as a general technical resource to the Division.
- **Capacity Development:** The Capacity Development Program assists systems with the development of technical, managerial, and financial capacity to public water systems including assistance on rate structures, budgets, bylaws, and sustainability planning. Conducts capacity reviews on all new NTNC and community water systems. Act as project managers for grants and contracts funded through the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund. Recent examples include leak detection contracts, lead reduction grants, and asset management planning grants.
- **Certification and Compliance:** This group administers federal drinking water regulations including the Surface Water Treatment Rules, Disinfection By-product Rules, Groundwater Rule, Revised Total Coliform Rule, Phase II/V Rule, and Lead and Copper Rule. The water operator certification program is administered by this section. This section also houses the Transient Non-Community (TNC) Program, which regulates approximately 700 of these types of water systems.

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